

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FEMALE
CHARACTERS IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF
V. S. NAIPAUL AND SALMAN RUSHDIE**

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENGLISH**

**By
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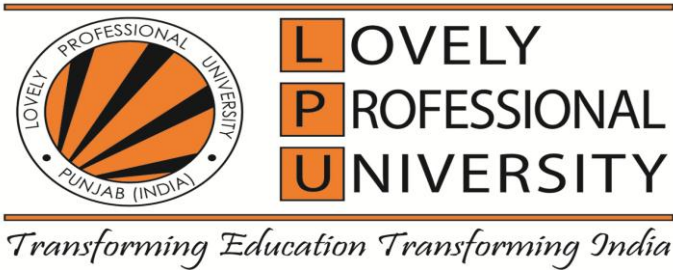
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Declaration

I do hereby acknowledge that:

- 1) The thesis entitled “A Comparative Study of the Female Characters in the Selected Novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie” is presentation of my original work completed under the supervision of Dr. Sanjay Prasad Pandey, Associate Professor of Lovely Professional University, Phagwara. We made our utmost sincere efforts, including suggestions mooted by the Department Doctoral Board of Lovely Professional University, Phagwara.
- 2) This thesis strictly avoided any form of plagiarism; and where ever due, the proper acknowledgement was provided throughout the work to the authors’ contribution.
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Certificate

This is to certify that **Gurjasjeet Kaur**, with Registration number **41400154**, has prepared the thesis entitled “**A Comparative Study of the Female Characters in the Selected Novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie**”. The same is submitted to the Department of English, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English. It is independent and original research work. No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma before this date.

The candidate has pursued the prescribed course work of research, and she has assimilated all the suggestions given by the Department Doctoral Board of the university during her annual presentations and pre-submission seminar.

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(Gurjasjeet Kaur)

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Introduction

Throughout the ages, the voice of females has been repressed by the patriarchal systems of society. Females have been assumed weak and inferior to men. The oppression and subordination of women mainly happen because of the existence of patriarchal systems present in society. In patriarchal societies, males dominate and exploit females. Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, rightly observes, "We are urged, 'Be women, stay women, become women.'" (3). Patriarchy has remained the prime obstacle in the development and advancement of women. Understanding of the system, which keeps women subordinate and oppressed, is required. Unravelling of these systems will help for the emancipation of women. In contemporary times, women are going ahead with the use of their abilities and merits. They are performing well in every sphere such as political, economic and social. But, still, patriarchy creates problems in the ways of women's journey of advancement. Patriarchal oppression is responsible for the secondary and subordinate status of females in society. Absolute authority and power provided to men in patriarchal society limit women's equal human rights to some extent. The women are taught to imbibe gender roles through the socialization process. They are made weak through patriarchal practices, which condemn assertiveness, individuality, and subjectivity. The patriarchal practices foster docility and modesty in women. These practices, be it mental, psychological, physical, emotional, political, social or cultural, are operational in society to make women subordinate. The present thesis, entitled "A Comparative Study of Female Characters in the Selected Novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie", deals with the representation of women in the selected novels of both these renowned novelists. This thesis has explored the similarities and

dissimilarities between V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie as far as the representation of women in the selected novels is concerned.

Feminism is a cultural, social, economic and political movement working towards establishing equal rights for women through the interface of life with literature and criticism. It is an ideology that is rooted in the basic concepts of human identity and the value of humanism. Feminist literary critics try to demonstrate the undesirable and stereotypical representation of women in literary works. They have also questioned the depiction of women in literature by male authors. Feminist literary critics focus on what type of roles female characters have been provided, are they protagonists, do they challenge patriarchy, do they hold power and what is the author's attitude towards female characters in the text. During the 1980s, feminist literary criticism considered gender as a primary category to analyze the representation of women in literature. Feminists criticized the exclusion of women's voice from literary theory and criticism.

The feminist writers tried to deconstruct the deformed image of females in fiction. They observed all realities of women's lives from the feminist point of view. Female authors used their pen to reach the forbidden world for them. They have provided a voice to silences. Pam Morris, in his famous book *Literature and Feminism: An Introduction*, observes, "Writing by women can tell the story of the aspects of women's lives that have been erased, ignored, demeaned, mystified and even idealized in the majority of traditional texts" (60). Feminist critics re-analyzed the bifurcation between male and female fiction. Feminist literary criticism became an effective medium to demolish the conventional image of women and install the actual one. The feminist critics posed a challenge to an androcentric world view to

give place to new meaning. They depicted strong women characters to break the barriers set by male domination. Along with personal and emotional representations of the females, they have written on social conditions, female positions and gender roles.

Gender has a vital role in the life of human beings. Starting right from their birth, in some countries, newborn babies are given pink or blue colour covers according to their sex; blue cover is reserved for boys, and the pink cover is meant for girls. These cultural traditions sent them forward in society to develop as men or women. From childhood, people are instructed to follow a particular code of conduct, which contrasts relying upon their gender. In a male-dominated culture, men have a special existence, and their experiences and preferences are considered as standardized human experiences. A woman is characterized just in connection to the man. Urging people to act and behave according to fixed roles is harming because these gender roles force human beings to encounter life just from their perspective as males or females, not as individuals. To believe that art is an impression of life, one can hope that writing will show the universe about the existence of these sex roles and females encounter life far uniquely in contrast to men and endure as a result of it. Sex roles are difficult to disperse, yet some male writers have endeavoured to represent life from the female's point of view.

This research provides a comparative study of the female characters in the selected novels of Trinidad born British English writer V. S. Naipaul and India born British writer Salman Rushdie. The comparative study of the literature suggests knowing about existence, truth, and fact as a basis for social, cultural and historical discussions. The purpose of comparative research in literature is to cross the borders

and boundaries of history, culture, philosophy, myths, social behaviour, political participation, economic circumstances, and customs. The literary works of different authors from different nations or languages are compared through facts. The fundamental objective of comparative literature is to understand human life across national and cultural boundaries. Comparative literature is a unique tool for readers, academics or scholars, who feel curious and enjoy analyzing literary works across nations, cultures, and languages. The focused two writers, V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, are from different social, political, religious, historical and linguistic backgrounds. Their diverse backgrounds force them to write in different ways and to tackle issues differently because their socio-political and cultural experiences interfere with their writings. There is an excellent representation of females in literature by male and female writers. Many critics observe that the representation of females by male and female authors will differ because they have different experiences of life being male and female. Some critics believe that male writers are not able to represent the life of women from a female point of view because being male their life experiences are different from women. Most of the representation of women is done by women writers in literature. But many male writers have also represented life from a female perspective. Male and female authors may differ in their presentation of females depending on gender, social-political situations, nationality, and culture. The present dissertation deals with the comparative study of female characters in the selected novels of V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. V. S. Naipaul's selected novels are *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), *Guerrillas* (1975) and *A Bend in the River* (1979). Salman Rushdie's selected novels are *Midnight's Children* (1981), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) and *Shalimar the Clown* (2005). The analytical

and comparative approach offers a new dimension to the study of the novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. The social, economic and political standing of these characters, the way they are portrayed, their attitudes towards their positions in society and family life are the focus of analysis. This research is an attempt to understand the similarities and differences for the representation of females in the fiction of both these renowned writers. This research seeks to compare both these well-known writers from the feminist perspective. By studying the selected primary texts of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie and evaluating available secondary sources about these writers, as well as how females are portrayed in literature, this research can answer the question of how both these writers are similar and dissimilar in the representation of women. Attempts have been made to analyze the depiction of female characters in the novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, but comparative analysis of women characters in the selected novels of these renowned authors is not available. The female characters' social, political and economic roles are the focus of comparison in this dissertation. This research focuses on the psychological, physical and emotional aspects of female characters to understand their roles, behaviour, and place in the selected novels.

V. S. Naipaul belongs to an East Indian Brahmin community that migrated from India. These innocent people were transported from India forcibly by the British government as indentured labourers to the West Indies. Since the colonizers had no intention of bringing them back to India, these people from the Brahmin caste had no option but to stay there and to adjust in Trinidad. Thus one can say that the East Indians suffered a decisive cultural displacement. Mixing and adjusting in a racially hybrid and colonial society was never easy for them. However, these groups, comprising relations and families carried with them Hindu religious texts

and symbols- Ramayana, Mahabharata, images of Hindu gods and goddesses, scriptures, religious idols, and sculptures. In most unlikely conditions, the East Indian community somehow carried on its customs, rites, and rituals to survive in a culturally mixed world. V. S. Naipaul was brought up in this kind of East Indian community- isolated, alienated and tradition bound. All through his early life, Naipaul saw the strange religious Hindu practices and ritual performances in the household. The rituals were weird for him because he had never seen India. He had known it slowly through memories and stories told by his ancestors.

Salman Ahmed Rushdie is a versatile writer of English literature. He was born in India, and he has experiences of living in Pakistan and England. Presently he lives in New York. He started his career in advertising, and now he is a full-time writer of novels, stories, and non-fiction. Salman Rushdie is a writer of the Indian diaspora. His literary works are concerned with diaspora, estrangement, otherness, magical realism, historical fiction and migrations amongst Eastern and Western nations. He also represents the hybrid identities of the post-colonial world. Popular culture, advertising, rock music, aspects of classical and modern India and ways of Western life influence his range for the subject matter. Salman Rushdie is a post-colonial writer because in his writing he has presented post-independence societies of India and Pakistan. He also deals with the problems and crises faced by people during the post-independence era. His novels are preoccupied with the presentation of marginalized women and downtrodden people. He also focuses on the dominating tendencies of society to deal with women or other inferior groups. His depiction of women is influenced by the socio-cultural and political scenes of his Indian heritage and adopted western culture. Aijaz Ahmed, in his book, *Theory: Classes, Nations and Literature*, observes about Rushdie, "Living in the contemporary milieu of the

British left, he has not remained untouched by certain kinds of feminism; and he is clearly aware, and quite capable of effective narrativization, of many kinds of women's oppression in our societies" (143).

In Chapter 1, *Feminist Journey and Patriarchal Oppression*, an attempt has been made to introduce the journey of feminism, tracing its growth and focusing on three waves along with famous feminist writers. It also attempts to draw attention towards feminist literary theory and criticism. This chapter focuses on to analyze patriarchal oppression and subordination of women in society. In this chapter, a detailed discussion has been provided to the roles played by women in family life as well as in society. This chapter also focuses on the importance of equality for the development of women in everyday life. The theories of Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Millet have been discussed in detail.

Simone de Beauvoir argues, in *The Second Sex*, that women have no history, no past and no religion of their own. She emphasizes that females should consider themselves as human beings. They should share their feelings, impulses, and things. She also evaluates that women take each other as enemies, rivals, and competitors. Beauvoir advises women to liberate themselves from male dominance. Social injustices delimit women's access to education, health services, property rights, and employment. In this epochal book, Beauvoir muses that women should be given the status of equal human beings. She is against the exploitation of women based on sexual differences. She opines that social and cultural traditions justify patriarchal control and male domination to make females inferior to males. Elizabeth Fallaize, in an article "Simone de Beauvoir and the Demystification of Women", reveals about Beauvoir that because of "radical attack on the social institutions of motherhood and the family together, with her frank discussion of female sexuality

she led to a public furore on the publication of the book in France" (85). Simone maintains that due to cultural traditions, a man becomes 'one', the powerful and a woman becomes 'other', who is powerless and oppressed. To solve these problems, Fallaize observes that de Beauvoir suggests, "there is a way out of this dilemma if each party offers full recognition of the other's subjectivity and a common agreement is made not to try to enslave the other" (89).

Kate Millet was actively involved in feminist activities in the 1960s. Her path-breaking book, *Sexual Politics*, is about patriarchal societies and the oppression of women. Kate Millet argues that if patriarchy is a cultural and political issue, then men do whatever they want to do and women never object. She opines that western culture and various institutions are favourable for men, and provide privileged positions to men and have made women the subordinates. Millet discusses the various reasons for women's oppression and subordination. She criticizes Sigmund Freud's theory of gender bias. She believes that the economic dependency of women is the major cause of their subjugation and subordination. She also criticizes the representation of women by male authors. Millet explains that women were owned by men as land in the past. The wife and children were enslaved by man. She also argues that some women have accepted their subordinate position and don't want an equal status with men in society and family life.

In Chapter 2, V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie: Making of the Authors, an attempt has been made to set V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie in their age along with a description of their lives, their works, accomplishments, and philosophy. Observations of various thinkers about V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie have been included in this chapter. It also attempts to draw attention towards similarities and dissimilarities between them as writers.

Chapter 3, V. S. Naipaul's Portrayal of Women in Selected Novels, discusses the role played by female characters in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, *A House for Mr Biswas*, *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River*. In these novels, women characters have been provided subordinate role only. They lack any intellectual growth. They mainly play the social roles of a mother, wife, daughter, sister, and mistress being part of the patriarchal societies. They remain self-sacrificing mothers, docile wives and suffering mistresses. They have to face male brutalities and violence. In *A House for Mr Biswas*, Mrs Tulsi and Tara are authoritative women. But with time, Mrs Tulsi also loses power and becomes dependent on her family members. The status of Tara is also reliant on the economic prosperity of her husband. These females have been denied education, identity, and employment, essential for the development of any individual. In the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul, male characters are the protagonists. Female characters have been provided with a minor role to play. These female characters belong to tradition-bound patriarchal families and societies. Tradition bound families make females self-sacrificing, humble and self-effacing who prefer to follow the orders of their male counterparts.

Chapter 4, Representation of Women in the Selected Novels of Salman Rushdie, is about the portrayal of females in Salman Rushdie's selected novels *Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, and *Shalimar the Clown*. The experiences of female characters in the context of love, marriage and sex have been analyzed in this chapter. The urge for freedom of the female characters has also been discussed in this chapter. In the selected novels of Rushdie, female characters play significant roles. Every selected novel has a central female character. In these novels, female characters are authoritative, adamant,

conscious and active participants of the plot. Many of them are economically strong, art lovers and politically active. They dominate in married life and love affairs. Aurora, Vina Apsara and Boonyi are central characters of the selected novels.

In Chapter 5, Comparative Study of the Female Characters in the Selected Novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, the social, political and economic roles played by the female characters have been compared and contrasted. The social roles of female characters have been compared under various heads as mothers, wives, daughters, and mistresses. The aspects of motherhood are studied as a soft, self-sacrificing mother, and a powerful matriarch. In this chapter, the role of mothers has been compared as strong matriarchal mothers and as submissive, docile maternal mothers. The focus of this chapter is upon if a mother is satisfied with this role, or she has to control her desires for the sake of her children. For the comparison of the female characters, the role of a wife has also been considered. The wives in Naipaul's selected novels are docile and submissive, but in Rushdie's selected novels, they try to find out their own identities and try to raise voice for their rights. This research seeks to find an answer to the question if females are not economically independent, do they have power over their families and have control over their own lives. If not, do they submit before the circumstances and society? V. S. Naipaul's female characters do not struggle to find their feet. They submit before the situations of their life and are submissive. But Salman Rushdie's female characters struggle to carve their own identity. They do so in most possible ways. V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie's art of characterization has also been compared in this chapter.

The role of daughters has been compared and contrasted from the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. As daughters, the female characters in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul are obedient and submissive. They have to bear gender discrimination in their life. Salman Rushdie has depicted the single girl child concept in his selected novels. The daughters, in Rushdie's novels, are not submissive, and they stand for their desires. As daughters, most of the female characters in the selected novels of both novelists pay attention to fulfil responsibilities towards their parents.

In this chapter, the female characters' role as mistresses has been compared. An attempt has been made to discuss how sex is used to manipulate women. There is a discussion on the comparison of women characters who possess and use beauty and sexuality to attain something in life. If the concept of woman as an object of desire or a sex object has been used for females, then her role is merely ornamental. The objective of this chapter is to compare and contrast V. S. Naipaul and Rushdie for their similarities and dissimilarities for the representation of women. Along with the social roles of the female characters, economic and political roles have also been compared and contrasted in this chapter. V. S. Naipaul's female characters are economically dependent on their male counterparts. So they play a passive role in the economic growth of their families and society. Salman Rushdie's female characters from the selected novels are financially secure. They own business, money and property. Politically V. S. Naipaul's female characters are ignorant, and they are not aware of their rights. Salman Rushdie's female characters are aware of their rights and struggle for equality for women.

The concluding chapter sums up all the findings and ideas that have emerged from the discussions of the previous chapters. Various ideas and concepts are put forth for further research. V. S. Naipaul and Rushdie's writings are filled with pain and struggles of common people in diasporic as well as Indian societies. They have to pay a high price for being truthful. The voices of both these renowned authors enhance the lives they touch in their literary works. Rushdie has moved away from traditional, enduring, and self-sacrificing women towards women who have an urge for freedom. The female characters, in the selected novels of Rushdie, reject patriarchal values that come in their way of freedom. Women must retain tradition where they cannot do without it, but they must go for modernity where it promises a better and more meaningful life to them. A woman cannot find fulfilment in being a woman, except by accepting herself completely and consciously. Acceptance means not only being aware of her identity but also becoming aware of her feminine self and her role in this world along with placing herself in a matrix of relationships.

The main objectives of this research are:

1. To explore feminist literary criticism and theory in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie.
2. To investigate the role of female characters in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul.
3. To analyze the context of love, marriage, sex and the urge for freedom of female characters in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie.
4. To compare and contrast the female characters of the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie.

This study is qualitative in nature and is focused on the analyzing aspect of literature. V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie's other novels, science fiction, and non-fiction are not part of the present study. Juxtaposed methods have been used for research. The selected novels are read and reread many times, and their representation of females has been noted down. The selected texts have been analyzed not only in the light of objectives but also with the lens of theoretical approach. The portrayal of female characters has been studied with the use of feminist literary theory and criticism. The data collection for the study has been drawn from multiple sources such as direct or participant observations, interviews, books and journal articles. Relevant textual references have been quoted from primary resources and available secondary resources, as per the requirement of the study. Feminist theories of Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Millet have been used for the theoretical framework. Other feminist critics also have been used to support the main theory.

In this research, an attempt has been made to answer questions such as does the economic dependency upon others affect the identity and place of females in family and society? Do they rebel or submit before the situations of their life? Are they treated as sex objects? Do they fight against oppression, do they search for identity, or do they save men or help them in critical situations? MLA 8th edition has been followed for documentation. The roles of female characters have been compared from social, political and economic participation of the characters in family life and society. A detailed discussion also focuses on the women who liberate themselves from patriarchal traditions and customs.

Chapter – 1

Feminist Journey and Patriarchal Oppression

Literature is considered an effective tool to represent the changes that people think and feel about life with time. It is a reflection and comment on society, human life, and relationships. Literature provides significant cognizance about the development of society. It helps to understand an individual and society as a whole. It also feeds the human need for emotional, imaginative and intellectual stimulation. Literature is an enriched resource to interpret the situation, status and role of women in society. Females, in earlier times, were expected to bear and rear children. They were an inactive part of the community, and their life was confined to the domestic world only. Now they have become an active part of society and are participating actively in social, political and economic changes. Now people have started recognizing that the world cannot grow at a good pace unless women come forward and make efforts for the development of the world. History of numerous centuries reveals that women have struggled a lot to attain self-respect, honour, equal opportunities and to improve the situation of women. The position and status of women have not been the same. After the struggle of many centuries, their status has been changed. Now, voting rights, education and paid work opportunities are available for women all over the world. Despite several changes, even in the 21st century, the human race has to do a lot for the betterment of women because still many women are facing traumas of gender discrimination, rape and are struggling to secure a place in family and society. Their status has been changed, but still, women in common are under the control of social, cultural and political systems that are controlled by men. Why in the 21st century, the place and situation of women is not the same as we explore? This research seeks to answer this question along with to compare and contrast the

representation of women in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. As Toril Moi, in an article "Feminist, Female, Feminine" observes:

We still need to claim our place in human society as equals, not as subordinate members, and we still need to emphasize the difference between the male and female experience of the world, but that difference is shaped by the patriarchal structures feminists are opposing, and to remain faithful to it, is to play the patriarchal game. Nevertheless, as long as patriarchy is dominant, it still remains *politically* essential for feminists to defend women as women in order to counteract the patriarchal oppression that precisely despises women as women. (128-29)

Women have been taken as secondary or inferior to men throughout history. The inferiority and subordinate position of women can be noticed right away from the first day of Creation. It is believed that God created man as his image. It is also admitted that after making man, God created woman from the flesh of man. The pronoun 'He' is used for God. This suggests that God is male. Whenever a woman tries to rebel against male domination, to get a place for her, she is called aggressive or unfeminine. A woman's road to success or authority is tough. Social, legal and cultural factors along with embarrassments limit women's access to the ways of life. As Simone de Beauvoir points out, "It is hard to know any longer if women still exist if they will always exist, if there should be women at all, what place they hold in this world, what place they should hold" (3).

Throughout the ages, the voice of females has been repressed by the patriarchal systems of society. The oppression and subordination of women mainly

happen because of the existence of patriarchal practices of society. In patriarchal societies, males dominate and exploit females. Patriarchal oppression has remained the prime obstacle in the development and advancement of women. Understanding of the system, which keeps women subordinate and oppressed, is required. In contemporary times where women are moving ahead by their abilities and merits, still, patriarchy creates problems in the ways of women's journey of advancement. Patriarchal social institutions are responsible for the secondary and subordinate status of females in society. Absolute authority and power provided to men in patriarchal society limit women's equal human rights to some extent. The term 'Patriarchy' has been used by feminists to describe the power-oriented relations between men and women, along with finding out the root causes behind the subordination and oppression of women.

The word 'Patriarchy' means the rule of the father or the 'patriarch'. Generally, the term is used to analyze a system of male dominated society where father rules and has authority over other family members - junior men, children or women. In *What is Patriarchy* Kamla Bhasin muses that nowadays the term has been used "to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways" (3). Many theorists have defined the concept of patriarchy differently. A feminist psychologist, Mitchell, in *Women's Estate*, defines the word patriarchy "to refer to kinship systems in which men exchange women" (24). Another feminist, Walby, observes in *Theorizing Patriarchy*, "patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (20). She further says "the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one" (20). So, in a broader

sense, patriarchy means the institutionalization and manifestation of male authority and power over children, women and junior men in the family. In general, the term is used to describe male dominance over women in society. Gerda Lerner, in *The Creation of Patriarchy*, observes that “men hold power in all the important institutions of society . . . women are deprived of access to such power” (239). So patriarchy can be defined as a set of social relations between women and men. Through hierarchy, the system enables men to have authority over women. Kate Millet, in *Sexual Politics*, observes that men dominate “through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women’s subordination to men” (35). Thus patriarchy is a system of social practices and structures, in which females are subordinated, exploited, oppressed and dominated by men.

Patriarchal oppression means the subjugation and subordination of women due to the patriarchal practices that exist in society. Patriarchy provides principal position to men and secondary to women. In a patriarchal family, the father is the head and decision-maker. In this family, the property is owned or inherited by a male child. So, in patriarchal families, the birth of a son is considered a blessing, a moment to celebrate, and the birth of a daughter brings sadness. Patriarchy is an age-old practice as ancient Greeks and Mesopotamian societies liberated husband to have extramarital relations, but the wife was not free. If the wife had extramarital ties, she was thrown into the river. In the article “Patriarchy in the Ancient World: Early Mesopotamia to the Dark Ages” male dominance is discussed:

The most implicit source of misogyny that came out of ancient Mesopotamia was the Hammurabi's Code, which set the law and social order in Babylon. Among rules that dealt with theft and

kidnapping, there were ones that ordered harsh and cruel punishments to women who disobeyed. For example, a man could divorce his wife anytime he wanted, but if a woman wanted to divorce her husband against his will, she would have been made a slave.

The ancient Greek communities were male dominated. Women were suppressed and exploited. They were not free to visit outside alone. They had to perform household duties. Great philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, also considered women weak and inferior to men. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, has observed that man is superior to woman. A man can be a ruler having power and woman can be ruled being powerless. The article, "Patriarchy in the Ancient World: Early Mesopotamia to the Dark Ages", has a reference to Aristotle:

Aristotle viewed women as subordinate. He felt that women were simply inferior- that they were merely deformed or “unfinished” men. He claimed that women were “receptacles” for men and they shouldn’t be educated or seen as rational beings- either he was complete misogynist or just a totally clueless math geek. Either way, his ideas formed the opinions of men for centuries after his death.

Automatically, the patriarchal family systems have made the society patrilineal where a son, a male owns the family property. In this cultural and social system, all issues of social, economic, cultural and political life are controlled by men. Male domination, socialization, cultural traditions, and sometimes, religious traditions are responsible for the suppression of the female voice. Access to education was refused to women, and they were confined to the limited world of domestic life. Social, political and religious thought has assigned women a

subordinate place, and they are labelled as irrational, emotional and less intellectual.

As Simone de Beauvoir observes:

The woman herself recognizes that the universe as a whole is masculine; it is men who have shaped it, ruled it and who still today dominate it; as for her, she does not consider herself responsible for it; it is understood that she is inferior and dependent; she has not learned the lessons of violence, she has never emerged as a subject in front of other members of the group; enclosed in her flesh, in her home, she grasps herself as passive opposite to these human-faced gods who set goals and standards. (654)

The patriarchal system of society upholds females' subordination to men. Due to patriarchal oppression, women did not have equal access to opportunities and rights and they remained subordinate. *Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines the word subordination as, "subordination means having less power or authority than somebody else in a group or an organization" (Hornby 1296). Women's subordination means inferior status and place of women in society, lack of decision making, fewer opportunities than men, and the use of male domination upon women. Various types of discriminations, powerlessness, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem are responsible for the subordination of women in society. So, the subordination of women is a situation where men use authority over women and power relations exist. Feminists, starting from Mary Wollstonecraft to the contemporary theorists and critics, have argued about the patriarchal oppression and subordination of women. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* argues about the other position of women in society. She argues that men perceive women fundamentally different from themselves, and females are reduced to the status of

second sex, and they remain others throughout their lives. Simone de Beauvoir observes, “Humanity is split in two categories of individuals with manifestly different clothes, faces, bodies, smiles, movements, interests, and occupations; these differences are perhaps superficial; perhaps they are destined to disappear. What is certain, is that, for the moment they exist in a strikingly obvious way” (4).

The practices and norms to provide subordination, inferior status, and lack of equal opportunities to women are present everywhere in society, as in families, religion, and social relations. Patriarchy is the sum of the kind of male power over women in day to day life. Women are used as property by men, and patriarchal oppression is responsible for the subordination of women. In *The Creation of Patriarchy* Gerda Learner observes:

The use of the phrase subordination of women instead of the word “oppression” has distinct advantages. Subordination does not have the connotation of evil intent on the part of the dominant; it allows for the possibility of collusion between him and the subordinate. It includes the possibility of voluntary acceptance of subordinate status in exchange of protection and privilege, a condition which characterizes so much of the historical experience of women . . . “Subordination” encompasses other relations in addition to “paternalistic dominance” and has the additional advantage over “oppression” of being neutral as to the cause of subordination. (234-35)

So, for the growth and development of women, their freedom from patriarchal oppression is required. Freedom is one of the essential requirements to be

independent, to acquire a proper place and status in society. Freedom allows a person to breathe freely, to experience life, to make decisions and meet people. But females have been kept in houses, in purdah or parlours and deprived the freedom to flourish. Due to the needs of the society, childbearing, rearing and fulfilling domestic responsibilities, women have been tied to chains. As Beauvoir claims, “There have always been women; they are women by their physiological structure; as far as history can be traced, they have always been subordinate to men” (8). Women’s journey for freedom is a journey of personal awakening and questioning the form of epistemological formulations.

The feminist journey discloses that women have struggled a lot to obtain honour, education, equal rights and opportunities in society. Feminist journey means feminism through ages, across nations and cultures. The process of women freedom has been difficult due to patriarchal, cultural and social traditions because, in these male dominated structures, a male is considered superior to the female. Being superior and powerful men have the right to rule over women. The process for self-discovery of women has necessitated the reordering of strategies to break power structures to provide equality to women. Throughout the ages, women were not provided formal education. They were kept out of the schools and universities, the places of learning, and refused the opportunities of learning and intellectual life. Women's education has been a subject of debate for many centuries. Their access to opportunities for education was controversial, as the important questions were, should women need education? If yes, what should be the nature, mode, and role of this learning? In *Emile*, Rousseau has advocated a different kind of education for females. He observes, “But for her sex, a woman is a man . . . the difference is only

in degree . . . the man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive; the one must have both the power and the will; it is enough that the other should offer little resistance” (321-22). Rousseau favoured to set up a system of relationship, marriage, virtue, and morality supported by subordination and docility of a woman. A woman was considered as prisoner and playtime of man. In marriage, they were used as objects without any property rights. From a daughter or wife, complete obedience and submissiveness were expected. Decisions of women’s life, rights, and wrongs, were decided by men in general.

This kind of attitude of society has been questioned by women from time to time. Women's movement challenged the inferior status provided to women by male dominated social, political and economic systems. Women struggled for education, voting, equality, other legal rights, along with discussing and finding solutions to the problems faced by them. William L O'Neill observes about women’s movement, “The term woman movement appears in the late nineteenth century to describe all the public activities of women, whether directly related to feminist goals or not” (XXIV).

Hundreds of women across nations, languages, and cultures have resisted domination to access educational opportunities, right to vote, right to own property, equality at workplaces and in society. All the changes in the situation of women in society are the result of gradual social and political struggles. Women stepped out of domestic confines and challenged the male domination for education, jobs and to acclaim equality. It is only later that the specificity of being a worthy woman has become an issue. All this has led to an introspective analysis of the women’s self and the right to pride and dignity within it. Even in the 21st century, women's

struggle for equality at various levels is continued. Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own*, observes about the plight of a woman as “Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant, she pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history” (45). Virginia Woolf's these words describe an ironic contradiction of the life of a woman. In day to day life, a man worships her, loves her, needs her, and writes about her. But a man does so for his own self. A woman's impulses, aspects of her life, desires, and interests, which do not relate to the male dominated system, do not fascinate a man.

As a movement, feminism struggled for equal rights of women and to end the superior status of males over females. Feminism fought for the possible changes in cultural and social conditions for the betterment of women. Feminism is a reflection of women's response to life, as a pointer to their status at home and in society, as a catalyst of their feelings and impulses, as a denominator of personal and social relationships and as an index of the cultural conditions prevalent in a particular society. Feminism assumed the form of individual and collective endeavours of women in different countries and at different times to demand equal opportunities and rights in all walks of life. In the 19th century, mostly women had to stay at home to perform household duties. Public speaking was not allowed to women. Women were dependent on men having no civil rights. Only white men had voting rights. Men did not want to provide voting rights to women. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, feminism developed as a force for the freedom of women from male domination. Lorraine Gates Schuyler, in *The Weight of Their Votes: Southern Women and Political Leverage in the 1920s*, depicts:

In 1848, the pioneering women, who gathered at Seneca Falls, insisted that like white men, they too were deserving of ballots. In the ensuing battle for woman suffrage, activities marched in the streets, picketed outside the white house, endured jail sentences, and staged hunger strikes to secure their full participation in the American polity. Their battle for suffrage rights lasted more than seventy years.

