

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

In the court of the Holy Trinity of Indian Patriarchy,
occupies the throne, the husband most high.
Backed in his crown by the father,
whom no one questions, eye to eye.
And then sits the son,
under the shadow of the crown;
Keen and observant; recording every custom
to reiterate, when he will wear the king's gown.
And there in the middle stands the accused woman,
with no defences to her side.
Chained in her own bangles and anklets,
she hears the verdict with her swallowed pride (Mishra 4)

The writers of the study, Munshi Premchand, Dalip Kaur Tiwana and Maya Angelou have outlined in their writings the inner realities of female psyche and the predicaments of feminine self. The common element that binds them together is their portrayal of struggles, difficulties and hardships a woman bears merely because she is a woman. Besides having linguistic differences, these writers have shown their concern for the 'weaker sex' of the society. By writing about female predicament, Premchand, Tiwana and Angelou expose the patriarchal stereotypes and oppression boundedness dwelled against women. The study of the works of these writers revealed the realities of the patriarchal system which destined the woman to all subordinate positions. Due to patriarchal domination, woman has become completely aloof and marginalized in the world. The much imbalance of power between the two sexes is the matter of concern nowadays. The binaries of man and woman construct an ideology of power structure in which man is privileged and woman always a subordinate; an unprivileged. The exercise of authority and domination makes a woman suppressed and oppressed. Therefore, the suppression of the female self compels her to live a deprived and humiliated life.

It is imperative to recognize the study as in the English literary Canon, the rural and the black women are assumed to be the most despised, rebuked and victimized by men who not only exercise power over their bodies but designed a system to control her feminine self. Patriarchal oppression is a universally experienced phenomenon. In the present study, the analysis of selected literary texts reveals the patriarchy to be a complex agency of discrimination and oppression. Patriarchal or gender-based discrimination is the most harmful for it is authorized, accepted and endorsed repeatedly. It can occur in any form i.e. open, subtle, physical, psychological or existential. The powerful social structure of patriarchy functions smoothly through different social institutions. It has oppressed women at all spheres - be it home, workplace, religious centre, or educational institution. All social institutions are based on different axis of power like caste, class, race, ethnicity and religion. The study exposes the experiences of both black women in American culture and the rural lower-class women in the Indian culture. Both are treated inhumanely. It is the powerful patriarchal structure that tries to submerge them and thus makes them socially, politically and economically unsubstantial. Therefore, it becomes imperative to look into the psychological disturbances created by patriarchy in the subordination of innocent woman. The researcher in the analysis of the primary and the secondary sources used for the investigation finds that patriarchy has played a vital role in the lives of women which has led to their oppression of both body and mind. The inclusion of the works of Munshi Premchand, Dalip Kaur Tiwana and Maya Angelou validates this claim.

An overview of three texts studied in depth in the foregoing chapters brings to result that patriarchy is a pervasive system of oppressive power that is purely responsible in introducing and maintaining imbalance within every relationship. In the study, the word 'patriarchy' has been used to denote 'power' and 'authority' but only on the weaker sex. It dwells on the myth of creation - men are born to rule and women to be ruled at. The male dominant society has used this mechanism to rule in order to suppress the overall development and progress of its counterpart. Certain restrictions are imposed upon a woman that helps man to protect and keep safe his status of authority. Hence, patriarchy mutes the woman in order to keep her position intact in society. It is no denying the fact that patriarchy and oppression are the two sides of the

same coin. The root of inequality and discrimination between genders is none other than patriarchy's seed.

