

## Ek Zindagi Meri, Sau Khwahishan: Review on the Impact of Parenting and Development on the Character of 'Tarika' in the Film *Angrezi Medium*

Samarjeet Yadav\* & Shubham Kumar Pati\*\*

\*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mahatma Gandhi Anarrashtriya Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha

\*\* M.Ed Scholar, Department of Education, Mahatma Gandhi Anarrashtriya Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha

"Parent: noun [C] UK /'pe:r(ə)nt/: A strange creature with the profound ability to love its offspring irrationally."

With this post-disclaimer note, the film symbolically introduces the child character of Champak, the father of Tarika Bansal, who is confused about taking the basic decisions of life; even where to stand while batting, what should be the haircut style or what he will be in future. Set in Udaipur, the film starts with the conflict between the characters Champak and his brother, Ghasiteram Bansal, for the ownership of the brand 'Ghasiteram'. The mother died just after she delivered Tarika. The plot travels beyond the function of parenthood by Champak, who endeavors to achieve the dreams of his daughter. The father-daughter relationship faces some real-life circumstances, conflicts, emotions and obstacles throughout the story. Tarika has the ambition to study in foreign, and her father, Champak, who is a businessman by occupation, attempts to convince her to stay in India by projecting some possibilities in the field of business life. The plot revolves around the sharing of decisions to restrain the relationship between a middle-class father and a daughter without a mother. Another hand, the film also portrays the character of Naina Kohli, an officer in London, who later meets Champak. Naina's relationship with her mother was not healthy. With this portrayal of upbringing and to understand the parenthood played by Irrfan Khan as the character of Champak, following are the several remarkable collectives to understand the concept in a far better manner;

**Father as a mother:** There are two ways to outline the character of Champak; first as a husband without a wife and second, a parent without a mother. To complete the role of parent, Champak puts in a great deal of effort in tasks traditionally undertaken by the mother. When Tarika was born, he displays his happiness and refuses his father's consolations over having a daughter. Rather he says "I always wanted a daughter." He combs the hair of his girl and

takes her out shopping basically bonding with her through daily tasks that are usually undertaken by the mother. But the film does not delve mention into the challenges of motherhood. Though, the character of Champak reflects in a style which breaks the conventional gender roles.

**Father as a Friend:** To move abroad, Tarika starts to acquire the behavior and lifestyle of a foreigner to accommodate herself outside the atmosphere of India. She orders drinks and mixes that included rum and other alcoholic products because according to her, she is "cultivating the habits" of a young foreigner; "When my friends in London offer the vodka shots, India's reputation will be at stake." Her father takes it casually when he finds Tarika drunk and explains to her the limitation of taking alcohol. Further, Tarika offers her friend, who is a boy, to help with her in the study. Champak (Father) coyly comes up with strategies to keep a watch over his daughter and her friend while they are studying together at home. Finally, Tarika assures her father that her friend is only assisting with her lessons and it is common to allow a boy-friend inside the house, Champak accepts the choice. In the conventional context, what could we expect from a father when her daughter invites any male friend into the home? A pessimistic welcome. By accepting the situation, Champak here sets an ideal character of a father as a friend, who shares the inputs in Tarika's secrets which generally a youth share with his/her friends only.

**Father as a Father:** Since, it is already said that the roles of parents should not be gender-biased, though; this paper classifies the roles of the father as a mother, a father and jointly as a parent at times to understand the practical and traditional picture of parenting in India which this film also illustrates. Champak's satires when he finds Tarika with books or reading stuff. He always encourages Tarika to join the family business instead of moving towards further studies. Her father always follows her orders and

wishes, so she never feels lonely. But at times it seems as if he is keeping surveillance on her, as a typical Indian father does.

**Study in Foreign:** This is the prominent theme of the entire film. Since childhood, Tarika had wished "Papa, when we'll go to see the Eiffel Tower; when we'll go to meet the Queen (of England); when we'll go to Hollywood?" But to Champak, "It is her ultimate goal to go foreign but it is beyond me." This film attracts the audience to youth who have dreams and aspirations to travel and study in a foreign country. Growing up, Champak always convinces her "We'll go abroad...when you grow up..." but when she grows up with the determination and grit to travel abroad it leaves Champak confused with her obsession because he always thought she would outgrow the dream of wanting to go abroad as she grows up. "Tarika finds that it would be better to get her enrolled in a university in a foreign country as that would enable her to have better chance to settle there after her course. Champak continuously declines her wishes ultimately Tarika runs away from home against her father's wishes to study in a foreign University. But she finds that the course fees and expenditures to be very high. It is one of the contemporary challenges in front of foreign students staying in abroad if they have no appropriate fellowship or sponsorship and that they must find work to supplement their expenses. Similarly, when Tarika discloses that she worked in a store to earn money for her university fees, Champak is unable to fathom that why would his daughter need to work when he is alive!