(1)

A feminist can be any person who has an understanding of equal rights for women, is concerned with the place of females and acknowledges women's roles towards the development of society. A feminist raises voice for the liberation of women from social, cultural, economic and political means of exploitation and oppression and yearns for the dignity of women. The term female implies gender differences and feminist refers to the political position. As, in "Feminist, Female, Feminine", Toril Moi asserts:

We distinguish between 'feminism', as a political position and 'femaleness' as a matter of biology, we are still confronted with the problem of how to define femininity. 'A set of culturally defined characteristic or a cultural construct' may sound irritatingly vague to many. The words 'feminist' or 'feminism' are political labels indicating support for the aim of the new women's movement, which emerged in the late 1960s. (123)

The 19th century was important for female writers. Women writers raised voice against discriminations in educational institutions, social and political systems. Mary Wollstonecraft, Catherine Macaulay, Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, Fanny

Fern, and George Eliot raised voice against discrimination and for the education of women in their writings. In *Vindication of the Rights of the Women*, Mary Wollstonecraft criticized Rousseau's observations regarding women's education. Mary Wollstonecraft has argued in favour of equal educational opportunities for women. She points out in *Vindication of the Rights of Women* about the importance of education for women, "If all the faculties of women's mind are only to be cultivated as they respect her dependence on man . . . let her grovel contentedly, scarcely raised by her employments above the animal kingdom" (Mary 33). This voice for equality has also been represented in fiction. The characters of George Eliot's novels, like Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*, stand outside the male dominance and seek intellectual satisfaction. Women writers also questioned institutions of marriage, family and community, all patriarchal constructs. They struggled for the respectability, seduction and vulnerable position of women in society. Writers through novels, poetry, and drama represented the subordination of women in society. They started asking questions about their rights and identity. Women had to struggle a lot to get equal rights in society and to get participation in every sphere of day to day life. The journey for equality and rights was not easy for women. Patriarchal societies, family and cultural traditions were the major hurdles in their journey for equality.

Feminist activists oppose the patriarchal concepts and ideas of sex and gender. The patriarchal patterns have provided all the negative qualities to female, as women are considered superstitious, inferior, weak, too sensitive and irrational. The positive qualities are attributed to men, as men are believed to be masculine, powerful, rational, logical and strong. These positive qualities are symbols of superiority, strength, domination, and action. The negative qualities assigned to

females are symbols of being powerless, weak, passive, obedient and inferior. Patriarchal beliefs of the society have projected stereotypical feminine and masculine gender identities where men have superior status and women are considered inferior. A male should be bold, extrovert, dominating, and a female should be docile, soft-spoken, co-operative and self-sacrificing. As Toril Moi, in her book *What is a Woman: And Other Essays*, observes:

If housework, childcare, and selfless devotion are female, heroic traits are male, and so are science and philosophy. Whole classes of activities are now endowed with sex. The modern world is a world steeped in sex: every habit, gesture, and activity is sexualized and categorized as male and female, masculine or feminine. In the transition to the 'two-sex model', man and woman emerge as two different species. (12)

Feminist writing is about gender oppression, subordination, and inequality on the bases of gender between men and women. Feminist writer analyses patriarchal control, gender bias, and male chauvinism issues. Various feminist theories and perspectives developed to explain women's issues, to depict female subjugation and to make them alert. All the theories have some similarities as well as dissimilarities. Feminists realized women's situation as an other and raised voice to achieve a correct position for them. Females are human beings like males, so equal rights should be granted to them.

Feminists differentiate between female and feminine. The concept of the female is biological and feminine is a cultural product. The patriarchal ideology, with the use of cultural practices, creates femininity. As Simone de Beauvoir says

"One is not born, but rather becomes, woman", she adds "it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine" (293). She argues for the opposition between masculine and feminine; with masculine go the qualities like active, dominant; creative, rational, adventurous and with feminine, the qualities, like timid, weak, inactive, emotional, conventional and passive have been attached. All feminist critics fight against this cultural construction and the issues of gender differences. All feminists claim that in this patriarchal ideology, the importance is given to those writings which are written by men. The literary works like *Oedipus*, *Ulysses*, *Hamlet* or *Tom Jones*, etc. have focused on male protagonists who embodied masculine traits, feelings and pursued masculine interests. The females play only marginal roles in opposition to males.

The feminist journey has undergone different phases to struggle for women's oppression and to fight against patriarchy. Different labels of feminism are social feminism, liberal feminism, Women's Suffrage Movement, Marxist feminism, lesbian feminism, postcolonial feminism, postmodern feminism, etc. Women's Suffrage Movement gave a common platform to women to resist patriarchy. Women struggled to get voting rights in the 19th and early twentieth centuries. Lorraine Gates Schuyler, writes, "Woman suffrage transformed the look and feel of southern politics, and white men could no longer refer to the franchise as evidence of their superiority over white women or even African American women" (44). Women's rights activists actively struggled for workplace issues, equal pay, harassment, gender discrimination, and domestic violence. Feminism is also described with reference to three waves- first-wave, second-wave, and third-wave. The aims of the three waves were to interrogate gender discrimination and inequalities. As Margaret

Walters in *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction* observes, "In the 20th century, 'First wave' feminists had demanded civil and political equality. In the 1970's 'Second-wave' feminism concentrated on and gave great prominence to sexual and family rights for women" (137).

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, first-wave feminism's leading centres of activity were the United Kingdom and the United States. The focus of this wave was to promote social equality, education and the right of property for females. Feminists struggled against the status of the owner given to the husband. By the end of the 19th century, activists mainly focused on voting rights for women. Margaret Sanger and Voltaire de Cleyre along with others raised voice for economic independence, social equality and education of women. Raman Selden claims "the Women's Rights and Women's Suffrage movements were the crucial determinants in shaping this phase, with their emphasis on social, political and economic reform" (115). The centre of the first wave was to fight for voting and legal rights for women.

From the early 1960s to the last of the 1980s, second-wave feminism concentrated on equality for women and against discriminations faced by women in day to day life. Feminist Coral Hanisch coined the slogan "The Personal is Political" which remained an essential part of the second-wave feminism. Second-wave feminists encouraged females to understand aspects of their private lives as deeply politicized and made them aware of sexist power-structured relations. Gillian Howie asserts that the starting of second-wave feminism "assumed to be 1968 but a change in emphasis can be detected throughout the 1970s from the earlier liberal agenda of equal pay and opportunities to a broader set of political goals" (48). The activists of this wave focused on reproductive freedom, pay equality, and struggled

against violence at home, gender discrimination, and rape. Marxist feminism was a strong aspect of second-wave feminism. Marxist feminists are interested in the economic ideology of Karl Marx. They point out that women employees face more exploitation and oppression than men due to gender bias. Second-wave activists were capable of providing a sociological and cultural explanation for gender bias. The struggle of first and second-wave feminists centred on the rights of white women. The voice of Black and other minority women was lacked.

During the early 1990s, third-wave feminism started as a reaction to the failures of second-wave feminism. Third-wave challenged the unnecessary importance given to the experiences of white women from upper middle classes. This wave focused on the post-structuralist defined sexuality and gender. They also challenged the second-wave's interpretation of what is right or not for women. Feminist activists of the Third wave are Maxine Hong Kingston, Cherrie Moraga, Chela Sandoval, and Gloria Anzaldua. Many black feminists also struggled for the inclusion of racial subjectivities.

Third-wave feminism is confined to women all over the world. Third-wave feminism was capable to make women aware of rights as well as to attain power. These feminists are confident to struggle against discrimination experienced by females all over the world. Third-wave feminists complained that the experiences and voices of the Second and Third world had been ignored. These feminists concentrated that all women have some shared experiences being women, and they have some different experiences based on race, class, religion, age, geographic location, and physical appearance. They also focus on to define women's rights in regional languages. Sherin Saadallah, in her article "Muslim Women in the Third Wave: A Reflective Inquiry", points out:

The first-wave of feminism represented the 'struggle for equality and integration', the second wave criticized dominant values and sometimes inverted value hierarchies to revalue qualities associated with the feminine'. While feminism in its third wave transgresses boundaries through deconstructing the presumption of a gender binary or the conventional ways of doing politics. (216)

The female writers of the modern period have depicted the voice of women who protested against domination, violence, and oppression. These women writers tried to search for their identity. In the 20th century, feminist writers like Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Virginia Woolf, Dorris Lessing, Sylvia Plath and Margaret Fuller raised voice against patriarchy and demanded equality. Literary works of women in recent times are beyond the criticism of gender bias and they focus on an analysis of culture. Some female writers as Margaret Atwood, Doris Lessing, Margaret Laurence and Margaret Drabble have depicted the women experiences in male culture.

Feminist literary theory and criticism focus on the depiction of females in literature. Feminist critics concentrate on the changing position of women in society and yearn to free females from oppressive restraints. Definitions of what is a woman, the role of culture in constructing identity and human nature are in the centre of these restraints. Feminist criticism is a part of the worldwide movements for equal opportunities and empowerment of women. This is a result of age-old struggles for equal rights for women. Women's struggles for equality are marked by books such as *A Vindication of Rights of Women* (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Subjection of Women* (1869) by John Stuart Mill and *Women in the Nineteenth*

Century (1845) by Margaret Fuller. The complaint lodged by females is that literary criticism since the days of Aristotle has consistently excluded their achievements. By way of redressing the balance, feminist criticism seeks to challenge traditional notions and establish the perspectives and experiences of women which had been marginalized for ages and ages. Feminist literary criticism focuses on the political and social issues associated with women's actual participation in culture. As M. A. R. Habib, in *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to the Present*, points out:

For most of this long history women were not only deprived of education and financial independence, they also had to struggle against a male ideology . . . the depiction of women in male literature – as angels, goddesses, whores, obedient wives, and mother figures – was an integral means of perpetuating these ideologies of gender. It was only with women's struggle in the twentieth century for political rights that feminist criticism arose in any systematic way. Since the early twentieth century feminist criticism has grown to encompass a vast series of concerns: a rewriting of literary history so as to include the contribution of women; the tracing of a female literary tradition; theories of sexuality and sexual difference, drawing on psychoanalysis. (667)

The Feminist literary criticism has challenged the orthodox norms to read literature and feminist literary critics have doubts about the conventional judgment of women writing. Overall, literature has not always represented the natural human beings. Literature and literary criticism have remained specific activities throughout

history. Feminist critics are also enthusiastic about identifying that specificity. Annette Kolodny in “Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism” comments, "Feminist literary critics are essentially seeking to discover how aesthetic value is assigned in the first place, where it resides (in the text or in the reader) and most importantly, what validity may really be claimed by our aesthetic 'judgements'. What ends do those judgements serve?" (15). Kolodny's study shows that if attention is paid towards the realities of females' lives, this will help to understand the worth of women representation. Representation of women in literature is made by the roles provided to female characters in fiction.

A character is the representation of a person in a narrative or dramatic work of art such as a novel, film or play. M. H. Abrams defines the character in *A Handbook of Literary Terms* as “The character is the name of a literary genre; it is a short and usually witty, sketch in prose of a distinctive type of person . . . characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the person says and their distinctive ways of saying it” (45). Derived from the ancient Greek word ‘kharakter’ the earliest use in English, in this sense, dates from the Restoration, although the word character became widely used after its appearance in *Tom Jones* in 1749. From this, the sense of a role played by an actor developed. A character, particularly when enacted by an actor in the theatre or cinema, involves the illusion of being a human person. Since the end of the 18th century, the phrase ‘in character’ has been used to describe an effective impersonation by an actor. Since the 19th century, the art of creating characters, as practised by writers has been called characterization.

The study of a character requires an analysis of its relations with all the other characters in the work of art. The individual status of a character is defined through the network of oppositions that it forms with the other characters. Character is everything in literary fiction. Not that character replaces plot and setting or theme and meaning, but character intimately relates to all these. A character in a narrative can be described through actions, speech, thoughts and his or her interactions with other characters. Different types of characters perform different types of roles in the narrative process. The characters are categorized as flat or static characters and round or dynamic characters. E. M. Forster, in his famous book *Aspects of the Novel*, has discussed about flat and round character. Forster observes that a flat character is built around, "a single idea or quality" (qtd. in M. H. Abrams 45). A flat or static character is represented without much individual detail. A flat character can be described in a single sentence or phrase. A flat character does not change over time. His/her personality does not undergo any transformation and is notable for one kind of personality. A round or dynamic character is a character that has a complex personality. M. H. Abrams describes that a round character, "is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; such a character, therefore, is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like a real person, is capable of surprising us" (45). Round characters are often portrayed as conflicted or contradictory persons. They change over time; usually as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a significant crisis. Round characters tend to be central rather than peripheral characters.

Characterization is a process that the writer uses to describe or present characters. There are two major methods used for describing characters- the direct or

explicit characterization and indirect or implicit characterization. The direct characterization refers to what the speaker or narrator directly says or thinks about the character. In other words, in the direct or explicit characterization, the reader is told what the character is like. The narrator or speaker is used by the author to tell about the character's role, likes and dislikes. The indirect, implicit, characterization refers to what characters say or do. The author shows or presents things that reveal the personality of the characters. The readers try to understand by themselves about the characters. The readers or audiences are obliged to figure out what are the character's likes, dislikes and role.

Feminist literary critics have primarily raised questions about the stereotypical representation of women in fiction and the minor roles provided to female characters. A number of feminist critics have concentrated on Gynocriticism, a term given by Elaine Showalter. Gynocriticism concentrates on the female framework for analyzing works written by women, including journals and letters. The focus of Gynocritics is specifically on feminine subject matters in literature written by women authors for exploring the domestic world, the experience of giving birth, woman-woman and mother-daughter relations. Showalter coined the term "Gynocriticism" in 1979 published essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics". Gynocritics explore new possibilities and dimensions in feminist criticism. Their critical creed has significantly shifted in the post-war stage from women as readers to women as writers. They have shifted their centre from the revisionary reading to the investigation of literature written by women. No English term existed for such specialized critics and hence Showalter invented the term Gynocriticism. Gynocritics have revised the previous texts for the representation of women. Gynocritics believe that a large has to be said and revealed by women, but they are

not able to say by adopting the androcentric governed discourses. They have turned their focus on to the imaginative literature and are striving to see how far it has misrepresented women throughout the ages or contributed to impose fixed gendered roles on them. They are dissatisfied with the wider social and critical situation. In “Feminist Criticism in Wilderness” Showalter points out:

Gynocritics offer many theoretical opportunities. To see women’s writing as our primary subject forces us to make the leap to a new conceptual vantage point and to redefine the nature of the theoretical problem before us. It is no longer the ideological dilemma of reconciling revisionary pluralisms but the essential question of difference. (329-330)

An important goal of feminist literary criticism is to reread, reorder and enlarge literary canon. Some sets of works have come to be acknowledged as major works, as subjects of teaching, scholarship, criticism, and history. Feminist critics like Virginia Woolf, Mary Ellman, Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Betty Friedan, Kate Millet, Margaret Fuller, and Elaine Showalter have analyzed the representation and images of women in literature.

Margaret Fuller’s *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) is an epochal book. This feminist work of Fuller is considered among the first major feminist works. In this book, Fuller points out that women are treated as slaves by men. She says that in the past man was hunter and woman was his hunting. Margaret demands equal rights of education and employment for women. She directs women that domestic roles are not enough for them, and they are suitable for any office job. Fuller says in *Women in the Nineteenth Century*, "If you ask me what offices they

may fill; I reply- any . . . let them be sea-captains if you will. I don't doubt that there are women well fitted for such an office" (345). Margaret Fuller evaluates that inequality between men and women is the reason behind all the problems of society. Women should be given equal freedom and liberty to speak in public. Fuller demands self-independence of women. She further muses, "Let them think; let them act, till they know what they need" (345).

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) has been observed as an eminent modern feminist critic. She has written various books on patriarchy and female issues. Her important works are *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *A Room of One's Own* and *The Waves*. In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), she writes about her experiences of gender discrimination and patriarchy. In this text, she has discussed that a female is the most discussed animal of the world. Virginia Woolf argues that women should be free from censorship because due to imposed limitation women are not capable to use language freely. Raman Selden observes that in *A Room of Her Own*, Woolf has argued that, "Women's writing should explore the female experiences in its own right and not from a cooperative assessment of women's experience in relation to men's" (118). Woolf demands that to create good literature, a woman should have independency. As she writes, "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (6).

In her major contributory essay to feminist literary criticism, *Women and Writing*, she discusses the difficulties of women writers and the phallogocentric world that made education inaccessible to women. In *Professions for Women*, she has discussed various women writers, problems faced by her to be a writer and about her time in prison. She writes that the taboos of society did not allow her to represent the

reality of her own experiences as a female. These taboos did not allow her to express the truth. She discusses that if women want to attain artistic talents than they must free themselves from dependency on men and achieve independence and economic equality with men.

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) is a French feminist critic. Elizabeth Fallaize in her article "Simone de Beauvoir and the Demystification of Women" observes that *The Second Sex*, a path-breaking book, "had a profound influence on the development of twentieth-century feminism" (85). In the book, *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir points out that the majority of females do not have the required freedom to live their lives. She has described the unprivileged status and situation of women in society. Her work inspired the second wave feminist movement. Simone de Beauvoir, daughter of a lawyer father and a devoted Roman Catholic mother, was born in a Persian family. She was a gifted scholar. She received her degree in philosophy in 1929 from Paris University. Her major works are *She Came to Stay* (1943), *Phyrrhus and Cineas* (1944), *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947), *The Second Sex* (1949) and *The Mandarins* (1954). She died in 1986 cause of pneumonia.

Simone de Beauvoir deals with the social position of females from the beginning of civilization to modern days. In a patriarchal society, women are treated as other, the second sex. Females have always been forced to play secondary roles, and the whole society is viewed from the male perspective and terms. Beauvoir has discussed the position of women using three frames of reference- historical materialism, existentialism, and psychoanalysis. Her investigation of historical materialism analyses about the dependence of women upon men in every sphere of life. She discloses that women have been made subordinate in society, and they have

no authority or power in society. They are half of the population but always treated like slaves and children. This derogatory treatment made them incapable of taking an active part in public life along with men. Due to these reasons, women are absent from history. She argues that social, economic and political power always remained in the hands of men; thus men have always influenced the historical and cultural events of society.

Discussing women from an existentialist point of view, Beauvoir describes that femininity has been constructed in society through cultural, social and religious practices. She discloses that the nature of a human being depends upon outside factors. The beliefs and values of a person are the results of the circumstances of his life. So a woman is not born but is forced by society to become a woman. They are taken as objects of desire for men. They have been made powerless and denied their subjectivity.

Women's situation is radically different from men's. She must give birth, and she must endure the bodily changes, distortion, and pain which accompany reproduction. Even worse than the pain is the fact that she is passive in reproduction, a pray to natural forces, not as a creator or manufacturer imposing her design on the world. The oppression of women is even more powerful when it is masked behind nature, behind the belief that it is women's destiny to be passive. One cannot rebel against nature. Consequently, women do not see the world as theirs, take no responsibility for it, and allow their energies to turn to futile substitutes like narcissism, excessive romanticism, or religion. Because transcendence is refused, and women are denied access to the highest human values – heroism, revolt, detachment, invention, and creation. Whether it occurs in the kitchen, job, bed or

university, Beauvoir always analyzed women's oppression in the same way as a thwarting of the human project of self-assertion and self-creation. If women are passive, hysterical, depressed, it is because the world does not appear to them, as it must, to any existentially existing human being.

Beauvoir has used psychoanalysis in *The Second Sex* to disclose the untruth and contradictions in myths about femininity that are to be found throughout religion, literature, popular culture and art. She points out that constructed femininity has no basis in facts. These cultural understandings are rooted in male desire to achieve, own and possess everything. Women are meant to fulfil all male desires. Women have been provided passive roles in myths. Women have no existence without being a wife, a daughter or mother.

Beauvoir argues that females' otherness seems to be absolute because unlike the subordination of other oppressed groups such as Jews and black Americans, women's subordination was not the result of a social change or historical event but is partly rooted in her anatomy and physiology. Women have never formed a majority, and they have never achieved cohesion as a group, since they have always lived dispersed among males. Beauvoir observes "As bourgeois women, they are in solidarity with bourgeois men and not with women proletarians; as white women, they are in solidarity with white men and not with black women" (9). She further argues that "The division of sexes is a biological given, not moment in history" (9). She argues that women's situation will be improved primarily by a change in her economic condition, but this change must also generate moral, social, psychological and cultural transformations. She is confident that women will arrive at "One must certainly not think that modifying her economic situation is enough to transform

woman: this factor has been and remains the primordial factor of her development, but until it brings about the moral, social and cultural consequences it heralds and requires the new women cannot appear” (777). Both man and woman will exist for self and recognize each other as subject. She advises that women can improve their status and conditions by paying attention to their subordinate status and by believing in their strength.

In the milestone, *The Second Sex*, she has disclosed about the position of women at home and in society. She has questioned the very idea of constructed femininity. Even in the 21st century, her work as a whole remains significant and relevant for the contemporary debate of women empowerment and gender equality. Still, her arguments in *The Second Sex* have been used in social and academic concerns because she has emphasized on the male power used upon females. It is a matter of concern that even in the 21st century, society feeds messages of femininity in girls. This work has always remained a highly original approach to define sexual and gender orientation. This text paved the way for equal rights of women in every aspect of life.

Marry Ellman is a freelance writer and critic of America. Her book *Thinking About Women* was published in 1968. In this book, she has disclosed the representation and images of women in literature and literary criticism. She argues that western culture is influenced by sexual analogy and measures everything from this point of view. Mary Ellman explains that certain characteristics are attached to women that reduce their role and development. They are regarded as formless, having a soft mind and body. She explains that women are trampled, oppressed, abused and are passive and not able to rebel against male domination and

aggression. Due to their dependency on men, they lag behind socially, culturally, economically and politically. Men have better education and employment options than women.

Betty Friedan (1921-2006) is another famous American feminist literary critic. Her epochal book, *The Feminine Mystique*, was published in 1963. This book contributed to second-wave feminism and new women's movement. This book is about the difficulties of educated American middle-class females. All these women had everything to live comfortably. They were living in good apartments, their husbands had good jobs, children were getting education in good schools, but they were not happy and satisfied. They were depressed and facing internal chaos. Betty Friedan, in *The Feminine Mystique*, explains:

I've tried everything women are supposed to do- hobbies, gardening, pickling, canning, being very social with my neighbours . . . I can do it all, and I like it, but it doesn't leave you anything to think about any feeling of who you are. I never had any career ambitions. All I wanted was to get married and have four children. I love the kids and Bob and my home. There's no problem you can even put a name to. But I am desperate I begin to feel I have no personality. I am a server of food and a putter- on of pants and a bed maker, somebody who can be called on when you want something. But who am I? (64-65)

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* criticized the idea that women should only find fulfilment through childrearing and homemaking. In this book, she has focused on the identity of women and deduces that women are forced to find meaning in their life through husbands and children. Friedan observes that during

the Post World War II era, middle-class women had new technologies to help them at home, but this also reduced their value at home. Even having everything in their life, women felt that they lacked something. But they could not understand the lack. Betty understood that they all were facing an identity crisis. She argues that women should work to earn money and to establish identity; otherwise, they will face deep depression.

Luce Irigaray's is a feminist critic from France. Her famous literary works are *Speculum of the Other Women* (1974) and *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1977). In *This Sex Which Is Not One*, she draws attention towards the women's object position in western culture. Luce Irigaray did not believe in Freud's 'penis envy' and that due to lack of a penis, a female is inferior. Irigaray believes that a female has to use her potential to prove herself by resorting to a patriarchal perspective. She criticized the exclusion of females from history, structural linguistics, psychoanalytic theory, and philosophy. A woman's identity is attached to nature but a man's identity is attached to culture. She suggests that women have to speak logically to remove the tag of being illogical. She also believes that gender differences are due to the use of language and linguistics. She also argues that every valuable thing is linked with men and less important and valuable positions are linked with women.

Katherine Murray Millet was born on 14 September 1934 in St. Paul Minnesota, United States, in an Irish Catholic family. Kate Millet became an active member of the feminist struggle in the late 1960s and 70s and was also a committee member of the National Organization for Women. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* is a paradigm of women's marginalization. She has argued for the subordination of women in every domain as political, historical, ideological, psychological, religious

and literary. She argues for the politics working against one sex and benefiting the other. Her book appeared when the second wave was at full swing. Kate Millet shows no pretence to hide her anger against the social and cultural mechanisms that work for and contribute to the subordination of women. Kate Millet points out about the role, “which concepts of power and domination play in some contemporary literary descriptions of sexual activity itself” (ix).

Kate Millet has analyzed the working of the concept of power and domination in sexual activity, supporting one while subjugating the other by taking excerpts from Norman Mailer’s *An American Dream*, Henry Miller’s *Sexus* and Jean Genet’s *The Thief’s Journal*. Millet points out that the choice of words, the inherent tone and the activity and passivity in sexual intercourse, in the chosen novels, all indicate towards the concept of subordination and oppression of women. She observes that the circumstances, details, and contexts are speculated to evoke the excitations of sexual intercourse. Kate Millet muses, “It is also a male assertion of dominance over a weak, compliant and rather unintelligent female. It is a case of sexual politics at the fundamental level of copulation” (6). Millet seems to investigate how a male sexual organ empowers a man and how a female sexual organ becomes a means of humiliation for her. She argues that through physical intercourse and with several emotional and physical gestures of contempt, a male tries to hold his authoritative and privileged position and suppresses a woman. Millet points out, “Sex is deep at the heart of our troubles . . . unless we eliminate the most pernicious of our systems of oppression, unless we go to the very centre of sexual politics and its sick delirium of power and violence, all our efforts at liberation will only land us again in the same primordial status” (22).

Kate Millet also argues about the very initial problem regarding the introduction of the term 'sexual politics'. She questions "Can the relationship between the sexes be viewed in the political light at all?" and she answers, it "depends on how one defines politics" (23). Millet seems to conceive 'politics' in terms of power structured relationships and arrangements that support one group of persons to control others. She muses, "The term 'Politics' shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another" (23). Kate describes that in our society what goes widely unexamined and unacknowledged but is still institutionalized is the birthright privilege that enables men to rule over women. She argues that however, it may appear less visible and influential in our society, sexual domination is the "most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power" (25). This is because our society, like other historical civilizations, is basically patriarchal in nature. In every field, power within the society – military, industry, technology science, universities, finance, and political offices, is in male hands.

Kate Millet points out that in patriarchal societies, half of the human race, which is male, controls the other half, which is female. She observes "the principles of patriarchy appear to be twofold: male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger" (25). Patriarchy runs through all the social, economic and political forms and does not mind any variation in caste, class, bureaucracy, and religion. Kate Millet discusses the various factors that contribute to the subordination of women. She argues that socialization of men and women, to behave according to set social and cultural norms, becomes the reason for the origin of sexual politics. Males and females have to behave according to a set pattern held

appropriate for their gender; and in this social system, men occupy privileged positions everywhere, whereas women are compelled to limit their areas of action.

Kate Millet points out:

Sexual politics obtains consent through the 'socialization' of both sexes to basic patriarchal policies with regard to temperament, role and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female. The first item, temperament, involves the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category ("masculine" and "feminine"), based on the needs and values of the dominant group. . . . sex rule . . . decrees a consonant and highly elaborate code of conduct, gesture and attitude for each sex. In terms of activity, sex role assigns domestic service and attendance upon infants to the female, the rest of human achievement, interest and ambition to the male. (26)

Our social circumstances locate male and female in two different cultures which is crucial. Kate Millet opines that as far as sociological factors are concerned, the family is one of the chief institutions of patriarchy which mirrors and connects an individual with a larger society that is a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. The family effects control and conformity, where political and other social authorities are insufficient. The three chief institutions of patriarchy, i. e. the family, state and society, are inter-related and cooperate with each other in the socialization of human beings. Females, as the heads of the household, are regarded undesirable and rarely accepted. Patriarchy grants total ownership to the male head of the family

over children and wife. The patriarchal family emphasizes the legitimacy of the child to ensure that the socialization of a child takes place within the confinement of patriarchy. The economic dependency of women is also a factor responsible for the subordination of women. In a patriarchal society, women are not generally allowed to earn, own or use their hard-earned money. Kate Millet writes about the situation of working women, "Women who are employed, have two jobs since the burden of domestic service and child care is unrelieved either by daycare or other social agencies or by the cooperation of the husbands" (41). Kate Millet ponders over the women's access to education and asserts that the kind and equality of education is not the same for men and women. She argues that patriarchy pervades and dominates women in all walks of life even as far as education is concerned.

Since education is the priority for the liberation of any group long oppressed, Millet makes education the primary threshold of her feminist observation. Women have been natural losers regarding education. Millet has made a comparative study of the views of J. S. Mill and John Ruskin regarding the education of women. Kate has insisted that the sexual revolution cannot reach a fruitful completion until it includes the economic and social equality between men and women.

Kate Millet has divided the history of the sexual revolution from 1830-1930 and 1930-1960. She reflects that all ideas that promote negative connotations regarding sexual activity should be eliminated. A sexual revolution would bring the institution of patriarchy to an end and abolish both the ideology of male supremacy and the traditional socialization of women. According to Kate Millet, the first phase of hundred years ended in reform rather than revolution because the sexual revolution requires a genuinely radical social transformation. Without a drastic

change, it is impossible to eradicate the social evils, i. e. the economic disabilities of women, the double standard, prostitution, and involuntary parenthood, which are most offensive. The essential patriarchal order has remained in society because most of us conceive that any social organization viewed as an alternative to its perpetuation will be chaos.

Kate Millet has made an attempt to express the different ways used for the subordination of women in all spheres of life, along with the factors that play an active role in the marginalization of women. She views patriarchy as a system that precedes its rules and laws in all the sections of society. Millet points out how the formation of patriarchal attitudes becomes a universal reality and the destiny of women. Assuming literature as the solid means of the reflection of society, she has given literary references from Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, and Jean Genet which depict the domination of one group of persons over the other group.

Elaine Showalter is an eminent feminist critic. Her major works in feminist literary criticism are *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), "Towards a Feminist Poetics" (1979) and "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1981). In *Twenty Years On: A Literature of Their Own*, she argues "If there was a female literary tradition, I was sure it came from imitation, literary convention, the marketplace and critical reception not from biology or psychology" (400). Elaine observes that the representation of women has been done by men, and the literary traditions were owned by men. But since the 1960s, female writers, readers and critics claim that women have represented their experiences and have different perceptions.