Feminism, as a literary movement, questioned the subordinate position of women in the patriarchal social structure. It aims to break the traditional tenets of patriarchy and struggles to render the substantial place for women. All the social, political, economical and theological myths that treated women unjustly were strongly opposed by feminist movement. Moreover, the advent of feminism as a movement in the west had left the indelible mark on both literature and society. The issues of race, class, caste, gender and sexuality constitutes multitude forms of oppression. These multiple forms of oppression have been manifested in detail in the four different chapters of the study. Patriarchy operates through the institution of family and the institution of family prescribes different codes and commandments for boys and girls and also constitutes a mechanism to adhere them strictly. Many codes and norms are meant only for women. The duties of a good daughter, wife and mother are set none other than patriarchal rulers. The ideology of patriarchal structure is a seminal element that is in built in the psyche of both the genders. Gender indoctrination is achieved through the medium of exercising control over female body and mind. Fixed codes create dilemmas in the lives of woman that makes them weak and hollow from within.

The present study to prove the hypothesis deconstructs the subtle mechanism through which the suppressive forces of patriarchal functions can be seen in gender discrimination. Gender as a concept is seen only relevant to women. The reason being it was used by feminists to analyze the subjugation and subordination of women in society. Gender constitutes division of labor and sharing of social status destined to ensure all privileges to man and woman is left isolated and non-privileged. This discrimination is a byproduct of socio-cultural formation of patriarchal society which restricts women's growth and development. Gender and race both have affected women in certain forms. The African-American philosopher Cornel West writes “Race matters because it is a constitutive element of life... Actually, class, gender and race matters, and they matter because they structure interactions, opportunities, consciousness, ideology, and the forms of resistance that characterize American life... They matter in shaping the social location of different groups in contemporary society. They matter in shaping concepts of leadership and the attitudes of diverse groups.

They matter by influencing the process of social mobility and by configuring the opportunity structures different groups experience. They matter in structuring family experience... (ix). Therefore, race, class and gender had left women on the periphery as shown in the preceding chapters of the work.

The impact of acceptance of whatever comes in life, realization of victimization and resistance to patriarchal domination procuring through the existential dilemmas of women is another area of her subjugation. Undoubtedly, among both the sexes, it is woman who is looked upon on the basis of her gender and sexuality as such she is never free to express her emotions and desires. She accepts whatever destiny gives her and hence becomes victim in her life leading to alienation. Her victimization is a result of her socialization. From the moment of birth, a baby boy is treated and privileged as different from a baby girl. As they grow, their socialization process differs in many aspects. Consequently, women become victim of being child bearers, sexual objects, commodities and nurturers. The suffering and victimization of women truly leaves them in a state of awe, helplessness and self-pity. Her identity is looked upon not as a human but only as a commodity to be used by anyone, anytime. The nature of existentialism, declaring that man has no fixed nature, too rule in the dilemmas of creation of God.

After the institution of family, the institution of marriage too is held responsible in creating silence in the life of women. A woman's identity is always questioned upon not only in the family where she is born but also in the family to which she is given in marriage. As such she feels it natural to be dependent on males. This dependency makes them meek, timid and docile obeying the well-established tradition of patriarchal system. The study proves that the isolation of women from the social development, democracy and individualism is evident in the institution of marriage. The theme of alienation has also been successfully dealt with in the study showing the alienated, gloomy picture of both Indian and Afro-American women trapped in the dominant patriarchal structure of society.

The writers selected for the study are no doubt, strongly moved by the feminist consciousness that is much needed in today's era. The feminist re-awakening is completely embedded in their texts. They have portrayed the agony and trauma going

in the mind of a woman that makes her feel aloof, isolated and insignificant. The oppression suffered by Nirmala, Bhano and Maya varies in degree and nature. Their individual experiences reveal the type of person they were and have become due to societal pressures. The third protagonist of the study, Maya Angelou had suffered the physical oppression which had completely maimed her psyche and mind. On the other hand, both Nirmala and Bhano underwent social and familial oppression which have made them passive sufferers in the course of their journey. Since ages, the custom of dowry and unhappy arranged marriages have made woman the victim of patriarchy. Moreover, the system of dowry has become a financial burden on the family of the bride.

