



WOMEN AND VIOLENCE IN VIKAS SWARUP'S 'THE ACCIDENTAL APPRENTICE'

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is a humble effort to study about the women and violence in every sphere of life depicted by Vikas Swarup, male novelist in Indian English literature. He has emerged as a distinguished contemporary Indian English writer. As a socio-political novelist, he has carved a niche for himself in recent years. He has focused on the predicament of the women in the society. Vikas Swarup emphasizes the fact that even in postcolonial India, the plight of the women and violence has not changed or modified. He goes on delineating injustice, inhumanity, insult and misery faced by the women.

This article draws a special attention of the close and fair estimate of portrayal of the marginalized female and violence on her in his third novel 'The Accidental Apprentice'. The present study is related to the violence on women in Indian culture, society and tradition from ancient days till today. It focuses on the violence on women which is occurring day to day in various walks of life like family life, social life and work situation. It also highlights on female foeticide, low literacy level of women, women's low nutritional status, and women's role in decision making. It also gives emphasis on number of women in total workforce torture of them by men in family life, social life and in other job places.

KEYWORDS: Violence, Women, Dowry, Exploitation, Marginality.

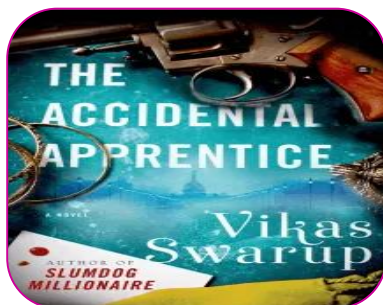
INTRODUCTION

Vikas Swarup is a renowned Indian English novelist who has carved a permanent place in the field of novel writing in English with his most productive and innovative works. He is an award winning author of three novels as well as short stories and articles, books review in a wide range of publications. His debut novel 'Q & A' turned out a global bestseller, selling more than half a million copies. The film 'Slumdog Millionaire' made on this novel became the Oscar winning film.

Since then, he entered in the literary scene and quickly earned himself the status of finest novelist. It has become so popular that Vikas Swarup is almost universally recognized as a spokesperson who formally served as the official spokesperson of the ministry of external affairs of India and currently the high commissioner of India to Canada. He explores the issues of freedom, equality, injustice, exploitation and unemployment which are denied to common men and women in our nation by the rich Indians. His novel

'Accidental Apprentice' in which the whole focus is given on the women character who is a main protagonist Sapna Sinha. This has led the readers to label Vikas Swarup as a feminist novelist.

As everybody is aware that India is riddled with multiple syndromes. Gender discriminations and women violence's are some among them. It can be located in the category of, 'Margins', or the excluded. Other social groups are in the offing to claim their marginality in a different way. For instance, women as one of the oppressed groups can claim that they have been under patriarchal oppression for



centuries and thus, marginalized in the male dominated Indian society. The element of violence is operative in multiple layers piled up in the society. Women's are not only victims of economic exploitation but also other social issues like injustice, inequality, deprivation, discrimination, disabilities, oppression domination, exclusion etc.

In Vikas Swarup's novel, we find a clear picture of the social status of the women who have to struggle for their identity and to prove that she is able to work strongly in the male dominated society. The term 'violence' connotes that the behavior of any person which harms to somebody physically or mentally. There are some people who use violence's such as physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and cultural and abuses as verbal and financial to harm other. Sapna Sinha has to face emotional and psychological violence by the thief at the outset of the novel. 'Violence' is the most important issue facing our nation in the 21st century and no one wrote about women and violence in more powerful, realistic, and self-contradictory ways than Vikas Swarup. The mainstream of human society does include such people who have been identified as marginal's. Now a day, we have to talk fruitfully on feminist perspectives, questions of identity of women and the violence on women that forms a longer part of marginal existence for them.

Violence against women is subsisted in every country, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age. This is the most prevalent yet relatively hidden and ignored form of violence against women and girls in present scenario. Man and women are two equal side of the society. As each and every one has a unique importance, but Indian society neglected the women and put away from her basic rights. But due to reformatory movement of reformer, Women of India got right of educations. Apart from, various commissions and committees recommended about the educational status of women but the violence on her are also increasing with rapidly with progress due to ill mentality of the new generation towards female.

According to the United Nation—

"There is no region of world, no country and no culture in which women's freedom from violence has been secured."

Indian women, unlike their western counterparts have always been socially and psychologically oppressed, sexually colonized and biologically subjugated against a male dominated social set-up. His third novel 'The Accidental Apprentice' is a tale of a young woman's moral fortitude against the corruption of modern India. Twenty-three years old Sapna Sinha, is a salesgirl in electronic boutique in downtown Delhi who is supporting her widowed mother and feckless sister. He has highlighted the issues such as child slavery, forced marriage, murder, bartered kidneys, acid attacks, sexual assault, trickery and scamming in his novel. The above mentioned issued are called violence which are prevalent in our digital society. Violence and women are interconnected with each other, they can't be separated. It is to be said that 'Where is a woman, there is a violence'.

