

**THE STORY OF A BELEAGUERED WOMAN:
A STUDY OF K. V. RAGHUPATHI'S *A TALE OF RESISTANCE***

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Abstract:

K. V. Raghupathi is one of the accomplished contemporary Indian English novelists. K.V. Raghupathi is also a known poet and short story writer. He has authored ten poetry collections, two novels, three short story collections, seven critical books including two books on yoga. A Tale of Resistance is one of the short stories from The Untouchable Piglet (2016), an anthology of short stories by K. V. Raghupathi, which highlights the pain and agony of a woman who faced the wrath and turbulence from the indifferent society. The short story depicts the hardships which are imposed on a woman because she is considered as a second sex in our society. Through this story A Story of Resistance, the writer wants to bring to our knowledge that women are not safe, and they are considered as a means of commodity if they are staying alone.

Key Words: *Short story, resistance, turbulence, agony of woman.*

K. V. Raghupathi tale *A Tale of Resistance* is about Ankush alias Anitha, a woman in the disguise of man attire who works at a roadside dhaba to earn her livelihood. The tragedy of her life is that she has to hide her true self (womanhood) to avoid the injustices that could be imposed on her because she lives alone. Her process of not divulging her identity would have remained intact, but an university employee's random questions about her made her reveal the true self. She failed to keep the secret intact about herself because of her voice which marks the essence of a woman. At first, she got perturbed when the employee asked her a question related to her sex. He asks: "Are you a man or a woman" (67)? This question made her very uncomfortable. It pierced her like an arrow and jolted her from inside. Out of immense pain she replied: "Why do you want to know if I am a man or a woman? I am a man. Don't you see" (67). She replied in an assailing tone which did not assure the university employee. Ankush alias Anitha was not able to escape from the constant probing of the university employee.

The further questions from the university employee marred the confidence of Anitha. He asked: "But you have a female voice." "And you don't have a moustache like we men have" (67)?

By asking these types of question one can directly attack the integrity of an individual. One can start doubting the existence of oneself. The doubt might creep into one's mind that is it so important to have distinguished sex for the survival in the society. From time immemorial and the recent developments suggest that it is important to have distinguished sex for the survival in this society. Otherwise, we have observed in the case of eunuchs that they had to fight for their existence in this society. And for Anitha it is not only about the issue of existence instead it has become a tool for her survival. The constant problems forced her to dress like a man. She was trying to make her conscious self-understand that it is a better way for her survival.

Ankush alias Anitha finally revealed her true identity to the man.

“Yes, I have been dressed like a man for more than two decades, and my original name is Anitha. I am a woman.” (68)

And, she revealed the reasons as well which led her to behave in this manner.

“I began dressing as a man as a practical matter to escape from torment and restrictions in the society and earn to support myself.” (68)

It was the same pathetic story about a woman who is subjected to as a means of commodity at the hands of society. Every woman is vulnerable to these kinds of audacities. We speak and write highly of our nation and society stating that we worship women or one should do the same but the truth is different. Women like Anitha succumb to these audacities, and the consequences are very harsh. They take the extreme step or keep on moving from one place to another like a nomad who is not given a true identity in a society.

It is a bane for our society that still women are sexually exploited, raped and are not given the due respect which they deserve as an individual. Women feel that they are not free instead they are treated like a bondage laborer whose duty is to satisfy her master. Women are not safe in their life. Anitha's self-revelation will validate the mentioned point. She says: “...I was sexually exploited by this caretaker...” (69). Although, we are living in a modern world but our mindset has not changed regarding the certain issues; this prompted Anitha to wear a man's attire so that she can lead her life in a good way.

“I was young. I feared I would be sexually exploited by men seeing my loneliness. With few options, I made the bold decision to seek work as man for two reasons, one to escape from this torment and two from this lustful world... If I hadn't, men would not have left me work and exploited me. I have no plans to dress like a woman again.” (69) To the dismay of the writer, after that introspection Ankush alias Anitha was never seen after that again leaving us to ponder why she did that.

Even after the Independence and in the era of civilization both culturally and technologically, why is it mandatory for a woman to be dependent on a man? Why can't they be independent and live alone and as per their wishes? But, if they try to do either of those, they are no longer safe in the society. The indifferent nature of the society can shatter the life of a woman as in the case of Anitha. Is it a bane to be a woman in this society?

Thus, K V Raghupathi's short story *A Tale of Resistance* tries to exemplify the sorry state of our society which is not able to provide enough security to women and even to those women like Anitha with a self-acclaimed sustenance.

References:

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