

Headlines in recent newspapers and other media were of reports about attempts being made by some wordsmiths to re-define the English word misogyny.

What was the provocation for this?

A speech by Prime Minister attacking the leader of the opposition on his constant references to her in rather unkind terms, which turned out to be derogatory to the whole womenkind.

This is not something new or even recent.

There are three names that stand out, i.e. Malala Uosuzai, Sirimao BandaranayaKe, and Julia Gillard.

The case of Malla is obvious to anyone. she is the latest victim of those believing in or practising acts of misogyny. Taliban admits shooting her for her advocating the education of girls.

Lesser known and essily the most venomous was what a Sri Lakan Prime Minister and a President to be said about the woman who was destined become the first Woman Prime minster in the world, Sirimao Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike.

"If she were to sit in the Prime Minister's chair, it will have to be washed once in a month."

These famous, or rather noxious words were uttered by the then Prime Minister R. Premadasa. In a country like Australia that would have sounded the death knell of his political career. Not so in the predominant-ly Buddhist Sri Lanka, where tolerance of



MISOGYNY IN SEARCH OF A DEFINITION ?

clinging to the saree pota was totally condemned by everyone.

It maybe the difference in the two cultures.

However, that is something that cannot be overlooked so easily, because we Sri Lankans, and Buddhists in particular, claim to give equal position to women, with no bias on sex or any other reason. The Buddha set an example by admitting women as his disciples without shutting them out because of gender. This should stand out in contrast to Christians, who are still arguing the case of admittning women priests.

Again two cultures in contrast.

Coming back to our main issue, it is the leader of the opposition who is responsible for bringing about this situation which he probably is already trying to pass on to someone else. There is no one else who can rightfully claim that distinction. There are instances that one would like to forget and ignore, but certain things are too important and too critical to pass off as insignificant. What Tony Abbott did to his university colleague although he missed the mark, intentionally or otherwise, in trying to pin her

to the wall, was something pretty serious coming from another undergraduate, an individual who cannot be called immature or even silly. Tony has proved his metal in so many ways and is no simple uni. student that we come across. Again when he elected to address the Student Union President who defeated him as 'thing' without referring to her as chairperson, he displayed his dislike and lack of respect for all woman kind.

Women's liberation and other such movements have been going on now for quite some time, and one would normally expect no one in public life to treat women unkindly or harshly. Private behaviour of course will take much longer to improve and come up to the desired level. However anyone who depends on the popular vote one's very existence, ; to , would never take that risk.

If it is so, why did Tony Abbott take that risk? Was it a calculated move on his part or was it a real blunder? No one other than Abbott himself would be able to clarify that.

One instance is too glaring to be ignored as a slip of the tongue, that is his deliberate attack on the P.M. on the child care allowance. For Tony Abbott to come out with a very popular quotation from the oft-quoted mediaman Alan Jones was rather purile. Tony Abbott was one mnan who never condemned Alak for his attack on the P.M. he only said what Alan said was bad, but in the same breath he went on to defend him in a way declaring his intention

to listen to Alan as usual.

Tony Abbott said that ' the government was dying of shame' he would no doubt try to get away saying he meant this and that, but the similarities are too glaring for anyone to miss his point. The very fact that Alan's joke or insult was even alluded to, was sufficient reason for one to see the connection. l Julia Gillard is a woman or merely because she is P.M. it proof that Abbott would cling to anything and everything that helps him to go at julia Gillard?

The appearance of Mrs. Abbott on defemnce of her husband is again intersting. Show me one wifw whon condemned her husband involved in a rape case or a case of child abuse. Many are the instances in which the loving wife of the accused is seen walking hand - in - had with that accused husband waling into or out of a court house. The diffrence here was that the husband was not an accused in such a caes. What if he were an accused? The same soidarity would have been on show.

At times I wonder whether Tony Abbott is attacking Julia Gillard because she is a woman or for the simple reason that she is occupying the position that is rightfully bhis. Ggoing by the daily attacks on the P.M. in parliament by the opposition, which means an array of individuals staryting with Tony Abbott and covering Julie Bishop, Joe Hockey, Christopher Pine etc, one cannot help feeling that they are all out to destroy her at any cost, because she has denied them the chance of sitting on the government benches.

Tony Abbott has no intention of allowing Julia Gillard and the government to get the credit for anything they do, however helpful it is to the for one of his theme songs, the ekonokmy which according to him was never worse than now. It wouls be better only under a coalition government. All arguments adduced by Wyane Shaune about ceredit ratings etc, are not valid according to their book.

Tony Abbott's interntions are clear. What one has to determine is whether all that is because she is a woman or because she is P.M.



that type of behaviour is very common. If not, the country would be left with no politician to carry on.

It was not long ago that Tony Abbott took out his katest trump card to bolster himself, his own wife as witness to his capacity tom like and love women. Going for that type of support has been known in Sri Lanka by another phrase, i.e. 'clinging to the saree pota'. To put it into English, one can say 'hanging on to the skirt,' which apparently is what Tony Abbott did. There is a difference though. No one would look down upon that whereas in Sri Lanka,

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