

Agnisakshi: Communal Taboos, a Study in the Light of Feministic Perspective

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Abstract

Our lives are dictated by a ridiculous level of compliance. We have been conditioned to observe various taboos in our communities, castes, customs, and rituals for no apparent reason. Even in Sivapurana, there is ample evidence to justify these taboos. The screw pine flower stands in defiance of God's offers. Some people, like this discarded flower, decide on the fate of others. Agnisakshiby Lalithambika Antherjanam has a kernel part of communal taboos that shattered a woman's life. The protagonist of the tale, Devaki Manampalli, steps forward to break such taboos that are the cause of cautious silence. Despite the fact that she was unable to have the family she desired, she achieved the pinnacle of sainthood, which is far removed from the life of an ordinary woman. Through the study of feministic perspective, the storey draws attention to superfluous taboos.

Keywords: Communal, Taboos, Feministic Perspective

On March 3rd, 1909, Lalihmbika Antharjanam, a twentieth-century novelist, was born in kottarakkarakollam, Kerala. She was born into the KottavattathIllam Namboothiri family. She was educated in a non-formal setting. She understood and valued the importance of growing up in a community during her formative years. In 1927, she married Ramapurath AmanakaraIllath Narayanan Namboothiri of Ramapurath AmanakaraIllath Narayanan Namboothiri of Ramapurath Amanakara Illa She is the mother of seven children. She has received numerous prizes, including the Kerala Sahithya Award, the Kendra Sahithya Award, and the Odakkuzhal Award, among others. Antharjanam died on February 6th, 1987. Agnisakshi (1976), Athmakathakkoru Amugam, Thenthullikal, and others are among her notable works.

Lalithambika Antharjanam defined Agnisakshi as "the history and culture of a community and society." Despite the fact that it depicted the life of a lady who is being converted into something else, it contains a silhouette of taboos. Devaki Manampalli, the protagonist, adores her spouse Unni. He admires her as well. But there's something that separates them. They are thinking of nothing more than collective restraints. Looking at Devaki's life through a feminist lens, she has lost all she desires. When there are no obvious

reasons to obey a taboo, it becomes a taboo. Devaki is both weak and strong as a result of these denials. She never deprives a boy from a lower caste of his right to food and education. This helped him advance in his career, but Devaki was accused of knowing an untouchable instead. All of these circumstances necessitate a thorough examination. Many communal taboos that call into question women's freedom must be viewed with suspicion. These taboos, particularly in the context of feminism, have not yet been broken. Its justifications aren't to be found anywhere else. It could be the result of a female-on-female fight. Because some people want to come forward while others want to stay put.

Feminism became a new wave in Kerala during the period of Lalithambika Antharjanam. Kerala's history is interesting from the standpoint of feminism because of its large caste structure. Long ago, Jane Austen observed that the pen had always been in the hands of men. However, not only the pen, but all the powers that have been in men's hands are highlighted in this storey. Other than holy publications, reading is strictly prohibited in Agnisakshi. Devaki, on the other hand, looks for newspapers and periodicals to satisfy her thirst for information and to alleviate her loneliness within those four walls.

“Thangam, I think if I were a man. If I were a man I would have been emancipated not only mywife, but also all the women. And I would die for the sake of the Nation and of human beings”(pg:30)(translated by me)

Devaki was compelled to speak these words to Thangam, Unni's sister, due to the suffocation of existence. Thangam's situation is similar to that of Devaki. She is also restricted. She wishes to pursue more education. Her father scolded her for making such a genuine wish. Her brother, Unni, also married when she was fourteen years old. Thangam, on the other hand, has no requirement to attend a wedding ceremony. Her mother is a Nair woman, so it's not because she doesn't like to go there. Namboothirs are allowed to marry and have children with Nair women. These women, however, are unable to enter the Illam or the Namboothiri's home. This prohibition clearly restricts the freedom of Nair women. Nothing will happen if a Nair woman enters the "Illam," as we all know. It's possible that it's to demonstrate male dominance and power.

We can also observe a character in this work who takes responsibility for emancipating all Namboothiri women from the taboos imposed by their own tribe. P. K.P Namboothiri, Devaki Manampalli's brother, works tirelessly to eliminate "marakkuda" for upper-class ladies. It's terribly awful that upper-class women can't leave the house without a palm-leaf umbrella. They must also be accompanied by someone else when travelling outside. It is one of the Namboothiri Community's systems that has survived. He was chastised by elderly women in the same society, who considered it was their job or responsibility to be under the authority of all limitations. They used to go along with everything without

question. They are persuading the next generation to follow in their footsteps. They are not even considering extending a helping hand to their followers in order to free them from these taboos. Lalithambika Antharjanam mentions community retribution for a person who complains against the current system of the time through one of the characters. If a person was to end up in prison, he would be expelled from the community. P. K. P. Namboothiri had to deal with it during his struggle. This novel's characters and events can't possibly be true. The novelist herself admits that the novel's events are all made up, not based on real events or her own life, but rather from her imagination. It still points the finger at the society for carrying communal taboos on its own.

Feminism may be found in every aspect of society. However, it is being questioned all over the place. Taboos are prevalent in society without being challenged. Despite the fact that the study is a feministic investigation of the communal taboos in the novel Agnisakshi, it raises a concern about modern society.

We may control the dreadful reality of the limits by recognizing them openly. It's important to stick to what's right and reject what's incorrect. Feminism strives for male and female equality. However, equality, with all of its ramifications at all levels of society, is a serious concern. As a result, it is preferable to abandon communal taboos in order to alleviate at least some of the inequalities. Our trump card is our ability to be mindful.

References

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