

**CONTRASTING IMAGE OF ROSHNI IN DINA MEHTA'S NOVEL
'AND SOME TAKE A LOVER'****PRIN DR. CHANDRAKANT R. MANDLIK**Shri Shiv Chhatrapati College,
Junnar (Pune)**ABSTRACT -**

The Protagonist, Roshni champions the freedom movement. She views use of 'Khadi' shows her love for nation. Roshni is representative of liberalism of Parsee women. Influenced by western life style Roshni is caught between western and Indian social structure. She fails in love affair with Sudhir and Rustom. Understanding sacrifice as a difficult task Roshni stops demands of more wants and hopes.

Key Words - Roshni, Freedom Movement, Liberalism, Love.**Introduction-**

The theme in the novels of Parsee novelists mainly moves around the partition between India and Pakistan, freedom of India and the reign of British in India. Faredoon Jungalwal is presented by Bapsi Sidhwa in the novel '*The crow Eaters*', who liked and had faith in the British Raj. He was against the Nationalist movement which was carried out to seek freedom from the clutches of the Britishers. Her novel '*Ice- Candy Man*' portrays the dilemma of the Parsee people whether to remain behind the "Swaraj Movement" or to continue feelings of loyalty to the British Policy in India as a support. The people belonging to the Parsee community held a meeting for debate on the current political affairs at the fire temple. They also expressed their views on what would be position of the Parsees after the departure of the Britishers from India. They feared the Hindus and the Muslims because they were in majority. Therefore they did not want partition between India and Pakistan and freedom to the country.

Bharucha wants the Parsees not to join agitation started by Mahatma Gandhi. His impression is that the movement the 'Home Rule' will be in the opposition of the Parsees and will stand up by the side of the Hindus and Muslims. Consequently, the Parsee community will be "mangled into chutney" (Mehta, 1992:60)

There are some causes behind the loyalty of the Parsee community to the British Raj. The first reason of their fear is that they will be ignored by the 'Home rule'. The second is the Britishers do not interfere the activities of their religion. The third cause for their belief in the British Raj was economic base. The Parsee people found themselves secured in the British reign. They were in minority as compare to the Hindus and Muslims. They did not want to hurt the British officers by joining the freedom movements. Col. Bharucha says, 'I hope no Lahore Parsees will be stupid enough to court trouble. I strongly advised all of you to stay at home and out of trouble' (Sidhwa, 1988: 37) The Britishers used to file cases in the court



against the people who joined agitation or the freedom movements. In order to save his community from the trouble of the court Col. Bharucha advised them to remain at home.

The writer, Bapsi Sidhwa attempts to show collective responsibility of the Parsee's towards the partition in the novel '*Ice Candy-Man*'. He has taken into consideration reaction of the man and woman in the Lahore. They desired to leave either for Bombay or London. To them Bombay was the safe place. Lastly, Parsees in great number took the decision not to leave Lahore.

The novelist reflects a change of attitude of the Parsees in Lahore. They are attracted to the freedom struggle. It is suggestive of psychological transformation of the mind. Dr. Mody urges them to join a task of freedom movement. He makes them to realize that the neighbors will believe the Parsees wanted British Raj. Dr. Mody Says, "Our neighbors will think we are betraying them and siding with the English (Sidhwa, 1988:37) Mr. Toddywala was the banker. According to him Parsees's moral support to the Indian community has a touch of practical thinking. He also believes that this will give strength to them to get power after Independence of the country. Bharucha and Lenny's father begin to blame the Britishers for bringing polio to India. It clearly suggests that the Parsees who were very much loyal to the Britishers began to lose faith in them.

A novel '*And some Take a Lover*' (1992) by Dina Mehta is a description about conflicting loyalty of the Parsees who belong to a middle class section. The novel also shows changing attitude of the Parsees towards the Britishers because of the Quit India movement. Roshni wadia is the protagonist of the novel '*And Some Take a Lover*'. She discusses the issue of starvation and deaths of poor people with the members of the family.

Rohinton Mistry, another Parsee novelist discusses incidents like India Pakistan war and Nagarwalla bank robbery in his novel '*Such a Long Journey*' and emergency in India in '*A fine Balance*' respectively.

Contradictory thoughts, conflicts regarding perfection, political views and debates, are the features of Parsee community. They are reflected in Dina Mehta's novel '*And Some Take a Lover*'. It shows disputed loyalty of a Parsee family who are involved in the 'Quit India Movement'. The political and personal conflicts and vigorous narrative style of the novel '*And some take Lover*' are suggestive. The novel is a careful search for the mind and soul as well as difficult to understand. Like Graham Green Dina Mehta deals with the themes like 'doubt and guilt, revolutionists and young idealists (Dodiya 2006:142) 'The Quit India Movement' helps to form all human relationships in Dina Mehta's novel and the politics is used as the important segment in the theme of the novel. A young girl, Roshni Wadia is the protagonist. She feels faithlessness in her love affair with Sudhir, her college friend. He is stern Gandhian who thinks that public duty is more valuable than the personal needs and desires. According to Roshni Wadia Gandhi's call to the young generation regarding eradication of untouchability will break up her love affair.

