

“The Feminist Character of “Sakshi Tanwar” as “Sheel” With Special Reference to “Mai: A Mother’s Rage”

¹Twidly Bhattacharya

Research Scholar, RKDF University, Ranchi

²Dr. Anita Kumari

Associate Professor, Dept. of English, RKDF University, Ranchi

Abstract

Feminism is basically a movement worldwide with the ideologies that demand equal gender rights, especially in the term “Feminism” for the female gender. History tells us that a woman had been deprived of almost every right as a human that a man was always privileged with, say sexual, political, economic, personal, social rights. The aim of Feminism is simply to give all the genders in our society equal rights and opportunities. The aim of Feminism to provide relief to the female gender with gender inequalities they face on a daily basis. With Modernity, it is clearly evident that the awareness through different mediums about the rights of women had been helpful in improving the impoverished condition of women. This paper is an effort to make a thorough study of a character named Sheel with special reference to a web series named “Mai: A Mother’s Rage”. The character of Sheel shows the true meaning of a Feminist Character in an Indian Society. Throughout the series we come across with the changing role of Sheel as per the prevailing situation demanded her to be. The character of Sheel acted by Sakshi Tanwar is an extraordinary role of a wife, mother, worker, and friend. The hardships make delicate women as per the society beliefs way stronger and capable. Though most of the female gender are given a fixed role to play and are muted as per the norms of the society but Sheel, a new woman breaks all the walls that imprisoned her for being a woman. It is certain that women had not only been deprived of the equal rights but also from expressing their grief, fears or distress which we will study through this paper.

Keywords:- Changing roles, new women, Extraordinary character.

INTRODUCTION

The feminist character of Sheel that we focus on mainly shows the power of a woman in different dynamics. Our Indian drama has its own catch in literature and with modernity it is expanding and flying with full fledged wings and of course the Indian Drama has contributed a lot in the awareness of the feminist movement. Mai being one of them targets the complete law enforcement system and society which can be seen as an echo of Sridevi featuring in MOM and Denis Villeneuve's 2013 crime thriller were women deprived of every right make themselves stand out and recognize their power . This Indian drama is made by Atul Mongia and a entitled as 'A Mother's Rage'. This drama thriller follows a plot of middle class women whose daughter has been crashed in front of her eyes by a truck, but sooner Sheels finds out it to be a murder and not an accident. Naturally the mother is driven by deep grief, something hardens with her and she is now transfigured as vengeful. This drama well-casted the remarkable character of Sheel as mother and women with a strong iron will, who would conclude on nothing but just payback.

Living in the era of Modernism and day to day enveloping technology, drama plays a very vital role and leaves a broader understanding and picture about the message of the drama to our society. Atul Mongia has chosen a very beautiful way to explore the modern women features and explodes the propensity every women has but may not be aware of that as we as a society has failed and have never allowed them to bloom fully but always has confined her to walls of gender decided roles by us. We can't blame the male gender solely for this but female had also played an extensive part in degrading the female. the activities of our life cycle can only work smoothly when we balance the gender roles. This paper tries to illuminate the inner psychological corner of Indian women in prevailing in Indian society. The deeper issue and pressure that goes on which never heals the wounds but cuts deeper are the result of the inequalities of the male dominant society. I being a woman understands my capabilities and try to explore more of myself though I am aware of my rights and opportunities ,but at every point of my

journey at some phase I am kept mindful of the female role I am bound to follow by the society , family, friends. I can surely say there is some improvement in the condition of the feminism but we have a long way to go for which awareness and understanding is very much important. Sheel being an ordinary middle class women just like any of us, is just a reflect of ourselves which help has to go deeper in our inner most psychological space and make us stand in front of the question of our own capabilities of playing the role of a woman. Sheel is simple women moving on with the journey in search of new woman, from a soft hearted lady to remorseless women to punish the ones liable for the death of her innocent mute daughter.

Literature Review

We all know that we are living in a advanced technological era and movies and OTT content has been a very important part of literary adaption. Talking about feminism in the chosen Web series “Mai”, the character of Sheel shows the modern but cultural and bound to the rules of society but when bluffed shows the power of the women even if the society is standing against her.

Similarity we may find more works of feminism in movies or series, talking about the most popular ones like English Vinglish casting Sri Devi who constantly tries to protect her self-respect even after the family and society puts her down and insult her by each passing day.

