



## **Prem Rog : Screening the Social and Familial Plight of Widows**



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### **ABSTRACT**

*Women centric films in Indian cinema are limited but they do exist. The patriarchal society has its root's ingrained within the social network. The breeze of social change has even swept the pillars of art and the scripts are penned down, characters are crafted keeping in minds the changing social roles of women. There have been many innovative scriptwriter's and film producers who have given a unique importance to woman in Bollywood. The traditional Indian society limits woman's individual development and growth. The tears and protests would have no meaning as they remain unnoticed by the outside world. The main reason for publishing this paper is to describe the problems faced by the widows in the film Prem Rog at social and familial level.*

*Bharat Muni has said that when the characters manifest their emotions through actions and words then action and words along with them become the medium to revoke the same emotion in the hearts of the readers. A film not only entertains but also inspires the viewer. They make us cry and laugh. They make us think. The film depicts a realistic picture of the widows and the difficulties faced by them at that particular time. Widow in India is called as "Vidhwa" which originates from the Sanskrit*

*word "Vidh" which means "to be destitute". The film represents the various changes in the life of women when she became a widow. The loss of husband is more than any other loss which disrupts the lives of women. Indian women have hardly any autonomous existence because she is covered with many thick layers of prejudice, convention and ignorance.*

*With the changing time women issues have been more properly addressed in Indian films. Films portrayed unique concepts illuminating the role of women in the society. Directed by Raj Kapoor, the film has a brilliant character transition portrayal by Padmini Kolhapure and great supporting act by all the other actors involved. The film questions the feminist moral concerns through the detailed examination of social and familial relationships with the widow although the Government of India has implemented several schemes in India for a widow; the problem of widows is not lessened by society. The research is an effort to throw light on the difficulties faced by the widows.*

### **KEYWORDS**

*Widow, Woman Centric Films, Familial plight of widows, Social plight of widows, widows remarriage, Prem Rog.*

## **RESEARCH PAPER**

### **Introduction**

The greatness of any civilization could be judged by the regard and respect shown by its people to the women of that society. To fight for the dignity and true emancipation of women is the most difficult task especially because it involves values and attitudes that are deep rooted not only into the minds of men but also in the consciousness of women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy , Pdt. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Mahatma Gandhi gave a new direction to the woman liberation in India.

Cinema is the popular source of entertainment brings forth many issues and problems. Many films are made in respect what is going on in the society .Cinema is the most influential art form. There is no doubt if we consider cinema as a means of influential and social transformation. With the gradual change of time women issues have been more properly addressed in Indian films .The film *Prem Rog* shows the female lead in strong powerful roles. Cinema can change peoples opinions on specific issues without affecting more stable construct.

### **The Familial Plight of Widows**

*Prem Rog* is a 1982 movie directed by Raj Kapoor. This is the story of a woman named Manorama, who is a higher status Widow.

When the film starts we see Rama as noble, delicate, refined and beautiful girl. She is dependent upon other for all the necessities and comforts of life. She is served by every one with pleasure because she is the only niece of the rich and powerful Bade Thakur. Her heart is pure in which a lamp shines. But her Badi Maa thinks that she is a stubborn girl, sulking at every given excuse.

A very innocent, good chaste, clean and delicate Rama , who has never kept her feet on the ground get married with Kunwar Narendra, who has a greater family. There is a song in the film in which Rama expresses that she will become stranger and she have no one of her own She is leaving her childhood behind in her mother's country Yard.

Time acts as a catalytic agent in her life. Kunwar Narendra Pratap Singh dies three days after the marriage in a road accident and she becomes a widow. Manorama goes through a great crisis with her husband's death and no one could be strong enough to protect her to defend and save

her in moments of crisis. She struggles against the captivity of marriage like a bird in a net. She comes to realize the tremendous transformation brought about by the time when at her own home. She is being prepared to have her head shaved by her widow Bhuva.

Rama who was the girl of modest ambitions now tried to build up her life with the help of Raj Rani her sister in law but she failed.