Roshni's aunt Gulestan reads a passage from a newspaper '*Hind Nama*' at the time of breakfast. It creates turning point in Roshni's love affair. Roshni waits for news of her lover Sudhir. But Roshni's tension is drawn. The news about Shudhir's marriage with a Harijan



girl Gauribai Mahar reaches to her. ‘Sudhir a Brahmin had performed his act on Gandhi’s behest, as a symbolic gesture to remove the last traces of untouchability,’ in law as well as in fact from Hindu society. (Mehta, 1992: 198) On this occasion Roshni thinks Sudhir’s Marriage to a Harijan girl is ‘betrayal and political compromise by her lover Sudhir. Sudhir’s marriage contributes Roshni to enhance contradictory views towards Gandhiji and his freedom movement. Roshni once says ‘what manner of man was this Gandhi, who could command such terrible obedience from his people. (Mehta, 1992: 200)

The Protagonist, Roshni in Dina Mehta’s novel ‘*And some take a Lover*’ ceaselessly champions the activity of freedom movement by action and not in words only. She puts on cloths of handmade ‘*khadi*’ as a means of protest. According to her ‘*khadi*’ symbolizes her love for nation and Indianness. She views it is a source of motivation to her in order to involve in the cause of freedom movement. Roshni hopes it can help her to impress her boyfriend Sudhir. Hence, She wears ‘*khadi*’ despite of her mother’s objections. One may underline contradictions between her personal and public images.

The Character of Roshni in ‘*And some Take a Lover*’ represents liberalism of Parsee women. It is due to introduction of the higher education to the Parsee women in the middle of the 19th century. Roshni rejects life which is decided by traditional Parsee attitudes. She does not like slogans of equality and the code of conduct for women which are based on traditional structure. Roshni is representative of a liberal education and development of the Parsee women. The voice of the new generation is presented by the novelist through the character of Roshni. Roshni raises some of the issues in her debate with the family regarding Mahatma Gandhi’s role in the freedom movement. Roshni’s cousin views Gandhi’s act of fasting as political blackmails’. Her aunt thinks Gandhiji as Pro-Japanese. Parsee paradox is represented by Roshni whose thoughts and views about politics are very strong. She lacks dedication and spirit of sacrifice for ‘the quiet unostentatious work of the ‘*Satyagrahi*’. (Mehta 1992:109) Roshni has western life style, habits and home patterns. She has become habitual of using shoes or slippers in the house. Meals or food are kept ready on the table with knife, fork and napkin. She was well acquainted with conflict for democracy, self rule and the underground during the college education. Liberal education enforced her to know double standards of the west. The western People only talk or debate on the social idealism but they do not bother about the needs. ‘The west only talked of social idealism, but turned a blind eye to our desperate needs’ (Mehta, 1992:189)

Roshni studied English literature and romantic poetry at Elphinstone College from which she learned lessons of ideal relationship. Being a woman of hybrid culture she is caught between the urban middle-class life of Bombay and Indian village life. Because of her love for Sudhir Roshni begins to realize that she could tolerate the hardship of village life. She is under the impression that her love affair would give meaningful shape to her life. She remembers the western ideal that ‘Love conquers all.’ (Dodiya, 2006: 145) Roshni felt that the sacrifice of relationship would forge Sudhir. But Sudhir’s explanation allows her to know her two levels of life. He Says, “Two levels midway between two worlds and that she did not belong to either”. (Mehta, 1992:190) Her thoughts about values of life, emotional attitudes and memories are influenced by urban environments.



In order to participate in Sudhir's day today life she says 'All I know is that I love you'. She knows it very well that she has to be obedient and follow rules of the villages. Roshni realizes that there is gap between the people and herself and she has no common language to bridge the gap. She has been trapped in the dilemma. Roshni wants to solve it. Therefore she feels a need of presenting community's identity and takes efforts to identify women of the Parsee community with other Indian communities. One may underline Roshni's image as 'a liberated woman'. Because of this image she can enhance union with Rustom, Parsee middle aged executive. She does not desire to break Rustom's marriage with Mithu. On rejecting the offer of marriage with him she leaves to England. When Roshni realizes impossibility of reconciliation between her and Sudhir she begins to find solace and comfort with conventional people and in attending parties at late night.

Conclusion -

Roshni is a Victorian woman who suffers from the tensions of adultery. She is unable to play the role of seductress for a long time. She is surprised why she could not cease her love with Rustom, a married man. Roshni's honest nature compels her to know difficulties in reconciling love. Roshni attempts to find relief for herself from the chain of wants. She desires to live life without hopes. At last Roshni comes to the conclusion that sacrifice is a difficult thing.

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