In *A Literature of Their Own*, Showalter has presented the history of women writings from the Victorian period to the modern period. She has divided the

evolution of women literature into three phases, the feminine phase, the feminist phase, and the female phase. During the 'feminine phase' (1840-1880) the women writers were believed to have imitated the trends of the dominant male tradition of literary criticism. During the 'feminist phase' (1880-1920), women started advocating the rights of minorities and protested against the predominance of patriarchal ideology in patterns of personal and social behaviour. In the 'female phase' (1920 onwards) the mode of opposition and negation of male literary order is replaced by an affirmative stance by women involving a rediscovery of women's text and emphasis on women's tradition of literature. Showalter opines that in part, women have been capable of writing due to the existence of women's tradition in literature. That tradition was ignored on a large scale by a standard of studies. This tradition ignored the pressures of the market and canon controlled by men and enabled females to write about their considerations and concerns.

In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1981) Showalter tries to study literary criticism from the feminist point of view. In this essay, she observes the aims of feminist criticism and wants to discuss a woman as a creative artist. She evaluates the sexual differences based on four models; biological, linguistic, psychological and cultural theories. Showalter recalls the history of feminist criticism and recognizes two distinct modes of feminism, woman as reader and woman as a writer. Feminists want to liberate women writers to show their usefulness. Feminist literary critics revised the earlier representation of women by male and female writers. Showalter finds that the literary texts of the early phase by women writers suggest a tendency to take them less seriously than their male counterparts. In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" Showalter claims:

It is time for feminist criticism to decide whether between religion and revision we can claim any firm theoretical ground of our own. In calling for a feminist criticism that is genuinely women-centred, independent, and intellectually coherent, I do not mean endorse the separatist fantasies of radical feminist visionaries or to exclude from our critical practice a variety of intellectual tools. But we need to ask much more searchingly what we want to know and how can we find answers to the questions that come from our experience. I do not think that feminist criticism can find a usable past in the androcentric critical tradition. (329)

The most extreme statements of gender differences are based on organic or biological differences. Showalter asserts that male critics and writers in earlier phases invoked false phallic and ovarian theories of art to oppress women in the past. Victorian physicians even suggested that a woman's psychological functions just deliver 20 per cent of the creative energy from brain activity. They considered the female brain inferior to male and therefore less intelligent than male counterparts. The feminist critics reject these biological differences and inferiorities. Male critics feel that female writers suffer from a lack of their anatomy and hence are incapable of generating the text. Showalter answers that women can generate texts from their brain, and this brain can be compared to a word processor with microchips and inputs/outputs.

In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness", Elaine Showalter discusses that feminist critics want to know if the sex difference can be located from the language. She also questions about writing, reading, and speaking, which is gender biased.

Female poets and writers have started attacking the normal language, which is male dominated and terms it as the oppressor's language. Feminist critics try to find and use an appropriate language for females as language is the place from where we must proceed or begin. They contrive for a language which is not oppressive and doesn't leave women speechless but instead comforts the user. Showalter further observes:

The appropriate task for feminist criticism, I believe is to concentrate on women's access to language, on the available lexical range from which words can be selected on the ideological and cultural determinants of expression. The problem is not that language is insufficient to express women's consciousness but that women have been denied the full resources of language and have been forced into silence. (336)

Showalter not only hints at the problems in the essay but offers solutions too. She strikes an optimistic note and says that this deadlock is, in reality, an evolutionary phase. She stresses that feminist criticism should be genuinely women-centred, intellectually coherent and independent. She says that women writers and women critics should avoid blind addiction to and thoughtless adaptation of masculine theories and models. She calls for new models based on women's experience and suggests gynocentric theories which are centred on the experiences of women as writers.

All the feminist literary critics emphasize that the analysis of literary works is combined with the social, cultural and historical evaluation of the realities of women's lives and portrayal of women in literature. The focus on the women

consciousness in literature provides unity to various feminist critics and feminist literary criticisms. Women should be conscious of themselves as women. They also learn that they are different from the representations given by men and try to understand that women's writing is the depiction of female experiences. The essential impulse seems for feminist critics is to find out what is a woman with the help of search done in the field of history, psychology, self-reflection, sociology, and anthropology. The belief in female experiences and consciousness has aroused worldwide doubts about theory among feminist thinkers. Christina Crosby, in her article "Stranger than Truth: Feminist Literary Criticism and Speculations on Women", points out:

True stories of women's anger and rebellion are hidden under acceptable cover stories, and the feminist critic must be attentive to the subtle revisions which women writers work on the traditions available to them. Part of their culture, their imaginations working on common cultural material, women writers are also alienated as the second sex. (250)

The experiences of women from all cultures, races, and classes should be represented through literature. The reading, teaching, and evaluation of literary texts should be focused on the representation of women. The need of the hour is to evaluate literature, philosophy, cultural and social taboos to understand how gender has been constructed, implemented in day to day life and represented through language in literature. Gerda Lerner, in *The Creation of Patriarchy*, also argues about the importance of analyzing women experiences:

Women have been left out of history, not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historian in particular, but because we have considered history only in male-centred terms. We have missed women and their activities because we have asked questions of history which are inappropriate to women. To rectify this, and to light up areas of historical darkness, we must, for a time, focus on a woman-centred inquiry, considering the possibility of the existence of a female culture within the general culture shared by men and women. History must include an account of the female experience over time and should include the development of feminist consciousness as an essential aspect of women's past. This is the primary task of women's history. The central question it raises is: What would history be like if it were seen through the eyes of women and ordered by values they define? (147)

The females were denied access to art, education, financial independence, and equal opportunities. The feminist journey throughout the ages clarifies that women had to fight against a male-dominated ideology that made them obedient and silent. Women remained under male control and authority due to social, cultural, economic and political practices. Throughout the ages, they have faced cruelty, oppression, subordination, and taboos of society. The class of women has remained oppressed among all nations, races, and civilizations. They have been seen as second-class citizens throughout history and have been abused, molested and belittled. Subordination of females has become a norm in society. Despite several efforts, even in the 21st century, many women are not able to enjoy the freedom and

are barred from equal opportunities to fulfil intellectual, educational, artistic and professional dreams. Now women are facing molestation, workplace problems, sexism, psychological trauma and subordination in society. According to a report of *Outlook: The News Scroll*, on 9 January 2020, the domestic violence is on top of crimes against women in 2018. The report published in *Outlook* provides the data of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for violence against women as "Domestic violence against women figures as the top category of violence against women in 2018, according to data from "Crimes in India - 2018". As per the data provided by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a total of 89,097 cases related to crime against women were registered across India in 2018. The figures indicate not much has improved when compared to the statistics of 86,001 cases registered under this head in 2017. The crime rate per lakh women population is 58.8 in 2018 in comparison to 57.9 in 2017. So in the 21st century, still, women are facing domestic violence, rape and subordination. The problems for equality for women have been solved during the first, second and third-wave feminism. But still many problems persist in society, which are deeply rooted in patriarchal systems.

In 21 century, many women have access to education, and they have better career opportunities, but still, rape is one of the most traumatic and painful experiences faced by women. On 16 December 2012, a 23 years old physiotherapy intern, Jyoti Singh, Nirbhaya, faced gang rape in a private bus in Delhi. She lost her life due to male brutalities. In January 2018, an eight years old, Asifa Bano was gang-raped in Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir, India. She was found dead after eight days of her disappearance. In November 2019, 26 years old, a young veterinary doctor was gang-raped in Hyderabad, India. She was found dead on 28 November

2019. So, irrespective of age, class, education and region women are facing the traumas of molestation, domestic violence and discriminations. These problems have not been solved even after the efforts of many generations. It is an undeniable truth that the subordination and oppression of women have been continued time after time. These problems persist in societies in the era of the 21st century when the human race claims for many scientific advancements, and the law has provided equality to all human beings in every sphere of life. Equal opportunities and rights should be provided to men and women to grow at a good pace in life. To end gender based discrimination, subordination and oppression among women, the whole human race has to make honest efforts. The journey of many generations has tried to establish a value and belief system for women. The Third Wave feminists couldn't have done it without the Second Wave feminists and the Second Wave feminists couldn't have done it without the First Wave feminists. Writers from Mary Wollstonecraft, J. S. Mill and Virginia Woolf to the contemporary feminist theorists and critics have tried to describe the subordination of women in patriarchal societies through their literary works. The patriarchal system, generated from the participation of male and female, is the main reason behind the sustainability of women's subordination and oppression in society.

Chapter – 2

V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie: Making of the Authors

V. S. Naipaul (1932-2018) is an acclaimed name among the writers of the second half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the 21st century. He was born on 17 August 1932 in a small town Chaguanas, Trinidad. V. S. Naipaul's grandfather emigrated from Benaras (Uttar Pradesh, India) as an indentured worker. Naipaul's father, Seepersad Naipaul, worked as a journalist for a daily paper 'Trinidad Guardian'. Naipaul's father provided him the first model for his scholarly and literary interests. Seepersad Naipaul is considered among the early diasporic writers who wrote about the struggle, problems, and crisis faced by the migratory communities in Trinidad. He published short stories, and his famous volume of short stories is *Gurudeva and other Indian Tales*. Patrick French, in *The World Is What It Is*, observes that this volume of stories "might be dismissed as a literary curiosity, the work of a famous writer's father, but is a book of rare quality in its own right, an early text in the tradition of Indian diasporic fiction that was to develop vigorously later in the century. At its best, the writing has a classical quality" (44). Father, Seepersad Naipaul, was the prime motivation behind his son's, V. S. Naipaul's, decision to be a writer. He influenced his son's creative impulses and time to time motivated him for writing. Naipaul belonged to a migrated Brahmin family. He saw his father's struggle to settle in Trinidad. He has represented the struggle of his father and richness of his mother's family in his autobiographical novel *A House for Mr Biswas*. The family of his maternal grandparents was wealthy. During his childhood years, most of the time, Naipaul stayed at The Lion, house of his maternal grandparents, in an extended family of maternal aunts, uncles, and cousins. All the

family members had to live according to the decisions taken by his maternal grandmother, a matriarch. Children had to follow a strict discipline in the family. In an interview with Patrick French on 12 July 2002, V. S. Naipaul discloses about his childhood:

Children were beaten with a strap or with a stick. Outside, we were surrounded by a language that came from the days of slavery. Parents would say: 'I will peel your backside. I will beat you till you pee. I will make you fart fire.' You can hear the language of the plantation. I think there is a lot of violence in Indian peasant families. But my father and mother didn't punish people too often, though we were surrounded by people being punished . . . What happens in that kind of awful set-up is that lots of quarrels break out between people, and those quarrels were my training for life, my training in life and society – propaganda, alliances, betrayals – all these things. So, in a way, nothing that happened later ever really shocked me. (27)

V. S. Naipaul received his initial education at Chaguanas Govt. Secondary School. Patrick French writes about his schooling, "At the age of five, Vido joined Kamla at the school in the country town of Chaguanas, a simple establishment where discipline was strict . . . Vido took to school work, and was captivated by the rhymes of *Nelson's West Indian Readers*, influential books with distinctive blood-red covers . . . He learned pages of *Readers* by heart" (16). After schooling, he went to Tranquility Boy's School in Port of Spain. Naipaul had to travel by foot five miles to and from school each day. During Naipaul's youth years, scarce educational opportunities were available in Trinidad. In Port of Spain, some expensive

secondary schools were available. Only some national scholarships could help with admission to those schools. V. S. Naipaul bagged a scholarship during an exhibition in 1943 for further studies at Queens Royal College in Port of Spain. French writes that at college he was "Physically weaker than his contemporaries, he was marked out as an achiever, one of twenty children across the island who had won an exhibition" (40).

During the 1950s, the aim of aspiring Caribbean writers' was to be recognized in England. Only four scholarships were available for the whole island, and V. S. Naipaul concentrated on winning a scholarship for further studies at Oxford. Then with hard work, Naipaul earned a scholarship in 1950 to study English Literature at Oxford University. The scholarship to Oxford gave Naipaul his opportunity to break out of a society he describes as saddled with double inferiority because of its background of slavery and colonialism. Israel Shenker writes about an interview in which Naipaul disclosed that Trinidad was no place for anyone with literary aspirations, and he became impatient when he was charged with abandoning his native land:

You have very nice liberal people who go out to a colony- which is deliberately created in an inferior society- and wonder why people in that place are inferior, and if they wish to become writers, they have to leave. They would not ask Hemingway why he left his own provincial town; they would not ask Pound why he left the Middle West. But they ask a man from what they accept as an inferior society. (67)

Naipaul was very curious about his further studies in Britain. His knowledge about England was based on books as he didn't have any first-hand experiences about England. Patrick French observes about this phase of his life as:

As he prepared to depart for England in August 1950, aged not quite eighteen, Vido was highly educated, intelligent, ambitious and emotionally immature . . . Vido was setting out for a country that had been presented to him as the epicentre of civilization. Each aspect of his education had emerged from overseas, yet he had no personal knowledge of Britain. (64-65)

During the initial years in England, at Oxford University, he endured alienation, displacement, mental illnesses and identity crisis that have been noticed in his fiction and non-fiction works. He felt the gap between the England of his imagination and quotidian life there, and between his father's literary aspirations and his lack of connections in London. He stays inclined to this discouragement throughout his life. Naipaul discusses about the reasons for his mental breakdown during the starting years in England:

Loneliness, and lack of affection . . . a man isn't a block of wood that is sent abroad and receives two notches as a sign of education. He is much more. He feels and he thinks. . . . I was just radically insecure, then later I saw that it was the great solitude that was leading to that feeling of insecurity. (French 95)

V. S. Naipaul started writing in the 1950s in London. His first story, "This is Home", was based on the memory of his father building the house in the woods at Petit Valley. Manuscript of his first novel was refused by publishers when he was

nineteen years old. Despite his best efforts, no publisher was ready to publish. Naipaul explains to Patrick French about that rejected manuscript, "I was heartbroken . . . It taught me 'how to take a book to the end'" (87). He was not optimistic about his career as a writer. He did an artistic program for B.B.C. During the starting years of his career, he edited books and worked as a reviewer for *New Statesman*.

V. S. Naipaul and Patricia Hale met at Oxford University when they were studying there. Patricia Hale was seventeen days older than Naipaul. They liked each other and got married on 10 January 1955. Initially, this marriage was a secret from their families. Patricia was more potent than Naipaul during the times of crisis in their life, "Pat, the stronger of the two at this point in their relationship, though, he should be more practical and needed to act fast to save himself. 'Don't shout at me . . . There is no one in the whole world besides me who takes you really seriously'" (French 140). She supported him a lot in writing and publishing his works. She died of cancer on 3 February 1996. After the demise of his first wife, Naipaul got married to Nadira Alvi, a Pakistani reporter, on 15 April, 1996. V. S. Naipaul died on 11 August, 2018 in London.

V. S. Naipaul's debut novel *The Mystic Masseur* got published in 1957. With a lot of struggle and devotion, his reputation grew steadily. His early books enjoyed a good critical reception and bagged many prizes aimed at encouraging younger writers. He achieved the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize for *The Mystic Masseur* and Somerset Maugham Award for *Miguel Street*. He achieved an honorary degree from Oxford; Trinidad's Humming Bird Medal, which had been given to him in 1970 but never delivered; an honorary degree from the universities of York and London, and

in 1993 he bagged the first-ever David Cohen British Literature Prize, awarded for a lifetime's achievements. V. S. Naipaul's novels are remarkable for his personal outlook and experience. In his early novels, he is indebted to Dickens in many ways. He learnt the art of exaggeration and caricature from Dickens. Later, he learnt from Conrad the art of writing about the world. R. H. Lee in *The Novels of V. S. Naipaul* remarks "In this sense, Naipaul's work shows a line of development, something like that from *Pickwick Papers* to *Hard Times*. He has moved from the episodic, eccentric character novels (*Miguel Street* and *The Suffrage of Elvira*) to the sparse, strictly necessary details of *Stone*" (69).

Naipaul has been acclaimed for his deep examination of the difficulties of the people in the Third World who experienced exploitation and hardships. His fiction is intended to represent the experiences of a specific circumstance in which atrocities and absurdities happen in contemporary life. His fiction can be considered as a following of connections between the real and imaginative universe of the author. Naipaul's Third World is delimited to those provinces, whose social orders are made out of migrant individuals. As Peter Hughes comments, "Above all because the writing out of the narrative of decline and fall, of disorder and lack of authority, involves the discovery of a void at the heart of Naipaul's world and it has been discovered through his writings" (31). These immigrants came in these nations as indentured workers. These individuals were rootless in countries in which they lived. They were more defenseless against misuse and exploitation than those colonial and imperial social orders with old indigenous societies. A massive piece of the total populace has been so persuaded of its inadequacy that it acknowledges western qualities as supreme. Even after getting independence, they copy West and

subservience is their typical reaction to life. He discusses with Patrick French, his biographer, in an interview on 22 January 2004 about the writing of a literary work:

If you are travelling for material or to write a book, it isn't that you are self-centred, it is that you are with the work. You are obsessed with what are you doing. And when you start writing, it is such a delicate thing, writing, shaping a paragraph, a page, shaping a chapter, having a sense of the bigger structure of the book, you got to be with it all the time. You are carrying it in your head, and things that upset you are very irritating. (442)

V. S. Naipaul's debut novel, *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), presents the struggles of an islander Ganesh Ramsumair. Ganesh tries his hand as a teacher, a writer, and a masseur. After a lot of struggle, he becomes a successful politician by securing a position as a Member of the British Empire. The author has claimed that the problems of Ganesh are the major problems faced by individuals in our times. In each step of his career, the author is satirizing the rise to power of a country which is about to achieve its independence from British rule.

As a satirist, Naipaul's most impressive achievement is *A House of Mr Biswas*. This novel was published in 1961. This is his fourth novel. In this novel, Naipaul has presented the life and difficulties of Mr Mohun Biswas. Mr Biswas belongs to a Brahmin family, and his ancestors came from India. He faces many physical, economic, identity and existential problems. This novel depicts Mr Biswas as an individual. This novel offered a broad canvas of the tapestry of ethnic groups that formed the island's population and the peculiar 'in-betweenness' of that society.

In *Guerrillas* (1975), Naipaul succeeds in depicting his native Trinidad's original exploration of the motives and pressures behind revolutionary politics and sexual aggression. A Caribbean island is presented after its freedom. *Guerrillas* represents the sweat, heat, colonial effects, abandoned buildings, and industrial estates. Three main characters Roche, Jimmy, and Jane, are in search of something and fight an internal war. They want to fulfil their wishes. Jimmy in *Guerrillas* comments, "When everybody wants to fight there's nothing to fight, in his own little war, everybody is a Guerrilla" (Naipaul 83). The characters cannot believe each other. They live with their incompleteness and weaknesses. Horrific sexual encounters are also depicted in the novel. Gillian Dooley, in "Naipaul's Women Revisited", writes about *Guerrillas*, "It is an original and very candid book, clear-eyed and unsentimental. The sexual act is described in plain, direct language" (165).

V. S. Naipaul's achievement *A Bend in the River* was published in 1979. It's a diasporic and post-colonial novel. In this novel, he deals with the modern human problems like the disintegration of values, social institutions, family relationships, alienation, existential and identity problems of a foreigner in an outsider society. The era of colonialism, in the works of Naipaul, appears as a shifting derailed panorama of lost history. This novel presents the newfound realities of an independent nation. This novel takes us back into the interior of the continent in the opposite direction of the journey of slaves in colonial times. Salim is the main character of this novel. Salim traces his ancestry to the East Coast of Africa. His ancestors came from India. Salim, Inder, Metty, Mahesh, Ferdinand, Zebeth, Shoba, Yvette, Kareisha are the main characters of this novel.

His other novels are *The Mimic Men* (1967), winner of the 1968 W H Smith Literary Award, *In a Free State* (1971), which won the Booker Prize for Fiction, *A Way in the World* (1994), *Half a Life* (2001), and *Magic Seeds* (2004). V.S. Naipaul is also the author of several non-fiction works including three books about *India*, entitled *India: An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990), and two books about Islamic societies, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1981) and *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions* (1998). He has written about the Caribbean in *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies- British, French and Dutch in the West Indies and South America* (1962) and *The Loss of EI Dorado: A History* (1969). Naipaul has published two collections of essays, *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles* (1972) and *The Return of Eva Peron* (1980). *The Writer and the World: Essays* was published in 2002. *Literary Occasions* (2004), is another collection of essays. His latest book is *A Writer's People: Ways of Looking and Feeling* (2007). V. S. Naipaul was knighted in 1989.

The significant subjects that rise out of V. S. Naipaul's books are identified with the issues of colonial and post-colonial individuals such as their feeling of distance from the scenes, their crisis of identity, rootlessness, existential problems and displacement. Naipaul's writings reveal his encounters of being an uprooted individual from a minority race and religion in Trinidad. Patrick French writes about his displacement:

Displacement gave Vidia a distinct view of the world . . . there was no other writer of the stature who was analyzing societies in this detached, global way. V. S. Naipaul was of everywhere and of nowhere, rooted in an English

literary tradition, but outside it. His attitudes and outlook had been formed by his family background, his colonial education and his experiences of Britain and beyond in the 1950s and 1960s: his instincts and prejudices were intact, but his eyes were wide open, missing nothing. (279)

Another critical aspect of Naipaul's books is freedom and dependency. Naipaul's imaginative world, in fictional works, is situated in reasonable outside circumstances and individual lives. He expounds on majority ruled government, opportunity and autonomy in an amusing way. He exhibits his perspective of history as a mind-boggling connection between the individual and conditions, the aggregate slave and separate individual, the exploiter and the exploited, the bondage and imperialism. Naipaul's novels and non-fiction keep on being seen from the edge of his frontier and diasporic reaction to the aggravations and different separations in the contemporary world. In the meantime, one reliable issue and subject in Naipaul's fiction has been to accommodate the various turns and developments in his career; as he has represented the provincial Trinidad of his childhood; England, where he learned at Oxford and has as far back as lived there; his mind-boggling and uncertain relations with India, lastly his journeys through West Indies, South America, India, Pakistan, Africa, and Arab nations. Naipaul has investigated the many-sided and frequently bewildering association between humanity's history and the powers that decide its headings. The connections between the West and the Third World are also one of the main themes of his works.

V. S. Naipaul has bagged numerous honours for his commitment to writing. He received Hawthornden Prize, The Phoenix Trust Award, and The Booker Prize alongside Nobel Prize in 2001. He suggested during the lecture of Nobel Prize, "My background is at once exceedingly simple and exceedingly confused" (qtd. in French

xi). The Swedish Academy, which grants the prize, expressed in its official reference that it respected Naipaul "for having united perspective narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories". Patrick French writes about the reactions of different countries and persons for Naipaul's receiving of Nobel Prize as following:

When V. S. Naipaul won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001, each country responded in its own way. The president of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago sent a letter of congratulations on heavy writing paper; an Iranian newspaper denounced him for spreading venom and hatred; the Spanish prime minister invited him to drop by; India's politicians sent adulatory letters, with the president addressing him to 'Lord V. S. Naipaul'. (x)

V. S. Naipaul's narrative technique has a solid commitment with perception, cross-examination, and updates of national cultural histories, individual destinies and the stories of otherness in the colonial and post-colonial world. Naipaul has utilized his innovative skills to uncover the reality about countries, social orders and subjectivities independent of geology, history and ethnic foundation. He has been blamed for making himself the centre of his reality by critics like Connor Cruise O'Brien, Alfred Kazin, Rob Nixon, Selwin Cudjoe, Nissim Ezekiel, Fawzia Mustafa, and numerous others.

It is confusing that regardless of his genuine and cozy relations with females, in marriage (more than one) and outside it, females have not discovered an essential place in his fiction as contrasted with male heroes and characters. A conceivable clarification of this nonattendance or absence of proper importance to females could be that Naipaul had been excessively required with the world of his familial

background and the misuse of the ethnic and social turmoil of the Caribbean in his initial works. Also, quite a bit of his fiction up to *The Mimic Men* kept on being male-focused, and portrayal of women identity remained absent in a number of his books. A third reason could be Naipaul's failure to find any exceptional notable national women figure who could speak for the social discriminations and exploitation. Henceforth, it must be yielded that women, all through Naipaul's fiction, remain minor or subordinate figures on the planet managed by solid powers, for example, viciousness, mistreatment, physical mishandle, colonization, the racial showdown, and male domination. In his fiction, beginning from *The Mimic Men* to *Half a Life*, females are given only disputable and minor parts to play. As the critic, Gillian Dooley muses in "Naipaul's Women", "Women in Naipaul's first three novels seldom have an existence independent from men, while there are some men who seem reasonably independent of women" (89). Another disputable viewpoint is that females in his fiction are denied regard, nobility, and credibility in a patternless and less ordered postcolonial world. Naipaul has been blamed for being a misanthrope by his critics and the female characters have never been given leading roles in his books. Discussing his first three books, Helen Pyne Timothy observes that the representation of female characters in Naipaul's novels is "extremely harsh, moralistic and judgmental" (306).

Naipaul's portrayal of women is based on the position and the situation of women in migrant families. The first is that females form a class of characters in Naipaul's imaginative world, whose parts and portrayal does not have consistency or improvement in the ordinary sense. Further, the female characters and their depiction constitute a slick division as far as their treatment is concerned. However,

one can state that Naipaul's negative depiction of females in a couple of settings, is similar to his treatment of men, keeps on being available all through his work. Henceforth the female roles fall into a general example in which Naipaul places his characters in the colonial, post-colonial and diasporic societies. Female characters in *The Mystic Masseur* and *A House for Mr Biswas* stay settled in tight and surrounded universes as spouses, sisters, daughters or mothers without permitting to desire an opportunity to have freedom. They remain restricted characters in a customary, static and fossilized Hindu universe of traditions, ceremonies, and rituals. They rarely have a presence free of men. Leela in *The Mystic Masseur* plays the role of a devoted wife and dutiful daughter. The main female character is Mrs Tulsi in *A House for Mr Biswas*. Jane, in *Guerrillas*, is a white woman in extreme conditions. She feels alienated in a new African country, looking for sexual fulfilment and experience and unfit to have confidence in her particular weakness. Yvette in *A Bend in the River* has no identity of her own. To satisfy her sexual needs, she makes physical relations with Salim. In the end, Salim rejects her. So, females in Naipaul's fiction are made to fit into minor roles or has been depicted as helpers to males. Their roles, constrained to either family life or casualties of male control or as objects of sexual interest or unethical relations with men, who frequently look for requital or need to defeat their prior pioneer colonial experiences, seriously confine them beyond a point of confinement. None of these females winds up dynamic specialists of progress or any positive change.

V. S. Naipaul's father, Seepersad Naipaul, affected him in the earlier period of his writing career. His father's effect is visible in his depiction of female characters. His biographer, Patrick French, observes about the influences of his father upon his writings as, "in his own presentation of the past, Vido would

concentrate on the virtues of his father; with the result that Ma's voice can be hard to hear" (28). While reading his novels, when we look at his characters, it is evident that the reflection of his father might be the principal affect a reader can feel and see in the representation of female characters. But it would not be an embellishment to state that the primary character is fundamentally affected by the females throughout his life. Robert D Hamner points out that Naipaul is seen as a satirist who "makes his characters appear unnecessarily ridiculous" (123), and the one who does not have much sensitivity with the human failings, especially with those who belong to Third World.

V. S. Naipaul presents women characters who cannot construct a coherent self. The reason for this lie deep in the pattern of subordination and existential split. Analyzing the outline of brutality, that is part of the lives of the female characters in routine, Dooley asserts in "Naipaul's Women", "He shows neither approval nor disapproval of what was in the world in which he grew up, a fact of life" (90). Dooley observes that if Naipaul is unsympathetic toward the oppression and brutality of women's life, it is due to the social and cultural situations in which he developed. Dooley further points out:

An unprejudiced reading of Naipaul suggests that his reputation as a misogynist is based merely on two or three characters and a few incidents principally from the three novels of the 1970s. The total impression of his wider work is much more complex. He does from time to time portray misogyny in his characters: Jimmy in *Guerrillas* and Bobby in *In A Free State* are probably misogynists, but this does not mean that Naipaul shares their views of women, especially since

he clearly disapproves of their behaviour and attitudes in every other respect. (101)

Sir Ahmad Salman Rushdie is an Indian born British author, essayist and story writer. He is an acclaimed name among the writers of the twentieth century having associations with four nations: India, Pakistan, Britain and the United States of America. He was born on 19 June 1947. He is a son of a businessman father, Anis Ahmed, and a school teacher mother, Negin Butt. Before Salman Rushdie's birth, his family shifted to Kashmir. Rushdie was brought up in a liberal Muslim family along with three sisters in secular ambience. He received his education at Cathedral, a mission school, and at John Connon Boys' High School. After schooling, his businessman father sent him abroad for further studies. He attended a public school in Rugby at the age of thirteen. In this school, he encountered racism and rejection by other students. Due to the political and social turmoil, Rushdie's family migrated to Pakistan in 1962. He was in Rugby, England when his family shifted to Pakistan. About the loss of his family home, Windsor Villa, he observes in *Step Across This Line* "I felt an abyss open beneath my feet . . . I'm sure that if he hadn't sold it, I would have still be living in it" (180).

Rushdie opted for history as a subject of study at King's College. He was free to read books of his choice in this course. In his final year, he was the only student to study a course on Arabic and Islamic civilizations, because the course had been cancelled due to the paucity of students. D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke observes about Rushdie's determination as "a basic sense of cultural identity" (4). So, in his life, Rushdie opted for the less trodden paths. In the 1960s he involved himself in activities of the theatre.

Rushdie didn't join his father's towel business after returning from England. He tried his hand as a producer for a television series on Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*. But due to oppressive censorship, he couldn't fulfil his dreams. Then he joined the advertisement business for ten years. Rushdie states about the value of literature in *Imaginary Homelands*:

Literature is an interim report from the consciousness of the artist, and so it can never be 'finished' or 'perfect'. Literature is made at the frontier between the self and the world, and in the act of creation that frontier softens, becomes permeable, allows the world to flow into the artist and the artist to flow into the world. Nothing so inexact, so easily and frequently misconceived, deserves the protection of being declared sacrosanct. We shall just have to get along without the shield of sacralization, and a good thing too. We must not become what we oppose. (427)

This announcement by Rushdie broadcasts three things all the while: one, it declares worldliness of the writer, experience of his/her awareness and the content; two, it acknowledges the imaginative part of cognizance which is seen as an action; and three, it implies that writing, being the outflow of awareness, is capable its locus. In *Imaginary Homelands* he further claims:

Literature is the one place in any society where, within the secrecy of our own heads, we can hear *voices talking about everything in every possible way*. The reason for ensuring that that privileged arena is preserved is not that writers want the absolute freedom to say and do whatever they please. It is that we, all of us, readers and writers and

citizens and generals and godmen, need that little, unimportant-looking room. We do not need to call it sacred, but we do need to remember that it is necessary. (Rushdie 429)

Rushdie's first literary inspiration was the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, which he enjoyed at the age of 10 in Metro cinema. He was greatly influenced by Sergei Eisenstein's *The Film Sense*, Ted Hughes' poem *The Crows*, *Fictions* by Jorge Luis Borges, *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* and *The Tin Drum* by Gunter Grass. He owes his literary legacy in *Imaginary Homelands* to Dante Alighieri, Lewis Carroll, Boccaccio, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, James Joyce, Frantz Kafka, Bertolt Brecht, Herman Melville, and Miguel de Cervantes. He has praise for G. V. Desani's *All About H. Hatter* and Charles Dickens. Rushdie muses in *Imaginary Homelands* about his debt to Gunter Grass, "This is what Grass' great novel [*The Tin Drum*] said to me in drumbeats . . . Dispense with safety nets . . . Argue with the world" (277). Salman Rushdie further observes about the value of books, "Bread and books: food for the body and food for the soul- what could be more worthy of our respect, and even love? . . . My most beloved books have been fictions" (415).

