

Treatment of Love in Pannalal Patel's novel '*Malela Jeev*' ('*Kanji and Jivi*' in English Translation)

-Dr. Divyeshkumar D. Bhatt.

:Abstract:

Love is the universal feeling, when it comes about a man and woman, its origin is fairly unpredictable. But when one finds her/himself immersed into this genuine feeling, one intensively feels attraction towards the other. This happens sometimes as a one-sided affair or in some other mutual one. Unlike in the western social set up, in the oriental caste based society, this love has to cross many barriers and pass the test of validity, and in absence of any of such acceptable norms, perhaps this type of love has to die either a premature death or to face the severe testimony of society in the form of social boycott or to remain satisfied by burying such feelings into the grounds of the inner hearts or to commit suicide. There are many such instances of such unrequited love, and the folk as well as artistic literary traditions remain replete with such stories. Whatever be the societal backgrounds, class and geo polity in the backdrop of the versions of the love stories, but the universally accepted pattern, may that be that of Diotima's ascend in the Western philosophy or that of physical to spiritual as it is labelled in the oriental versions, the emotion of love finds real exaltation in the course of time, and perhaps it is this transformation that remains the clutching point in these stories. As R. K. Narayan puts, "No one can explain the attraction between two human beings. It happens;" This paper tries to investigate the operation of the human mind in the same line and tries to bring out subtleties of human mind, attachments and pains incurred through it in Pannalal Patel's presentation of a tragic love story of Kanji and Jivi in his celebrated novel '*Malela Jeev*' which has been rendered into English under the title of *Kanji and Jeevi*.

Key Words: Love, Society, Caste, jealousy, social acceptance.

The ship of love getting wrecked on the rock shores of social acknowledgement and social norms is something important recurrent theme in the Indian Fictions. Right from the Bankim Chandra's *Rajmohan's Wife*, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Devdas*, R. K. Narayan's *The Bachelor of Arts* and the latest one *The One You Cannot Have* by Preeti Shenoy and the plethora of stories dealing with the same or similar storylines in almost all variety of vernacular literatures, one thing is sure of it; and that is the kind of Romantic love has to get the validation through several norms in Indian Society.

Love and stories woven around it have always fascinated man, and therefore almost all the classical and folk literatures abound in it.

Man loves a woman and the woman's reciprocation of it becomes a major story in the backdrop of social acceptance and validation. The lovers feel infatuated towards each other, or in some cases on one side, the person in love tries to gain the attention and thereby favours and heart is the commonest trait in the literature of love. In the western outlook, the same happens and the entire exercise results in the marriage. There may be some other hindrances on the grounds of honours and acceptability in terms of social class or the either of them is already in the wedlock as it happens in *Jane Eyre*. But, in the Indian concept, falling in love that is the pre marriage love might result in great social disturbance.

Kanji and Jivi both belong to the neighbouring villages. Besides this, they do not share any common grounds, which might result in attachment a primary precondition of love. In adulthood, positive interactions with our attachment figures often imbue us with a confidence that serves to inspire us, to raise the bar for complacency, and to attenuate our tendencies toward risk aversion (Feeney 2008; Collins et al. 2006; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016). But, what happens between the two is what is popularly known as 'Love at The first sight' and the research maintains that it too have the ground of attachment originated through the physical attraction. (Collingwood). The first encounter at the fair of Janmastami finds the genesis to the long trail of love, happiness and pain, sacrifices, insaneness and maturity, i.e. presenting the entire seven stages of love as prescribed in Sufism: Attraction, Infatuation, Love, Trust or Reverence, Worship, Madness and, Death. (Burn)

Kanji's carefree gait and a freelance offer of help at the marry-go-round fires Jivi's imagination. On the way back at home, Kanji catches her up and through his bold and talkative personality receives the invitation from her to go for tea and hookah (Tobacco Smoking), a common trait custom of

villages of Northern part Gujarat of Aravali mountain range. Kanji too has some churning in his heart for the girl. On their way back home, to Hira's comment:

“Even though she is the daughter of a barber, how mature she is!”

Kanji responds: “Caste doesn't matter, Hira! One's value is reflected in one's eyes.” (Patel and Patel)

Here, the novelist nicely sets the plot and giving a crucial clue to the readers of the grounds of troubles, suggests the point that both of them belong to different castes. Both Kanji and Jivi are aware of the caste endogamy; a prerequisite condition for marriage. Though Kanji in his bold spirits tries to mute Hira on this issue telling, ‘Caste doesn't matter, Hira!’ within his hearts of hearts, he himself wasn't sure how long he would be able to go in this matter. Even though Jivi had the dream of being abducted by Kanji, she too had the same feeling and “Won't you be ashamed of committing apostasy just for a woman?”(Patel and Patel). Here the ‘caste consciousness’ seems clearly looming in the minds of the both.

