

THE TRUE FACETS OF LIFE

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Abstract:

The majority of novels written by Indian women writers depict the psychological sufferings of the frustrated homemakers and working women. Pinki Virani's nonfiction, **Aruna's Story** is a breakthrough in Indian writing in English. No other literary piece in India has so adapted the real story as its plot as this manner does. It targets sharp barbs against rape understood and judged by the law, valued and sympathized by male society, security offered to women by the government and man, social stigma on a raped woman, familial relations and their treatment after rape, and finally it questions the absurdity of woman and her helplessness in Indian society. **Keywords:** Feminine consciousness, delineation, megalomaniac, amalgamation, perpetuate, chauvinists etc.,

Human experience for centuries has been synonymous with the masculine experience with result that the collective image of humanity has been one-sided and incomplete. Woman has not been defined as a subject in her own right but merely has an entity that concerns man either in his real life or his fantasy life.¹

Pinki Virani's nonfiction, **Aruna's Story** is a breakthrough in Indian writing in English. No other literary piece in India has so adapted the real story as its plot as this manner does. It targets sharp barbs against rape understood and judged by the law, valued and sympathized by male society, security offered to women by the government and man, social stigma on a raped woman, familial relations and their treatment after rape, and finally it questions the absurdity of woman and her helplessness in Indian society.

The stimulus for **Aruna's story** came from a real incident for the writer. Pinki Virani as an artist and explorer of personal life not only unmask these realities but also expounds the mental sufferings of their victims. It also shows the problems that exist among Indian women and their enforcement and inadequacies of legal provisions. The tragic and bottle neck like situation reminds the audience of Banavari Devi, Nina Sahni, Tasneem Sheikh Suhail, Delhi model Jessica Lal, Nirbhaya Pande, Sunanda Pushkar and acclaims Virani as a woman of relevance to the contemporary society, where the practices like – eve-teasing,

whistling at girls, bottom pinching are common phenomenon among Indian youngsters, apart from big incidents like rapes and murders.

Discrimination was the first fundamental in articulating a new position where women would speak for themselves, rejecting both the charitable view of social organizations and political parties as well as the instrumentalist view of development agencies; a position that would clearly align itself with the notions of freedom, dignity and equality. For many, including in the women's movement such an articulation was too radical and violated norms of propriety appropriate to the nationalist construct of the women.

The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring self-sacrificing women, towards conflicts, female characters searching for identity; no longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. A major preoccupation in recent Indian women's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is a central focus.

On the contrary, one may legitimately question the humanistic role of law and justice representing and justifying nurses' concerns and their basic rights. Women form half of the world population and have acquired political citizenship in most of the societies. Yet, their concerns and status have remained marginal within the social, economic and political structures. How has the law and justice responded to the women's question in a service sector where they act as primary definers of public interests? For instance, does the elite society perceive women as individually important and hence promote and encourage their participation in the public sphere? Does it allow women the right to communicate and be heard? What kind of ideas and ideologies are being perpetuated by the contemporary society in relation to women? Is it upholding women's contemporary positions properly? Or in the name of 'justice' is it gradually shattering its own visage and losing its real meaning? Needless to say that in the contemporary politically amalgamated, scientifically advanced, commercially oriented and gender based contexts, law and justice in India is on the verge of collapse in this regard.

There is a young, small-boned, fair woman crouched over the floor. She is face down, her forehead touching the floor, her hair tangled and covering her face. Her elbow and the back of her hands touch the floor; the rest of her body is not completely in contact with the ground till her knees, calves and ankles. She is on all fours. Her brown sari is bunched up near her waist along with her petticoat which has rolled up with it. Her legs are bare and slightly apart. There is blood everywhere, on her clothes, on her skin, on the ground. Her panties are soaking

with blood; a rivulet of it runs down her inner thigh to form a small pool on the floor beneath.²

Following the attack, nurses in Mumbai went on strike BMC KEM Hospital demanding improved conditions for Shanbaug and better working conditions for themselves. In the 1980s they made two attempts to move Shanbaug outside the KEM hospital to free the bed she has been occupying for seven years. No relatives are willing to take her home. Her brother and sister clearly refused to take her, "It is your responsibility to look after her because this happened to her during her duty-time in your hospital because of one of your other employ". The case touched off India's first nurse's strike demanding protection and proper treatment for Aruna, and better working conditions in Bombay's municipal hospitals. KEM nurses launched a protest, and the BMC abandoned the plan.

In this context, Pinki Virani's novel, the plight of Aruna certainly, is a powerful treatise against biased judgment, where reporting can be distorted by the personal attitudes of nurses even though they claim to be proud of their objective. The novel has raised pens and typewriter keys, both for his denouncement of service sector and her trendy stance of sympathizing with the plight of a woman, a theme she has been pursuing with some consistency through her non-fictional works. The novel is about real life tragedy which engages itself in adventurous investigations rather than supposed to be concerned with the truth by honestly fighting a valiant battle for Aruna's right to live with dignity.