Salman Rushdie is a writer of the Indian diaspora. His literary works are concerned with diaspora, estrangement, otherness, magical realism, historical fiction and migrations amongst Eastern and Western nations. He began his profession as a copywriter for advertisements. His first novel, *Grimus*, was published in 1975. He won Booker prize in 1981 for his second novel *Midnight's Children*. His third novel, *Shame*, was published in 1983. This novel portrays the political circumstances of Pakistan. Rushdie won Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger Prize for *Shame*. His *Satanic*

Verses, most dubious work, was published in 1988. A Fatwa was issued against him for this work. His novel *The Moor's Last Singh* was published in 1995. His novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* was published in 1999. His novel *Shalimar the Clown*, which was published in 2005, bagged Hutch Crossword Book Award. This novel was a finalist for the Whitbread Book Award and was shortlisted for International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2007. His other novels are *Luka* and *The Fire of Life* (2010). Along with novels, Rushdie has published numerous short stories, as published in *East, West* (1994). His book *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* was published in 2012. His other famous fictional works are *Fury* (2001), *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008), and *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty Eight Nights*. His book with R. Jhabvala and V.S. Naipaul, *Homeless by Choice*, was published in 1992. Some other well-known non-fiction works of Rushdie are *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey* (1987), *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991* (1992), and *Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002* (2002). Salman Rushdie's latest published novel is *Quichotte* (2019).

Even though he appreciates writing, Salman Rushdie says that he would have been an actor if his writing work had not been effective. Rushdie produced a film made on his novel *Midnight's Children* with Deepa Mehta. This film was released in 2012. Salman Rushdie got Knighthood for his contribution to the literature on 16 June 2007. He is from a liberal Muslim family although he calls himself a sceptic. He bagged Booker of Bookers for *Midnight's Children* at 25th commemoration in 1993. Salman Rushdie has achieved the Whitbread Prize for Best Novel, the European Union's Aristeion Prize, India Abroad Lifetime Achievement Award for Literature, Author of the Year Prizes in both Britain and Germany, the French Prix

du Meilleur Livre Etranger Prize, the Crossword Book Award in India, the Austrian State Prize for European Literature, the London International Writer's Award, the James Joyce Award of University College Dublin, PEN Pinter Prize and Writers Guild of Great Britain Award for kids fiction. He is University Distinguished Professor at Emory University. He is one of the most acclaimed writers of the twentieth century. He is an Anglo-Indian essayist whose representative books discuss the social, political and religious issues by using methods of unusual characters, dismal cleverness, and an energized and excessively enthusiastic writing style. Bill Buford muses about Salman Rushdie:

Rushdie, with his godly gift of the gab, is a garrulous storyteller who single handedly returns the English language to the tradition of magic realism: that charmed line extending from Cervantes to Sterne to more recently Milan Kundera and Gabriel Marquez. Rushdie makes a special world, in his determined linguistic frenzy, he inflates . . . a globe that does not match the one we occupy but actually seems to stand as an alternative to it. (22)

In his novels, Rushdie has presented the cultural history of the 20th century, politics of India, Pakistan and Britain and the way of life of these three countries. He also represents the hybrid identities of the post-colonial world. Popular culture, advertising, rock music, aspects of classical and modern India and ways of Western life influence his range for the subject matter. Salman Rushdie is a post-colonial writer because, in his writings, he has presented post-independence societies of India and Pakistan. His novels are preoccupied with the presentation of marginalized, women and downtrodden people. He also deals with dominating tendencies of society to deal with women or other inferior groups. He has used various myths,

including Greek myths and film techniques in his novels. Andrew Blake in *Salman Rushdie: A Beginner's Guide* points out that Rushdie “insists on the hybridity as the crucible for the emergence of the new and who makes no claim to defend authentic traditions, however, of them he might be” (26).

Salman Rushdie is not a writer of a particular tendency, but he is a versatile author of the multicultural world. He has experiences with many cultures, cities, and countries. He was born and educated in Bombay, India, as well as in England. Presently he lives in New York, America. Therefore, he has become the voice of diasporic people. His fiction and non-fiction are based on his views, reflection, and experiences received from many cultures and continents. A. G. Motabai observes about Rushdie:

It is Mr Rushdie's wide-ranging power of assimilation and imaginative boldness that makes his work so different from that of other well-known Indian novelists, such as R. K. Narayan, and the exuberance of his writing from that of V. S. Naipaul. In Salman Rushdie's work, both India and England are re-peopled and take on new shapes. For the Indian subcontinent, there is a more commensurate bigness and teemingness, a registration of the pandemonium and sleaze of contemporary life. (3)

Salman Rushdie's art of portrayal seems, by all accounts, to be an endeavour at defamiliarization of the identity of the characters of his novels. The thought of settled personality does not work, and the characters in Rushdie's books are rootless, hybrid and distanced. They are results of assorted variety and mixing of societies. In *Imaginary Homelands* Rushdie analyses:

Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for the writer to occupy. (15)

Midnight's Children turned out to be an achievement for Salman Rushdie. It was taken as introducing another time in Indian writing in English. John Mee muses that *Midnight's Children* has been an exposition of, "Postmodern playfulness, the turn to history, a new exuberance of language, the reinvention of allegory, the sexual frankness, even the prominent reference to Bollywood" (129). *Midnight's Children* provided worldwide recognition to Indian novel in English and received an overwhelming response at the international level. In his book, *Rushdie's Midnights Children: A Book of Readings*, Mukherjee regarded the novel as "the quintessential fictional embodiment of the postmodern celebration of de-centring and hybridity" (9). In this novel, Rushdie has exhibited the history of three generations of the Sinai family. Salim Sinai, protagonist and narrator, shares the history of his family with his caretaker Padma. Characters in Rushdie's novels move into the genuine and fake worlds.

Saleem Sinai, the omniscient narrator, in *Midnight's Children*, claims "Women have always been the ones to change my life" (Rushdie 565). In this specific situation, Saleem's comment should be taken as a critique of the representation of women. After the publication of the novel in 1981, the above-cited sentence turned into a glimmering point for critics for the representation of the female characters. Nobody can doubt that Rushdie has an affinity with females and with woman's equal rights. In spite of writing various articles, denouncing the

Islamic world's severe treatment of women in economic, political and social circles, the depiction of the female characters in his particular writings became an amazing range of assessments that have differently been applauded and censured by critics.

Midnight's Children contains a captivating representation of the life and role of female participants. Saleem delivers his stories to Padma, the female narratee who once in a while meddles, remarks and criticizes. She is Saleem's caretaker, lover and assumes a noteworthy part in the novel. The word 'Padma' implies lotus and is the image of one who is conceived in sludge and mud. She is ignorant and illiterate. Saleem opposes Padma's aesthetic insight. He conceives that he is better than her in insightfulness. Padma remains a genuine critic of Saleem. Her marvellous control over Saleem can be felt when we see that she is Saleem's good listener and audience. Her basic reaction to the narrating is radiant. Saleem says, "I must intercept myself. I wasn't going today because Padma has started getting irritated. Whenever my narration becomes self - conscious, whenever, like an incompetent puppeteer, I reveal the hands, the strings" (Rushdie, *Midnight's* 83).

The character of Padma brings out much discussion and criticism among critics. Alongside Saleem, the storyteller, she remains the major character who contributes towards the moulding of the whole account. As it were, she remains the co-maker of the story. She remains exceptionally faithful beloved and devoted caretaker. Critics have seen in her association with Saleem, an impression of a conventional Hindu spouse who is generous and completely committed to her significant other. Their association prompts the making of an anecdotal universe. Padma plays the part of a good spouse, secretary, and companion to Saleem. She does kitchen work for Saleem; prepares the bed for him and stays occupied for him.

She stays tame, fair and devoted. Saleem underestimates Padma's dedication. Saleem is capricious and has no time for this rural young lady. It is her adoration for Saleem that has caught her, she pines for his affection; "So then I thought, how to go back to this man who will not love me and only does some foolish writer. Forgive Saleem Baba, but I must tell it truly, and love to us women is the greatest thing of all" (267).

The Moor's Last Sigh, published in 1995, is about the history of rich da Gama and Zogoiby families. Moraes Zogoiby, son of Abraham Zogoiby and Aurora da Gama Zogoiby, tells the history of his family with the help of flashback. This novel reveals the political, social, and economic circumstances of India before and after independence. In this novel, Rushdie represents the corruption and underworld present in Indian society and politics. Rushdie has also represented vibrant and powerful women characters such as Aurora Zogoiby, Isabella da Gama, Epifania, Flory, and Uma Sarswati. These women characters play an important role in the narrative.

At the starting of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), Vina Apsara, a celebrated and much-cherished singer, dies due to an earthquake. Story of the novel revolves around Vina, and her devoted lover Ormus Cama, who discovers, loses, looks for and again discovers her through his own uncommon life in music. Their epic sentiment is described by Ormus' companion and Vina's lover and friend, her "back-door man," the photographer Rai. Recounting the tale of Ormus and Vina, he finds that he is likewise uncovering his particular certainties; his human failings and his undying longings. The novel is set in India, particularly in Bombay, America, and England. This novel is not only about rock-n-roll but is about materialistic-

globalized society. Rushdie observed about the novel, “This book is not a novel about rock’n’roll, but an attempt to respond to the evolution of world culture in the last half-century” (qtd. in Rollason 122).

Vina Apsara, an awesome singer, and Ormus Cama, her darling and future spouse, holds the way to the pivotal excellence of music compositions. Third most important character of the novel Rai, a photographer, is the manifestation of general society’s outlook and the representation of the media. Novel restores the fantasy of Orpheus, the legendary limit between the living and the dead. After Vina's demise, the miserable Ormus Cama tries to replace her on stage with resembling Mira Celano. Vina is revered for her ability, her outrageous genuineness and her eagerness to share her most private encounters.

An enormous number of males wanted her body and longed for her company during the evenings. Not only men but women of all ages appreciated her and were thankful for her frankness, her dauntlessness, and her musicianship. People respect Vina for her battle against starvation and her fight for the benefit of different natural and vegetarian organizations. She was seriously popular, remarkably photogenic, and overwhelmingly provocative. She was the foremost whiz of the time and is bold enough to expose her scars, to carry on with her private life in public, to discuss her injuries, her errors, her deficiencies. Great, effective and successful Vina Apsara is viewed as a normal woman having defects yet commendable, solid and feeble, independent and imperfect. She was a rock star and however, she was unrealistically like one of us.

Shalimar the Clown (2005) had been shortlisted for the Booker Prize. This novel bagged Crossword Fiction Award and was a finalist for the Whitbread Award.

In this novel, Rushdie has represented love, hate, urge for freedom, adultery, and terrorism. Boonyi, daughter of a Kashmiri pundit, and Shalimar, son of Muslim Abdullah Noman, love one another passionately. Their relation is accepted in the name of Kashmiriyat, and they get married according to Hindu and Muslim rites. Their marriage proves that the people of Pachigam believe in harmonious coexistence. After marriage, Boonyi finds that her life is like a bird in a cage. When Maximilian Ophuls, US ambassador to India, comes to visit Kashmir, she finds a way for her freedom and becomes his mistress. After her elopement, Shalimar chooses the path of terrorism and becomes a killer. Max and Boonyi are murdered by Shalimar. The novel unravels the unrest of Kashmir and the life of people in a globalized era.

Boonyi, in *Shalimar the Clown*, is the main character of the novel. She has to repay for her actions. She wants to achieve the heights of career as a dancer. But she comes to know too late that she wants to escape from her rustic life, "She knew then that she would do anything to get out of Pachigam . . . she would move faster than fortune" (Rushdie, *Shalimar* 213). She has longings to excel in her life. She wants a marvellous life far away from the village, Pachigam. Boonyi is a simple rural girl who wants to achieve big dreams. But she is misguided by the persons on whom she believes most. Boonyi wants to go away from a working rural middle class. At last, Boonyi finds that the new liberated life she had attempted to make for herself was not free from betrayal. The independence, she decides for herself, is false. In the character of Boonyi, the impulse for freedom can be discovered, yet she loses herself seeking liberation.

Rushdie was criticized that his work comprised of a progression of entirely misogynistic writings by early feminist critics. A large number of the more critical

articles and essays were written by 1983 after the arrival of *Shame*. In *Shame*, a fictionalized history of Pakistan after freedom, female persecution is at the core of its story. In a powerful evaluation, Inderpal Grewal, in "Marginality, Women and Shame", contends that, "there is a disjunction between the mode of inclusion in which the narrative is written and the authoritative stance of the writer suggested in the novel, a stance that breaks down the coalition between the writer and women" (125). Catherine Cundy, in "Rushdie's Women", writes for his representation of females, "Women in Rushdie's novels are invoked to prove a point about social injustices and inequalities, and then effectively demeaned . . . or marginalized by the writing itself " (17). In the late 1990s, a more thoughtful perspective of Rushdie's books was given by feminist critics. A considerable lot of these critics state that although Rushdie's depictions of females are frequently hazardous, he has challenged the male dominance. Justyna Deszcz, for instance, in "Salman Rushdie's Attempt at a Feminist Fairytale Reconfiguration in *Shame*" states that instead of "Beauty and the Beast" children's story, Rushdie's *Shame* "can be treated as postmodernist feminist subversion of Euro-American androcentric culture" (27). In "Marching in from the Peripheries: Rushdie's Feminised Artistry and Ambivalent Feminism", Ambreen Hai indicates that Salman Rushdie as a postcolonial writer represents women who have "a distinct oppositional creativity" (17). Lamentably, the potential progressiveness of this illustration is undermined by Rushdie's steady inversion to a gender oriented style of portrayal. Harveen Sachdeva Mann also provides similar observation that in spite of his endeavours at the feministic approach in *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie "largely fails to champion the cause of women" (294). Among all the dissonance of voices, Aijaz Ahmad's words, in "Salman Rushdie's *Shame*: Postmodernism, Migrancy and

Representation of Women”, are true that Salman Rushdie isn’t, "a misogynist, plain and simple" (143).

V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie both are post-colonial and diasporic writers. They both have experienced alienation, displacement, homelessness, and rootlessness in their lives. V. S. Naipaul was brought up in a tradition-bound patriarchal immigrant Hindu family in Trinidad. He received his early education in Trinidad and went to England for higher studies. He spent most of his early childhood in an extended joint family at The Lion, house of his maternal grandparents. His father became his prime motivation to become a writer. His writing is influenced by the patriarchal mindset. His maternal grandmother was authoritative, but the relations between his father and maternal grandmother were never cozy. The influence of his personal experiences is visible in the portrayal of female characters. As far as his selected novels are concerned, all the protagonists are male characters, the centre of the novels, and female characters are provided subordinate roles only. Male characters as Ganesh, Mr Biswas, Peter Roche, Jimmy Ahmed, and Salim dominate over the females and take important decisions that affect the lives of their female counterparts. Women characters as Leela, Shama, Mrs Tulsi, Jane, and Yvette are dependent upon their male counterparts. In *The Mystic Masseur* and *A House for Mr Biswas*, all the female characters live in traditional patriarchal stereotypical societies. They are docile, submissive and lack the required freedom in their lives. Jane in *Guerrillas* and Yvette *A Bend in the River* are white women. They have freedom in their lives, but they end up as sex objects only. They are rejected by Jimmy and Salim, their partners for sexual adventures. All the women characters, in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul, have to follow the restrictions forced upon them by patriarchal societies. They face

discrimination and cannot raise any voice. If they try to raise a voice, then they are forced to be silent. Leela, Shama, Chinta, Sushila, and Soomintra all are stereotypical wives, mothers, and daughters only. At the end of the novels, Leela and Shama have better relations with their husbands, but they remain dependent wives only and do not have any identity of their own.

Salman Rushdie, like V. S. Naipaul, is a writer of postcolonial and diaspora societies. He has represented globalized societies through his fiction and non-fiction. He spent his early childhood in India in a Muslim but secular family. He received his early education in India and for further education, he went to England. Like V. S. Naipaul he has faced alienation, displacement, and homelessness in his life. The study of his novels reveals that female characters in his selected novels play significant roles. Their urge to fulfil dreams forces them to stand against their families and society. In *Midnight's Children* Naseem, Amina, Padma, and Jamila Singer are strong representations of the female voice. They help their families to solve the crisis. Amina and Padma play roles of dutiful spouses and are conscious about their selves. They make rational decisions for the wellbeing of their families. Naseem is a dominating wife and mother. These female characters make an important place for themselves in their families. Aurora is the prime attraction in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Flory and Epifania are matriarchs. Aurora's mother, Isabella, proves her to be a successful businesswoman. Aurora's daughters are free enough to choose their careers. In the life of the protagonist, Uma Saraswati becomes as important as his mother, Aurora. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* revolves around Vina Apsara, a star musician, businesswoman and lifeline of Ormus Cama. She is a self-made woman who has to face many struggles in her life to be successful. In this

novel, Mira Celano is introduced as a single mother of a daughter. She tries to replace Vina in the world of music and experiences rejection and acceptance from the audience. At the end of the novel, she is successful to settle her life with Rai. Boonyi and her daughter, India/Kashmira Ophuls, are representations of women's urge for freedom in *Shalimar the Clown*. Boonyi denies her family to live her dreamy life. India/Kashmira is a modern and independent girl who challenges Shalimar for the murders of her parents. Boonyi's mother, Pamposh, explores the repressed sexual desires of women in the novel. But all the female characters in Salman Rushdie's selected novels are not as free they seem. Some of them have to face discrimination and subjugation in their lives as they have to wear the burqa, face molestation and many of them die at the end of the novels.

Both these renowned novelists, V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, have been criticized for the representation of females in their novels. In the selected novels of both these writers, protagonists are male characters. But a primary study of the selected novels reveals that Salman Rushdie's female characters are more powerful presentations from the feminist perspective. Naseem Aziz, Padma, Vina Apsara, Aurora Zogoiby and Boonyi are a powerful exploration of the female perspective than Leela, Jane, Yvette, Shama, and Mrs Tulsi. Salman Rushdie's female characters represent the conscious part of women. Rushdie's exploration reveals that they have an urge to survive, and they struggle for survival. Rushdie's female characters are illiterate or less educated, but they are self-conscious. They love freedom in their life. Women characters in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul are part of patriarchal societies and remain silent. Unlike the female characters of V. S. Naipaul, Rushdie's female characters are decision makers. They take strong

decisions for the betterment of their families. They don't play the roles of unpaid wives, mothers or daughters. Rushdie's female characters are more secure economically than V. S. Naipaul's female characters. They spend their life on their terms. But at the end of Rushdie's selected novels, most of the female characters, Amina, Aurora, Vina Apsara and Boonyi, die but some of Naipaul's female characters, Shama, Savi and Leela, are satisfied in their life. The representation of women, the roles played by women characters in the progression of the story, their influence on the growth of major characters, their experiences of marriage, love and sex have been analyzed in the next chapters.

Chapter – 3

V. S. Naipaul's Portrayal of Women in the Selected Novels

Feminism is a social movement that focuses on gender as the main component in the construction of power relations between a male and a female in society. Feminism emphasizes political, social, and economic theories to deal with the issues of gender difference and demand equality of sexes in society. This movement has changed the significant society perspectives ranging from culture to law. Feminist literary criticism has an important influence on the portrayal of women in literature. Feminist literary criticism has criticized the patriarchal ideologies and gender hierarchies represented in literature and concentrated on the role of female characters in literature. This domain of criticism is focused on the depiction of women and the dominance of a male upon a female in stereotypical patriarchal families and societies. In typically traditional families, women are taken as passive members, and they face oppression and subordination. Representation of stereotypical roles and images of females is the main concern of feminist critics which has damaged their self-perception. The narrow roles of females have been criticized. Throughout the centuries, feminists have concentrated on making women aware of their subordinate status and situation in society, where they are provided with a supportive role to play rather than the choice to take decisions. Simone de Beauvoir claims for the inferiority of women:

Women's inferiority . . . is not in itself sufficient to account for the oppression she has suffered. What was harmful for her that . . . she was excluded from the human *Mitsein*: that woman is weak and has a lower productive capacity does not explain this exclusion; rather, it is

because she remained enslaved to the mysteries of life that the male did not recognize in her an equal. (89)

In patriarchal societies, the roles of males and females are decided even before the child is born. Males are meant to play active parts as earning money, deciding all family matters, and dealing with the outside world. Females are limited only to their homes. They cook and serve food, take care of kids and elderly persons in the family. The world of a woman ends with her family, which reduces her merely to a component in the household machinery. She sacrifices her wishes and dreams for the sake of her family. Her world shatters if her family suffers. She is brought up in a certain way to play these domestic roles. This behaviour of females is the result of the patriarchal socialization of many centuries. Both males and females contribute to the subjugation of females. As Kate Millet opines that family is one of the primary units where females are instructed for a certain type of behaviour:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. Mediating between the individual and the social structure, the family effects control and conformity As the fundamental instrument and the foundation unit of a patriarchal society, the family and its roles are prototypical. Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads. (33)

Females are oppressed and made subordinate to restrict them to be rational human beings. Their subordination makes them irrational, indecisive, passive and weak. Females, half of the population, must be liberated from the taboos to become active, self-determining and rational human beings. They should not be controlled by oppressive social ideologies and structures. It is a matter of great shame that in the 21st century when the technology is so advanced and many luxuries and facilities are available, the situation and status of women in society has not improved to the desired level. In this era of scientific advancement, where equality has been provided by law to all human beings, in almost all the nations, women depend on the support of their male counterparts, adjust with the circumstances of life, sacrifice themselves for the sake of the family, accept insult and inequality passively. They are made objects of male desire. Kate Millet opines about the difference between men and women:

While connected to economics and other tangibles of social organization is, like racism, or certain aspects of caste, primarily an ideology, a way of life, with influence over every other psychological and emotional facet of existence. It has created, therefore, a psychic structure, deeply embedded in our past, capable of intensification or attenuation, but one which, as yet, no people have succeeded in eliminating. (168)

Feminist critics have challenged from time to time the ideal of male domination in family and society. The life of females is controlled by masculine values. Male dominated figures have been depicted again and again in literature. Patriarchal ideologies provide men with the roles of protagonists, decision-makers

and active participants of the action, while female characters are provided subordinate role to play who are indecisive. The societies, about which, Naipaul chooses to write is no exception to these norms. In the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul, *The Mystic Masseur*, *A House for Mr Biswas*, *Guerrillas*, and *A Bend in the River*, set in patriarchal societies, the female characters play a subordinate role and are indecisive. They are used to satisfy male desires, and they are victims of male dominance. If they want to do anything in life, they have to depend on male support. Some of them even do not know that they have the right to say 'no'. Bearing and rearing of children along with to follow father, mother, brother or sexual partners, is their way of life. V. S. Naipaul's women characters belong to traditional, patriarchal, and stereotypical families. He portrays the larger world of colonial, post-colonial and globalized societies. In his selected novels, women do not have their own identity. They are dependent on the males in their life. Ramabai Espinet in "The Invisible Woman in West Indian Fiction" opines about V. S. Naipaul's depiction of female characters:

In the novels by this author, women play only supporting roles and are not so successful as their male counterparts. The invisibility of women in V. S. Naipaul's novels springs from the old Hindu custom which declaims against actually seeing Indian women. (430)

In his own life, Naipaul had several kinds of relations with women. During his childhood, Naipaul was brought up in an extended family with sisters, brothers and many cousins at The Lion, house of his maternal grandparents. In this house, his Nanie, his maternal grandmother, a matriarch, was the decision maker. He was very close to his mother, a number of sisters and he devotes a full chapter in *Enigma of Arrival* to the death of his sisters. His elder sister, Kamla, helped him financially

many times when he was at Oxford University. Patrick French, in *The World Is What It Is*, writes that in a letter, available at the archive of Tulsa University, he asks his sister to send some money, "This is a desperate plea for help . . . I am broke, broke, broke. Can you send me \$5-\$10?" (94). He visited prostitutes when he was a student in England. In an interview taken by Patrick French, Naipaul discloses about his sexual adventures in London as a young man, "I used to go actually for the sex in head, that kind of excitement. . . . I was lured by the idea of bodies. I found them very attractive" (151).

Naipaul's representation of female characters is affected by the courtship with his wives, particularly Patricia Hale, his first wife, his affair with Margaret Gooding, and his second marriage with Nadira. In many of these and other relationships, Naipaul's ethical-moral stance has been taken by some critics, including Patrick French, his biographer, questionable; the way he ignored his first wife to suffer and die. They had a love marriage, and she helped Naipaul during times of crisis when he was a struggling author. However, he ignored his wife when she was suffering from cancer. Naipaul had a love affair with Margaret Gooding and he thought to get divorce from Patricia. He discussed the matter with his friend Diana Athill, and her reaction was, "How dare you? Now you are famous, and people are around you? You have a wife who has been working for years to make you write your books. It's disgusting. She has taken care of you" (qtd. in French 324). His beloved Margaret Gooding was a married woman. She was very passionate about Naipaul. Patrick French observes about their relationship, "Margaret was Vidia's ideal woman, a woman of a kind who had existed previously only in his fantasy life: he could string her along and mistreat her, with her abject consent. Margaret was unlike Pat in almost all respects: tempestuous, cynical and

sexy” (320). All these observations point out an ambivalent attitude for female identity, biology, and cultural ties.

Naipaul's art and vision are not directly concerned with the portrayal of women or their significance. Women are imperatively a small part of the larger disturbance that forms the subject matter of his writing. He always thought that no women writer was as capable as he was. In an interview given to ‘The Guardian’ and published under the title “Nobel Laureate V. S. Naipaul Says No Women Is His Literary Equal”, V. S. Naipaul said, "I read a piece of writing and within a paragraph or two I know whether it is by a woman or not. I think [it is] unequal to me". His interviewer asked if he considers any female writer his equal, and his answer was no. About Jane Austen, he says in the same interview, "couldn't share her sentimental ambitions, her sentimental sense of the world." He further says "sentimentality, the narrow view of the world" interferes when a woman writer writes and "inevitably for a woman, she is not a complete master of a house, so that comes over in her writing too". A literary critic and journalist, Alex Clark, replied for his cynical comments, "It's absurd. I suspect V. S. Naipaul thinks that there isn't anyone who is his equal. Is he really saying that writers such as Hilary Mantel, A. S. Byatt, Iris Murdoch are sentimental or write feminine tosh?" (“Nobel Laureate”). Another literary critic of The Daily Telegraph, Helen Brown, reacted for his criticism of women writers, “It certainly would be difficult to find a woman writer whose ego was equal to that of Naipaul. I’m sure his arrogant, attention seeking views make many male writers cringe too. He should heed the words of George Eliot- a female writer- whose works have had a profound impact on world culture than his” (qtd in “Nobel Laureate”).

The Mystic Masseur and *A House for Mr Biswas* are largely set in the Indian communities of Trinidad and India. Naipaul has presented Indian communities in Caribbean lands in both these novels. Female oppression, orthodoxies regarding women's education, including their status in society and family, the hindrances in their progress are an inseparable part of this community. A considerable segment of the population in these communities believes in age-old customs of treating men and women differently. There is a range of female characters of dominating and dominated types in these novels. Some female characters are powerful and dominate to dictate their decisions in family life, but their domination is dependent on the status of their husbands. Many of the female characters have to face domestic violence. They are given only primary education and are confined to housework only. Aameena Gafoor, in "The Depiction of Indo-Caribbean Female Experience by the Regional Women Writers," points out about the portrayal of women in Indo-Caribbean fiction, "Women play crucial roles within the family that is matriarchal in nature but patriarchal in appearance, which means that women have limited power and opportunities for independence" (128).

Naipaul's classic comedy *The Mystic Masseur* narrates the struggle of a failed pundit, Ganesh Ramsumair, in Trinidad. He tries his hands as a school teacher, writer, masseur and finally as a politician. He marries a 'good girl', Leela. Leela first appears in the novel as a shy but cheerful girl, daughter of Fourways' shopkeeper Ramlogan and later as Ganesh's wife. Ramlogan boasts about Leela's intelligence and education, which only means that she can read as well as write and is exceptionally fond of punctuation marks. Ganesh remains an active agent of the narrative, and Leela has been provided supportive role only. At the starting of the novel, she is a shy girl but becomes a strong woman and by using her husband's

influence, she is able to achieve whatever she wants. Like a typical good wife, she follows her husband, but when the situation demands she opposes the rash deeds of her husband. She is lively and active but is not allowed to cross the limits of a traditional daughter or wife's role to rebel against male power. Simone de Beauvoir's claim is quite suitable for the role of Leela:

When she is a young girl, the father has total power over her; on marriage, he transmits it entirely to her spouse. She is his property like the slave, the beast of burden, or the thing . . . under the patriarchal regime, she was the property of a father who married her off as he saw fit; then attached to her husband's household, she was no more than his thing and the thing of the family . . . in which she was placed. (94)

In this novel, Leela is used as an object or thing that can be used for personal gains. She is used as a contract between Ramlogan and Ganesh for financial gains. They both want to gain profits from the marriage of Ganesh and Leela. Leela is treated as a burden or “the debts of previous life” which her father wants to shed. The narrator in *The Mystic Masseur* says about Ramlogan's attempt to trap Ganesh for his daughter; “Ramlogan had a sixteen years old daughter he wanted to be married, and wanted to be married to Ganesh. It was an open secret in the village. Ganesh was always getting little gifts from Ramlogan—a special avocado pear, whenever he passed the shop Ramlogan was sure to call him in” (Naipaul 22). When the marriage of Ganesh and Leela is finalized, she is very happy and feels proud to be the wife of an educated person. But for Ganesh, this marriage is only a business to get dowry from Ramlogan. Ganesh's desires for money stigmatize their marriage

relationship, and they have to face interferences of Ramlogan. Ganesh marries Leela because he needs a wife to do domestic work. He is not very enthusiastic about his marriage.

