

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SATISH CHENDER'S TELUGU STORY "*IT IS WRONG.*" IN ENGLISH

Prof. M. Suresh Kumar
Research Supervisor &
HOD, Department of English, ANU

Kumbha V Koteswara Rao
Research Scholar,
Department of English, ANU

Abstract:

The short story "*Thappu*" in Telugu language by Satish Chender is translated as "*IT IS WRONG.*" It talks about a thought provoking contemporary social issue. The issue of an inter caste marriage between a high caste disabled woman and a perfectly able man of low caste (outcaste), which is eventually supported by her mother but not by her community people in the village. It is a theme of true love and sacrifice being portrayed sensibly by the writer. The story answers to the questions such as who did wrong. Why did s/he do it? What is important for the people of her community? Is it life or pride? What did Veeralakshmi do for her daughter Malliswari who cannot walk on her own without any aid? Though we live in the 21st century where most of the people are able to transact globally without inhibitions some Indians are not able to understand the very purpose of life in the name of caste, religion, class and region. In this paper cause and effect of caste consciousness is argued.

Keywords: Love, discrimination, community counsel, sacrifice.

In this story, Satish Chender focuses on discrimination, alienation, communal pride and unity to break the relationship between Malliswari, a Kshathriya woman and Solomonraju an untouchable man(outcaste) lives in Peta (locality where untouchables live) in the name of caste. Malliswari is a differently abled woman, whereas Solomonraju a perfectly abled man.

Malliswari's father abandons Malliswari and her mother Veeralakshmi to keep up his Kshathriya pride. Veeralakshmi a single parent faces lot of troubles in bringing up of the disabled Malliswari. Malliswari and Solomonraju are schoolmates. As Malliswari could not even move for her personal needs without any aid, she takes help from her mother at home and a female friend who can carry her to the washroom and bring back to the class or the place wherever she is, but as a matter of fact, nobody is ready to help her except Solomonraju who is just three or four years old to her at the school.

This routine has gone until Malliswari becomes 15 years. After that she used to manage taking help from her female classmates who could help her involuntarily. But the

students, teachers and people of her community hate the relationship between Malliswari and Solomonraju because Solomonraju is an outcaste and who lives in "Peta" (a place where the out castes live). They murmur among themselves, "How dare he is to touch a Kshathriya woman, being a person from Peta?"(Satish Chender 844) Malliswari loves only two people in her life, they are her mother Veeralakshmi and Solomonraju, both serve her without any expectations. The relationship between Malliswari and Solomonraju is also approved by Veeralakshmi as she knows the difficulty and patience that her daughter requires to attend to her daily needs.

Malliswari, Solomonraju though become young, they have not lost their love and affection upon them. This bond of souls is misunderstood by Malliswari's father and the people of her community. Her father hated Malleswari and her mother because are on intimate terms with a low caste boy, as if it is an insult and damage to the pride of their clan "the Kshathriyas". Therefore, he deserts his wife and daughter and has gone off.

Malleswari one morning observing that her mother was reading the Bible, says, "Mother! Shall I tell you a secret? I've met Jesus in my dream." (843) Veeralakshmi curiously asked, "Jesus! Have you spoken to Him properly?" (843) In the course of their conversation about Jesus, Malleswari told her mother that she had taken for granted Jesus, and asked Him why didn't He give her the feet whereas, He has given eyes to the eyeless. She told her mother that Jesus replied, "You silly woman, I have given you the lap of a mother permanently. The mother's of others' carry them only for two or three years, whereas in your case you will ever be carried by your mother" (844). The words of Malleswari at that moment made Veeralakshmi understand the pain of disability being experienced by her daughter. Veeralakshmi thinks about the life of Malleswari after her death.

The very thought made her to take a fatal decision which will open the doors for her daughter's harmonious life with Solomonraju because the people of her clan will never allow her to marry Solomonraju. It shows Veeralakshmi's belief that Malliswari will be accepted by all the people in Peta unconditionally.

