

Research Paper

BREAKING TIES; A CULTURAL BONDAGE ENSLAVING HUMANITY**Dr. Uttam B. Sonkamble**SMRK BK AK Mahila Mahavidyalaya
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Sara Aboobacker is the finest model of radical author in the Indian Writing in English who she dares to write about the cultural mysteries in the religion which too in religion like Islam. It is approved of by neither the religion nor the community. She wisecracks to slyly convey the message through the fiction the eccentricity of religion, resulting implicitly in rebellion against the strange and vicious religious customs which mysteriously control the human life, it is successfully done as well. Through this book *Breaking Ties*, the author has voiced as an ambassador for feminine sensibility and oppression and subordination under the patriarchal hegemony. She seems to be satiated with her book. The second part of the book reflects her autobiographical part as it duly supplements the motive of the protagonist relating to her life as well. The fiction translated from the Kannada original 'Chandragiri Theeradalli' lays bare the intricate web of relations - economic, sexual and religious - that operate within domesticity in a larger patriarchal order in which women remain voiceless victims of male ideology and male interpretations of the religious scriptures.

The author Sara Aboobacker is herself the first Muslim girl in her community to have attended school and matriculated in her region. She has published seven novels, four collections of short stories, a book of essays and three Malayalam works translated into Kannada. She runs her own publishing house, Chandragiri Prakashana, named after the river in this novel.

Breaking Ties is clearly a feminist text and projects the female body as the site of struggle. The novel provides a glimpse of the Muslim woman's world and gives expression to the subaltern experience of oppression of the poor, uneducated Muslim women victimized by the Muslim patriarchy. Being silenced by a patriarchy that governs women's lives in the name of religion, the protagonist who an unlettered Muslim girl is unable to write her story of misery and indignity. The author offers in

the second half of the book takes for a Muslim girl to go to school and gives a voice in the first, to the predicament of Muslim women within the unilateral practices and customs of marriage in Islam. The first and second parts as twin narratives constitute an internal critique of Muslim patriarchy.

The translator creates an atmosphere of Indian domesticity and at the same time, maintains the individuality of the text by preserving the flavour of the specificities of local customs, culture and language. The translation dismantles the male discourse by supplementing the language difference through culture-specific terms like 'madi', 'atte', 'happala', 'sandige', 'mangalasutra' etc. There are also culture-specific terms like 'birthing room'. The translation conveys effectively moments of shared communion characteristic of female experience as when *Phaniyamma* consoles *Dakshayini*, another

child widow, supports and encourages Premabai, a young Christian midwife and helps an untouchables' daughter in a difficult delivery. Niranjana's translation of *Phaniyamma* clearly projects a feminist discourse right at the outset and contributes remarkably to the creation of a female tradition. In recalling the words of *Phaniyamma's* brother "*that no other woman like his sister Phani had ever been born or would be in the future*" (p.1), the text is not really playing up to the dominant male ideology and in the absence of any overt rebellion, nor is it reinforcing it. On the contrary, the translation successfully represents the gestures of defiance and subversion implicit in it.

The fictional narrative represents the tragic plight of the central character Nadira, the helpless and young Muslim girl. She is a sane and beautiful girl. She is illiterate but possesses a very sense of life and her worth towards herself and her family; parents and later husband and in-laws. She inherits nothing from her father of an egotistical and dictatorial person. In course of time, as she grows fourteen she is married with Rasid a suitable match. They prove to be a true content match. Their happiness sees a new horizon with an entry of a child in their life. Their life reaches happiness to a high index for couple of years after the birth of child. Then villain in Mohammad Khan rises to the occasion to spoil their life. His egotism and avarice of his daughter's beauty, he assumes, is viable even when she is married with a son. Besides he thinks his desire to be rich and affluent life is feasible only through Nadira. He brings back his daughter with her son to his home on the pretext of visiting their home which is located in the neighbouring village. And as per his conspiracy, she desists her from leaving for in-laws house and creates such