Leela and Ganesh's married relationship does not move in the right direction at the start. In the beginning, Leela often cries for the bad behaviour and negligence of Ganesh. He not only ignores her but beats also. He criticizes her father for not giving sufficient dowry. After marriage, Ganesh is taught by his aunt, The Great Belcher, to use a whip for his wife to keep her under control. Thus, even some older women also provoke men to use power over women. Women like Great Belcher are the result of patriarchal socialization, who are not ready to leave age-old practices of patriarchy to subjugate women. As Beauvoir claims, "Marital power is rigorously exercised, both over the wife herself as a person, and over her possessions" (130). Leela is also brought up in a tradition-bound Hindu family. She has seen from childhood how women are treated in day to day life. She feels proud that she is mature enough to have a husband who beats her. It seems that in traditional orthodox Hindu families, wife-beating is acceptable. Dooley in "Naipaul's Women" describes wife-beating as it, "becomes a source of pride for both husband and wife, a sign that the marriage is working as it should" (89-90). In the novel, the narrator also observes that beating is like a privilege to a wife. Nobody opposes it and interferes between husband and wife. In *The Mystique Masseur*, narrator comments about the first beating of Leela by Ganesh:

It was their first beating, a formal affair done without anger on Ganesh's part or resentment on Leela's; and although it formed no part of the marriage ceremony itself, it meant much to both of them.

It meant that they had grown up and become independent. (Naipaul 49)

In Indian orthodox traditions, wife-beating works as a confirmation certificate of the wedding of a couple. It is also confirmation of domination of husband over the wife. Leela and Ganesh's marriage is quite ordinary. Many times, they quarrel and face difficulties, and their relationship lacks mutual understanding and love. They are reconciled with their roles of a wife and a husband; they respect each other but do not dare to ask for more. Soon Ganesh comes to know that Leela is not able to conceive a child, so he "lost interest in her as a wife and stopped beating her. Leela took it well, but he expected no less of a good Hindu wife" (63). They never enjoy romantic love in their life. When they lost hope for a baby, they also lost the need for sexual relations.

Leela has always to change her house where ever Ganesh goes to adjust his life and occupations. Due to her husband, she faces displacement. She cooks food for him, washes his clothes, waits for him and bears his frustration. It is after nine years of her marriage that she gets a chance to fulfil her desires of partially active life when Ganesh is wealthy enough to support her social activities. She opts for the social work and contributes to the paper 'The Dharma'. The paper is published by Ganesh. So indirectly, she only plays the role of a dutiful wife. Her social work and contribution depend upon the consent and assistance of her husband. As Kate Millet points out, "she lives under the first as well as the last, or longest, rule of force in the history of tyranny . . . a woman is no more than a bondservant in marriage" (99).

It is evident that women help men in their worst times, yet they are discarded in their good times. Leela too accompanies Ganesh in his struggle like a dutiful wife,

but during the celebration of his victory, when he becomes a successful politician, she is almost absent from the scene. The male dominated society in Naipaul's works fails to understand the psyche of the other sex. If Naipaul's protagonists live on the periphery and remain segregated from the mainstream of Europe due to the racial discrimination, then his women suffer double, since they live under suppression and oppression of the oppressed. They are weak, ignorant, unattractive and submissive who submit to their men to save their family. They depend on their men to fulfil their needs. They are incapable of creating a place in society on their own. As Kate Millet points out that the subjection of women is a way of life, "The subjection of women is of course far more than an economic or even political event, but a total social and psychological phenomenon, a way of life" (121).

After disputes with her husband, cause of his inability to earn some money or due to conflicts between Ganesh and Ramlogan, sometimes Leela leaves Ganesh's house. Every time it seems that she will never come back. However, luckily every time they both make a compromise, and she comes back as Simone de Beauvoir opines, "the woman does not sincerely seek to take leave of what she detests. She plays at rupture but in the end, remains with the man who makes her suffer. . . . she protests against man, against life, against her condition, but she does not escape it" (664). Leela confronts the endless quarrels between Ganesh and Ramlogan. She is blackmailed emotionally by her father and husband. She has to face mental trauma due to their disputes. As a daughter, she wants to take the side of her father. But being a dutiful wife, she cannot ignore her husband also. She remains confused about which side she should join. She always feels trapped between the disputes of her husband and father. They both create problems for each other to satisfy their

ego. Nobody cares about Leela and her feelings. Being a daughter and wife, she has to bear the loss of both sides, and her emotions are hurt.

Whenever Leela leaves her husband's house, she acts independently, which a proper Hindu wife should not do. Thus she causes a disturbance in the village, especially among women who do not understand it. One of them is Leela's friend Suruj Mooma, who condemns her deed and blames education. Suruj Mooma in *The Mystic Masseur* considers this as an unusual action; "That is the trouble, giving girls education these days. Leela spends too much of time reading and writing and not looking after her husband properly" (Naipaul 80). This type of reaction of women is proof of the antediluvian attitude of society towards women. Women, like Suruj Mooma, are brought up in families which do not allow any freedom to females. Opposition or rebellion from a woman is considered bad on her part. A rebellious woman has to pay the price among the women also. Because it is believed that they should spend their time in the household, cooking and looking after their husbands and they should let them earn money. So women do not need any education; rather, they are educated in a particular way to be good wives. As Kate Millet opines, "In general the task of a woman is to serve man and the family through "womanly guidance", exercise some vague and remote good influence on everyone, and dispense a bit of charity from time to time" (96).

Leela runs away from Ganesh's house because she feels ashamed for her husband, who loses "all sense values" and is "dragging my name in the mud" (Naipaul 104). Leela herself is not able to earn money, so being dependent on her husband, she feels ashamed. Moreover, she has to face her rich sister Soomintra, who looks like a typical Indian wife. Her sister has several children and is "growing

plump, matronly, and important" (74). Leela envies her sister, whose biting remarks about Ganesh's incapacity, make her depressed.

When Leela learns that Ganesh has written a book, she is pleasantly surprised and cries "Look, I go run and tell Pa. And we must let Soomintra know. She wouldn't like it at all at all" (84). Her female ego is satisfied, and now, Leela is proud of her husband and returns to him. She is glad that she does not have to undergo Soomintra's mockery anymore. Leela feels respected and at equal status with her sister. She feels delighted with her husband's achievement.

However, Ganesh's book is not a best-seller. Leela is bitterly disappointed and forces her husband again to earn some money. She together with the aunt, The Great Belcher, tries to persuade him to be a mystic masseur and to use his outstanding powers. In the end, Ganesh tries his fortune and succeeds at last. Leela is proud of him and his abilities. She says, "Man, I take back all the bad things I say and think about you. Today you make me feel really nice. Soomintra could keep she shopkeeper and she money" (125). So, Leela calculates and thinks more of her good reputation because she supports Ganesh only when he is successful, and when not, she scolds and despises him.

As Ganesh becomes wealthy and recognized, Leela becomes conceited and snobbish as the narrator observes, "Every day Leela became more refined. She often went to San Fernando to visit Soomintra, and to shop. She comes back with expensive saris and much heavy jewellery" (143). She tries to look important and educated, but she becomes ridiculous. With the help and support of The Great Belcher, Leela takes up charity work. She does not know how to do it and is not interested in it, but because rich women are supposed to do so, therefore, she cannot

drop behind. Now Ganesh regards Leela as his equal partner when he asks her advice whether he should go in for the general election or not. She supports him but at the same time warns him against “all sort of low argument with all sorts of low people” (187).

When Ganesh gets ahead in politics, he makes his mind to shift to Port of Spain. Leela and Ganesh have to part with their friends and relatives. The separation from friends is painful, especially for Leela. In Port of Spain, she does not forget her friends and often travels with The Great Belcher and visits her relatives. As a wife she still abides with her husband, respects him and encourages him in his political aspirations.

To sum it up, Leela undergoes a process of slight development throughout the novel. In the beginning, she is a shy and fearful girl who turns into a mature woman, and she is able to get what she wants. A good Hindu wife is supposed to ask no questions and do whatever she is told. But Leela does not want to put up with her submissive position and is brave enough to oppose her husband, and she has the courage to object his reckless deeds. Despite her relative's emancipation, she still appreciates her husband and is quite satisfied in this 'equal' marriage, even though without romantic love. Ganesh respects her, listens to her advice and "in time, though they would never have admitted it, they had grown to love each other" (63). Gillian Dooley in “Naipaul’s Women” catches the situation in this sentence: "Significantly, once there is no beating, or presumably sex in their marriage, it becomes an extremely successful working partnership" (90). However, all her happiness, respect and status depend upon the reputation of her husband. No individual identity has been provided to her. She never tries to search for her own

identity. Her life focuses on her husband and domestic chorus. Leela is a woman, as Beauvoir opines, “who seeks her independence through work has far fewer possibilities than her masculine competitors. . . . To ‘get ahead’, it is useful for a woman to make sure she has a man’s support. Men are the ones who take the best places, who hold important jobs” (157).

Leela’s sister, Soomintra, is a typical, orthodox woman. She is fat and is beaten by her husband. But she never objects and feels proud of the beatings. Her husband is a hardware merchant in San Fernando. Her husband also keeps growing rich and fat. She becomes a reason of jealousy for Leela as the narrator in *The Mystic Masseur* points out, “Soomintra got plumper and looked richer, and it was a strain for Leela not to pay too much attention when Soomintra crooked her right arm and jangled her gold bracelets or when, with the license of wealth, she complained she was tired and needed holiday” (Naipaul 74). Her mocking tone of talking with her younger sister, Leela, is not liked by her sister. Leela also behaves like her sister when she becomes rich. Soomintra is portrayed as a typical, obedient wife and caring mother. All her needs are fulfilled by her husband and she is respected in society due to her husband's reputation. Soomintra shows off and boasts about her richness. She is ignorant about her own identity and remains dependent on her husband.

The Great Belcher, Ganesh’s aunt, is a wise old woman. She is a practical, traditional, and enthusiastic lady. After the death of Ganesh’s father, she cares about him like a mother. She supports Ganesh whenever he needs her help. She does not trust doctors for treatment, so she is “suffering from this wind” (42). She shares experiences of her life with Leela and Ganesh. At the time of Ganesh and Leela’s

marriage, she plays the role of a supervisor and takes control of everything in her hands. Ganesh also believes her. She is an ardent follower of Hindu traditions and conventions and does not like modern girls. After Ganesh's marriage, she advises him, "These modern girls is hell self. And from what I see and hear, Leela is a modern girl. Anyway, you got to make the best of what is your's" (46). Aunt doesn't like Leela much, but along with her, she always helps Ganesh to solve his difficulties as writing, publishing and sailing his books. She also gives him religious books of her late husband and persuades him to be a pundit. Along with Leela, aunt advises Ganesh to become a mystic masseur. Later, when Ganesh is hesitating about participating in elections, she claims resolutely, "Is your duty to go up and help the poor people" (194).

The Great Belcher is very sociable and is always busy with attending weddings and funerals. She likes to know what is going on around in the society. Like a tradition-bound Hindu woman, she is very anxious to fulfil her duties as a wife, aunt, relative and neighbour. On funerals, she weeps excessively. It seems that she enjoys all these obligations. She is not even provided with a name in the novel and she is known by a physical characteristic. She is a caring and warm-hearted lady as well as, "delightful creation and our one glimpse in the novel of an older Indian way of life dominated by the family rituals of wedding and funerals" (White 70). Simone de Beauvoir's opinion is suitable as far as The Great Belcher is concerned:

She goes to every wedding, every funeral; no longer having any existence of her own, she feeds on the company of others; . . . she watches, she comments; she compensates for her inaction by dispensing criticism and advice to those around her. She gives her

experienced advice even to those around her who do not seek it.
(649)

Suruj Mooma is another female participant of this novel. She is wife of Beharry. She appears in the book when Ganesh and Leela shift to Fuente Grove. Leela and Suruj Mooma become good friends. Suruj Mooma is an orthodox, tradition-bound, typical wife, mother, and woman. She is always busy with her household work and care of her family. She is strict, assertive and knows how to tame her husband when the situation demands. She does not like modern women who do not bother about their husbands and families. She criticizes Leela for abandoning her husband.

A rift comes in the friendship of Leela and Suruj Mooma when Leela goes to live at her father's house after a quarrel with Ganesh. Suruj Mooma is surprised as well as unhappy about Leela's action. As a typical tradition bound wife, she cries and criticizes Leela for the action. She says that she can never abandon her husband and kids for her own choices. She is an illiterate woman and believes that modern education has spoiled the girls and believes that due to their new education, they resist fulfilling their foremost duties as wives. However, when Leela returns, once again they unite as good friends.

The second time their friendship is shaken when Ganesh and Leela become rich. Leela often visits her friend and boasts about her new attires and tries to give an effect as she is tired of her busy routine and responsibilities. Suruj Mooma discusses Leela's boastings with Beharry, her husband. When Beharry, claims that she is jealous of her friend, then she claims, "Tell me, Suruj Poopa, what cause I

have to jealous a thin little woman who can't even make a baby? I never leave my husband and run away from my responsibility" (Naipaul, *Mystic* 136).

In the novel, Suraj Mooma is not even provided with a name of her own. She is known as a mother of Suruj. Like The Great Belcher, she is very social and helpful. When Leela was at her father's house, Suruj Mooma willingly provides food to Ganesh. She keeps news of everything that is going on in the locality. Beharry observes about her capability, "These women and them, pundit, they does notice thing we can't even see with a magnifying glass. They sharp as razor-grass, man" (134). So Suruj Mooma is a typical wife, mother, a good friend and well informed about society. She is denied any identity of her own in the novel, not even a name of her own.

In a ritualistic family, women are expected to play domestic roles or fulfil their duties as daughters, mothers or wives. They are not considered as active and independent agents having desires. So it can be said that through fiction, Naipaul has represented realities of a migrant community in colonial and post-colonial societies. Representation of women was never his main concern. In this novel, all the action revolves around Ganesh, who himself is alienated and displaced. Every female character plays the role of an obedient wife, daughter or mother having different traits. Leela remains wife or daughter but is self-confident and modern in a way. The Great Belcher is very social and a typical traditional woman who believes in the dominance of a husband, but she helps Ganesh in every possible way. Suruj Mooma remains a wife and loyal friend, but she is denied a name of her own. Soomintra depends on her husband for everything in her life. These female characters are denied education, awareness for human rights, an identity of their own and they are

not aware of their subordinate role. Kate Millet's observation is quite appropriate for them, "Some find their subordinate position so hard to bear that they repress and deny its existence" (56).

A House for Mr Biswas depicts struggles, identity crisis and the ups and downs of the life of Mr Mohun Biswas. Mr Mohun Biswas is an exiled Indian. This novel is, basically, a diasporic text where an exiled protagonist tries to establish his identity in migrated societies. For him, search for a house is the ultimate aim of his life. In *A House for Mr Biswas* women hardly have any identity without men. Wife beating, bad language, and comments about the wife's parents are part of their day to day life. Females are provided subordinate roles to play. They are not the decision makers, and they have to face traumas due to the clashes between their husbands and Tulsis. Female characters are provided roles of mothers, daughters, sisters or wives. They are brought up in a socio-cultural set up to accept these roles without any resistance. In their families, they face gender discrimination also. Mrs Tulsi, Shama, Chinta, Savi and other Tulsi daughters are female participants of the novel. All these characters are created in the context of Mr Biswas's story. None is provided as much space as Mr Biswas.

Mrs Tulsi in *A House for Mr Biswas* is one of the major characters. She is a prime foundation of the Hanuman House, the living place of Tulsi clan. She is a symbol of power in the Tulsi clan. Her daughters always care about her decisions. Rohlehr, in "Character and Rebellion in *A House for Mr Biswas*", concludes, "Hanuman House reveals itself not as a coherent reconstruction of the clan, but a slave society, erected by Mrs Tulsi and Seth who need workers to rebuild their Empire" (87). She seems to be a good mother. She has several daughters and two

sons, and they live with their own families together in Hanuman House. As her husband is dead, she alone is bringing up her daughters and sons. Once Mrs Tulsi in *A House for Mr Biswas* confesses to Shama how it is difficult to marry all her children off:

Think of the worry I had when your father died. Fourteen daughters to marry. And when you marry your girl children you can't say what sort of life you are letting them in for. They have to live with their fate. Mothers- in- law, sisters-in-law. Idle husbands. Wife-beaters.
(Naipaul 208)

Mrs Tulsi is aware of the fact that marriage without romantic love can cause unhappiness for her daughters, but at the same time, she knows that it is necessary for a proper Hindu woman to be married and to give birth to as many children as possible. At the beginning of the novel, Mrs Tulsi is the 'boss' of the Hanuman House. Everybody has to obey her orders, and the Tulsi daughters are trained to satisfy all her wishes. It is this exercise of her power that Mr Biswas truly hates and fights against her. Mrs Tulsi's attitude towards her rebellious son-in-law, Mr Biswas, is not clear. She neither hates him nor likes him. It seems that Mrs Tulsi is rather two-faced. Landeg White, in *V. S. Naipaul: A Critical Introduction*, observes about Mrs Tulsi:

What she demands is total submission of thought and will, absolute devotion to herself, She works through blackmail, inviting victims to share her maudlin nostalgia, then springing her demands at a moment when it will seem insulting to refuse. Her ultimate weapon is her faint, an elaborate performance uniting the household in resentment

against the offending son-in-law for whom equally elaborate penance is prescribed. (111)

Mrs Tulsi faints quite often. Whenever this happens “a complex ritual was at once set in motion” (Naipaul, *A House* 126). Almost all the women in Hanuman House have to attend Mrs Tulsi, and there is a lot of fanning and massaging her body and forehead. However, unpleasant she may look, she is also capable to forgive all by utilizing her comment “What is past is past” (211). The fact that Mrs Tulsi is the most powerful person in the household is proved when she moves with her son Owad to a house in Port of Spain. Then a proper upset turns up at Hanuman House. The narrator explains:

During her absence, the accepted degrees of precedence at the Hanuman House lost some of their meaning. Sushila, the widow, was reduced to nonentity. Many sisters attempted to seize power and a number of squabbles ensued. Seth exacted the obedience of everyone; he could not impose harmony. That was re-established every weekend when Mrs Tulsi and the younger god [Owad] returned. (240)

Mrs Tulsi invites Mr Biswas and his family to live with her and Owad in her Port of Spain house. Mr Biswas accepts, and for a while, he becomes reconciled with his mother-in-law and her bossiness. After some time, Mrs Tulsi returns to Arwacas and Hanuman House, but she is not able to regain her power and control over the household. She becomes a cantankerous, invalid, and it seems that she has lost interest in her family. Mrs Tulsi and Seth get separated due to a dispute over ownership of lands. Both families have to separate, and her zest for life reappears for a moment when, after the quarrel with Seth, she decides that the whole family will

move to an estate at Short Hills. Soon, however, she loses her enthusiasm again; "As suddenly as she had emerged from her sickroom to supervise the move, so Mrs Tulsi had now withdrawn. It was as though her energy had been stimulated only by the quarrel with Seth and, ebbing, had depressed her further into exhaustion and grief" (416).

Without her supervision, the family gradually disintegrates, and the household becomes unorganized. When she is tired of Short Hill's, she comes to live in her house in Port of Spain again. Mr Biswas has moved there shortly before her and is not very glad that he will have to live with her under the same roof. In "Naipaul's Women" Dooley points out about Mrs Tulsi, "Mrs Tulsi uses many unpleasant tricks, such as emotional blackmail, dramatic and strategic illnesses, and contemptuous ridicule, to enforce her power" (91). At the end of the novel, all her kids are busy in their life. They do not have any time for her. Even her sons, whom she has given more importance than daughters, leave her and are busy with their wives and kids.

Bipti, Mr Biswas's mother, serves a good example of a tradition bound stereotypical woman. She depends on her husband, Raghu, when she lives with him and on her mother's family when deserted by him. She always lacks money in her life. A comparison can be drawn between Bipti, as a feeble character and her sister Tara, as an assertive housewife. Bipti willingly gives the responsibility of her children to Tara because she is not good financially. Bipti is born in modern times. She does not have to face the ritual of Sati after the death of her husband, but she has to suffer the painful phase of widowhood. She has to undergo a ritual of widowhood; "Bipti was bathed. Her hair, still wet, was neatly parted and the parting

filled with red henna. Then the henna was scooped out and the parting filled with charcoal dust. She was now a widow forever” (Naipaul, *A House* 29). Bipti has to sell her house and land at a low price due to disturbances created by her neighbours after the death of her husband. She moves for Pagotes, where her sister, Tara, lives. She leads the life of alienation and seclusion in Pagotes. She is avoided in all the religious ceremonies and family rituals.

Tara is the sister of Bipti, aunt of Mr Biswas and wife of Ajodha. Her husband is a rich man. So she is economically secure. She is a well-reputed woman in the society in which she lives. She helps her relatives financially whenever they need it. She provides shelter to her sister, Bipti’s, family after the death of her husband. She is a traditional Hindu lady. She is depicted as always heavily loaded with jewellery:

Her arms were encased from wrist to elbow with silver bangles which she had often recommended to Bipti. She also wore earrings and a *nakphul*, a ‘nose-flower’. She had a solid gold yoke around her neck and thick silver bracelets on her ankles. In spite of all jewellery she was energetic and capable, and had adopted her husband’s commanding manner. (32)

She is egoistic because when Dehuti, Mr Biswas’s sister, elopes with a man from a lower cast, she asks everyone not to have any relations with her. Even Dehuti’s mother denies having any relations with her daughter due to her economic dependency on her sister, Tara. Tara helps Mr Biswas financially many times. However, she does not own any money that's why she has to request her husband at a suitable time and mood. Her reputation and status depend on the status of her

husband. She doesn't have her own identity. She likes to do everything in a perfect manner. At the time of Raghu's death, she takes control of every ceremony. She is at equal status with Mrs Tulsi. Tara, the maternal aunt of Mr Biswas, dominates in his life before marriage. She decides about him what he should do at the time of crisis. She sends Mr Biswas to Pandit Jairam to learn Hindu religious rules. Mr Biswas prefers to visit her with his children during the holidays. She also helps him financially after his marriage whenever he needs it. But she depends on her husband Ajodha. Finally, Ajodha decides about the financial help to Mr Biswas. However, she tries her best to help Mr Biswas in managing his crisis.

Shama, daughter of Mrs Tulsi and wife of Mr Biswas, is from a wealthy and upper-caste family. At the starting of the novel, she is provided the role of an irresponsible wife, sensible mother, an immature and uneducated woman. But as the story of the novel moves ahead, she becomes a helping and mature wife. However, she is good at calculations and her relations with Mr Biswas mature with the passage of time. But throughout the novel, she behaves like a slave of her mother due to her dependency upon the Hanuman House. In the novel, she is never required to use her independent judgments because of her upbringing and socialization in a patriarchal family. In every quarrel with Mr Biswas about Tulsis, she always takes the side of Tulsis. When Mr Biswas packs her things after a quarrel with Mrs Tulsi first time, Shama says, "Yes, take up your clothes and go. You came to this house with nothing but cheap Khaki trousers and a dirty old shirt" (110). Soon, she goes to live with her husband at The Chase because she knows that being a wife, her fate is bound to him. At The Chase, she provides her help to manage the shop and accounts. She also helps Mr Biswas to fight with loneliness. She behaves, "as though she moved into a

derelict house every day. Her actions were assertive, wasteful and unnecessarily noisy. They filled the shop and house; they banished silence and loneliness” (150).

Shama provides her best services at Tulsi store and Hanuman House. At Hanuman House, she helps in cooking, washing, cleaning, and care of kids. She has a head for figures and collects rent for her mother. Shama is a manager of her own house. Sharma and Mr Biswas do not have romantic and lovable relations, but she fulfils all her responsibilities as a wife. Mr Biswas muses, "He wanted to comfort her, but he needed the comfort himself . . . In the end, it was Shama who gave him comfort” (149). Shama is stronger physically than Mr Biswas. Shama is unhappy with her married life because her husband is a poor man and is dependent on the Tulsi family. She never likes his ways of criticizing the Tulsi family. She is very attached to her mother, sisters, and brothers. When Mr Biswas calls Mrs Tulsi, “Old Queen”, she answers him by saying, “a barking puppy dog” (123).

Shama never wants to leave Tulsi clan, but she has to follow Mr Biswas because being a wife, she has to obey him. Sometimes Shama rebels against Mr Biswas, as she arranges for house blessing ceremony against Mr Biswas’ wishes and invites Tulsi clan. She also breaks big Dolls House given by Mr Biswas to his daughter Savi as Christmas present. She is a victim of traditional rituals and cultural hegemony. Shama has to break the Doll's House of Savi to pacify her sisters. She confesses before Mr Biswas:

You don't know what I had to put up with. Talking night and day. Puss- puss here, Puss-puss there. Chinta dropping remarks on that time. Everybody beating their children the moment they start talking to Savi. Nobody wanting to talk to me. Everybody behaving as

though I kill their father. She stopped and cried. 'So I had to satisfy them. I break up the dolly- house and everybody was satisfied'. (235)

Shama's treatment for her children changes when they do not live with Tulsi clan in Hanuman House. In Hanuman House, her treatment is harsh, strict, and many times she beats her children bitterly. But when they move for The Chase, her treatment changes, "At The Chase Shama had seldom beat Savi and then it had been only a matter of a few slaps" (206). At The Chase, she is master of her house. She can decide about her children and also finds time for her children. At Hanuman House, Shama becomes a thorough Tulsi and behaves like other Tulsi daughters. Even her tone of speaking changes at The Chase. Beauvoir's observation is quite suitable for Shama as a mother:

Like the woman in love, the mother is delighted to feel needed; she is justified by the demands she responds to; but what makes maternal love difficult and great is that it implies no reciprocity; the woman is not before a man, a hero, a demigod, but a little stammering consciousness, lost in a fragile and contingent body. (570)

Shama's economic dependence also makes her subordinate. She is not able to earn money on her own because she is uneducated and the society, of which, she is part, does not allow women to work outside the house. She has to adjust with the meagre income of her husband. Shama never buys anything for herself. She always struggles with the shortage of money in her life. She calculates and recalculates the money to spend on the family's daily and necessary needs. Dooley observes about her, "Shama is portrayed not without sympathy; she is clearly not as ambitious or interesting as her husband" (Naipaul's 91). She has the sense to give gifts at the

occasion of marriage to others. She wisely chooses the gift according to her budget. At a time, she almost fixes a set of glasses as a gift. For this choice, Mr Biswas says that on the marriage of Savi they will get only crockery sets. For her clothes and other needs, she relies on her mother's gifts. The narrator in *A House for Mr Biswas* depicts, "Unable to buy the best and, like all the Tulsi sisters, having only contempt for the second rate in cloth and jewellery . . . bought nothing at all and made do with the gifts of cloth she received every Christmas from Mrs Tulsi" (365).

Shama lives a double life between Tulsi's and Mr Biswas. Shama is depicted as a woman who has no ambitions, interests, and wishes. She only tries to fulfil her duties as a daughter, mother, wife, and sister. She never thinks or even dreams of any independent life. Martha Lewis concludes, "Shama . . . does not have even the slightest desire to lead the independent life like her husband dreamed about" (181). For many years she remains the daughter of her mother and sister rather than a wife. Her domestic duties provide a very monotonous routine to her day to day life. As Beauvoir's claim is suitable for Shama:

The woman finds motive there to claim a higher meaning for her existence; she passively submits to her biological destiny. Because housework alone is compatible with the duties motherhood, she is condemned to domestic labour, which locks her into repetition . . . day after day it repeats itself in identical form from century to century. (75)

So, it can be concluded that Shama remains a wife, daughter or mother throughout the novel. She shows a change from an immature wife and dependent daughter to become a loyal wife. She acknowledges that her happiness is with her

husband and children not with Tulsis. But her life is away from economic independence, dignity, freedom, and education. Her life is centred upon managing the house, children and meager income of Mr Biswas. She has no decisive choices to make.

Savi, daughter of Mr Biswas, faces gender discrimination during her childhood. More significance is given to her brother, Anand's education. She is a very docile girl. She never demands anything for her. Towards the end of the narrative, Savi is presented as the saviour of her house. She has a good job, supports her family financially, now she can drive and Mr Biswas enjoys spending time with her, "Savi got a job at bigger salary than Mr Biswas could ever have got" (Naipaul 622). She replaces Anand because he cannot come to help his father. Mr Biswas also welcomes her as a son. Earlier he paid more attention to the education of Anand.

In the novel, *A House for Mr Biswas*, women are peripheral figures but still, they play an important role in men's world. Women like Tulsi, Shama, Chinta, and Tara force men to do something for their families. In Naipaul's novels, men have a central place. Women play only assistant roles. Women are marginalized but they, like Savi, also try to have little space of their own.

Tulsi daughters, like Shama, Chinta, Sushila, and others, are assaulted physically by their husbands. They feel proud of their beating. Govind beats Chinta. The narrator points out, "beating gave Chinta a matriarchal dignity and curiously, gained her a respect, she had a respect she never had before" (488). Sushila, a widow, also recalls her beating proudly; "talked with pride of the beating she had received from her short-lived husband. She regarded them as a necessary part of her training and often attributed the decay of Hindu society in Trinidad to the rise of the timorous, weak, non-beating class of husband" (153).

V. S. Naipaul has depicted only the real status of females in migrated Hindu families in Trinidad. All the depicted female characters are flat. They lack any growth, blooming and progress except Savi. Even in the end, Savi plays the role of a supportive daughter only. They contribute to the development of the plot, but their personal status is not developed. They have to adopt male dominance to survive in patriarchal societies. In these societies, there is a limited scope of personal development of women because more preference is given to males. Females follow age-old traditional customs and codes of life. Personal, internal and external, space is a dream for females. As Simone de Beauvoir says, “he is a citizen, a producer before being a husband; she is above all, and often exclusively, a wife; her work does not extract her from her condition; it is from her condition, on contrary, that her work derives its price or not” (497).

In *A House for Mr Biswas* Naipaul has portrayed immigrant Indian communities. Naipaul has dealt narrowly with the female characters. This novel doesn't sketch strong woman characters. Even the title is also formed after the name of the protagonist Mohun Biswas. The protagonists, in Naipaul fictions, are male. Females have chances to appear. Rohlehr in “The Ironic Approach: The Novels of V.S. Naipaul” observes, “Naipaul has been able to present a hero in all his littleness, and still preserves a sense of man's inner dignity” (190). In this novel, Mr Biswas, Owad, Shekhar, Seth, and other men are given more prominence than women. He has exposed the gender inequality in this novel. Mrs Tulsi and Tara are strong and dominating females in *A House for Mr Biswas*, but their status also depends on the wealth and reputation of their husbands.

Naipaul was brought up in a tradition bound indentured Indian family. In extended orthodox Indian migrant families, the house was headed by men. Women

were only subordinate to run the family. They had to obey male orders. Ramabai Espinet argues, "Indian woman is invisible because no novelist has yet been able to regard her existence in West Indies and give voice to the peculiarities and perceptions of that particular existence" (425). Ramabai further argues "A quick survey of V. S. Naipaul's female Indian characters reveals more unflattering versions of the stereotype – cardboard cutouts, for the most part, serving a functional novelistic purpose, but unexamined in themselves" (429).