The novel also discusses the prevailing biased syndrome attitude among the law-makers and how a megalomaniac belief, that dictates events can destroy the virtue of anonymity worship and fails to balance to bring forth the truth. The story not only belonged to the wave of professional women that broke into the staid and decorum gender justice of the patriarchal society but also discussed her unfortunately unheard voice of victims.

Some think she ought to live. Some think she is better off dead. Her family does not think of her anymore as a living, feeling, and human being. She came from South to seek her future. The man who loved her came from the West. The one who lusted came from the North. One unfortunate woman at the centre of them all. How many conflicts, yet, must find expression in her?

There is another side of the coin. The novel not only brings out the evils of existing Indian society with the public sphere of women but also exposes the hegemonic and sensuous behaviour of the illiterate and educated as well in the private sphere. Here Virani uses the novel well on the characteristic suffering of the Indian middle class women perpetrated by selfish, malicious, secretor and hypocritical male chauvinists. The violence, the oppression and the exploitation in the society that she witnessed made her restless. And law could not offer her a

viable solution for her mental agitation. But it does shape her career. With her exposure to non-fiction from childhood and journalistic background, Pinki Virani turned contemporary socio-political situations into explosive novel. The facts of **Aruna's story**, however, were only a take off point for the entire woman world.

The nurses are the respectable stereotypes of the profession. If nurses could be clearly designated as mothers, future wives, or objects of desire, then where did this leave the first women doctors? The problem was that they could not be accommodated into any of these useful stereotypes. They had independent incomes, and, once past the hospital resident stage, lived independent lives. There were some early efforts to find a role for them as objects of desire.

The stimulus for **Aruna's story** came from a real incident for the writer. Pinki Virani as an artist and explorer of personal life not only unmask these realities but also expounds the mental sufferings of their victims. The tragic story of ArunaShanbaugisa nurse at King Edward MemorialHospital, Parel, from Haldipur, Uttara Kannada, Karnataka in India. In 1973, was sexually assaulted by a ward boy, SohanlalBharthaWalmiki and has been in a vegetative state since the assault. On 24 January 2011, after she had been in this status for 37 years, the Supreme Court of India responded to the plea for euthanasia filed by Aruna's friend journalist Pinki Virani, by setting up a medical panel to examine her. The court turned down the mercy killing petition on 7 March 2011. However, in its landmark judgment, it allowed passive euthanasia in India.

As deeply moved by the incident, Pinki Virani perceives the realities of the human society without any preconceived notions, reacts to them as a sensitive human being and writes about them in her works as a responsible writer. She deals with gender inequality, social inequality, power games, self-alienation, false consciousness, sex and violence in her works. In **Aruna's Story**, she deals with the most important theme: human relationships- especially man-woman relationships. Although almost everyone would agree that men and women are different, how different they are, is still undefined for most of the people. A non-fiction book titled *Aruna's Story* has been written by Pinki Virani about the case in 1998, while Duttakumar Desai wrote the Marathi play, *Katha Arunachi* in 1994-95 and was performed at the college level, subsequently it was staged under director VinayApte in 2002. Anumol will play Aruna in a Malayalam film 'MaramPeyyumbol'. An Indian poet, Kumar Gautam, in his poetry blog has tried to express the thoughts of ArunaShanbaug in her words in his poem 'An open letter from ArunaShanbaug'.

ArunaShanbaug's spirit has kept her injured body conscious through a long, cold, pain-wracked night, all by itself. A full fifteen and a half hours of strong will. Now, just when she needs it the most, her flesh is turning weak, letting her down. Her God let her down yesterday.³

The rape is clearly external to her; it is a crime that has been committed against her. This distinction in language makes no difference to the legal prosecution against the perpetrator, but it signals a different message as to whose burden it is. We know that in most societies women carry the burden of rape. It is imposed on her by society as well as her near and dear ones, and she herself internalises a sense of shame, guilt and worthlessness. Similarly referring to sexual assault and rape, which means loss of chastity or honour of the woman, her family and the nation, not only detracts from rape as a crime but also fails to place the burden of dishonour on the perpetrator.

In our Vedas and Puranas woman is considered the incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi, Durga. She is more powerful and stronger than man. In the modern time, women are on the path of progress and have been exposing their mettle as well as spirit in every field and have developed her true identity in every walk of life. Although she is progressing globalization has led to economic changes that have raised more social and economical challenges for women, particularly for working class.

It is interpreted or studied as a 'legal plea' which demands for emancipation, equality and liberation of women and stresses the need for a social transformation of law, culture, and social patterns which release women's potential, where the legal curriculum has neglected issues of central concern of women like: rape, domestic violence, reproduction, unequal pay, sex determination and sexual harassment, as a result of Aruna's case study. Aruna is cast in the role of an unmarried young girl who is sexually exploited and robbed has to live dead to maintain the façade of honour and accused of rape on legal and ethical grounds.

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