Now Rama seems to have lost her identity in marriage. She assumes a new identity with her widowhood. At her own paternal house she feels, she is unwanted thing which is kept in a corner. She fails to get any response from anyone around her. Bitterly lonely she develops signs of nausea with illness both mental and physical. The contrast between past and present time is crucial for Rama. Now Rama is leading a life of frigidity. Every thing is happening according to custom. She wore a white Saree, kept in a separate room, put a lock on her lips, don't eat after sun set . She cooks and keeps her own dinner before going to the temple. She lives with her own family but no one enter in her room. The simple food is a proper food for widows because it keeps the mind calm and doesn't get evil thoughts. Rama has learnt to put up with every thing.

Later Rama discovers her tender sensibility and her feminine identity in her adolescent infatuation with her friend Devdhar. Devdhar tried to rebuild Manorama's life and bring a smile on her face. For Rama he faced the old age traditions and custom of Thakur family and their wrath.

Lastly Manorama confessed her feelings to her mother. As the situation of women is affected by the degree of their autonomy or capacity to make decisions both inside and outside their own households, Manorama's mother is in dilemma, she wanted to help her daughter but she doesn't have enough autonomy or capacity to make decision.

Myth forms a large part of human Psyche. They cover over minds to such an extent that we are unable to distinguish the reality of what we perceive and what we learn of ourselves through them."Woman" says Simone de Beauvoir have no virile myths in which their projects are reflected. They still dream through the dreams of men. The ultimate development of women status is not in the hands of men but is in the realization of women only.

Finally Manorama and Devdhar united after a strong opposition from Manorama family. The film ends by giving a message of social change.

## **The Social plight of widows**

Woman is recognized as a person only when she is with her husband. She becomes Saubhagyavati a fortunate woman. Shashi Deshpande Say's " Women are always expected to be as pure as Sita , as loyal as Draupadi , as beautiful as Laxmi ,as bountiful a provider as Annapurna , as dogged in devotion as Savitri , as strong as Durga . She is controlled by man throughout her life. In childhood she must depend on her father after marriage on her husband and in old age on her sons. But if she is a widow she must depend on herself under the circumstances of hunger, poverty, humiliation. When she becomes a widow she is no more a daughter or daughter-in-law or an individual.

In the film there is story of poor widowed daughter of Mehato. In India poor parents do not aspire for a female child for two selfish reasons firstly because of the fabulous dowry to be paid on the daughter's marriage. Parents consider a daughter as "financial liability "and secondly because the daughter has to leave the parents house after marriage, she is no longer considered useful as an earning member of the family.

These physically and psychologically harmful customs are deeply rooted in the tradition and culture of society. The Bade Thakur Shammi Kapoor in the film announces the remarriage of the poor window girl without any hesitation. He breaks all the customs and traditions but when the time comes to take decision for Manorama, he has no words left with him. He began to think of his upper class and cast.

Indian constitution has provided all the rights to the woman equal to men. The education of a girl is the education of family continuing its impact on the future generations. Every married woman is made to believe that even if the husband is drunkard or a womanizer, he should be respected as husband. The husband who wears no symbols to reveal his married status escapes from the death of his wife. The widower can remarry twice or thrice or even at his death bed.

An Indian woman who survives to old age is therefore almost certain to become a widow. Their condition is also very worse because amongst them 88% widows remain in their deceased husbands village, some are allowed to stay in the same house and others are either abandoned often by their own sons to have claim on their father's property or sent back to their parents house. Even today widows are under the immense psychological and social pressure. They are accursed of being responsible for their husband's death. There was no place for her and was viewed as a threat to society.

## **Conclusion**

An injury to one is the concern of all. After marriage the bride moves in with her husband's family. A bride is a stranger in a strange place. They are controlled by the older females in the households and their behavior reflects on the honor of their husbands. The primary duty of a newly married young woman is only to improve her position in the house and to bear sons. Therefore she may be more of a slave in the factory than she is in the narrow confines of home, she has come up higher. Women have to be treated as equal partners in decision making and implementation rather than as beneficiaries. Woman with wild, deep nature possess warmth, strength, sharpness, innocence and self respect who awakens her responsibility as an individual. Woman is a creator of life upon this earth, that womanhood and motherhood should be respected deeply and sincerely.

Now a days widows are allowed to remarry but because of their children or because a man agreeing to marry a widow, she is generally impoverished. The new woman has a very fair realizing sense of this great social truth and therefore she may be more of a slave in the factory than she was in the narrow confines of home.

Talking about women, Virginia Woolf says;

Imaginatively she is of the highest importance, Practically she is completely insignificant..... Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could hardly spell and was the property of her husband.

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