A system of androcentric approach has tried to prevent women from intellectual life, art, higher education, power, and employment opportunities. This approach has confined women to the limited area of the house to do low paying jobs, denying their mobility, denying access to the outside world, curtailing their aspirations to go out, and meet people in the outside world. They have to experience life in its magnanimity. Within the families, daughters face discrimination as sons get the chance to attend school and continue their study, but the education of a daughter is ignored by parents. Leela in *The Mystic Masseur* and Tulsi daughters in *A House for Mr Biswas* are such examples. Mr Biswas gets an opportunity to go to school and later on, for training to become a pundit. At the same time, Dehuti is given to Tara to learn some grace which would help her in finding a good match. Shyness and wearing heavy jewellery are signs of feminine nature. Dehuti in *A House for Mr Biswas* was liked by Tara because she "smiled shyly not looking up" (33). In a patriarchal society, the identity of a girl is always associated with her father before marriage, and to her husband after marriage. Her role in life is that of a provider who sacrifices for the sake of her family. Caste is a matter which is applied to men only; women ethically belong to their provider's caste regardless of their inborn strata. Dehuti by her elopement, degrades herself completely and

consequently excommunicated by her high caste family. Her poor status and low caste become a reason for shame for Mr Biswas because he is from a high caste, a Brahmin.

Dehuti is not the only woman who faces subordination, but the rest of the females also face servitude and attitude of inferiority. They are conditioned. Shama is taught servitude although she is from high caste and belongs to a wealthy family. Mr Biswas is married to Shama and starts behaving like an adult. Their marriage was make-believe as a child game. Shama remains a properly instructed woman by the patriarchy to be docile and submissive. She displays her unhappiness for Mr Biswas's status as a dependent of Tulsis. She considers herself inferior to her other sisters due to her husband's incompetence to provide them bread and butter. It is a man's world where a woman has very little to say and feel important. Mr Biswas is powerful only to Shama; otherwise, he is a failure. He is beaten by everyone in the Hanuman House due to his ill behaviour and bad temper. His shame and defeat are exerted in the form of frustration and angst on Shama.

Women in *A House for Mr Biswas* and *The Mystic Masseur* are submissive and docile. They are victims of male dominance. Mrs Tulsi uses many tricks to manipulate Biswas along with other sons-in-law. From starting to the middle, she remains powerful. But in the end, she loses her authority and is weak physically and mentally. Dooley in "Naipaul's Women" states, "In Trinidad world of these three novels, the women are often more sensible and down to earth than the men. Sometimes they are dangerous seducers, but just as often they are the ones who keep everything going. Sometimes they are victims, but sometimes they sensibly take themselves off when their men grow violent and unreasonable" (91).

In this saga of men's world, women are thrown to the periphery. Women do not stand as prominent figures, yet they minimally affect the general course of the story. People in such a society believe that nature grants superiority to men over women who try to crush them under the patriarchal system. They relegate women to the status of mere 'entity' that can be owned or disowned. They are treated as a piece of property; therefore, they have become an object of possession. Simone de Beauvoir's observation is appropriate for dependent women:

The wife's work within the home does not grant her autonomy; it is not directly useful to the group, it does not open on to the future, it does not produce anything. It becomes meaningful and dignified only if it is integrated into existence that goes beyond themselves, towards the society in production or action; far from enfranchising the matron; it makes her dependent on her husband and children. She justifies her existence through them; she is no more than an inessential mediation in their lives. (497)

Women generally shut themselves in the confines of domestic affairs and remain ignorant. Thus they put an end to all the possibilities of an active life. They become handicapped as they are dependent on their husbands and fathers for their personal needs. People like Pt. Ganesh and Mr Biswas who have stepped out of their finite worlds of orthodoxies, desperately feel the need to change the thinking of the women of their families and want their partners to be equal. The irony lies in the fact that they would never make an effort; instead, they expect the change will happen itself. These men want educated wives who could understand them well and would also accompany them in the course of life. Though they understand the need, they

cannot change the practice of patriarchy, which in many ways satisfies their ego and covers their shortcomings. They laugh at their women's families and ridicule them intentionally, which is consequential to their male chauvinism. They derive sadistic pleasure by tormenting their wives physically and mentally. They feel happy in doing so. The women in Naipaul's selected novels are ignorant. If they are not ignorant, even then they are dominated by male counterparts. Most of the time, they stay at home minding their family responsibilities. Men, on the contrary, move outside according to the expectations of society.

Guerrillas was published in 1975. The setting of *Guerrillas* is in an unnamed West Indian island under the management of the American Bauxite Company. *Guerrillas* is based on Naipaul's non-fiction *Michael X and the Black Power Killings*. This novel is motivated by the life of a Trinidadian black leader Michael de Freitas. The landscape of Trinidad Island is pictured elaborately in the novel. In *Guerrillas*, violence is depicted explicitly. Naipaul has represented unsympathetically the three major characters Peter Roche, Jane and Jimmy Ahmed, in this novel. Half-Chinese, Jimmy Ahmed, has come from England and is now staying at Thrushcross Grange, a commune. Peter Roche is an employee of the American company. Initially, he perceives himself as a 'doer', a man of action. After spending some time on the island, Roche in *Guerrillas* contemplates, "I've built my whole life on sand" (Naipaul 87). Jane, his mistress, comes to join him on an isolated island. Jane and Roche represent European colonial thwarts. They are surrounded by heat, ugliness, and dirt. Their areas are limited. Jane, being a female, has no authority. This novel is considered as Naipaul's most complex, suspenseful and shocking book. Characters in the novel are spiritually, emotionally and intellectually depleted. They are like scorching heat islands. To Jane, the place of the

novel is, "itself a place at the end of the world, a place that had exhausted its possibilities" (44).

Self-alienation and distancing from each other are also depicted in *Guerrillas*. The main three characters locate themselves in the eyes of others. They all are restricted, narrow and unreliable. They misunderstand each other and interpret each other in the wrong way. They all are forced to live an alienated life. In *Guerrillas*, Jane describes the alienation of the aeroplane:

Obliterated past and distance; the memories - more like dreams than memories of actual events - of getting off at various airports, brilliantly illuminated; excitement than going, fatigue deadening response; so that, just hours away from London, she felt she had entered another life. (38)

In migrated societies of the selected novels, women cannot be themselves, and they remain strangers and outsiders in the world where they live. In *Guerrillas*, Naipaul has depicted alienation and otherness with reference to gender and race. All the characters sacrifice modesty of their gender to achieve satisfaction. Jane, for sexual satisfaction, shifts her partners and sacrifices the modesty of womanhood. She has to pay for physical satisfaction with losing her life. All the characters, in the end, face failure. Their search to attain satisfaction is not fulfilled. Jane is murdered, Jimmy is sad after the murder of Jane, and Peter Roche leaves the country. Peter Roche himself is a pitiful man who never stands by Jane to protect her. He never proves himself as representative of white patriarchy. Roche, a representative of white power, undermines Jimmy's operations and dreams. Christopher Morrison is *Sexuality in V. S. Naipaul's Novels* says:

Guerrillas, Naipaul's seventh novel, is a sexualised account of a multi-racial community's fast disintegrating life on The Ridge, a privileged neighbourhood overlooking a troubled seaside city on a fictionalised, nameless Caribbean island. Roche, a relative newcomer to the island, is a white exiled, former hero of the South African resistance, who had been tortured while in prison there. His English mistress, Jane has recently flown in from London to be with him. Her relationship with Jimmy Ahmed, a Chinese/Black mulatto "revolutionary" living out in the bush, in his Thrushcrosse Grange, people's commune, provides the central plot strand, leading in the end to her brutal slaughter. (9-10)

Feminist film theorist, Laura Miller observes that a woman is not provided with the status of a maker in male dominated societies. Laura Miller, "Woman stands bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as the bearer, not maker of meaning" (15). Jane is mainly depicted as a woman who wants to fulfil her sexual desires. She is without high aims in her life. She is represented as having vague physical dissatisfaction. Neil Ten Kortenaar in "Writers and Readers, The Written and the Read: V.S. Naipaul and *Guerrillas*" states about Jane "many men have written on Jane's blank sheet, and Jimmy's ambition is to write on Jane's whiteness himself" (324). In *Guerrillas* V. S. Naipaul has provided the following description to Jane in the novel:

She was without memory . . . She was without consistency or even without coherence. She knew only what she was and what she had

born to; to this knowledge, she was tethered; it was her stability, enabling her to adventure in security. Adventuring, she was indifferent, perhaps blind, to the contradiction between what she said and what she was so secure of being; and this indifference or blindness, this absence of the sense of the absurd, was part of her unassailability. (97)

The very first depiction of Jane is done by Roche. He likens her to a sea anemone. Roche's imagery of female sea-monster is representative of his displeasure about Jane's adventurous and uncontrollable femininity. The writer has not provided any mutual bonding between Roche and Jane. According to Roche;

Waving its strands at the bottom of the ocean. Rooted and secure and indifferent to what it attracted. The dragon lady, infinitely casual, infinitely unconsciously calculating, so indifferent to the body, so apparently willing to abuse it, and yet so careful of the body, so careful of complexion and teeth and hair. (Naipaul 15)

Jane has marginal and subordinate status in the novel, but she also represents the colonial rule that denied Jimmy of his manhood. As a white female in Jimmy's world, Jane's disrespect, disgrace, and victimisation happen very soon. Jane faces violence, especially being a woman. After the murder of Jane narrator says that Jimmy is in despair, and he notices that Jane's eyes "had taken everything away with them" (248). S.W. Perera concludes; "Initially Jane is the privileged, white liberal who makes demands from Jimmy, yet at the end, she is not only murdered brutally but is deprived of her identity and self-respect" (40-41).

Jane was born in Ottawa. She owns an insured house in London, England. Her passport provides her with the privilege to stay and work in London. Jane was a publicity manager in England. She comes to Thrushcrosse Grange to join her lover, Peter Roche, supposing it as a centre of activity and for the sake of an adventurous life. The aeroplane brings Jane from London to a different world of postcolonial Caribbean. Very soon Jane realises that her decision is wrong and she observes; "The city and the flat remained as unknown as it was on that first day, and nothing had happened to alter the conviction she had, at the moment of arrival, that she had made a wrong decision" (Naipaul, *Guerrillas* 41). However, she considers herself privileged and lucky who has the freedom to leave the place because many people do not have this privilege. She can use her return ticket that was not checked by the immigration officers. She perceives herself as "revolutionaries who visit centres of revolution with return ticket" (22). Bruce King in *V. S. Naipaul* observes about her:

Uninterested in a career or job, dependent on men to give her purpose, ideas, place but financially secure and without normal pressure to make a place in the world to survive, Jane seeks drama in the Third World. (75)

Naipaul has depicted Jane as a financially secure woman who is easily attracted towards pretended revolutionaries, Peter Roche and Jimmy Ahmed. She considers Peter Roche a doer and chooses to join him throwing up her job. Jane is a woman who likes to define herself through men in her life. She is financially independent, but her physical needs make her a slave of men in her life. Jane has to pay a heavy price for supposed adventures by losing her life. She seeks sexual satisfaction from a primitive and violent man, Jimmy Ahmed.

With a distinctive feeling of privilege and security, Jane visits Thrushcrosse Grange of Jimmy Ahmed. Jimmy in *Guerrillas* is disturbed after her first visit; “he had a vision of darkness, of the world lost forever, and his own life ending on that bit of waste of land” (Naipaul 32). Like Peter Roche, Jimmy Ahmed perceives that her freedom and choice of going back to England have made her capable of doing adventurous actions such as leaving her job in England and her decision to be with Roche in an isolated island. Jane is an adrift enervated woman with discontentment in her life. Jane perceives Roche as a doer. However, after spending some time with him, Jane acknowledges “Roche was a recluse on the island. He was an employee for his firm . . . he was half colonial. He was less on the island than he had been in London and still wondered at the haste with which he had thrown up his life . . . And he seemed to accept his role . . . a man who didn't have a place to go back to” (47-48). Jane is disappointed with emptiness in his life and gets attracted towards the commune leader Jimmy Ahmed. To fulfil her physical needs, very soon she opts for charismatic Jimmy Ahmed as her partner. Her heated sexual actions with Jimmy are proof of her mad and adventurous streak. Thus her dissatisfaction with Peter Roche takes her near Jimmy. She dominates during their first sexual encounter and insures Jimmy's hatred for herself.

During Jane and Jimmy's first sexual engagement, Jane is the assailant, and Jimmy is ashamed about his unmanly situation by the fast speed of her actions, “He feared he was losing the movement again. He felt isolated by her indifference and began to fear that he was losing her as well” (74). Jane, after her first sexual intercourse with Jimmy, states: “I've been playing with fire” (79) and at night opts to sleep with Roche. She cannot stop herself from meeting Jimmy again as she

perceives herself privileged, having a return ticket. But Jane never gets the chance to return to London and meets her gruesome end. As Bruce King in *V. S. Naipaul* opines, she "enjoys masochism" and seeks "sexual satisfaction in forms of masochism" (79). Her masochism puts her in an engendered situation, and she has to die very early in her life. Jane becomes moist after unsatisfactory physical relations with the men in her life – a journalist and Jimmy Ahmed. In *Guerrillas* when Jimmy rapes her, assaults her physically and spits in her mouth rather than opposing him, she states, "that was lovely" (Naipaul 240). Jimmy threatens to be more violent and vulgar, and she responds, "I am thinking I have to go back. I think I have to go" (243). Thus Jane's masochism is shown in her sexual actions, and in the manner, she accepts her rejected and subordinate position in society. She has to lose her life because of her sexual hunger, and she is morally, physically and psychologically weak. Jimmy's violent and forceful sexual attack upon Jane, proves her dismantled and indefensible. It also implies that womenfolk, in common, is deprived of required honour and respect in this novel and is used as a sex object. As Kate Millet points out, "It is a common trait of minority status that a small percentage of the fortunate are permitted to entertain their rulers. Women entertain, please, gratify, satisfy and flatter men with their sexuality" (57).

Jimmy's political memoir has a reference to a woman named Clarissa. Clarrisa is a symbolic representation of Jane, a white English woman. Jimmy wants to dominate over females in his life. For Clarrisa in *Guerrillas*, Jimmy is "not black but a lovely golden colour, like some bronze god" (Naipaul 39). Anne Zahlan observes about Clarissa, "a crudely only class-conscious woman who exists only to be obsessed by him" (100). But on the other hand, Jane notices the absurdity of

Jimmy's apparition in *Guerrillas*. She observed that Jimmy, "close up, looked distinctly Chinese" (Naipaul 98). Jimmy writes a letter, apparently, to his past lover about death in loneliness:

I sit in the peace and stillness of this tropical night to pen the words to you . . . I want you to know that you were right, what you prophesised is all coming true. I am dying alone and unloved and I will die in anger, no other way is possible now. That is a bad way to die, and Marjorie I feel death is close to me tonight, I can hear it in the tropical stillness, fitfully broken by the occasional hoot of an owl . . . When we were children and you heard an owl at night you stuck pins in the wick of a lamp to keep death away from the house, but I don't think it stopped the coffins coming. (230)

Jane is murdered after this composed letter. Jimmy decides to sacrifice "the white rat", Jane. His imaginative death becomes physical death for Jane. S.W Perrera depicts, "Jane 'offers' herself as a sacrifice at the end of the novel. She takes upon the sins of the white world" (47). Jimmy violently rapes Jane before killing her. Jane is murdered brutally by Jimmy and Bryant. The narrator in *Guerrillas* explains the incident of her murder as "Sharp steel met flesh. Skin parted, flesh showed below the skin, for an instant mottled white, and then all was blinding, disfiguring blood, and Bryant could only cut what had already been cut" (243). While killing Jane, Jimmy holds her neck in his hands. Jimmy feels her dying body. He has no sympathy for a lady who provided him with sexual pleasure. The narrator further states; "he scarcely felt the neck, he felt only his own strength, the smoothness of his own skin, the tension of his own muscles . . . and as he felt her

fail, a desolation began to grow on him. And then there was nothing except desolation" (247-48). After Jane's death, Jimmy feels desolation and darkness. Kevin Foster analyses, "The symbolic triumph embodied in this act, dishonours women, but it also serves to demean its perpetrators . . . thus the last refuge of the downtrodden, the only means to express their virility and positive self-identification, turns out to be a form of castration" (175). Jane is murdered like a chicken. No sympathy is provided to Jane during the second act of sex and murder. When Jimmy murders and sacrifices Jane, he shockingly comes to know that the outcome was nothing and symbolises his own spiritual death. Jane symbolises the coloniser who has already affected his identity. Jeffrey Robinson concludes, "Jimmy's battle with Jane is simultaneously a battle with the loved and hated aspects of himself . . . to which he can relate only by a perversion of an act of love" (75). Jimmy's killing of Jane is an attempt to asseverate his manhood and male ego. His action also proves his rejection of white power.

When Roche visits Jimmy's place, he notices that Jane has been murdered after rape by Jimmy. He does not ask anything. Roche does not enquire about Jane. He comes back to his house, collects her identity proofs and passport, throws them in the toilet and flushes out. He even erases Jane's existence by flushing out her identity proofs. Roche ignores Jimmy's murderous act masterfully. He notices a pit of dirt at Jimmy's place, and he is sure about Jane's murder, but he pretends unawareness about the act. Roche being white male dominates over black Jimmy and white woman Jane.

Jane poses a threat to both Roche and Jimmy with violent sexual actions. Naipaul relates her with corporal abjection. Jane has been depicted as a dirty and

malice woman. Jimmy Ahmed and Peter Roche note her "physical gracelessness" (94) many times in the novel. Cheryl Griffith states, "Naipaul characterises the white woman, the flesh and for him flesh is repulsive . . . it is in *Guerrillas* that themes of women and the experimental vision are integrated" (96). Griffith further concludes that Jane is, "carnally humiliated by anal rape" since the "diseased flesh belongs to the anal level of existence" (103).

Jane has been portrayed as indefinable and unreadable. Jimmy in *Guerrillas* states, "her face was the puzzle, he hadn't been to remember it, and now he thought he saw why. It seemed characterless, soft, without definition, it could become many faces" (Naipaul 64-65). Jane's sexuality is a distinctive symbol of femininity that is happy with her subordinate role. During the second sexual act with Jimmy, she has to experience intolerable physical pain. Jimmy specifically notices Jane's pain, "I don't notice clothes. What I felt about you as soon as I saw your eyes. They looked as they look now. Half screaming" (67). Jimmy and Jane do not love each other. They only want to satisfy their physical needs. Jimmy has no respect for Jane. He treats her as a thing. During their sexual intercourse, Jimmy does not offer Jane a kiss, but he spits on her face:

He held her face between his hands, jammed the heels of his palms in the corners of her mouth, covering her almost vanished period spots, this distending her lips. He covered her mouth with his; her lips widened and she made a strangled sound, and then he spat in her mouth. She swallowed . . . She opened her eyes and said 'That was lovely. (240)

Imraan Coovadia states, “Jane’s sexuality works at cross purposes to her feminist convictions” (56). In London, Jane has a journalist friend. She rejected that left-wing journalist. She was “exposed and vulnerable” (Naipaul 43). By her journalist friend she was “slapped so hard that jaw jarred . . . then she discovered to her dismay and disgust that she was moist” (43). This proves Jane only as a woman who is always ready for physical relations and don’t bother about self-respect.

Guerrillas has an omniscient narrator. The narrator comments about and records the feelings of Roche, Jimmy, and Jane. But the narrator is not able to record Jane’s feeling when she is at Thrushcross in the bedroom with Jimmy. She is molested by Jimmy and experiences intense pain, “sobbing, biting her thumb, she began to plead, now with a surpassed scream, now with a whisper, ‘take it out, take it out’” (242). The narrator doesn't comment about the mental status of Jane. It seems that Jane is only to satisfy the exotic desires of males and her own. But these desires are never satisfied, and she has to lose her life. In *Postcolonial Situation in the Novels of V. S. Naipaul* Champa Rao Mohan points out:

The narrator's approach towards his male characters is essentially sympathetic, and they are presented as victims of their circumstances. However, in the case of Jane's character, we find total lack of sympathy on Naipaul's part. Even the description of the murder scene is done in a passionless, clinical manner. (122)

The narrator is confused about her feeling at this time and at the time of her murder. Jimmy has to attend a telephone call, and Jane waits for him. The narrator in *Guerrillas* comments, “Jane turned over on her belly and shouted whether with laughter or rage, it was hard to tell” (242). After the sexual engagement, no

emotional dimensionality is provided to Jane; rather, she is given an animal treatment. She weeps for physical pains, but Jimmy says, ignoring her pain, "Yes, you've lost your virginity" (243). Jimmy experiences power and male domination over her and is feelingless towards her. No emotional attachment between Roche-Jane and Jimmy-Jane is shown in the novel. For him, she is only flesh, "He lay on top of her, and again had only the feeling of flesh below him" (74).

Jane cannot escape male brutality. Jane has been taken as a contemporary version of the deceitful white witch. The white woman and black man both are marginalised in main societies. They both have an approach with powerful, but they remain nonentities in major societies. Naipaul has been criticised for the unfavourable, degraded and rejected the depiction of Jane, "Naipaul's deep hostility toward the women reaches a horrifying climax in *Guerrillas* . . . Jane is the first woman to receive such elaborate treatment in Naipaul works" (Griffith 98).

Jane is a degraded outsider in an alien environment. Representation of Jane proves Naipaul as a misogynist. She cannot understand the racial and class-oriented hatred in the eyes of Jimmy. She has been depicted as an inauthentic person in *Guerrillas*, "she was the only what she did or said at any given movement" (96). Jane comprises in herself "unrelated ideas deposited in her soul as she had adventured in life, the debris of a dozen systems she had picked up from a dozen men" (55). Jane's acceptance of her degradation, rejection, and dishonour is more disturbing than the actions performed by Jimmy. She never opposes Jimmy's brutality, even at the time of her murder, she remains silent and opts not to struggle. She remains unable to raise voice for her rights. Jane's supposed privileged position, class differences, and her weaknesses are the key factors behind her gruesome end. Pyne Timothy concludes:

It may well be maintained that the dictates of the plot of this extremely harsh and pessimistic work, where Jane must be brutally murdered, demands that the reader's response to this woman must be as possible in order to mitigate the effects of the nightmarish quality of the rape and murder of which she is a victim. (300)

A Bend in the River (1979) was shortlisted for Booker Prize in 1979. In this novel, the subject matter has been taken from V. S. Naipaul's essay "A New King for Congo: Mobutu and the Nihilism of Africa". This novel is about the uncertain possibilities of the Third World in the changing political systems. Like other novels of V. S. Naipaul, this novel also reflects on the identity crisis, unbelongingness, alienation and displacement of the protagonist and other characters in an unnamed African country. Shashi Kamra observes, "It is similar to the existential absurdity of anguish at living in an unrelated meaningless world" (117).

This novel is the story of Salim whose ancestors came from India. He is from an East Indian Muslim African family. After his breakup with Yvette and unrest in the bush, Salim goes to London. In London, he thinks about the opportunity of marriage with Kareisha. Their marriage was fixed by their parents when they were children. Without marrying Kareisha, he returns to the town at the bend in the river. Salim is the narrator and protagonist of the novel. The unnamed country described in the novel is a place of tribal conflicts and undirected violence. Chinua Achebe in *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays: 1965-1987* observes about the novel as "Naipaul's thesis of a universal civilisation most cogently" (86). Further, Achebe has compared Conrad's and Naipaul's representation of Africa as:

Conrad's great wall of vegetation, which has, at least, a kind of ambiguous grandeur, is now cut down to mere "bush", Conrad's 'black', incomprehensible frenzy of the Africans to a rather pitiful rage that will try to set fire to concrete, and so on, and so on and so on. (89-90)

A Bend in the River is about displacement and alienation of Salim, Indar, Raymond, and Yvette. Dooley in "Naipaul's Women" points out, "the narrator, Salim, a young merchant, living in the inland town on the Congo River, is sexually naive until he meets Yvette, the wife of a European historian at the local University set up by the country's Big Man" (96). Yvette, Shoba, Kareisha, Zebeth are female participants of the novel. Female characters are sufferers of male domination and control. Only one woman, Zebeth, lives her life on her terms. Even she has to adopt some measurements to save herself from the cruelties of men. Males are the decision makers in this novel. They control the lives of their female counterparts.

Yvette, in *A Bend in the River*, is wife of European historian Raymond. She comes to a country town in New Domain because her husband works for a local university. Salim meets Yvette, a beautiful, attractive and young woman, at a party organised by Raymond couple at their house. Salim comes with Indar, his friend, to attend the party. After some meetings, Salim acknowledges the void and realities of Raymond-Yvette's relation. They both, Salim and Yvette, come close to one another to fulfil the void in their lives. Yvette plays a significant role in Salim's life. She opens Salim's eyes about life at New Domain as Zebeth, another female character, opens his eyes for the bush. Salim in *A Bend in the River* points out about her, "All my self-esteem came from being Yvette's lover, from serving her and pleasing her in the physical way I did" (231). However, in the end, she is rejected by Salim and

faces his hatred. In *A Bend in the River* Yvette says, "Women are stupid, but if women were not stupid, the world wouldn't go round" (218-19). She becomes the object of male sexual desire. She has to face subordination due to the deep-rooted patriarchal culture of society. More surprising is that she is educated and belongs to the developed world but is not aware of her disrespect and object position. Beauvoir's observation is suitable love relations between Salim and Yvette:

For woman, the love act is still considered a *service*, woman renders to man, thus giving him the status of the master; we have seen that he can take an inferior woman, but she degrades her if she gives herself to a male who is not equal her; her consent . . . is of the same nature as a surrender, a fall. (611)

Salim is surprised when for the first time she enters his room barefoot. He is surprised by her beautiful white legs. Yvette's beautiful white face and her expensive silk clothes attract him. She has other affairs also and is involved physically with other men. Raymond is 30 years older than Yvette, but he has money. She married him for the sake of money. Her face loses glow whenever she sees Raymond. Their relation is not based on any emotions but is based on the desires for a comfortable life. But she is a dutiful wife and is anxious about Raymond's deteriorating position at The New Domain. Actually, she is anxious about her own future. Bruce King in *V. S. Naipaul* observes about her as follows:

Yvette is one of Naipaul's European women like Jane and Linda who follow a man to the Third World expecting to find excitement and a better life but who are disappointed lacking talent, unable to escape. (19)

Before Yvette, Salim knows payee girls only. Before the entry of Yvette in his life, he was unaware of emotions and passion. He is attracted physically towards Yvette, "All my adult life I had looked for release in bars of the town, I knew only women who had to be paid for out of pleasure in one another's company" (Naipaul 147). Yvette provides physical pleasure to Salim. She is bold and intimate to men. Before she entered into his life, Salim was living a dull life. Salim finds Yvette "in an atmosphere of Europe in Africa" (215) and gets attracted towards her. Further, he makes the statement "perhaps in other setting and at another time she would not have made such an impression on me" (215). Due to the dullness of his own life he needs her. Dooley in "Naipaul's Women" compares Yvette with Jane:

Unlike Jane in *Guerrillas*, who is in some ways in a similar position- a white woman seeking sexual adventure- Yvette is only made to bear a small portion of responsibility for Salim's behaviour, and that portion is diminished even further by her acknowledgement of it. (96-97)

Yvette is able to touch the emotional and intellectual side of Salim's personality. She remains helpful to him. Moreover, Salim in *A Bend in the River* thinks "to feel so close to the highest power on the land" (217) because Raymond is Big Man's White Man. But with the passage of time Raymond has lost his position and now he is not Big Man's White Man. Yvette says about Raymond; "He was in a situation that he had perhaps lived through before, when he was a neglected teacher in the colonial capital. . . . Raymond was following a code . . . This code forbade him expressing disappointment" (220-21). Salim feels that Yvette in a strange country is herself a stranger. He observes, "She suffered more than Raymond appeared so. She was in a country that was still strange for her and was dangling,

doubly dependent” (220). Raymond and Yvette feel depressed in their life after the destruction of New Domain.

Salim’s encounter with Yvette never reaches beyond physical pleasure. He falsely thinks that he discovered his manhood through Yvette. He feels defeated even with his relationship with Yvette “I was possessed by Yvette, possessed by that person I never stopped wanting to win, satisfaction solved nothing; it only opened a new void, a fresh need” (216). Soon their physical attraction changes into violent hate and disgust. Salim rejects her, beats her mercilessly and spits between her open legs. Salim behaves violently when he comes to know about her other love affairs. By disrespecting Yvette, Salim wants to attain mental satisfaction and manhood. Salim states, "My wish for an adventure with Yvette was a wish to be taken to the skies . . . it wasn't a wish to be involved with people as trapped as myself" (223). The chaotic and disorganised society of bend in the river is incapable to provide any kind of fulfilment. Yvette, Salim, Mahesh, and Shoba all face an identity crisis. Yvette like Jane, in *Guerrillas*, is affected by female masochism. Bruce King in *V. S. Naipaul* concludes, “From *Miguel Street* onwards Naipaul has been examining the causes of masochism and women beating; one of the major themes of his novels is the way male impotence and insecurity turn into a sadistic rage against women” (121).

In *A Bend in the River* Yvette provides Salim, protagonist, “a physical fulfilment which could not be more complete” (15). She is a source of information about the outside world to Salim. But at the end of their affair, Salim treats her harshly. He starts feeling that she has other lovers and in anger and jealousy, he beats her and spits on her. Even then she has sympathy with Salim and calls him to enquire about his well being. Yvette's telephone call to Salim, to ask about his

wellbeing, is a gesture that she has no self-respect. She calls Salim to offer sympathy, but he rejects her sympathy. Gillian Dooley in "Naipaul's Women" comments, "However the fact that Yvette forgives Salim is also seen a trick by Naipaul to encourage the reader to absolve Salim. This tangled argument contains too many slippages of logic to straighten out. Also in a novel written in the first person, there is no surprise in the fact that Salim's point of view is prevalent" (96).

V. S. Naipaul does not claim morally healthy relations between men and women in his novels. In alienated, unsettled, and shattered world, strong and healthy relationships are denied. At first, Salim and Yvette's relations are satisfying and joyful. He knowingly ignores her low vision, judgements, and faults. But at last, Salim disrespects Yvette and his behaviour is violent. Robert Hemenway states about the negative depiction of females, "He deliberately denies his readers the hope that modern men and women, confronted by an earth slowly going back to the bush, by nation-states self-destructing in genocide and guerrilla warfare can find solace in the personal bonds of love, sex or marriage" (194).

To Salim, Kareisha is someone who informs him about London. Very soon he observes that Kareisha is not Yvette. Her serenity makes him thoughtful. Salim is engaged with Kareisha indifferently and irresponsibly. No emotional understanding between them is depicted by Naipaul. Kareisha in *A Bend in the River* informs him about London, Europe, and Indar. She observes, "There could be no going back; there was nothing to go back to. We had become what the world outside had made us; we had to live in the world as it existed" (286). Salim feels comfortable with her during the day, but at night in the hotel room, his worries and solitude haunt him, "the decisions and pleasures of the day and early evening were regularly cancelled but by me at night" (240).