Munshi Premchand's protagonist Nirmala meets the tragic fate due to the social evil of dowry and unmatched marriage. Premchand apparently reveals the agony of a fifteen-year-old girl who is forced to marry a man of thirty-five. Such type of forceful marital knot with a man of her father's age makes her life terrible, neglected and alienated. Being a victim of continuous mental and social trauma, Nirmala began to usher into the world of alienation and estrangement. Furthermore, the impulses of cruelty, jealousy, suspicion and doubt aggravate the situation. In such circumstances, a woman only feels herself trapped in these impulses and accepts them believing they are destined in her fate and thus has to be endured. Every human being craves for love and satisfaction in life. This was the only crime of poor Nirmala who only wished to have love and companionship in her life. Caught in the tripartite circumstances ruled by suspicion, isolation and anxiety, Nirmala lived an accursed life till death that had finally restored her to freedom. Nirmala wraps herself completely into domestic chores in order to keep her mind at ease. Her motherly affection towards the step-sons too proved fatal when Munshi Totaram began to suspect her relationship to his elder son. The study reveals that the poor economic condition of the lower-class people trap them into dilemmas blind to difficulties and hardships that arise from such age-gap marriages. The powerful patriarchal structure reduces a woman's state to the periphery and thus makes her weak and hollow from within. The theme of marital disharmony thus reigns in the novel showing the disastrous outcome of such type of marriages.

The nuances of gender disparity and oppression of women has always been looked normal in the so called patriarchal Indian culture. The institution of marriage

and family has only bartered a woman in the hands of powerful and oppressive social milieu. Nirmala accepts all the misfortunes and surrenders herself to the oppressive patriarchal culture. Through the analysis of the novel, Munshi Totaram is blamed who is no less than the member of patriarchal culture and rules like a dominating dictator. He controls Nirmala and all the other members of the family. The elements of doubt, suspicion and insecurity are attributed to Munshi Totaram who brings destruction in his own household. It is not only Nirmala but the innocent children are too exploited by the bourgeoisie member of the family. The maniacal hold of patriarchy on the human psyche truly makes a person suppressed and alienated. However, such hold on body of a person too makes her helpless and abandoned. The patriarchal attitudes, beliefs and values reveal how it has a large impact on the sexuality of a woman. The estrangement of a woman like Nirmala begins from family and ends by family only. Nirmala is made to suffer at the hands of her family. Her family treats her as a liability; her body is looked upon as an object. She is a mere commodity in a patriarchal society. Nirmala's mother due to her helpless situation gave away her daughter in the hands of patriarchal male without her consent. In the patriarchal system, the mother is conditioned to behave as a 'surrogate father' to carry forward the patriarchal values to daughters. The institution of the patriarchy manipulates the mother to subjugate the daughters and this legacy is carried forward through ages. As Kate Millett had said "Patriarchy's chief institution is the family," (33) undoubtedly, family acts as a social power structure which acts smoothly and results in women's oppression.

Unlike Premchand's Nirmala, Dalip Kaur Tiwana's novel *And Such Is Her Fate* narrates the experience of oppression and estrangement undergone by a bride for sale named Bhano. Through her narrative, the author exposes the patriarchal norms and narratives which conditioned the woman to accept and bear violence and humiliation as her fate and destiny. Bhano is double marginalized on the basis of her gender and class. As such she is unable to lead a dignified life of a wife and a mother. Bhano's life journey is her acceptance of patriarchal domination in order to survive in this cruel and harsh world. In the patriarchal social set up, a woman is visualized only in terms of her relationship to her husband and family. But for Bhano there is no family and no husband, she does not exist for anybody. Firstly, the novelist shows Bhano as a bride for sale in order to get money for family's poor economic condition. She is no less than a commodity as she is purchased and sold for the pleasure of the patriarchal lord.