conditions that oblige her to seek divorce from her husband. Their separation is undertaken against Nadira and Rasid's will but it makes his job easy to become a rich person. In meantime before their divorce, Rashid arranges to have their child kidnapped in order to force Nadir to return to him. It breaks Nadir's heart but their love for them lessens not even in an inch. Then Muhammad Khan makes his attempts to realise his dream by remarrying a rich man of the village who in return assures him sufficient amount of money. He is wealthy but as old as her father with number of children in his house. She continues to defy her father from his intentions of her marriage with the old man to which Muhammad Khan has to acquiesce and to give up his intention or marrying with the man. In course of time, he suffers of age and feels ashamed at his daughter's anguish for her husband and son. The women in the house oblige him to realise of the misery of Nadira along with husband and son. So he is ready for the reunion of the separated couple. But this time, religion stands in their way. As per the religious code, Nadira can reunite with Rashid, only if she goes through the ritual of marriage with another man, sleeps with him and gets a divorce from him. It terrifies Nadira who refuses to this flashing marriage. She is then convinced by her mother in law and her own mother by realising her of desire to go back to her husband and child. She reluctantly consents the proposition. The marriage takes place, but the sight of the man with whom she is to spend one night as an ordeal so fills her heart with terror and despair that she goes and immerses herself in the river Chandragiri flowing by the village and it has been a witness through her childhood to the last breath. The very idea of spending the night brings aversion to her. At the

heart of the novel is the question Nadira asks herself silently, “*But what kind of law was this that the man who called himself ‘husband’ should pronounce talaaq three times from wherever he was and the marriage null and void!*” (p.75). It is a loaded question that attempts to deconstruct the concept of marriage. Nadira can neither be saved by the patriarchal order nor the religious scriptures as the pious system of humanity. Both of them witness a human life being ruined at no fault of hers. This works itself through the institutions of family, society and religion systematically.

Muhammad Khan’s brutal treatment of his child-wife on the first night is heart-rending and more so because the father and the *mauve* support Khan and not the scared child-wife. “Scolding and spanking her, Fatima’s father had carried her to Khan’s room himself and consoled him!”(p.5). Equally powerful is Nadira’s predicament that reflects the psychological trauma arising from the conflict at the center of which again there is the female body. Muhammad Khan who ruins Nadira’s marriage and wants her to marry a wealthy old husband the second time, stands for the masculine principle that negates the feminine totally.

Vananala Viswanatha, the translator, provides a fairly informative introduction locating the novel. She employs the modern techniques of translation to ‘represent’ the Muslim woman’s world and it may be observed how the translation becomes the agent of voicing subaltern consciousness. The translator explains in the introduction the change of the title to ‘Breaking Ties’: “The title could have been translated into English as “On the Banks of Chandragiri” to reflect its Kannada source. But since it sounded too literary to reflect the political

edge of the book and somewhat familiar....” (2001: xix). She goes on to say, “After a prolonged discussion on the implications of the title, we selected the more neutral and nuanced title *Breaking Ties.....*” (xxi). In a way it “lays the cards on the table right at the outset” as it were, representing the feminist project symbolically.

The narrative leads towards a reinterpretation of the religious codes which the patriarchal hegemony has used against women for its own convenience. The novel critiques the patriarchal order and argues for reform and justice for women. Resistance to patriarchal ideology is implicit in the question which points out absolute disregard for the woman as an equal partner in marriage or for her feelings.

It is important to note that the writers, translators and the translation editors of these novels are all women who seem to have joined hands for the common cause of equality. In both the novels “...patriarchy is a common hegemonic structure within which women live and struggle; the particular kinds of oppression women face differ depending on their location in caste, class, region and religion” (*Breaking Ties*, p.xvii). Translations act as powerful agents in the task of deconstructing the predominantly male cultural paradigms and reconstructing a female perspective and experience enabling the marginalized voices to find utterance. If *Phaniyamma* chronicles and questions the traditional Hindu codification and exposes the inhumanity of the social and religious rituals practiced against women, *Breaking Ties* similarly translates the religious codes against women and the harsh patriarchal attitudes of the Muslim community that all but stifle the female voices. By taking these texts to a wider public, the translators not only

underline the articulation of the implicit resistance but become participants in the creation of meaning.

Sara Aboobacker, in the preface to the 1995 edition of the novel, earnestly urges for an impartial study and reinterpretation of religious prescriptions. *Chandragirya Tiradalli* foregrounds the Muslim woman's burden of inequality in social and religious spheres. There are number of works offer similar custom based situations with certain restrictions on the authors as of Aboobacker is concerned has successfully presented an issue seeking positive and firm reinterpretation of the scriptures without hurting their intentions of socializing the society. For the scriptures, perhaps, allow reconsideration and reinterpretation of the texts but not the stringent followers. Their reaction may cause destabilise the entire society. for instance; Lalitambika Antarjanam who dares stand for the cause of the Tatri women, though she is terrorise by the thought of writing about the Tatri.

REFERENCE:

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