Zebeth, a friend of Salim, and a customer from the bush entrusts Salim as a guardian for her son, Ferdinand. She is a local woman from the bush. She runs a small shop in an interior village. She brings news from the bush and tells Salim what is happening in the bush. Zebeth is an independent African woman and she is very traditional in her ways of life. But she wants to educate her son according to modern ways. She introduces bush to Salim. She lives her life as a true African but wishes modern education for her son. So she is progressive in her attitude. About Zebeth Pyne Timothy points about Naipaul's intention is, "to set Zebeth apart from women kind" (302). Zebeth is bold physically and a celibate. Pyne Timothy again says, "A woman can only be a complete, unfractured personality, and an intelligent and worthwhile member of her humanity, if her energies are withdrawn from sexual indulgence" (Women 302). Salim in *A Bend in the River* says about Zebeth:

I saw no contradiction; it seemed to me natural that someone like Zebeth, living such a hard life, should want something better for her son. This better life lay outside the timeless ways of village and river. It lay in education and acquiring a new skill, and for Zebeth as for many Africans of her generation, education was something only foreigners could give. (41)

Zebeth is influenced by Salim because he can speak English. She is a traditional woman from Africa but likes western education for her son. She knows that without European education, Ferdinand cannot grow in his life. She wishes Salim to take him under his supervision because she believes him. She says, "No. No Mis' Salim. Ferdinand will come to you. You beat him whenever you want" (41).

Zebeth is a very bold woman. She travels with other women towards the city. She uses special ointment, "ointment repelled and warned" (41) so that no one could touch her. So she protects herself. She is not married. She is like a magician. Salim thinks she has special powers and her charm works on Salim. Zebeth is single, but she has a son as a result of her sexual relations with a man from another tribe. That man left her and got married to another woman somewhere else. Zebeth's crossing of social and cultural boundaries is proof that she tries to give a particular place to her own preferences. She is a traditional woman, but at the same time, she stands in opposition to all traditional and social norms for her son.

Shoba is wife of Mahesh. They have a love marriage. Shobha's family was not in favour of their marriage. So, Shoba eloped with Mahesh and they came to a town in the interior. Their ways of life and feeling of insecurity depict their typical Indianness. Mahesh is very careful and possessive for his wife, Shoba. She lives among Africans but she has fear and hate for unknown Africans. She tells Salim, "You don't know how I live in fear in this place. You don't know how frightened I was when I heard . . . that a stranger had come to the town" (82).

Shoba and Mahesh seem to be tied to their Indian culture and tradition. But actually, Shoba broke Indian Hindu family traditions when she eloped with Mahesh. She came to Africa to hide from her brothers' anger. She visits India after the death of her father. She goes for two months but comes back early with utter hate for the land because she has been attacked physically. After that, she feels utterly unattached in the world; she feels alienated and displaced. Mahesh says, "She had hated the political situation in the East . . . thieving and boastful politicians, the incessant lies and hate on the radio and in the newspaper, the bag snatchers in

daylight, the nightly violence” (238-39). Shoba hates Africa but cannot love India and Asia. She feels trapped between India and Africa. She is frustrated with her insecure life in Africa. She cannot live her life with completeness. Martha Lewis comments about Naipaul's treatment of characters, "Naipaul's harsh treatment of his fictional figures, men and woman alike, and his often scathing remarks about his fellow human being do not . . . spring from sheer and misanthropy, but an underlying idealism resulting in uncompromising views" (210).

Naipaul has portrayed a multi-cultured and multi-ethnic society in this novel. But, in this multicultural and multi-ethnic society, women are not secure and safe. They are dislocated, abandoned, used, raped, defeated and disrespected by men. In this novel, only Zebeth has been provided with an independent role. But she is also divided between tradition/modern and African/Western. Naipaul has not provided any authoritative role to female characters in this novel. These females are not expected to be as competent as males are. They receive less attention from the author. The subordination of women mainly happens due to the existence of patriarchal ideology in the societies of which they are part. Yvette proves herself as an object of male desire, mainly of Salim. Beauvoir's observation is quite appropriate for Yvette:

She is nothing other than what man decides; she is thus called ‘the sex’, meaning that the male sees her essentially as a sexed being; for him, she is sex, . . . She determines and differentiates herself in relation to man, and he does not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other. (6)

Women in the selected novels of Naipaul are weak, submissive, fragile and backward. They are subordinate and dependent on men. They are wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters but never become the soul mates and confidants. No one cares for their sentiments. Women are ignorant individuals. Being a realist Naipaul shows the true state of women in Indo-Caribbean societies. In these novels, it is the struggle of the male protagonist who sustains the interest. Women remain indifferent and sidelined. They are flat characters and have been denied any growth or development. They live on the extremes of existence. Naipaul's female characters are not attractive, central and decision makers. They are only to subordinate men and to sacrifice themselves before male power. Female characters like Zabeth and Shoba go against the traditions of the society but they are also affected by the decisions taken by the patriarchal society. Elaine Fido claims:

We as readers . . . have the right to object if we see certain traits being constantly repeated as if they were morally health perceptions of human behaviour when in fact they are playing on the sickness which sexism creates and posters in the mind. (90-91)

Female characters in these novels have been left apart; they ramble in another sphere, which definitely co-exists with men's world but entirely different. As women don't develop, the only way to survive for them is to adopt the male-oriented atmosphere and remain stereotypical forever. Naipaul's representation of females in many ways is traditional and patriarchally stereotypical. His female characters are marginalised. There are many marginal groups based on race, colour, and area in this world. These marginal groups are denied subjectivity and rights. Similarly, like other subordinate groups of women, two white female characters, Jane and Yvette,

are also denied their subjective selves to attain identity. They run after the men in their lives to satisfy the sexual needs of men as well as their own. In the end, they are rejected by these men, Salim and Jimmy Ahmed. Within society, the allocation of power between men and women is not balanced. The position of women within the patriarchal society is decided by men. Throughout the ages, within the families, and in the outside world, women have been tortured mentally and physically by powerful men. Their life and destiny depend upon the decisions taken by men in their life. As Beauvoir claims, "woman makes no claim for herself as a subject because she lacks the concrete means, because she senses the necessary link connecting her to man without positing its reciprocity, and because she often derives satisfaction from her role as Other" (10).

The patriarchal systems shape and influence the conditions of the life of female characters in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul. This is reflected by the roles provided to female characters. Male power, domination, and identity are more important than female identity. The subordinate role of female characters gives an advantage to male protagonists in these novels to emerge as independent human beings. The females have been depicted in lower social standing in the society like Shama, Leela, Yvette and Jane. They remain mere housewives or sexual objects. These female characters experience physical abuse, discrimination, mental harassment, wife-beating, and discrimination.

Female characters' upbringing and lack of resistance in these selected novels indicate the existence of patriarchal oppression that prohibits the active participation of women. These characters choose the path to tolerate male domination and contribute to maintaining and generating patriarchal oppression. An individual's

stance might bring some good change in society. The choice of a better path might bring better changes in the life of women. The change might provide a sense of awareness to victims who experience domination and subordination in society. All the subordinated characters have their ways of facing the problems in their life. Some of them never say a word to oppose victimisation, as Tulsi daughters, Yvette, and Jane. Some female characters show partial development, while others do not show any achievement in the selected novels. Leela, Shama, and Zebeth release themselves partially from patriarchal oppression but remain subordinate as Shama stops running to her family during crises for help and Leela prefers for social work. By helping others, she gains confidence, although her social work depends on the financial support of her husband. Zebeth remains an independent woman throughout the novel. Leela, Shama, and Zebeth are capable of enhancing their self-esteem. However, the subordinate role of these female characters forces them to experience a lack of individual identity, bitterness, and suffering. They are unable to realise their abilities and powers to free themselves from oppression. Their fixed roles make them trapped in the circle of suffering.

Chapter – 4

Representation of Women in the Selected Novels of Salman Rushdie

Women's subordination, oppression, marginalization, and identity have been argued over and over in academic and non-academic circles. In day to day life, they are supposed to be silent, spineless and subaltern. If they try to speak for their rights, they are forced to be silent with the male dominant gag. The roots of inequality between men and women can be traced back to the membership of various social institutions such as the family, the community, and the state. In a way, these institutions are meant to settle disputes, establish legal rules and prevent abuse of power. Inequalities faced by girls can begin right at birth and follow all their lives. A family's happiness and prosperity have been attached to the male heir. Young girls are brought up under some social and cultural practices by the family. They grow under some restrictions. They are instructed to sit appropriately, behave like a girl, not to laugh loudly and are trained to be polite and docile. On the other side, boys are allowed to do whatever they wish to do. Boys can go outside freely; they can be outspoken, and they have choices in their life. Girls are not even free to choose their life partners. Love marriage is a taboo in patriarchal families. Experiences of women involving love, marriage and sex are undergoing drastic changes throughout the world.

Nowadays, a change can be felt among young women. Now they are experimenting with love, choice of life partners and sexual freedom. If there is anything that modern people seem to take for granted, it is the importance and the necessity of falling in love. The songs, stories and movies endlessly describe the pain and ecstasy of love as it is found, challenged, lost, denied or thwarted. The

romantic clichés believe that love is blind; a life without love is not worth living; marriage should be for love and love overwhelms. Between a lover and beloved, romantic love, cannot be sold or calculated, and love is mysterious, profound and spontaneous. A woman is adored when young and beautiful but ignored when she loses beauty. Love for a man is just an episode in their lives, while for a woman, it is everything. Any principle of honour or constancy does not bound men in love. For them, love does not involve obligation; many of them only love for the moment. If love is the province of men, it is better not to be loved, because if a woman gives in to the need to be loved, she gives herself to man. Simone de Beauvoir muses about love, "Woman accomplishes herself and is really transformed in love; unique, accepting a unique destiny – and not floating rootless through the universe – so she is the sum of all" (256). Sex has remained the central aspect of human life and encompasses gender identities, roles, pleasure, intimacy, reproduction and eroticism. Sex is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, economic, social, political, ethical, religious and legal factors. Patriarchal ideologies have claimed for the purity and chastity of women. As far as sex is concerned, the acquisition of any right on the part of the women is interpreted as a moral infringement of their natural priorities. In general, women have to repress their sexual desires due to societal control. But now women have started expressing these desires openly. As Kate Millet observes, "All agree that the relation between sexes is a matter of rule and be ruled, all agree that the recent liberation of sexual desire in women, and particularly the new right of sexual initiative, place women in a position to rule" (273). However, now women are getting equal status in family life. Now they have an urge for freedom from the restrictions of society. Women have started raising voice against oppression and atrocities.

Marriage is a sacred bond between man and woman. It is dreamed as a bed of roses, not realizing that roses are always accompanied by thorns. Weddings in a patriarchal family usually happen within caste, religion and economic group. In arrange marriage, a suitable match is found by the family for the marriageable girls and boys. However, in love marriage, boys and girls choose their life partners on their own. Their choice is the result of feelings of love for each other. Now the number of love marriages is outnumbering the arranged marriage. The concept of marriage is changing in society, and even young boys and girls are opting for live-in-relationships. Girls' choice for life partners proves their urge for an independent decision. Feminists have long criticized the institution of marriage. Historically, it has remained a fundamental means for the oppression of women. A wife is denied equal status with husband in family and society. A wife is expected to be self-erasing, submissive and obedient. Wife, a woman, faces gender discrimination throughout life.

Gender discrimination was opposed by activists and scholars, which facilitated legal, constitutional and other remedies to ensure equality for women. Literature is an important medium to represent social realities. With the passage of time, feminist literary critics began to think about the authentic portrayal of women in literature. Now women are becoming educated, financially independent and have choices in day-to-day life. Now, they walk keeping pace with males in the world of cut-throat competition.

Salman Rushdie is a Bombay born versatile British author who has represented hybrid identities, popular culture, problems of post-colonial societies and displacement in his fiction. His novels are about migration between East and

West. Eastern and Western world views have influenced Salman Rushdie's mindset because he was brought up in an Indian Muslim but secular family and received education in India and England. He has experiences of living in India, Britain and the United States of America. In the selected novels, *Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Shalimar the Clown*, Salman Rushdie has expressly provided an excellent depiction of the female characters as for as love, marriage, and sex are concerned. He has also represented the women's struggle to survive in life, which type of rituals they have to follow, the way they are exploited, their urge for freedom and how they struggle to attain identity. His selected novels deal with stories of women and the men in their lives as a son, brother, father, husband, and friends. Female characters in these selected novels rebel against fixed gender roles. They are depicted as women having mind and impulses of their own. Rushdie's female characters attain their identity by becoming artists, film producers, and successful businesswomen. They run the business of health products, music, horse racecourse, painting, making of a documentary and family business. However, their help and intervention help male counterparts to solve physical ailments, financial crises, and mental traumas. The active and liberated female characters fight for the equality of women.

Midnight's Children (1981) is Salman Rushdie's second novel. The *Midnight's Children* bagged Booker Prize in 1984, Booker of Bookers in 1993, and Best of Bookers in 2008. This novel is about the life of Saleem, born on the midnight of Indian Independence day along with other children. All the midnight's children have special powers and are connected with each other through telecommunication. This novel depicts cultural, social and political situations of pre

and post-independence India. At the starting of the novel, Saleem Sinai, the protagonist, is 30 years old. He works in a pickle factory. He narrates the story of his life to Padma, his caretaker, beloved and would-be wife. The story of the novel starts in Kashmir with Doctor Aadam Aziz and Naseem Ghani, the maternal grandparents of Saleem. After marriage, the couple shifts to Amritsar, where they have to face violence. Then they move to Agra. In Agra, they bring up their children- named Emerald, Mumtaz, Alia, Mustapha, and Hanif. Aadam Aziz is optimistic about the early freedom of India. He discusses India's freedom with Mian Abdullah, Nadir Khan and Rani of Cooch Nahin.

After the assassination of Mian Abdullah, a Muslim politician, founder of Free Islam Convocation and is called by the name Hummingbird; Nadir Khan approaches Aadam Aziz for shelter. Nadir Khan lives in the basement of Doctor Aziz's house for three years and falls in love with Mumtaz, and he gets married to her. Emerald, sister of Mumtaz, informs army officer Major Zulfikar regarding Nadir Khan's hiding in their basement. Nadir Khan runs away from the basement, leaving Mumtaz behind. Then Mumtaz gets married to Ahmed Sinai and becomes Amina Sinai. After marriage, Amina and Ahmed move to Delhi. Then they move to Bombay and purchase a house from Methwold in June 1947. Amina gives birth to a baby boy. But the midwife, Mary Pereira, exchanges their baby boy with someone else's. Saleem Sinai, to whom Amina and Ahmed take home as their son is not their biological son, and is considered as a symbol of India's freedom. Saleem's picture prints on the front page of the newspaper because he was born on the midnight of Indian independence. The Prime Minister, Mr Jawahar Lal Nehru, sends a letter to wish Saleem Sinai. The actual Sinai boy has to fall into unknowingness.

After some years, Ahmed Sinai has to face a financial crisis, and all his assets get freeze by the government. Saleem's childhood is not pleasant. Other children make fun of his odd looks. At the age of nine, Saleem comes to know about his capability to communicate telepathically. He creates the network to communicate with children born on the midnight of 15 August 1947. Telepathically, he arranges Midnight's Children's Conference. Saleem contacts Shiva, born on the midnight of Indian independence and biological son of Ahmed and Amina Sinai. Saleem gets injured at school and from a blood test his parents acknowledge that Saleem is not their biological son. After this revelation, Saleem has to live with his maternal uncle Hanif and his wife Pia. Hanif commits suicide due to financial loss. After the mourning of 40 days, Saleem's family moves to Pakistan. Now he cannot contact midnight's children due to his weak telecommunication powers. Saleem's sister, Jamila (Brass Monkey), becomes a singer. He confesses his love for her as she is not his biological sister. But she refuses his love. During the war between India and Pakistan, Saleem's parents, grandmother, his aunts Emerald and Pia are killed in Indian bombshells.

Then Saleem joins Pakistan Army. He meets Parvati-the-witch, also a midnight children. Saleem comes back to India with the help of Parvati and Picture Singh, a snake charmer. He marries Parvati, but Parvati becomes the mother of Shiva's son. Saleem gives that boy his name, Aadam Sinai. Parvati is killed during a ghetto attack. Saleem comes to Bombay along with his son, Aadam Sinai, and Picture Singh. The chutney he smells reminds him of his childhood chutney prepared by his nanny Mary Pereira. In the pickle factory, Salim meets Mary Pereira and starts working in the same. He works during the day and shares his stories with Padma during the night. On his 31st birthday, Saleem experiences mixed feelings, he

is with Padma, his caretaker and beloved, and he is also aware of the death approaching him. The novel ends on a pessimistic note. The following observations of Saleem in *Midnight's Children* depict the role played by females in his life:

Women have always been the ones to change my life. Mary Pereira, Evie Burns, Jamila Singer, and Parvati-the-witch must answer for who I am, and the widow, who I'm keeping for the end; and after the end, Padma my goddess of dung. Women have fixed me alright but they were the never central- perhaps the place should have filled, the hole in the centre of me, which was my inheritance from my grandfather Adam Aziz, was occupied by for too long by my voices.
(Rushdie 565)

In *Midnight's Children*, many male and female characters play minor and major roles. Female characters have a big space in the narration. Naseem Aziz, Amina Sinai, Padma, Jamila Singer and Parvati-the-witch are significant female characters of this novel. These female characters play an essential role in fixing the personality, destiny, and identity of Saleem. The position of the female characters in the novel is equivocal -they play significant roles in Saleem's life. They are his makers and they also are made by him.

Female personas in *Midnight Children* are makers as well as unmakers of Saleem. Saleem Sinai, the protagonist of the novel, comments, "Women have made me and also unmade. From Reverend Mother to the widow, and even beyond I have been at the mercy of so-called gentler sex" (565). Rushdie depicts the miserable protagonist as a puppet and females in his life are makers, unmakers, tormentor and commentators. Fixed sex roles are changed in the novel. When Padma proposes

Saleem Sinai for marriage, he reacts "like a blushing virgin" (620). She proposes him "Let's be married, mister . . . At thirty-one, a man is a man, and is supposed to have a wife" (621). Padma is resolute, but Saleem feels low before her determination and hopes that she will change the end of his story with the "phenomenal force of her will" (621). Saleem feels lonely, sad and angry when Padma leaves him for two days. Padma's separation of two days is torture for him. He points out "in her absence, my certainties are falling apart. Even my nose has been playing tricks on me" (229).

The narrative, that praises and denigrates the women in the novel, is told to a woman listener, Padma. The speaker and listener have a quite complicated relationship. They have a multi-faceted relationship of lover-beloved, speaker-listener and hunter-hunted. Padma, the listener, is in love with Saleem, the speaker. Saleem wishes to attract Padma with his story and she falls in love with him. Saleem points out, "I have become his master . . . and Padma is the one who is now under its spell, sitting in my enchanted shadow . . . while she squatting glimpses, is captivated as a helpless mongoose frozen into immobility by the swaying" (304). Padma is more influenced by Saleem's personality rather than his way of storytelling. In the chapter, Accident in a Washing Chest, Saleem narrates that Padma left him for two days. In the chapter, The Fisherman's Pointing Finger, Saleem points out about the reason for leaving him that Padma has more interest in other pencils than his creative pencils. Saleem observes questioningly, "to resent nocturnal scribbling as though they were the very flesh and blood of sexual rival? I think of no other reason for Padma's bizarre behaviour; and this explanation at least has the merit of being an outlandish as the rage into which she fell, when tonight I made the error of writing" (165). After two days, Padma comes back with herbs to cure Saleem's manliness.

Padma is a caring woman, but at the same time, she is driven by the sexual attachment for Saleem.

Padma is interested in Saleem. She is influenced by his foreign accent, his way of narration, personality, and stories. However, she cannot believe his stories about the activities of midnight's children. She cannot understand Saleem's language and Saleem as narrator. However, she can understand Saleem as a man. She does not understand his writing and underestimates his writing. She says, "So I thought how to back to this man who will not love me and only does some foolish writery?" (267). Her underestimation upsets Saleem and he cries for Padma who loves him but cannot understand him. Simone de Beauvoir's observation is quite suitable for Pdama:

She wants to feel like a real woman for her personal satisfaction. She only succeeds in accepting herself from the perspective of both the present and the past by combining the life she has made for herself with the destiny prepared for her . . . She wants to live both like a man and like a woman; her workload and her fatigue are multiplied as a result. (741)

Padma's inability to understand Saleem's story proves her as intellectually and educationally dull. This is also proof of the author's prejudiced and biased vision for Padma. Padma cannot understand Saleem's stories of midnight's children because she lacks intellect and imagination. Padma has an interest only in stories, not in plot and depiction. She only wants to hear his stories. Padma in *Midnight's Children* says, "Arre bap just tell what happened mister!" (594). She has a curiosity for the traditional dream-like stories.

Jamila Singer, also known as Brass Monkey, Saleem's sister, in *Midnight's Children*, is given an unfeminine role. In her childhood, she is a troublemaker for her family. Saleem becomes a docile and good boy. Saleem and Brass Monkey have a significant relationship of care. Rushdie depicts their relation with well-written sentences and well-placed incidents. In childhood, one day, Saleem gets punishment for hiding in the washing area, and Amina asks him not to speak for one day. After the completion of the punishment, Brass Monkey reminds Amina to free Saleem from the forced silence. In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie writes, "To demonstrate the loyalty of sisters: when the twenty-four hours were up, on the dot, the Brass Monkey ran into my mother's bedroom . . . 'The time's up! She exclaimed, shaking my mother out of sleep. 'Amma wake up: it's time: can he talk now?'" (226).

Brass Monkey is not docile and submissive but she is the hell-raiser of her family. When Saleem claimed to hear voices, his family ostracized him. For the sake of family peace, Brass Monkey puts herself in trouble and is punished:

Even the Brass Monkey was satisfied by my show of contrition- in her eyes, I had returned to form, and was once more the goody-two-shoes of the family. To demonstrate her willingness to re-establish the old order, she set fire to my mother's favourite slippers and regained her rightful place in the family doghouse. (210)

Jamila Singer depends on religion and tradition to search for her identity. The hell-raiser of the family, Jamila Singer, succeeds to create her identity with modesty. She sings behind the veil. The narrator observes her popularity as followings:

The accident rumour set the final seal on her popularity; her concerts packed out the Bombino theatre in Karachi and filled the Shalimar-bagh in Lahore; her records constantly topped the sales charts. And as she became public property, 'Pakistan's Angel', 'The Voice of the Nation', the 'Bulbul-e-Din' or nightingale-of-the-faith, and began to receive one thousand and one firm proposals of marriage a week. (435-36)

Jamila perceives Saleem's confession for love as a betrayal. Saleem and Brass Monkey are not siblings. However, she takes his confession as incest. According to Saleem, she takes revenge from him for his confession. He explains, "Vengeful abandonment by Jamila Singer, who wormed me into the Army to get me out of her sight, I accepted the fate which was my repayment for love " (488).

Parvati-the-witch, a midnight's child, saves Saleem from the enemy. She forces Saleem to marry her. Saleem and Parvati get married, but she gets attracted to the manliness of Shiva. She lives with Shiva in his house for three months and indulges in physical relations. She conceives son by Shiva because her husband Saleem is impotent. To pacify her physical needs, she has to choose another man rather than her husband. She gives birth to her son, Aadam, in the ghetto. Her son is adopted by Saleem. A patriarchal society does not allow extramarital relations for females. But Parvati's decision to have sexual relations with Shiva proves her urge for freedom from fixed gender roles. Her husband is not physically fit, but she is not a woman who can submit before what destiny has provided her. However, she is a woman who crosses the limits of society to pacify her physical impulses.

Naseem Ghani, maternal grandmother of Saleem, is always accompanied by three lady wrestlers during her teenage, and she lives in repressive surroundings. Whenever Doctor Aziz, a German-educated doctor, comes for her physical check-up, he has to check her through a perforated sheet. The perforated sheet does not serve as purdah or wall of protection from unknown persons, but it is a metaphor for the barrier that society and family establish between lover and beloved. This perforated sheet is a symbol of a thing that controls and induces sexual desires. The perforated sheet covers Naseem and arouses sexual desires in Aziz. The perforated sheet is also used as a metaphor. This sheet allows Doctor Aziz to access the body parts of Naseem. This perforated sheet also leads to the path of conception and birth. Naseem is seen and diagnosed through the perforated sheet. Jamila Singer also performs through the sheet in the land of pure. Doctor Adam Aziz's examination through the perforated sheet is explained as following in *Midnight's Children*:

So gradually, Doctor Aziz came to have a picture of Naseem in his mind, badly fitting collage of her severely- inspected parts. This phantasm of a partitioned woman began to haunt him, and not only in his dreams. Glued together by his imagination; she accompanied him on all his rounds, she moved into the front room of his mind, so that waking and sleeping he could feel in his fingertips the softness of her ticklish skin . . . but she was headless because he had never seen her.

(Rushdie 26)

Doctor Aziz and Naseem get married in Kashmir. After marriage, they face many problems in their married life, Naseem is of rigid behaviour, and Doctor Aziz wants to see her as a modern woman. Many reasons are responsible for failed

marriages. Age mismatch, social status, unequal education of husband and wife, unnecessary interference of family members, use of drugs by partners, and dowry are some common reasons for failed marriages in society. Sexual dissatisfaction, ignoring reality and believes in imagination are also responsible for failed marriages. The reason for the failure of the marriage of Aziz and Naseem is that Doctor Aziz is forced to imagine and love Naseem in parts. Because the family, the culture and society, in which they try to survive, do not allow open contact between man and woman. When he goes for the check-up of ailing Naseem, Doctor Aziz is not allowed to see her. He sees her in parts. The narrator in *Midnight's Children* explains that Aadam and Naseem had a failed marriage because;

Naseem Aziz, whom grandfather had made the mistake of loving in fragments, and who was now unified and transmuted into the formidable future she would always remain. She lived with an invisible fortress of her making, an ironclad citadel of traditions and certainties. (47)

In this novel, Aziz couple is not the only one to experience an unsatisfied sexual life. However, the same dissatisfaction and fragmentation are repeated in the life of Amina Sinai, mother of Saleem. First, she is married to Nadir Khan. Then she is married to Ahmed Sinai. She never forgets her previous husband. She tries to love Ahmed Sinai. The narrator muses about Amina Sinai, “fell under the spell of the perforated sheet of her own parents, because she resolved to fall in love with her husband bit by bit” (87). Saleem states about this dissatisfaction of his mother as following:

In my mother's opinion, a husband deserves unquestioning loyalty and unreserved full-hearted love. But there was a difficulty: Amina, her mind, clogged up with Nadir Khan and his insomnia; found she couldn't naturally provide Ahmed Sinai with these things. And, so bringing her gift of assiduity to bear, she began to train herself to live him. To do this she divided him, mentally, into every single one of his component parts, physical as well as behaviour. (87)

Society denies any open expression of sexual desires. People have to repress some of their desires due to the fear of society. The consequences of the repression of natural desires are represented by Rushdie again and again in the novel. After her marriage, Amina gets herself busy with fulfilling family responsibilities. Then she receives calls from Nadir Khan and many times goes to meet him. For Saleem, their relation is illicit. The glass of lassi becomes the source to release their repressed sexual desires. This illicit love affair of Nadir Khan and Amina Siani is depicted as:

Through the dirty, square glossy cinema screen of the Pioneer Cafe's window, I watched Amina Sinai and no longer Nadir play their love scene my mother's hands raising a half-empty glass of Lovely lassi, my mother's lips pressing gently, nostalgically against the mottled glass, my mother's hands handing the glass to her Nadir-Qasim; who also applied, to the opposite side of the glass, his own, poetic mouth. Midnight. (300-01)

Salman Rushdie represents a certain kind of furtiveness of female characters' sexual desires. Saleem Sinai becomes an eyewitness to Amina Sinai's masturbating to her previous husband, Nadir Khan:

And her hands are moving. Lost in their memory of other days of what happened after games of hit-the-spittoon in the Agra cellar, they flutter gladly at her cheeks; they hold her bosom tighter than any brassieres, and now they caress her bare midriff, they stay down below decks . . . yes, this is what we used to do, my love. (222)

Amina Sinai's secret urges and behaviour depict the concept of sexuality. Amina's behaviour is in contrast to the old world values of her mother, Naseem. Naseem is terrified when Doctor Aziz, her husband, demands her response at the time of physical relations. Rushdie writes:

She has been weeping ever since he asked her, on their second night, to move a little. Move where?' she asked. 'Move how?' he became awkward and said, 'Only move, I mean, like a woman. . . . she shrieked in horror . . . Listen, Doctor Sahib, husband or no husband, I am not any . . . bad word woman. (34)

Women characters in this novel fulfil their feminine duties as mothers and wives. When Ahmed Sinai faces bad luck and is incapable of handling finance and family life, at that time, Amina leads the family, financial affairs and provides stability to her family. She uses her savings to invest in the racecourse and earns money. Amina uses that money for lawyers to save her husband's property to unfrozen the accounts. She fights a legal battle and wins the case for her debt-ridden and drunkard husband. At that time, she plays a very important role to manage the family crisis and proves herself. Simone de Beauvoir's observation is quite suitable for Amina:

The woman herself believes that her personal life does not dispense her from the duties she assumed in marrying; she does not want her husband to be deprived of the advantages he would have in marrying a 'real woman': she wants to be elegant, a good housekeeper and devoted mother as wives traditionally are. It is a task that easily becomes overwhelming. . . . She will be a double for her husband at the same time as being herself; she will take charge of his worries. (750)

Many female characters are provided nicknames like small kids in the novel as Brass Monkey, Parvati-the-which, Reverend Mother, Nussie-the-duck. The task of providing nicknames to female characters denies their real identity. It only designates special traits of their personality. The female characters in the novel are used as shaping tools to assist the development of Saleem.

