



SCARS AND STRENGTH: A JOURNEY OF SURVIVAL AND RESILIENCE IN ANURADHA ROY'S "SLEEPING ON JUPITER"

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ABSTRACT :

Being born as a woman, girl considers it as a curse not according to gender basis but to reason of leading a life in society. All men and even women consider a girl only as a sexual object to comment about her especially about her physical appearance and dressing. This feels really a strange thing for a girl to walk in her own native place where she born or any other places where she moves. She is only a sexual product carried from one place to other in eyes of others who comments on her. Women are not having equal freedom like men to wear dress by her choice without fear of abused or criticized by anyone. These crucial minded people start to comment at the first look without bothering about feel of a girl.

Dressing :

Dressings of women were considering one of the major topics for a society to comment on her. Being born as a girl she has some criteria for dressing fixed by society. "It is striking that in many novels the "liberated" woman distinguishes herself by an audacity in dressing that emphasizes her character as sex object, and thus of dependence:" (653, *second sex*). In *Sleeping on Jupiter*, Nomi dressing were seen in a strange manner by other characters like Latika, Gouri and Vidhya and they criticize her dressing and physical appearance.

The girl wore a turquoise T-shirt over which the words "Been There Done That Binned It"...Her pants were cut off at the calves and the fabric was held together with a dozen zips that traversed the legs....Vidhya was longing to say, "Have you seen how young girls dress these days? And then they complain if men bother them! (Roy, 20).

There were more demons in this world that always eagerly waits to watch even a bit move in dressing of a girl who thought it gives them pleasure. Man thinks that they have whole right with body of a female because he is a man. They think more superior and pride about their bad intention and abusing of women. Simon de Beauvoir says in her book *Second Sex*, "In her evening dress, the woman is disguised as woman for all the male's pleasure and the pride of her owner" (653). Suraj, the photographer who accompanies nomi had a same intention towards her. He watches dress movement of nomi in a vulgar way.

"Nomi's room, he found her clothes drying...His bottle- free hand went out towards them...A dark blue brassiere"(106). Suraj saw wet clothes of nomi drying and he intends to touch it and felt happy by touching that. Clothes of girls were used as symbol of sexual object. He looks nomi as a sexual object in their meeting at night while drinking. The scarf rounded in her neck and the cloth which covers her body looks unhappy for him. When wind blows, move of her dress which covers the attention of Suraj with her body.

"Didn't it feel good? Didn't it feel great?" Nomi was half out of chair with delight, sheet falling off, revealing the thinnest of noodle straps underneath, over a bare shoulder. It appeared and disappeared under her mass of hair. The shoulder was smooth and shiny, the brown of dark honey. If you dipped in a finger for taste it would be sweet (109).

Women don't have a freedom even to slight move of her dress. Man wants woman to be always conservative about her dress. . Even though these demons were visible in day to day life like public places, working places etc., Women can't do anything. Be calm and move in this way their life has to go on with adjustment. This is the great lesson society teach a girl to behave in this kind of situation.

"The level of daily, routine violence in India is horrifying and disturbing...It reflects our real lives here" (Says Roy in interview).Nomi saw a tattered and abandoned woman who wears grimy sari petticoat and too big man's shirt buttoned wrong asking for food .When Nomi went to give her food she was surrounded by two men who starts to misbehave with her. "...one of the men sidle closer to the girl. He was leering and saying something to her. She paid him no attention. As if by mistake, still grinning, he brushed an arm against her breasts (31)".

Having been born, and brought up in India, I grew up reading news about many a recurring theme — gender-based violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation of the young, and innocent by religious gurus (says Roy).

This violence against women starts from an innocent seven year old child who lost her parent in war and was adopted by guru in name of spiritualism and abused for his sexual desire. Female were seen only as an object of sex in the eyes of this sex demon. This sexual abuse against women starts from child to old lady which is one of major social issue which happens in real day to day life in society. Each and every minute a girl is underwent abuse by man in this world. According to Mackinnon makes women's sexuality into "something any man who wants to can buy and hold in his hands...she becomes something to be used by him, specifically, an object of his sexual use" (138).

Sexual assault against women is a continuing process nowadays. Dr. N. Velmani in her article *SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE SPIRITUAL SANCTUARY: A STUDY OF ANURADHA ROY'S SLEEPING ON JUPITER* expresses that "There's been a recent stormy call to action against sexual assault in India as rape cases have begun to make international headlines rather than being accepted as part of everyday female experience in the country. On the wake of this perpetration of violence against women and children, Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter* is timely released with extremely brave perspective. Roy in her "Acknowledgements" expresses,

There are countless horrific cases of child abuse and sexual violence in India. I have drawn on the legal and investigative history of many such incidents...violence, being the LSD of our times, human interest stories on the subject play out one evening high-pitched news capsules in television every day. (II)

Anuradha takes newspaper headline as her theme and created a characters in her novel, *Sleeping on Jupiter*. Nomi, who not even attend puberty and no knowledge about sexual parts of human being were used as an object of sex. In the place of spiritualism under the unexpected wall a girl underwent an abuse by man.