The next powerful feminist character we may find is again Sri Devi casted in Mom, who was left helpless by the society takes action in her own hands and punishes every single man accused of raping her step daughter, though she was her step daughter but she shows traits a true motherly warmth and also the power of a wounded women.

Research Methodology

Primary - A questionnaire was done from ladies belonging to different backgrounds of the society and family as well asking them about how they feel as women in their house and also in their society, what things they have been deprived of and also of what they had been privileged and also of opportunities they were given.

Secondary - “Mai: A Mother’s Rage.” And other feminist movies and OTT content like MOM, English Vinglish.

About the drama Web Series “Mai: A Mother’s Rage.”

The Drama begins with main character Sheel Chaudhary , middle class mother handling all the household things and taking care of the family with all willingness and commitment as any usual women of our society does and is expected to do so, well female do follow these social norms but out of their love and concern for their family, this is the emotional part seen in almost every female. Along with being the perfect house maker, Sheel is also working as a nurse in an old age home named Gita Bhawan. Which makes the audience aware of the opportunity for pursuing education and then going head with job, though Sheel has always wanted to be a Doctor which was never fulfilled but she is completely supportive towards her mute daughter Supriya who is dedicated to full fill her mother’s dream, here we see a beautiful relationship of two ladies mother and daughter and womanhood which plays a very important part in the growth of women. The whole family of Sheel is preparing of their brother-in-laws son Archit’s birthday party but eventually when the plot unfolds, we find out that Archit is actually the son of Sheel. Sacrifice for the sake of the happiness of the close ones as we see here is very sensitive feature of a female. As the plot moves forward we see Sheel’s daughter very much in distress and when She is about to reveal the reason behind, is ruthlessly hit by a truck in front of the eyes of her mother. Post funeral rituals , Sheel witness a lot of clues which forced her to believe that the death was not an accident but a well planned murder. Which drives a rage of cyclone within her heart and she is now only determined to uncover the truth and find out the real criminals behind. This was the turning point in the life of Sheel. This event has completely changed Sheel from within.

Sheel is a very soft spoken, homely, efficient in work , honest character. As it is very natural for a mother who lost her daughter to be very disturbed and grief stricken but the moment she discovers that something is hidden behind the whole incident , something solidifies within her and she becomes maleficent. Although the truck driver who had hit her daughter is arrested and punished to death but after the clues of it being a murder ,when she tries to speak about it to her husband police and everyone else, who just helped her by a warning to sidestep from these complex matter being a woman as our Indian Society does not entertain her female spoken words ,it is then that Sheel decides to start her own investigation, a mother's vengeance of her daughter leading a path to a world of political scandals. Without being affected by the warnings of her family, the unsafe circumstances she is very much firm about her chosen journey which leads her to the first target i.e. the truck driver's wife and son. Proceeding with her investigation she finds out that the poor boy is admitted in a very expensive school which was out of their reach, with the help of a politician named Jawahar Vyas, son of Sheel's patient at the old age home. A simple woman unaware of the cruel world who had now taken charge of her life shows the strength of will a woman have when life demands her to be hard and not soft, well a woman can play both roles very well.

Moving forward in the plot we can see how well Sheel present mindfully and alertness plans her next step, she calls the politician Jawahar by a simple excuse of his mother's poor health. Sheel tries to interrogate Jawahar of Supriya's murder, to which Jawahar tried to attack her with a quick reflection she gave a sedative injection to him but Jawahar dies from a heart attack because of the injection leaving behind few last words that he tried to protect Supriya and is not the one to be blamed of her murder. Throwing a trap, Defending her own life, showing bravery and courage, does it happen sudden in a woman, no, it's just a woman is never allowed to understand her abilities and channelize them in the best direction.

Sheel is completely dumbfounded of killing a man though accidentally , but soon she gains her composure and looks for solutions to come out of the situation and she quickly decides to get rid of the body it is just then she collides with Prashant follower of Jawahar and his boyfriend Shankar. Surprisingly Prashant helps Sheel to get rid of the

body show kindness for her earlier favors on him. Sheel being alone in the world of bad men uses all her resources to get out of the worst but nothing can lead her to take a step back.

Now that Jawahar is dead, and it is quite apparent that he assisted Goyal in major medical scam and also in all the illogical activities and transactions. So to recover the saving account now Neelam quest for crypto key. Later it is revealed that Sheel has discarded the key and to lead for the information about Supriya's **assassination** she goes to the medical waste disposal with Prashant and Shankar and is intervened by Neelam's right hand 'Keshav' who tries to block them but Sheel in the next moment faints him and locks him in an unoccupied house to get information out of him to which initially he refuses but later at an under pressure situation he admits Neelam's involvement in Supriya's assassination since she was a witness of the medical scam. So, finally we see the power of Sheel's determination and she gets to the roots of Supriya's murder.