Secondly, Bhano is the victim of her husband's brothers' lustful intentions. Her sexuality is merely seen as an object, a 'merchandise' to be shared by all. However, her husband gets killed in a dispute developed intentionally by his brothers. Thirdly, after the death of her husband, Bhano as a widow in a patriarchal society is treated as a burden who has to be thrown away by any means. Her attempt to commit suicide is foiled by an alcoholic and drug addict named Narain who takes her to his house for his own pleasure and comfort. Fourthly, residing in Narain's house without any marriage, Bhano silently faces his abuses. Not only this, moreover she also faces the network of lust coming from Narain's friends. Amidst all these dilemmas, Bhano tries to find meaning of her existence, wherever she is driven by her destiny. Living with Narain without any formal wedding, makes her vulnerable to all the audacious behaviour and lustful eyes. Like Nirmala, Bhano too finds comfort in performing household chores and maintaining the house well.

The novel is a study of Bhano's struggle through life for existential belongingness. In the course of novel, she longed to belong to someone and lead a dignified life of a normal human being. As such she becomes the victim of selling and purchasing in various male hands. It is a fact that a woman all through her life is dependent on male authority. This makes her weak and silent in many spheres of life even when she knows she is right. Above all, if a woman is not able to produce an heir to the family, she is considered useless and evil. It does not matter even if she maintains the house well and keeps the family into well knit, the main thing in life becomes to contribute in family lineage. It shows it is not the woman who is valued rather it is her body, biological functions that are important. Narain's decision of marrying to another woman leaves Bhano poor and helpless. She enters the world of seclusion and loneliness. Her only dream of becoming an integral part of the social structure dashes to ground. Even after participating in all the activities of domesticity, she is still treated as an outsider. Narain's new wife, Bhagwati has also been shown as the victim of patriarchal culture. Her past has thrown her into the society as such she was too in search of some space over her head. In this competition of emerging victorious, Bhano loses the battle. Bhagwati won by producing a child to Narain. Eventually, Bhano is sold off to a new customer. Bhano's end is tragic. Her half-dressed picture finally makes her understand that patriarchy has won the battle by throwing away the undesired person of the society.

By depicting the plight of many girls like Bhano, the author has depicted the struggle of a woman against her fate failing she lives barely and humbly a life like silent strangers. It is the woman who is always on the periphery, her victimization is most common and her acceptance of whatever comes in life is deeply embedded in her socialization. Nobody could measure the anguish of poor souls like Nirmala and Bhano who in their lives kept on struggling with the powerful patriarchal rulers. Their only wish to live in little peace is denied by the patriarchal structure. Without showing any revolt, both of them have submitted themselves to all social and ritual milieus of life. Bhano's acceptance of patriarchal values and norms makes her an easy target of oppression and victimization. When social structure becomes oppressive, it results into mental, physical and emotional damage to 'other sex'. The study of Bhano's life shows that such damages are very disastrous and lead to life ending consequences.

The life of young Marguerite in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is another prominent example of oppression meted on a woman both physically and mentally. The growth of Maya from the age of three till sixteen can be witnessed amidst the restrictions of patriarchal American culture. Growing up in Stamps, Maya Angelou has felt double marginalization firstly, on account of her race and secondly her gender. Maya as a young girl has survived in such a world of disillusion and despair, aloofness, self-doubt and a diminished sense of self. Her rape by the patriarchal male member of her own community makes her shattered from within. Like Munshi Totaram in Premchand's *The Second Wife* and Narain in Tiwana's *And Such Is Her Fate*, it is Mr. Freeman in Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, who was like a father figure to young Maya, finally abuses her and further threatens her to keep mute. The act of rape on a tender body of seven leaves Maya abandoned in the world of shame, guilt and confusion. By narrating the incidence of rape, Angelou shows the traumatized suffering connected to it by the suffering of her race. It is only after telling lie in the court, little Maya is delved into 'perfect' personal silence for five long years. Her lie made her realize the evilness flowing from her mouth due to which she believed Mr. Freeman is killed. This makes her a voluntary mute to the world.