According to the triangular theory of love developed by psychologist Robert Sternberg, the three components of love are intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy encompasses feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness, and bondedness. Passion encompasses drives connected to both limerance and sexual attraction. Commitment encompasses, in the short term, the decision to remain with another, and in the long term, the shared achievements and plans made with that other person. (*The psychology behind love and romance*). Kanji and Jivi both share this intensive feeling. Kanji's kissing Jivi, and Jivi's acceptance of this advance in the farm of Jivi where nobody was around is the proof of their intimacy. But suddenly Kanji releases her and steps back towards the way outside echoes the conflict which is constantly going on within his mind regarding this relationship. He confesses to Hira, “Even I don't know what is in her, Hira! But something is there that has bewitched me. Had she belonged to our caste, I'd certainly have got married to her!”

Again, the conflict stands with open jaws before Kanji. For him, to marry Jivi was in a way an easy task. For Jivi he had the confidence that ‘she would even jump into an empty well, if he asked her to do so.’ Even there was a way of shifting to an unknown place where nobody would have any reference or idea about their inter-caste marriage. But again the collectivist society comes in the way. Kanji's concerns that marrying Jivi, a lower caste girl, will result in great problems for the next generation are not just imaginary or his alibis to step away from the relationship. This is an instance of a collectivist cultural trait where he knows his non-abiding to the social norm will prove adverse

not only to him but to his family and even to his next generation too. (Bhatt et al. 191-194). As Kanji clearly states: “One can abandon his caste, community, bhai, bhabhi, and friends if he wishes so, but then what about the children, born of inter-caste marriage, who will have to face the miseries and difficulties in future with regard to their engagement and marriage?”(Patel and Patel)

This concerns and the rigidity of the social circles leads Kanji to take another way, and as he was sure Jivi would be ready to do anything as per his instruction, he decides to get Jivi married to Dhuliya, the barber of his village. Kanji’s views behind this was very simple, at least Jivi would be before his eyes by this settlement. For Jivi there was no choice, as her step mother wanted to get disposed of her at any rate. Jive too had the consolation of being closer to the one whom she ardently loved and worshipped.

Both Kanji and Jivi had overlooked the dynamics of marriage in this settlement. Though they had no scheme of cuckolding Dhuliya in their mind even at the remotest possibility, the stories of Kanji and Jivi’s affection was not unknown to the village folk and for Dhuliya, his wife nurturing soft heart for another male was a serious injury to his male ego. Sexual jealousy arises in response to a perceived threat to a valued relationship with an individual, through perceptions or suspicions of a partner’s sexual infidelity. An evolutionary psychological perspective predicts that men are more sensitive to the sexual aspects of their partner’s infidelity than women. (Kato). As per this fact, Dhuliyo started ill-treating and even thrashing her under one or another alibis.

Kanji had to remain a helpless witness to this, as if he would come forward taking the side of Jivi, this would prove the accusations on Jivi. Even then Kanji tried to intervene through Hira, but the things were looked upon as the matter between the couple. The suffering of Jivi, and Jivi’s acceptance of all this pain as the consequence of her own ill fate, gradually creates a load on Kanji. He starts considering himself the sole responsible for the fate of Jivi. When kanji finds that Jivi would not be able to forget him, and if he remained around her eyes will surely reflect love for him resulting in increased thrashing form the hands of her husband Dhuliya out of mere jealousy and male pride, Kanji decided to shift to the city. Again, this proved a wrong decision. Jivi’s conditions worsened day by day. She felt orphaned in the village without Kanji being around.

When things got beyond her endurance, she prepared poisoned bread for herself. But accidentally her husband Dhuliyo ate them and died. This again created a social blemish on Jivi. Because for a lady her husband is the supreme god, even if she receives ill-treatments from him, and to kill him is a great sin. For Jivi, this becomes a hard shock and she turns insane.

Kanji has by now got settled in the town. When he receives the news of Jivi's insanity, he manages to take her to the fair of Shamlaji, and takes her with him to the town. Thus, the chronicler which started from the fair ends with the fair

On the whole, the romantic love story of Kanji and Jivi completes the process of of Diotima's ascend, and the steps of Love ascribed in the sufiem. It started from attraction, infatuation, love and gradually passing through the phases of pains of separation matures into catching the glimpses of beauty in soul itself. This maturity liberates Kanji from his earlier fear of social impressions and validations. This also proves what Indian scriptures hold as the true essence of love as the exercise of churning out the Good, "Perfecting love brings about this good: our freedom from external influence as people who love each other." (Rangnathan and Martin 371-381)

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Dr. Divyeshkumar D. Bhatt.
Department of English,
Faculty of Languages and Literature,
Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.
divyeshdbhatt@gmail.com