Contradictory with her investigation process , Sheel's family takes worse turn and his husband walks away from her and her brother and sister –in-laws approves their discontent because of her anonymous absence and behavior. Though Sheel's family are unhappy with her behavior Sheels is still standing straight on her motive and goals. Later she found out that Farooque the investigating officer of the case was Supriya's boyfriend and left her alone when his wife disagreed for the divorce and Supriya had to deal with Neelam's threats all alone. Things were going perfectly as per Sheel's plan but it took another turn with the arrival of Mohan the twin brother of Jawahar who is determined to kill the killer of his brother. Witnessing Mohan's determination Sheel plants the crypto key at Neelam's place and sets an trap for killing his brother. Sheel now shifts Keshav to a rouge place with the help of a friend Kalpana and tries to kill Neelam but that went all in drain. In the meanwhile Mohas has acquired the key setup mfrom Sheel and takes an oath to kill his brother's wife Neelam but Farouque arrested Neelam. Bluffing a policemen, criminals and everyone else around and smoothly doing her task beneath is skill of multitasking.

When Neelam is shifted in safe house Mohan, Prashant, Shankar tried to destroy her before she could speak but they fail and in the whole process Shankar is badly injured and is rescued by Sheel. Just before the record of Neelam Sheel exchanges the asthma pump and Neelam dies after inhaling it. The case here is shut down. Sheel feels peace at heart seeing the killer of her daughter die, Prashant is now the new partner of Goyals which was his only motive all of this time. They thanked Sheel for helping Shankar and Prashant through all the way long. While Sheel is returning home after all of this Keshav who has escaped from the police attacked her and Sheel killed him and asked for help for the disposal of dead body from Prashant. When She reaches to meet Prashant, he is found there with the wife of the truck driver having a conversation which Sheel overhears them and eventually to her shock it is found out that it was actually Prashant and not Neelam who was behind the death of Supriya.

FACTORS

There are certain factors which resulted in the way a woman may become or are.

1. **Cultural Factor** – We as an Indian society had failed a woman in a lot of ways say in her brought up and facilities, education, respect, protection or justice which is clearly identifies in this particular series.
2. **Social Factor** – The norms laid by the society of how a woman should be treated or how she needs to lead her life and going beyond will cause a consequence of even getting her killed.
3. **Political Factor** - The politics and politician and their corruption and mean motives of our Indian society can be a major reason in spoiling the life of many women in India.

Findings and Discussion

After going through several movies and OTT content whose prime motive is based on feminism and also conducting a female survey in my neighborhood, my findings stand still at the fact that most of the women of our Indian society are deprived of their basic needs or wants, equal opportunity to grow and lead a respectful life instead they get the opposite then expected though there is also a line of improvement if we compare with the past but it's still a long way ahead.

Things can be changed by making strict policies and women rights which should be a must to follow. Though, if we focus in the early stage of a child, if every girl/boy child gets the environment straight from the initial stage and treated equally and given equal opportunity will surely bring a change. Even at Schools these factors must be implemented at every stage and the coming up generation will surely show results, but for the current generation there must be awareness camps about feminist rights and counseling can add up a little more.

CONCLUSION

Sheel being the main protagonist exhibits a lot of feature which are sometimes seemed to be manly, ruthless, and tough but at the same time the caring, affectionate, soft hearted is also visible throughout the drama. A woman with all the feature , we can say A bad woman in a bad man world played her part with every last strength. Though Prashant and Shankar has initially misbehaved with Sheel throwing her clothes from her body but she had remained loyal to them until the time she finds out the real motive of Prashant. The hidden pain of losing a son without willingness and living with it every day and then losing her only daughter forever can always turn a innocent soft hearted women to a ruthless enemy. We see Sheel torturing Keshav to get information out of him at one time but at the other time we see her caring for his wounds which shows her emotional side. Throughout the whole plot we see Sheel using her knowledge to fullest, we see a confident lady, fearless woman who is very much aware of everything happening around her and is a quick reflector with a great presence of mind capable of doing anything to

reach her goals. Lastly we can conclude that the female gender have to take their own charge as it will not be given easily to them by our society.

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