Nomi used for sexual desire of guru in ashram who shows himself as an icon of spiritualism and religion. A man who gives message to people was not having good intention in his heart. "Hold this, it is magic." It struck out from between his legs like a stump (92). A child who don't know what she is doing and what use in it. She not even knew about the sexual part of man who says it as "a cucumber", "...man is, like woman, a flesh, thus passivity, the plaything of his hormones and the species, uneasy prey to his desire" (second sex, 859). Man likes woman only her flesh which is useful for his hormonal desire. He thinks woman as a doll to play a sexual game who wants to act according to his wish.

Puberty :

Death of nomi's biological family was the first thing which makes a child who is longing for love. She unknowingly got in hands of bad temper of Guruji without knowing real face of demon. Without knowing she became victim of guru desire. "It was the only proof she had of what she had seen. Everyone said he was God...She stayed awake for most of the night with the fruit next to her pillow"(81). When she and Piku steal fruit from tree and got in hands of guru but rather punished guru takes care of her wound when she fell from tree and offered her fruit to eat. Nomi don't know the intention of that man and believed him and keep the fruit safely. In this manner some of man cheats girl child and female and using for their purpose.

Real face of man and bad intention were came to know Nomi when she attends her puberty. This is one of important stage for every girl child.

I remember the day my first period came, at the ashram. I had just turned twelve. My legs were sticky with blood and there was a damp red patch on my sheets. I was put away in the hut where every girl...everything hurt (172).

For every girl it is really a strange and painful. As she lost her mother she doesn't know how to handle this situation. Puberty is the strange thing and this stage makes a girl into a woman. For every woman have different experience and for nomi it is her curse.

What is happening in this troubled period is that the child's body is becoming a woman's body and being made flesh. Except in the case of glandular deficiency where the subject remains fixed in the infantile stage, the puberty crisis begins around the age of twelve or thirteen (second sex, 368).

She was decorated with new dress and took to Guruji. He raped a girl. She suffered both physically and mentally. After undergoing sexual abuse nomi feel the pain and shout to get help and there was pain between her legs.

He said again that he was God on earth and I would be purified by serving him...stuck greasy lips on my lips...My body felt as if it would tear into two when he forced my legs apart, then wider apart. He stuffed cloth into my mouth to stop me shouting for help...There was blood. A burning between my legs. The sense that my body was being split open (173-174).

Everyday this continues and daily night she sits under tap and washes her clothes, rubs her hair and body to wash it away: smells, touch and bad taste of his lips after Guru summoned her in his room. This occurs daily and she feels like her body was tarred into pieces by the torture of him. She was used only as an object of sex desire of that Guru in ashram.

Sexual abuse :

Daily night, she went to dinner after being used by him where foods were over and nothing to eat. She afraid daily when she will get freedom from these torture. Being born as a girl this is her fate. Piku who is companion of nomi was given punishment for not undergoing the sexual desire of Guru. She was tied to big bag of dung in her ankles drag along with her while moving and she eat outside with that smelly sack where flies buzzing around it.

Nomi who untied piku and got punishment of three days in kennel shed with six dogs and no food to eat. "The kennels have six dogs...growled at first...sniff me with flattened ears and snarling lips...they licked my face their tongued were rough and their breath was hot" (174). Male children in ashram were not suffered a lot like girl children. Female children were considering only as a sexual object to be used.

Man shows their physical strength to woman and considers it as their power and pride. Champa, the girl in ashram who runs from ashram were taken back to ashram by police who got her and she was beaten tremendously and thrashed by Bhola who shows his physical strength. She was dragged in by her plaits and locked up in a cottage...thorny rose branch which Bhola cuts and took with him into the cottage...banging and thumping sounds. Shouts, and then screams for help so loud...his white lungi was flecked red. The rose branch was bloodied and bent. (170-171)

Conclusion :

Sometimes peoples from newspaper and journalism comes to take interview with guru in the manner of spiritual god on earth but the real face of him will be known to children like nomi who underwent sexual abuse by him.“My picture was in the paper once...Guruji stood behind me...his fatherly smile...his flabby belly and his stump pushing against me between my shoulder-blades (174)”

Though woman escapes from that situation but scar remind in their heart. Nomi, who escaped from ashram along with Champa and she lives with her foster mother. She underwent nightmares about her previous suffering and cries at night without knowledge of her mother.

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