Vikas Swarup has described the pathetic condition of his protagonist Sapna Sinha who is thrown into situation where she has to face among other thing such as child labor, black market, organ sale, forced marriage, corruption, rape and general daily life violence. His novel shines a light on these social problems which are omnipresent in our nation without being sentimental. Vikas Swarup points out that well-educated people, also facing extreme problems and violence in our nation. Sapna Sinha, a chief character in 'The Accidental Apprentice' also well-qualified but while doing job, she has to face economical problems for her family. She is living in her uncle's house but further, he demanded rent to live there. Then, she turns to earn more money, thus, the most challenging journey of Sapna's life begin. There are many girls and women in our society who are living in untold circumstances as Sapna Sinha is facing a challengfull journey in her life.

Vikas Swarup is a realist and his writings are replete with truthful portrayal of the women and violence on her in the Indian society. His novels provide ample of examples regarding women and violence in the Indian scenario. He projects developing India is a place where common women is still struggling and living fearful life. Through his character Sapna Sinha, an ordinary salesgirl in 'Accidental Apprentice', he gives powerful message of triumph over common violence which is occurring in women's daily life. She passes all

seven tests i.e. 'Seven Life Test'. She has to show the quality of leadership, integrity, courage, foresight, resourcefulness and decisiveness. It deals with the role of male dominance in frustrating to the talented women and their struggle for identity. It shows how women are oppressed and manipulated by men and humiliated into powerlessness.

Vikas Swarup has very realistically portrayed the predicament of the underprivileged and marginalized women and the violence on her in every walk of life in his novel. He has all the sympathy for these women and wants to awake the society from its slumber of selfishness and eradicate the existing social stigma of violence on women for the path of peaceful society. Though, women born to be free as a man, she finds herself safe in her own family but whenever she has to go outside from the family, she must face various types of violence in his peaceful life. Vikas Swarup has succeeded in penning down about the real problem of Indian women and their lives inside the four walls of their house. He has successfully depicted the issue of violence on women in his novel very clearly for the social betterment of female community.

CONCLUSION:-

In 21st century, copious novelists have given voice to the questions of women's place and identity in a patriarchal society. Novelists across the world have triumphantly highlighted injustice done to the women in their caring society as well as unceasing dictatorship of deep rooted customs and traditions in their respective countries. There are end numbers of multicolored problems of women which are full of rue and split. Lack of individuality, financial helplessness, political negligence, social exploitation, dowry, child marriage, child labor, mental turmoil, unemployment, corruption, crime, rape etc. are sensitive issues in modern India. In this digital nation, the plight of women is undergoing both gradual and rapid changes in various acts of their routine life. But the violence against women seems a daily routine activity. The violence on women is not natural but it is a manmade phenomena. With the passage of time and the rapid development of our country, in all sphere of life, the problems of women are becoming an extremely volatile cum sensitive issues and challenges for our country. It must be faced with proper channel and way by women.

Vikas Swarup expresses the views that India is a multi-ethnic nation where multi-talented people lives, but he focuses on the sensitive issue i.e. violence on women through his third novel, 'The Accidental Apprentice'. His whole life is struggleful and therefore, he recognizes too patently contemporary fact and his writing will of course help to bring about a better nourished generation. As a socialist, Swarup believes that the uncontrollable problem of the society is the problem of violence on women and their deprivation. The greatness and principal mission of Vikas Swarup is to eradicate the problems of women from our country and to help the society.

It is true that we are in the midst of a great evolution in the history of women. We see the evidence of violence everywhere. The voice of the women is increasing heard in parliament, courts and in the streets. Many rich people give offer to the young women to progress themselves in our nation. Needy educated women needs job to support their family. Therefore, they can ready for any job. Sapna also accepted the offer given by a rich businessman, Vinay Mohan Acharya, one of the India's richest men. He offered that if Sapna will pass the seven life test then, she will get job as a CEO in his incredibly huge and profitable company. It shows that many women are exploited on the name of job in our nation. This paper wants to focus on the hopes and fears in our nation through the detailed description of the novel 'The Accidental Apprentice'. The industrialist, Vinay Mohan Acharya says –

“We are living in kalyug, the dark age, full of sin and corruption’.

It is true because the whole nation is in trouble due to the mentality of the people towards women. Vikas Swarup also highlights the issue of violence through the dowry with the help of the character Kuldip Singh from agricultural family who come to the capital to buy goods for his daughter's marriage as a dowry. The over ambition of women takes her for violence such as Sapna remarks about her sister Neha, **she says -**

“one day, she hopes to be as rich, famous and successful as rich people”. She is ready to exploit her beauty to get what she wants.

Raja, son of millionaire father, only drinks alcohol and picks up girls. He had already had success with one of the salesgirls. He also wants to do same with Prachi and Sapna. It shows that rich people and their next generation easily exploit the servants who work in their office. This is rarely fact in our current scenario. Violence on women is occurring by snatching the purse and gold from the women while they are out of the house. The police officer also raised the more and more questions regarding the thief but does not have a helping action. People from around the world only care about themselves, while the purse was stolen by the thief, all around people are laughing, eating, shopping and enjoying the sunshine. Though all violence, the paper wants to point out that women should have to fight for their dreams, earn the place where they want to go. He further says, **‘In life we don’t get what we deserve, we get what we negotiate’**. The important message of this paper is women must face all difficulties in their life with courage and determination as Sapna Sinha, because life does not change in an instant, we have to be ambitious to get success and money as Sapna. We have to pass some life test to live peaceful life with dignity and self-respect.

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