**Democratic Values:** The film constructs the dimension of a political strategy in the family. It must be noted here that Tarika does not want her friends to know about her family circumstances. There can be two major reasons behind this attitude; the first is the economic situation of the family and the second is modern versus traditional argument that pans out between Champak and Tarika. Despite all this, Champak as a father realizes that his daughter is embarrassed among her friends or classmates because of her family's financial status and appearance, despite belonging to a middle-class family. But Champak does not interfere with his daughter's determination; rather he respects her opinions and behavior. From a personal point of view, as a father, Champak wanted Tarika to take

over the family business, but from a democratic point of view, he supports his daughter by compromising his opinions. In this context, the character of Champak proceeds through a conflict on a cognitive level between his determination and his anxiety about social stances on his daughter's social appearance and behavior. The way Champak breaks gender stereotypes, traditional practices and beliefs in raising Tarika and how her character transforms is noteworthy.

**Culture and Society:** On one hand, the character of Tarika develops in a middle-class business background where the family observes a usual Indian standard of living. However she is eager to assimilate to the lifestyle of London and she tries to do so by living up to certain appearances. Tarika feels disrepute to publicly call Champak as her father amongst her friends'. But in the end, when Champak sold the ownership of their only shop, their sole source of income for the education of Tarika; she reciprocates her views and ideas and reconstructs her preferences of even getting an education in India. At this time, one does begin to wonder if she did compromise with her ideas of a foreign lifestyle. If one looks closer, one begins to realize that she had carefully established certain system of traits & tendencies of living inside a home and outside the home. But it is Champak, who never commented on her appearance. Here, a typical middle class grown Champak accommodates the modern choices made by Tarika. For example - Once, in London, when Champak unexpectedly enters Tarika's room, she replied, "You (father) should knock before entering." But Champak on the other gently greets Tarika; "Whenever you want to visit India, my doors are always opened for you." Though entering anyone's space without prior notification may regard as manner less or unanticipated behavior, despite this, the film wave-off the formalities inside the relationship between a father and a daughter.

**Traditional and Modern:** When Naina Kohli met an accident in London, Champak comments on the relationship between Naina and her mother; "The nurse was saying she's had a heart attack before, and you let her live alone?" Naina replies, "I've been on my own since I was 18. I didn't want to be a burden on her." This made Champak emotional and he generalized his sentiments on the modern lifestyle or

adolescents' behaviors; by saying "Independence at 18 is fine but come back when your parents need you. What sort of a deal is this where you use your parents till you're 18 and then you away in the name of freedom. The only expectation parents have is that their kids are around to hold their hand when they need them." Champak's views here stretch beyond the concept of modernity from appearance to behavior.

**Economic Aspects:** The central theme of the film is the challenges of a father to fulfill the aspirations of a daughter in the complexion of economic concerns. Throughout the film, financial challenges were preventing her from going abroad. Scholars or students studying abroad from India solved their financial problems by being self-sufficient or through scholarships. Milind Sohini on Indian Express, dated February 28, 2022, writes that "A recent report estimates that about 8 lakh students travel abroad for higher education every year and spend \$28 billion or 1 per cent of our GDP on this. Of this, about \$6 billion are fees that go to foreign universities. This is about Rs 45,000 cr. which is adequate capital to start and run 10 new IITs, IISERs or JNUs or any such elite institution every year."

Champak fulfills every possible wish of Tariqa with the income from his business, but in the face of her desire to go abroad, he surrenders and

like an ordinary Indian father. At the core of the anecdote is when Champak sells his ownership rights for Tariqa's admission, he doesn't hesitate. She on the other hand wanted to become self-reliant by refusing the financial expenses offered by Champak. To be able to do this, she also started working part-time in a restaurant. Seeing his daughter work hard to manage her fees is something Champak is surprised to see as an ordinary Indian father.

It is pertinent to note here that Tariqa had only one childhood wish that she wanted to go abroad for which she started looking for information on all possible mediums. As a middle-class father, Champak gathers information about all the possible ways to go abroad but he understands that Tariqa can't go abroad due to their financial constraints. Initially, Tariqa wanted to get herself enrolled at the University of London as that would help her in settling in London later. The film depicts Tariqa's upbringing by Champak as a father that keeps in mind all the middle-class challenges that are upon him. Tariqa's behavior and choices are opposite to that of her father. Tariqa was mentally optimistic about her father. It is, her desire to go abroad that defines the relationship of a father and daughter in this film.