The people of her caste called on a community counsel to address the issue and to separate them under the headship of a gentleman by name Venkatapathiraju. In the community counselling, she confronts many people there and she even dares to ask her community people that she will marry anyone, if any one comes forward to take her as a maid for the son of any man. One person with great feeling of caste by name Kodipandhelaraju, who often spends most of his time in gambling and cock-fights insults her mother, "Veeralakshmi, why don't you also select a Johnraju for you like your daughter because your husband has already abandoned you both? Hasn't he?" (842)

This insult affected both Malliswari and Veeralakshmi to a great extent consequently made them to rethink whether to continue the relationship with Solomonraju or not. Malliswari thinks, "Of course, it's wrong! Wrong to ask a thing that cannot be asked! It is wrong to ask, taking for granted that it is my mother, whom I have asked! Asking mother to take me to my lover wherever, he asked me to come is wrong" (841). She then tries to discontinue her relationship with Solomanraju, who is the only source of relief whenever she gets upset in her life other than her mother at home. She thinks it is a wrong act which made her mother to face such a disgusting remark by the nincompoo of the community. Malliswari's mother Veeralakshmi on the other hand thinks for her daughter's new life after her death. The narrator here says, "Veeralakshmi felt that the words like a knife was directly pierced her heart like that of a cock that hits the opposite cock with its sharp knife tied to its leg in the fight." (842) Veeralakshmi having got all these ideas as possible outcomes of her daughter's life, ends her life leaving a letter for her daughter in the Bible, which is kept under the pillow in which she writes her that Solomonraju can only be the person who can carry her for the rest of her life.

Venkatapathiraju is a prominent person, a gentleman among their community; no one dares to question him or contradict him in his presence. Venkatapathiraju promises Veeralakshmi that his two acres out of four acres of fertile land shall also be given for her, if Malliswari keeps their pride in being away from Solomonraju and marry a man from their own community. A brief silence prevails there, and then Malleswari replies to Venkatapathiraju, "Uncle! I will marry a person from our own community", (843) not only that but also she says, "I will marry in this community only, and also in this village itself, as these people of our community have gathered to address the issue. I will marry the son of any of these persons, if comes forward. However, the person may be, may be a drunkard, an illiterate, a philanderer, anyone! Even if the groom comes not for me but for the land you have promised to gift us! I am ready to marry the person". (843)

Listening to her words, all the Kshatrya persons over there have left the place silently one after the other. She even dares to ask that she is ready to marry Vikramavarma the son of Venkatapathiraju. Venkatapathiraju abashed at her remark. Veeralakshmi immediately slaps Malleswari and says, "How dare you to expect his life, don't you have control on your expectations! Uncle Venkatapathi is like God for us!" (843) the narrator remarks soon after the words spoken by Veeralakshmi against her daughter's choice of marrying the son of Venkatapathiraju as "It is nothing but sheer violence, the violence that hurts even the people of great violence like the violence that takes place at giving birth to a child by a woman". (843)

The Paster opens the Bible kept under the pillow, finds to his surprise a letter addressed to Malleswari. In the letter Veeralakshmi writes, "You are gold. You will be carried for the rest of your life by Solomonraju only. I will not send you with Solomonraju to

his home as long as I am alive. I am therefore, going to live with Jesus, with lots of kisses....your mother.” (846) With that letter mother goes to cemetery and daughter goes to Peta.

Satish chender concludes the story with the remark, talks about the need for unconditional love, affection and compassion towards fellow beings, as they are the real sources' of life not meanness and hatred toward people without reason but just for pride. All these qualities of life have been successfully addressed by him through the characters: Solomonraju and Veeralakshmi who show unconditional love and affection towards Malliswari. Venkatapathiraju though shows concern and humanity conducts the communal counsel for the issue. Kodipandhalaraju's disgusting remarks of Veeralakshmi shows how mean he is and also has full of community pride. Satish Chender advocates the contemporary social issue invoking the social responsibility of communal harmony and integrity, ended the story saying “the wrong of ethics has become the right of eternity” (846), reminding the axiom justice delayed but not denied.

References:

- Satish Chander. “*Thappu*” (2011), a short story translated as “It Is Wrong.” by KoteswaraRao, K. V. 2019.
- Naveen Vasireddy, and Sivasankar Papineni, editors. *Paathikella Katha*-1990. Bangalore: MaNaSu Foundation, Vol.II, 2016 pp.841-846.
- Hornby, A.S. Hey, Leonie and Holloway, Suzanne, editors. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, Edition 9, 2015.
- Gwynn, J. P. L. Assisted by Venkateswara Sastry, J. Oxford Telugu-English Dictionary. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015.