Angelou's complex awareness of what black men, women and children encountered in their life is apparent in each of the incidents of the novel. She was the

victim of racism due to her black skin. Angelou was very much aware of the fact that she was despised because of her black colour. Like Morrison's Pecola, Maya too dreamt of turning into white and making people astonished at her beauty. A black woman, being a non-white and non-male, has become the victim of powerful hegemonic culture. The world of whites was totally different but for Maya it was not less than man-eating animals' territory armed with weapons and guns. On the other hand, the blacks were the strange pale creatures that had memories in messy frightful vignettes; the nights when Klan rides with power and all black people hide themselves, the 'powhitetrash' girls humiliating and insulting her grandmother, the nights when both 'unwanted motherless darlings' cried after receiving their Christmas gifts from their awful parents, of the graduation ceremony when she listened helplessly to their weaknesses by the white guest. It is no denying fact that Maya knew that she belonged to such an oppressed class. Her class was regularly lynched, beaten, raped and abused from time to time. In such odd circumstances, it was only their racial community that nurtured its members and helped them to face all the obstacles of life. Black community shared the oneness of being loved and admitted in the company of one another. Besides, their love, it was the church activities that reveal the powerful bond of community which was practiced by all the members of community through their gatherings. The church was a sort of comfort to black people necessary for survival in a hostile social world.

The oppression of black people is an outcome of American culture of racism and sexism which together intermingled provides arenas of dominance and power. The history of American culture is a journey of black people who are victimized and treated wild, filthy and inferior in comparison to whites who are considered to be civilized, superior and attractive. Maya's life has moved around only such parameters: racism, sexism, classicism, gender and otherness. Amy Jacques Garvey, Feminist Black Nationalist, very aptly states "Black women were highly attuned to the overlapping effects of racism, sexism, and classicism on their lives - what Deborah King calls "multiple Jeopardy" (Adler 14). As a child as well as an adult, Maya was fully aware of her community's painful history of abuse and marginalization. The blacks existed only if they followed the norms and conditions of whites.

Maya Angelou has been victorious in her life, due to support of her family and black community. A displaced and oppressed girl initially has found a place and identity of her own by the end. Nirmala and Bhano have been unlucky in this regard. Both of them have suffered, cried and lost their lives to the patriarchal rulers. But Angelou has found her way to survive by accepting the traditions of her family. As a girl child, Maya has learned valuable, life determining truths about her community, about herself, about the people known and unknown. The oppression faced by Angelou in the form of sexual abuse at the tender age depicts the life she has lived i.e. of insecurity, loneliness and despair. But Angelou like powerful bold woman has transcended her isolated and chaotic life into a self-individualized meaningful woman. The research work hopes to create a new world where peace and harmony will reign along with equality and happiness for both the sexes "... that someday women may rule men, we agree with the prediction, and feel sure that the world will then be a better place in which to live, for women have a conscience, while men have not, and ever-handed justice will more likely be meted out... You (men) had your day at the helm of the world, and a pretty mess you have made of it... and perhaps women's rule will usher in the era of real brotherhood (sic), when national and racial lines will disappear, leaving mankind (sic) in peace and harmony one with another. Who knows? (Adler 21-22).

The women characters of the selected novels are economically dependent upon their husbands who are no less than the authoritative patriarchal males who assert their identity by suppressing them. It becomes a major reason of oppression of women that further give rise to violence and anxiety. The study also reveals the harsh working of the institution of family and marriage that is fully responsible for the oppression of 'other sex' of the society. The women under these institutions are marginalized to a great extent to accept the patriarchal norms as their destiny. They are treated like an object to satisfy the hunger of patriarchal ruler.

The established patriarchal norms and hypocritical social practices are the root cause of women's oppression. The mismatch wedlock without the consent of emotional and psychological preferences of women counterparts results in marginalization and isolation of women. Consequently, in the process of faulty marriage system, a woman has to lose her individuality, her desires, her wishes and

even her own self. Moreover, patriarchy functions as a governing body that has established itself as an institution and manipulates the social systems and traditions to claim male superiority over the counterparts. Meanwhile, women are forced to suffer marginalization, victimization and alienation.

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