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## The Meaning Of Women Chastity In Christianity

The traditional and orthodox woman will not accept the losing of virginity before marriage because it defeats the very purpose of marital proceedings. It is considered to be one of the essentials for the sanctum of marriage. Female chastity is highly valued in India but pre-marital promiscuity is not connected to morality in the west. In the name of modernity or New Woman, the age-old thinking about chastity cannot be altered. Generally, the chastity of a woman is linked to the character of a woman. It is inconsonance with a proverb that if a character is lost everything is lost. Therefore virginity should be preserved till she marries. The society never respects the characterless woman in society.

Virmati is under tremendous pressure from her mother to marry Inderjit. She makes an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide but is rescued by the servants of her grandfather. To escape her marriage with Inderjit, Virmati says to her parents that "I don't want to marry" and "I want to study" (DD 59). This is a bold and courageous step taken by Virmati against her parents and the rigid patriarchal norms of the society and also to hide her secret relationship with Harish. First, she asserts her individuality, freedom of thought and she boldly expresses her unquenchable desire for education and thereby she becomes a New Woman. The forbidding family situation draws Virmati closer to Harish. The love affair with Harish, changes her behaviour and attitude and it is also the reason to become a disobedient girl. She defies her parents and she tries to establish her own identity. The rival attitude and the conflicting view develops in Virmati are due to the newfound love. Kalpana Rajput in her article quotes Prasanna Sree comments, "Virmati struggles between the physical and moral the head and heart. Finally she gives way to her heart and body" (154)

Virmati wants to escape from the patriarchy that denies her freedom and the choice of choosing her life partner. She takes education as a tool to rebel against her parents and succeeds in her venture. It is human nature to fall in love with anybody in her age group but Virmati wrongly accepts the love of a married person Harish. She loses her rational thinking and fails to distinguish between lust and love and this pushes her to the path of eternal shame and insecurity and she becomes prey to the lustful desire of Harish. She has joined college after a great protest from her family to satisfy her desire for education. Now she realizes that the very purpose is deviated towards making love with the professor. She converts the place of study into a place of lovemaking and satisfying her desires. She laments herself as "Her studies were her passport to independence, not just her passport to sleeping with the professor" (DD 152). Kavita in her article quotes Grima views "Man has subjugated woman to his will used her as a means to promote his gratification, to minister his sensual pleasure, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort but he never desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to fill. He has done all he could do to debase and enslave her mind" (149)

It is quite natural for a woman to trust a man whom she believes and loves. Virmati is not an exception but she fails to understand the motive behind his seductive words. Due to the seductive promise of professor Virmati is trapped by her own sensuality "I cannot, cannot live without you" (DD 89). Professor considers or uses Virmati as a sexual object to satisfy his sexual urge. He is selfish, lacks wisdom, and courage inconsonance with his education and qualification. Devika comments, "This man of seemingly sublime and sober nature in verity runs

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out to be sycophant who spoils the life of Virmati to satisfy his thirst for keeping the women in his awe" (234).

Virmati goes to Lahore to widen her horizon of wisdom to satisfy her unquenchable desire for education but she involves in the useless love affair and unwed pregnancy. She goes beyond the moral code for a woman and she crosses the boundary of limitation of morality. As a result of her intimacy with Harish, she becomes pregnant. Premarital pregnancy is not an incident welcomed by society. This will spoil the woman's image in the public and further contemporary experience reveals that such a woman will lack social acceptance and they will be subjected to cruelty. Therefore Virmati is afraid of her unwed pregnancy. In Drabble's novel *The Millstone* the woman protagonist, Rosamund did not embrace in a similar situation. She boldly begot the child without shame or guilt. Mitti Pande observes, "Even in the European world, unmarried and seduced mothers are supposed to be helpless creatures because they lack social recognition" (100). According to Indian tradition premarital affair is not accepted by the society. It not only cast a stigma on the individual but also the parents. Unwed pregnancy is more severe than the premarital affair. The prospects of her married life will be affected adversely. Even in western countries, society does not recognise unwed pregnancies.

