

**CRISIS MANAGEMENT ABILITIES OF WOMEN: WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO SHAKESPEARE'S 'THE MERCHANT OF VENICE'****Ms. Parchuri Vandana**

I B. Tech (ECE) Dept. of B S & H

Vignan's Lara Institute of Technology and Science, Vadlamudi-522 213.

parchurivandana@gmail.com

Abstract:

Though William Shakespeare lived and produced his literary works four centuries ago, yet, people of all walks, irrespective of age, profession, region and religion enjoy the pleasure of reading for the freshness and universality. I am one such lovers of Shakespeare who spellbound, reading the plays 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Romeo and Juliet'. At the time, I found analyzing Shakespeare's work focusing on the skill set is most appropriate and suits to fulfill the current day complicated needs and meet our targets without huddles.

The objective of the work is to explore and unravel Soft skills portrayed in Shakespeare's play 'The Merchant of Venice'. The spontaneity and problem solving skills illustrated by the female protagonist, Portia like Crisis Management, out of the box thinking and lateral thinking to rescue her husband's friend Antonio from the crutches of the cruel money lender Shylock are exemplary. In fact, in the present modern age there are many issues and transactions that can be resolved with soft skills. Hence the youth, especially girls need to equip themselves with these qualities in day to day interactions with others to manage a smooth flow of life with amicability.

Key Words: Soft Skills, Crisis Management, Out of the box Thinking, Lateral thinking.

About the author:

William Shakespeare is the most popular British Play writer of all time who needs no further intro. His works portrayed a mixture of emotions like happiness, love, grief, passion, hatred, revenge as well as magic and mystery. His plays are so interesting that, youngsters and teenagers like us are spell bounded even today. Thus his work is lively despite of time.

Brief Narration of the Play:

Antonio, a Venetian merchant, complains his friends of melancholy that he cannot explain. Antonio has a friend named Bassanio. He is in need of money to Court Portia, a wealthy heiress who lives in the city of Belmont. So he asks Antonio for a loan.

Antonio wants to help him but he says that he has invested his Money in a number of trade ships that are still in the sea. He suggests Bassanio. That he can secure loan from another money lender, Antonio as loan's guarantor. After that Antonio and Bassanio approach Shylock, a Jewish money lender for a loan. Shylock accepts for giving loan and offers to lend three thousand ducats with no interest.

Shylock will be entitled to a pound of Antonio's own flesh. Despite of Bassanio's warnings Shylock's condition was accepted by Antonio. After securing loan, Bassanio leaves for Belmont and win Portia's hand. Portia and Bassanio declare their love for one another. Their



happiness has not lasted for long time due to the news that Antonio lost his ships and he has forfeited the bond to Shylock.

Bassanio and his friend Gratiano immediately travel to Venice, in order to save their friend. Shylock ignores many pleas to spare Antonio's life. Then how the life of the Antonio is saved by Portia and her friend Nerissa will be explained in a dramatic manner.

Illustration of Crisis and how it is managed:

Portia is an intelligent and quick witted woman. When Bassanio leaves for the rescue of his friend Antonio, she understands the situation well. She knows that lateral thinking is very important in that situation. So, she decides to resolve the problem logically without damaging the husband's reputation for breach of contract.

Portia tells Nerissa they will go Venice disguised as men. Later in Venice, Bassanio approaches the Duke of Venice and explains his grief regarding Antonio. Duke of Venice tries his best to resolve the problem, but Shylock says everything has to be done according to the bond. Then the Duke of Venice, who presides over the trial, announces that he has send for a legal expert, who turns out to be Portia disguised as a young man of law.

Portia who is disguised as a young man, asks Shylock to show mercy on Antonio. But Shylock refuses and says that he wants to stay with his bond and according to it a pound of flesh from near the Antonio's heart belonged to him. Portia examines the bond says that he can take one pound of flesh near the Antonio's heart according to the bond. On hearing that Shylock face beamed with pleasure and happiness. But, she also says that he has to do it without causing Antonio bleed, as the contract does not entitle him any blood.

She also says that, he has to take only one pound of flesh from Antonio's heart. Not even one gram must be more or less as well. Trapped by this logic, Shylock accepts the money offered by Bassanio instead. Portia informs Shylock to accept his bond as written or nothing at all. Portia says Shylock that he should be guilty for conspiring life of a Venetian citizen. She also says that for this he has to give half of his property to the state and another half to the Antonio.

Duke of Venice spares Shylock's life and accepts the fine instead of his property. Antonio also forgives him and gives his wealth on one condition. The condition is that, he has to take care of his own daughter and son-in-law who married against his will. Shylock agrees to it and takes leave. Thus as a result of Portia's spontaneity in the court room, she could save Antonio's life.

Integration of Soft Skills with Present Day Scenario:

In this play Portia show cased her lateral thinking very well. The girls and women of today should posses lateral thinking. It is crucial because it is the key for finding new and better ways to solve problems we face.



We all know that every problem has and will have a solution. **“If there is no solution we cannot say it as a problem”**. The alternate solutions for a problem can be found by lateral thinking. It is necessary for competitive advantage and survival as well. So, everyone should start **“Thinking Out of the Box”**. Then we can overcome thick and thins easily and handle any crisis with ease like Portia.

Conclusion:

Some people may think that Shakespeare's plays are out dated but still there is a lot to unravel. His works proved ageless and exceeded the boundaries of regions and religions. At juncture, I would like to say many Soft Skills can be inherited. For instance, lateral thinking, crisis management etc and infotainment and language skills can be experienced with Shakespeare's works.

References

1. *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare ISBN 978-81-907905-2-9 Published@
Maanu Graphics, New Delhi.
2. <https://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/merchant/characters/>
3. <https://voices.berkeley.edu/writing-editing-and-technical-communication/why-you-should-study-shakespeare>