She knows that society will not appreciate her to have a child born through unwed pregnancy. It will cast a stigma on her character. Her family reputation will be spoiled. She misuses her freedom and her identity is at stake. Virmati's roommate Swarnalata helps Virmati to terminate her unwed pregnancy. Harish put Virmati in the midst of a whirlpool of complexities. He never helps her nor consoles her in this difficult situation. In this crucial time, he ought to have been with her to support her morally but he shuns away from these responsibilities. He does not even sympathise her and he is such an insensitive selfish man. Virmati bears the pain silently without anyone knowing. "Her body gave through knives and abortion, what could happen to her now that she could not bear?" (DD 175). This incident gives Virmati enormous will power and she is determined to put an end to her relationship with Harish. She looks forward to a meaningful life with the determination to begin a new chapter and therefore she burnt all his love letters. The loss of virginity constantly pricks her conscious but she overcomes her guilt and says it was "an outmoded morality" (DD 125). She justifies her thoughts. Her resolution does not last long. Again she resumes her relationship with Harish even more intimately. She cannot resist him. Shaikh states, "On one hand she is very strong and has strong will power and can resist all kinds of social and family pressures. On the other hand she is very weak because she just cannot kick the professor out of her life" (342).

After completing her B.T Course at RBSL College, on the recommendation of her grandfather, she gets a job in Nathan as Principal. The happiest period of Virmati's life is only when she is in Nathan. She gets the freedom to decide on her terms on any matter. She asserts her selfhood, tastes the freedom of wine and individuality. So far in her life journey, Virmati has no separate place for her living. But in Nathan for the first time in her life, she has a separate place for living. Therefore her ambition and aim are fulfilled totally. She achieves her desirous life in establishing the freedom of her own, independency and quest for identity. In the microstate, she has no friends or relatives nearby. Here she tastes the freedom of wine. Since Virmati is already educated she becomes self-reliant. Above all, she is empowered and she attains the exemplary level of female independence. Virmati lives happily and peacefully without any preoccupation in her mind. The bud of the new woman is bloomed in the life of Virmati for the first time. R.S.Pathak views "that her quest for identity is a spiritual odyssey of modern man who has lost his social and spiritual and who is anxious to seek his roots." (52).

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The situation does not last for a long period. It is short-lived. The destiny come through the image of Harish. She cannot resist or stop Harish coming over to Nathan. Harish haunts her for his physical urge more frequently during the night and he stays with her in Nathan. This news spread like a wildfire. Hence Virmati loses her job. She has no regret over the loss of a job. She gives importance to life more than the job. Every woman considers that chastity is more important and they do not want to lose it before their marriage but Virmati loses it to Harish. Since Virmati is brought up traditionally her conscious pricks constantly. Therefore she does not want to marry anybody else other than Harish. Virmati says, "Her body was marked by him, she could never look elsewhere, never entertain another choice" (DD 177). Undoubtedly Harish pollutes Virmati's body without any hesitation but he is extremely careful to protect himself from social condemnation. He avoids marrying her despite her continuous insistence to marry her. Virmati is aware of her position and her clandestine activities with Harish. Shaikh observes, "Virmati's emotional dependence on professor constantly evades the question of marriage stop her from doing anything that he disapproves" (341).

She decides to go to Shanthi Niketan for higher studies. On the way to Shanthi Niketan, the train stops at Delhi. The destiny works against her. Unfortunately, she meets Harish's friend in Delhi who knows her intimacy with Harish. He arranges for their secret marriage. It is the second faltering step towards ruin in her life. This secret marriage brings nothing but everlasting sorrow to her. The consequence of this secret wedding is dreadful and beyond one's imagination. The wedding with the professor is very misfortunate to Virmati. Virmati fails to understand the texture of the relationship between them. The act of loving satiates Harish ego only and she does not dare to face her family. Beauvoir narrates the real state of women in marriage,

It is the duplicity of the husband and that dooms the wife to a misfortune of which he complaints latter that he is himself the victim. Just as he wants her to be at once warm and cool in bed, he requires her to be wholly his yet no burden he wishes her to establish him in a fixed place on earth and to leave him free to assume the monotonous daily round and not to bore him, to be always at hand and never importunate he wants to have her all to himself and not to belong to her to live as one of the couples and to remain alone. Thus she is betrayed from the day he marries her. (497).