Naseem Aziz, grandmother of Saleem, is a domestic lady, who does not know anything about politics or the nation. Naseem is far away from Gandhian non-violent ways for the Indian independence struggle. She has no information about the Rowlatt Act and its effects in India. She mostly asks questions, and Doctor Aziz answers as well as makes statements. When a specific time has passed over her family, she denies any type of political discussion and debate in her house. So she is depicted as an antithesis to Rani of Cooch Naheen, a politically active female character in the novel. The narrator points out, "Among the things which she denied entry were all political matters. When Doctor Aziz wished to talk about such things, he visited his friend the Rani and Reverend Mother sulked; but not very hard, because she knew his visits represented a victory for her" (40). She is ignorant of governmental issues, independence struggle, and problems. Naseem says:

I do not understand this hartal when nobody is dead.” Naseem is crying softly, “why will the train not run? How long are we stuck for?” . . . ‘It was a mistake to pass the Rowlatt Act’, he murmurs, ‘what Rowlatt?’ wails Naseem. (37)

Naseem behaves in a very determinant way whenever she does not like something. She denies political debates in her house. Although, she does not like Doctor Aziz’s visit to Rani of Cooch Naheen but never shares her disliking openly. She is a staunch follower of Islam, so she believes in traditional orthodox religious education for her children. They are expected to be good Muslims and well versed in the *Quran*. Naseem expects that they should have faith in the teachings of the *Quran*. Unlike Doctor Aziz, she has no ambiguities and she is very devoted. She says, "You have your Hummingbird; she told him, "But I whatsitsname, have the call of God. A better noise, whatsitsname, than that man’s hum. It was one of her rare political comments” (50). Naseem is against any type of religious tolerance, i.e. Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism or Buddhism. Doctor Aziz wants to provide modern education to his children. Many times they both argue about it. One day they have a heated discussion about the education of their children:

Aziz, “do you know what that man was teaching your children?” and Reverend Mother hurling question against the question, “what will you not do to disaster, whatsitsname, on our heads? But now Aziz, ‘you think it was Nastaliq script? Eh? -to which his wife warming up: ‘would you eat pig? Whatsitsname? Would you spit on the Quran?’ And voice raising, the Doctor ripostes, “Or was it some verses of “The Cow”? You think that?”. . . Paying no attention,

Reverend Mother arrives at her climax: ‘Would you marry your daughters to Germans!’ and pauses fighting for breath, letting my grandfather reveal. ‘He was teaching them to hate, wife. He tells them to hate Hindus and Buddhists and Jains and Sikhs and who knows other vegetarians. Will you have hateful children, woman? “Will you have godless ones?” . . . “I take this oath . . . I swear no food will come from my kitchen to your lips! No, not one chapatti, until you bring the Maulvi Sahib back and kiss his, whatsitsname, feet!. (50-51)

Rani of Cooch Naheen becomes a friend of Doctor Aziz. She is active politically. Rani of Cooch Naheen believes in secular India. She is a nationalist and dreams about independent India. She proves her Intelligence and analytical powers when she analyses the aim of partition between India and Pakistan. She is an idealist who believes in the best of the country above all other affairs. Her enthusiasm for India's freedom is a mirror of her idealism and political goals. She considers herself as a sufferer of cross-cultural disturbances. She says, "I am the victim, 'Rani whispered through her photographed lips that never move, ‘the hapless victim of my cross-cultural concerns. My skin is the outward expression of the internationalism of my spirit’" (53). Rani supports the right political beliefs financially. She never showed Agra as a Muslim League bastion. She says, “Aadam my boy if the Hummingbird wants to hold convocation here, I’m not about to suggest he goes to Allahabad.’ She was bearing the entire expense of the event without complaint or interference; not, let it be said, without making enemies in the town” (56). Like Doctor Aziz and Nadir Khan, she dislikes the Muslim League. She argues:

That bunch of toadies; the Rani cried in her silvery voice, swooping around the octaves like a skier. ‘Landowners with vested interests to protect! What do they have to do with Muslims? They go like toad’s to the British and form government for them, now that the Congress refuses to do it!’ It was the year of the Quit India Resolution ‘And what’s more,’ the Rani said with finality, ‘they are mad. Otherwise, why would they want to partition India?’ (55)

But such political activities by a woman are not acceptable in a patriarchal society. In a patriarchal society, a woman is supposed to fulfil domestic duties only. A woman who participates actively in political affairs has to face unpleasant comments and observations of society. Rani supports scholars. However, her political rebels spread rumours about ways of her life. The narrator comments, “These scholars of hers, man, everyone knows they have to perform extra-curricular duties. They go to her bedroom in the dark, and she never let them see her blotchy face, but bewitches them into bed with her voice of a singing witch!” (56). Doctor Aziz never believes in such matters. He only enjoys the company of her friends.

Naseem half believes on such stories, but she never visits her house with Aadam. She believes that Rani’s ways are against God. Rani is depicted in opposition to Naseem. Naseem believes in Muslim religion and God, but Rani believes in secularization. On the one side, novelist portrays a political and peaceful type of devoted nationalist woman, Rani of Cooch Naheen, and on the other hand, stubborn, violent and dictatorial woman character is also depicted in the form of Naseem.

Throughout the novel, female characters outshine the males having more success and managing powers as Nasseem, Amina, Padma and Jamila Singer. They revert the fixed gender roles and raise voice against whatever they do not like. They are capable to manage their families during the times of crisis. They fulfil their responsibilities as mothers or wives but do not sacrifice their self-respect. But some are depicted morally low. Amina is a good mother but an unfaithful wife. She goes to meet her ex-husband regularly. Mary Pereira is a committed aaya, but she is a sinner. She exchanges babies at the time of their birth. Parvati is a loving and caring friend but proves to be an unfaithful wife. She compels Saleem to marry her, too calculative witch and enjoys physical relational with Shiva. Saleem's grandmother, Naseem, is a good caretaker of the home but is a very authoritative mother and wife. Jamila, Brass Monkey, is a good sister and singer but hates the feeling of love.

The Moor's Last Sigh, published in 1995, bagged Whitbread prize. The novel is set mainly in Indian cities Cochin and Mumbai, and in Spain. The narrator cum protagonist, Moraes Zogoiby, tells the family history of Zogoiby and da Gama families. The protagonist, Moraes Zogoiby, is known as Moor in the novel. He is the sole survivor of Zogoiby and da Gama families. Aurora da Gama Zogoiby, Moor's mother, is the pivotal character of the novel. She is a very strong and dominating woman who destroys the true love of her only son. She also disowns her loving son Moor. She is a genius painter but dies an accidental and tragic death during Ganesh Puja. Moor compromises with his father, Abraham, to bring peace to Aurora's soul. Abraham's business empire is destroyed in the end. All the characters die in massive fire bombings in Bombay except Moor. Then Moor moves to Spain in search of his mother's paintings. He finds Vasco Miranda's mansion in Benenegali. Vasco earned money and international fame with his paintings. Once upon a time, he was

dismissed by Aurora. Moor is taken into prison by Vasco and is locked in the Vasco basement with Aoi Ue, a Japanese art conservator. She is kidnapped by Vasco to remove over-painting of the Moor's Last Sigh to show the bare-breasted young Aurora in original. Moor lives with his only companion, Aoi Ue, in confinement and tells his family history to her. When Aoi Ue completes her task Vasco kills her, but Moor flies from Vasco prison. The novel ends in the cemetery where it starts.

Rushdie represents the 20th century women of a south Indian da Gama and Zogoiby families. India's freedom struggle movement becomes the background for the novel as well as for the evolution of the women characters. The leading female characters who play the role of the bearers of different attributes are Epifania, Flory, Isabella (mother of Aurora) has a rebellious spirit, Aurora Zogoiby (the central character) likes independence and self-realization through painting, Ina Zogoiby (elder sister of Moor) has an urge for self-affirmation, Minnie Zogoiby (Middle sister of Moor), believes in God and chooses church to escape family hardships, Mynah Zogoiby (Younger sister of Moor) is a social activist and raises voice for women rights.

The central character, Aurora da Gama Zogoiby is a very talented painter. Through her paintings, she represents the complexity of life and history of India. But often she is misunderstood. Aurora has tangled relations with men in her life as Abraham, Vasco Mirinda, Aires, and her son Moor. Everyone admires her for her beauty and artistic genius. In the character of Aurora, Salman Rushdie has presented a combination of tradition and modernity. In *The Moor's Last Sigh* the disappointed suitor of Aurora, Vasco Mirinda characterizes Aurora, before her son Moor, "To be the offspring of our demonic Aurora is to be, truly, a modern Lucifer. You know the son of the blooming morning" (Rushdie 5).

Aurora is outspoken and dare in her ways. Every time she does not like anything, she has the courage to revolt. She inherited this straightforwardness from her mother. She says to her grandmother "you will see . . . from now on I am in her place" (171). Her pain and grief often come out in the form of anger. She feels bad for whom she hurts, and proves that her, "good feelings could only swell up in her in the aftermath of a ruinous flood of bile" (177). Moor reminds that they all were under her influence, "and we spend our lives living up, down and sideways to her predictions . . . did I mention that she was irresistible?" (172). Moor, Abraham, and all other near ones forgive her for her weaknesses, smoking, drinking, and for being outspoken because she is deeply attached to every person in her life. This quality of attachment keeps alive Aurora's bond with Abraham, her husband, and her children. They do not sleep on the same bed in the same room after she comes to know about his extramarital relations; even then they seek each other's suggestions. Moor says, "My mother needed Abraham's approval as much as he longed for her" (172). Their attachment and mutual understanding force Moor to forgive them for their weaknesses and follies. Moor reminds that his mother always remained a light of their lives, she was 'excitement' of their imagination and 'beloved' of their dreams, Moor points out, "We loved her even as she destroyed us. She called out of us a love that felt too big for our bodies, as if she had made the feeling and then given it to us to feel as if it were a work" (172).

At the beginning, Aurora is attracted towards naturalism and natural paintings. She was influenced by the spirit of the age. Abraham also liked natural paintings. When Vasco Miranda comes into her life, she listened to her own voice. She does not submissively surrender to the demands of her husband. Aurora gives

preferences to her likes and dislikes. With the help of Vasco, she reminds about her unhappiness of mimetic. Once again, she pays attention to her wishes, likings, and dreams. With Vasco's advice, she makes Moor the centre of her paintings. These changes in paintings also bring a change in her attitude. Her feelings for Abraham also change. Sometimes her self-destructive actions confuse Abraham. But Abraham remains her "uncomplaining protector" (182).

As usual, Abraham is the first person to have a look at her every new painting and Aurora's separate development continues under Abraham's uncomplaining protection. However, when Aurora feels, she steps out from Abraham's protective zone to solve issues and to live life according to her wishes. Solely, she faces the danger of violence and fire attack caused by the anger of the public due to her 'The Kissing of Abbas Ali Baig' painting. Her single telephone conversation, without her husband's help, within half an hour and without leaving her abode, Elephanta, solves the issue. Moor reminds of the incident, "'Wait on'; my mother told him. 'This little frog-face, I know how to fixofy. Give me thirty ticks. . . . How much? She asked and Mainduck named his price" (233).

Aurora is bold as well as submissive. She is a nurturer and destroyer. After her death, she creates a void in Abraham, Moor and Vasco's life. Abraham and Vasco become recluses after her death, "They both sought to bury the pain of her loss beneath new activity, new enterprises, no matter how ill-conceived" (28). V. Vidia points out, "It becomes difficult to locate and assess her thoughts, actions and relationships with others as good or evil, villainous or heroic, desirable or intentional or unintentional, destructive or constructive, masculine of the feminine, etc." (5).

In *The Moor's Last Sigh* reader, for the first time, comes to know about harsh and tougher Aurora when she murders her grandmother Epifania, by 'inaction' (Rushdie 64). She does nothing to save her grandmother. Aurora and Abraham had inter cast marriage. Abraham's mother, Flory, was not in favour of this marriage. When Abraham takes her mother's financial help to solve business problems, then his mother, Flory, asks him to surrender their first male child to her. Abraham gives a written document to his mother. When Aurora comes to know about this promise of rearing a first male child as 'a male Jew of Cochin' (112), she asks her husband to leave her bedroom. She also declares that no child would take birth until Flory dies. This is the second time when the reader comes to know about her stricter side. She attacks over Abraham with a flower vase in anger. She expresses her anger and grief through paintings. As the narrator depicts, "In the following months, however, her work-drawings, paintings, terrible little skewered dolls moulded in red clay-grew full of witches, fire, apocalypse. Later she would destroy most of this Red material, with the consequence that the surviving pieces have gained greatly in value" (115).

Abraham tries to win her heart back. He mewls at her closed door and sings idiotically love songs sung by a hired balled singer. But Aurora's angry attack gives him a permanent limp. In this attack, firstly, she throws flowers, then water and finally, the flower-vase. This throwing of flower vase gives Abraham a permanent limp. After this incident Abraham's obedient attitude and Aurora's abuses and humiliation remain continued, Moor points out "Misery was etched in every line of his face, misery dragged down the corners of his mouth and damaged his good looks. Aurora continued, contrastingly to blossom. Genius was being born in her, filling the empty spaces in her bed, her heart, her womb. She needed no-one but herself" (116).

Suchitra Awasthi observes about Aurora as “not a typical virtuous Indian woman” (112). Awasthi points out that she is a different mother, not like traditional Indian women having "the elements of ruthlessness, hatred, and indifference” (111). Aurora forecasts about the future of her children in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, "Poor kids are such a bungle, seems like they are doomed to tumble" (Rushdie 172). When Moor chooses Uma, then his parents, Aurora and Abraham, disinherit him. After disinheriting Moor, Aurora's painting 'The Death of Chimene' has a dead body of a woman tied to a wooden broom as a central figure. It is a portrayal of a mother's broken heart. Her sequence of paintings, 'Moor in Exile' is a depiction of her broken and dejected self, grief over the loss of her son, anger and helplessness:

Aurora had apparently decided that the ideas of impurity, cultural admixture, and *mélange* which had been, for most of her creative life, the closest things she had found to a notion of the Good, were, in fact, capable of distortion, and contained a potential for darkness as well as for light. This 'black Moor' was a new imagining of the idea of the hybrid- a Baudelairean flower, it would not be too farfetched to suggest, of evil. (303)

Her suffering and grief that come out as anger are due to her unexpressed affection for Moor, her only son. Disinheritance of Moor creates a chain of inconsolable helplessness, pain, sorrow, anger, grief, and hatred in her mind. 'The Portraits of Ayxa', a series of paintings, is the depiction of distressed, terrible, and vulnerable self, overwhelmed with erotic despair. The reason behind all those anguished and distressed feelings is the betrayal of her son. Her last painting 'The Moor's Last Sigh' is a depiction of her feelings of forgiveness and blessings for her

son, Moor. It also proves her irresistible quality of never to give up. After her death, Moor points out, "I never knew a stronger woman, nor one with a clearer sense of who and what she was, but she had been wounded" (315). After Moor's betrayal, she submissively isolates herself and portrays her distress, anger, and revenge through her paintings and art. All these paintings are praised and honoured after her death.

V. Vidia in "The Saga of Saying and Unsayings: A Reconnaissance of Women Characters in Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*" comments:

Absence of abstract harlequin and junkyard collage in her last work, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, indicates her complete exhaustion of her wild erotic despair and anger. The portrayal of her son, lost in limbo like a wandering shade and soul in Hell and herself behind him, no longer in a separate panel, looking frightened and stretching out her hand reveals her absolute forgiveness and longing to unite with her son. (7)

Aurora's qualities and weaknesses as her capability to hate and love, smile, humiliate, punish and forgive, all propagate side by side and make it difficult to categorize her characteristics. Aurora is like her mother, outspoken and dare. After her mother's death, she behaves like her mother and takes her place. Her family and household servant in Cabral Island think as if they were seeing the ghost of Belle. The first time Aurora's aggressive and dual nature in *The Moor's Last Sigh* comes out when she accepts "... it wasn't them-it-was-me" (Rushdie 58), at the situation that arises when Aires enquires the household staff for the lost ivory-tusks and Ganeshas. She confesses her action and feels guilty for the inquiry of household staff for the lost ivory-tusks and Ganeshas. She has the courage to face her family members, along with Epifania and household staff. She speaks in an assertive tone:

‘Don't call me baby’; she answered, defying even him 'It is what my mother always wanted to do. You will see: from now I am in her place. Aires uncle you should lock up that crazy dog, by the way, I've got a pet-name for him that he really deserves: call him Jaw-jaw that all-bark-no-bite mutt. (Rushdie 58)

Aurora accepts her punishment given by Epifania. She bears her punishment happily. All the household staff loves her because she saved them from the anger of Aires. They smuggle all tasty dishes to her in her room along with colours, brush, and charcoal. She enjoys her arrest in her room for seven days. She gets herself busy with paintings. Even her father obeys her orders and stays away from her room during this time because he could not say anything to his mother for Aurora's punishment. However, after the end of punishment, she compromises with her father, with love, having the same intensity and force that she had in her anger. She invites Camoens, her father, to see her painting at the end of her punishment.

In her paintings on the walls and ceiling of her room, she portrays the scene of the Last Dinner in which household servants are engaged in a noisy gathering at the dining table while their forefathers look down and da Gama's serve as waiters. These paintings reflect her soft as well as rebellious nature. She is soft towards the oppressed and rebellious against the oppressor. In her painting of the Taj Mahal, she paints oppressed masons. All her paintings are about the anger of women, the weaknesses, agonies, distress, and compromise on the faces of children and the uncomplaining faces of dead ones. At a very tender age, she portrays the anger of the world, little delights, pain, distress, and disappointment. After seeing the art of his daughter on walls and ceiling, father was in a silent conversation with his

daughter, "When you have learned joy, he wanted to say, then only then your gift will be complete, but she knew so much already that it scared the words away and he did not dare to speak" (60).

Aurora has soft, bold, assertive and submissive nature. She loves and hates with the capacity of the same intensity. Her moods swing between parting away and making compromises with the same speed. She has peculiar qualities of loving, hating, punishing, hurting, humiliating, abusing, forgiving and cursing. She conquers everyone. All these qualities are also portrayed in her paintings as her love for her children, and mountains are depicted as exclamations of the soul. Some lands, in paintings, are infertile, and some others have green rice fields, oceans and water wells along with coco-palms. In her first painting, at the time of punishment, her mother Belle's face is in the centre where all lines converged. This proves her longings for her mother's company and love that she can not express with words; "Queen Isabella was the only mother goddess here and she was dead; at the heart of this first immense outpouring of Aurora's art was the simple tragedy of her loss, the unassuaged pain of becoming a motherless child. The room was her act of mourning" (61).

Aurora forgets the past harsh behaviour of Uncle Aires and Aunt Carmen and allows them to stay at Cabral Island. After the death of Carmen, she provides shelter to Uncle Aires at Elephanta. She provides her uncle with the best guest room of Elephanta with soft mattress and view of the sea. She takes pity on the old man and forgets past family quarrels. He is also buried next to his wife Carmen in a graveyard by Aurora. Aurora has the capacity to punish, love and forgive. She forgets past family resentments and embraces the present. She also forgives

Abraham after the death of Flory for his approval to hand over their first male child to his mother. The interrelations of counterpart in Aurora's behaviour form a chain, "that strange sort of chain without beginning or end in which no commanding (origin, goal or underlying, principle) may be identified but in which there is always something earlier or something later to which any part of the chain on which one focuses refers and which keeps the chain open, undecidable" (Min-ha 444). V. Vidia argues:

Aurora's characterization, instead of having blocks of air-tight compartments with fixed and stagnant elements, forms a chain. She is bold and aggressive in her confession; she is humble, yet inwardly strong in embracing her punishment, she is assertive and bold in facing and sometimes, in defying her family members, but, a doting figure among her domestic servants; the lines in her paintings reflect her inner strength which is muscular, free, teeming and violent. (10)

In traditional patriarchal societies, only men are supposed to have control over love affairs and to lead the women. Women are supposed to follow male orders submissively. However, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, female characters break gender stereotypes. In this novel, not males but females are in control of love affairs. Love affairs of female characters predetermine their evolution. Aurora takes the initiative to start a romantic love relationship with Abraham Zogoiby, a manager and who is twenty one years older than her. When Abraham Zogoiby enters Aurora da Gama's life, a new phase of her life starts. Desire, emotions, and seduction are the reasons for the starting of the love relationship between da Gama family heiress, Aurora, and the manager, Abraham Zogoiby. Moor in *The Moor's Last Sigh* says, "In the perfumed half-light of (-50 Godown No.1) Aurora da Gama grabbed Abraham

Zogoby by the chin and looked deep into his eyes . . . Aurora da Gama at the age of fifteen lay back on pepper sacks, breathed in the hot spice-laden air, and waited for Abraham" (Rushdie 88). Aurora and Abraham's passions force them to ignore the differences in age, social status, and religion. Their families oppose this relation:

After the fifteen-years- young, spice-trade heiress entered the bedchamber of her lover the twenty-one-years - older duty manager dressed in nothing but moonlight for a moment the awestruck Abraham thought she was flying; the door of their nuptial chamber flew open, and there, in pajamas, with a lantern was Aires-da Gama looking like a strong book. Picture except for his expression of counterfeit wrath; and in one of Epifania's old muslin mob-caps, and ruffled neck nighties, Carmen Lobo da Gama, doing her best to look horrified but failing to push the envy of her face. (99)

In Aurora and Abraham's relation, they are from different social classes, have different interests and belong to different religions. Marriage plays an important role in the life of husband and wife. In this novel, Salman Rushdie uses marriage to actualize woman images. Aurora, the artistic genius, exercises the upper hand in her married life. This marriage is based on a passionate love union. Passions force Abraham to ignore his roots, religion and age difference. As the narrator remarks:

After he said "yes", to marry her, he would take the great step, he would accept instruction and enter the church of Rome, and in the presence of her naked body which inspired in him a kind of religious awe the thing did not seem so difficult to says, in this matter too he would surrender to her will, her cultural conventions, even though

she had less faith than a mosquito, even though there was a voice within him uttering a command he did not repeat aloud, a voice which told him that he must guard his Jewishness in the innermost chamber of his soul. (99-100)

The relation of Aurora and Abraham proves Aurora as weak and strong as well. At the starting of their relationship, Aurora can do anything for her chosen partner. She goes against her family and ignores religious traditions. She loves him passionately and dominates in their relation. However, when later she comes to know about Abraham's adultery, she is incapable to ask any questions about it. Their passion oriented love union fades over time. They stop interfering in each other's private lives. The narrator in *The Moor's Last Sigh* comments:

She was confronter, a squarer-up, a haver-out. Yet, when faced with the ruin of her life's great love and offered a choice between an honest war and untruthful, self-serving peace, she buttoned her lip, and never offered her husband an angry word. Thus silence grew between them like an accusation; he talked in his sleep, she muttered in her studio, and they slept in separate rooms. (223)

Abraham is, "Colourless phantom hanging around the edges of tumultuous Aurora's court" (169). Aurora's passionate feelings for her husband cooled down after the birth of their son Moor. Sometimes, she obediently follows his suggestions, and she secures Abraham's services to fulfil her needs, "Aurora was not unaware that her lavishness required maintenance so that she was bound to Abie by her own needs. Sometimes she came close to admitting this, even to worrying that the scale of her spending or the looseness of her tongue, might bring the house down" (170).

Aurora humiliates Abraham publically, but she is conscious about the causes of submissiveness; "Men in our part of the world, all are either peacocks or shabbies. But even a peacock-like my mor is a nothing compared to us ladies, who live-o in a blaze of glory. Look out for shabbier I say it. They are our jailers. They are the once holding the cash books and the keys to the gilded ones" (169-70).

Aurora loves Abraham passionately, but she has retaliating and dominating attitude for him. This dominating attitude is the reason behind his extramarital affairs. Her complicated relations with other men are a sign of hatred, but she submissively clings to her husband to maintain her lavish needs. She is a cautious woman in love who knows how to use her husband's services. Simone de Beauvoir's observation is quite suitable for Aurora-Abraham relationship:

A cautious woman in love – but these words clash - tries to convert the lover's passion into tenderness, friendship, habit; or she tries to attach him with solid ties: a child or marriage; this desire of marriage haunts many liaisons: it is one of security; the clever mistress takes advantage of the generosity of love to take out insurance on the future. (722)

Aurora is affectionate towards oppressed but rebellious and strict for the oppressor. She yearns to be loved and has the capacity to love others. She defies the portrayal of God, Christ or any angel in her painting but yearns for the love of her dead mother. She is not a typical traditional mother, daughter or wife. She is the individual who can accept punishment humbly and forgive others for resentments. She remains in the hearts of her near and dear ones after her death. Her rebellious and bold characteristics provide novelty and masculinity to her feminine existence.

Her forgiving nature provides flexibility and softness to her existence. She can provide shelter and refuge. This capacity supplements grandeur to her status. Dr V. Vidia points out about her behaviour:

Her rapid swinging moods in her 'Olympian, immortal unconcern' (MLS 171), the confidence of her genius, her beauty as merciless as her tongue and as violent as her work, swoops, and rococo riffs and her great set-piece ghazals of cursings, coated with her cheery stone-hard smile anaesthetizes her victims, ripping out their innards. (4)

Epifania, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, is the great-grandmother of Moor and grandmother of Aurora. When at the dawn of the 20th century, she entered Cabral Island, as the bride of Francisco, disappointed many mothers and was the reason for great jealousy due to her marriage with Francisco. She always believed that she has a specific talent for grandeur. Her earlier years were laid with destitution. But with her confidence, she changed rich man, Francisco in *The Moor's Last Sigh* "decently revolted' into 'Francisco da Gama, Epifania's defunct spouse" (Rushdie 15). Epifania has suppressed discontent. The reasons for her suppressed discontents are Francisco's, her husband's, out of the way tastes and decisions. Francisco has to go to jail; then, his life ends due to 'watery death' (15). Epifania takes charge of the da Gama family when Francisco had to resign from the Home Rule party. Epifania, "moves in swiftly for the kill" (22). She said, "ours was a love-match; she further said, to her dejected husband, "For love or what else I gave into your fancies? But see where they have brought you. Now for love, you must give in to mine" (22). After taking charge of da Gama family, Epifania proves herself different from the girl who entered the da Gama family at the time of marriage. She takes control of all

business and to please Francisco she puts the paintings of devil-women and big canvasses. All these pictures are ugly and like calamities, but she has to perceive them as new ways to beautiful to oblige her husband. Sometimes she has to follow the commands of her husband on the breakfast table, of 'moving East' or 'going West'. She can only lament over her husband's philanthropic acts of opening free clinics, helping orphanages financially and political involvements. She never liked his charities but like a passive observer, "She fought him every inch of the way and lost every battle except the last" (17).

Epifania's husband, Francisco returns from jail as a fragmented hero and becomes a laughing figure, and his political career ends due to his theories about fields of conscience and, "a puckered look common in men convinced that the world has inexplicably done them a great and unjustified wrong" (22). Everything of the da Gama family remains in her control until Belle, her daughter-in-law, divides the property into two equal shares. Only Isabella, also known as Belle in the novel, her daughter-in-law, refuses to bow before her power, "In all the years of her life only Belle refused to be scared of her" (11).

The way Epifania takes control of business and household from her husband for the sake of true love and with sweet words proves her bold and submissive nature. The narrator reminds, "Epifania swallowed the news of his death without a tremor. She ate his death as she had eaten his life; and grew" (24). Her reactions are different when her sons get jail sentence for 15 years. She faints in the courtroom when she hears their sentence. However, when they are released after nine years, she cries out in delight. She puts her grand-daughter, Aurora into prison by locking her in a room for one week on water and rice. She also reacts badly and comments when

Belle, suffering from lung cancer spits bloodily into a spittoon at the time of a meal of family reunion. She says, "I suppose so now you've hooked the money you don't need the manners" (49).

When Aires and Camoens are in jail, Epifania prays before God, "Epifania . . . entered into a kind of ecstasy, an apocalyptic frenzy in which guilt and God and vanity and the end of the world, the destruction of the old shapes by the hated advent of the new, were all jumbled up" (46). She feels neglected when Belle divides the property into two shares after the sentence of Aires and Camoens. She gets angry for being pushed behind the sack by her daughter-in-law. In anger Epifania says, "she she she everywhere and evermore she" (46). Epifania can not dismiss servants for their awkward behaviour because their salaries are paid by Belle. Feeling helpless in that situation she consoles herself, "but I can wait, see patience is a virtue, I'll just bide . . . O my time" (46). She feels guilty and a feeling of sin accuses her. She prays before God for mercy and blessings. She imposes a self-punishment on herself and starts sleeping without a mosquito net. Epifania begs before God:

Lord, I have sinned, I should be scalded with hot oils and burned with cold ice, have mercy on me Mother of God for I am the lowest of the low, save me if it be your will from the chasm the bottomless pit; for in my name and by my doing was great and murderous evil unloosed upon the earth. (46)

Epifania is a mixture of boldness and submissiveness. She is dominating and docile. She feels the 'lowest of low' (46) under Belle and after Belle's death, she becomes "impassive Epifania" (58). When she feels that death is approaching her, she curses roaringly; "A house divided against itself cannot stand . . . May your house be forever partitioned, may its foundations turn to dust, may your children rise

up against you, and may your fall be hard” (99). Her curse falls on Aurora's family, as Moor becomes a recluse, her great-granddaughters (Ina, Minnie and Myna) die, Camoens dies watery death, Aires dies at Elephanta, and Aurora gets a mysterious death at Ganesh festival. Ina, Minnie, and Mynah also vanish after one another at the end of the novel. Moor surrenders himself by the side of his predecessors’ graves. Epifania dies a death, 'committed by inaction' (64).

Isabella da Gama, known as Belle, is also an important character in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. She enters the da Gama family at the age of 18 years after her marriage with Camoens. Epifania does not like her. In *The Moor's Last Sigh* Belle is portrayed as beautiful and straightforward right from her entry into da Gama clan:

She was tall, beautiful, brilliant, brave, hardworking, powerful, victorious, but ladies and gents, Queen Isabella was no angel, no wings or halo in her wardrobe, no sir. In those years of Camoens’s jail sentence, she smoked like a volcano. (Rushdie 44)

She remains merely a passive spectator until the jail sentence of Aires and Camoens due to war between Menezes and Lobos. After acknowledging the sentence, Epifania faints and Carmen starts weeping in the courtroom. But Belle remains stable; "Belle had her own ideas about how civilization should be restored and she wasted no time" (41). Belle puts all the blame for fires in fields and all loss on Epifania and Carmen. She attacks upon Epifania and Carmen saying "Since you could start-o these evil fires with your scheming . . . then, it is with you that we must begin to put them out" (48). She takes the command of da Gama empire in her hands and alone goes to meet lawyers of da Gama Trading Company and the trustees of Francisco da Gama to settle the division of the business. She convinces them to

divide family property and business into two equal shares. Isabella wisely reads the circumstances that the dispute introduced by Menezes and Lobos will ruin the family business if da Gama Trading Company remains a single cell. She thinks that division between two equal shares will at least save half of the business. She says "If we do not live separately, then we will die together " (41). At these crucial times, Isabella plays the role of a creator and doer and is successful in saving the family business. Her efforts are explained as:

She started dressing in men's trousers, white cotton shirts, and Camoen's cream fedora . . . She found managers whom she could trust and whom the work-force would follow with respect but without fear. She charmed banks into lending her money, bullied departed clients into returning, and became a mistress of small print. And for the rescue of her fifty percent of the Gama Trading Company she earned a respectful nickname: from Fort Cochin 's salon's to Ernakulum dockside, from British Residency in Old Bolgatty Palace to the Spice Mountains, there was only one Queen Isabella of Cochin. (Rushdie 43)

First of all, Isabella fulfils her duties as a wife and mother. However, later when situations demand, she becomes a successful businesswoman. At the time of the division of family business between two shares, Aurora is only one year old. Belle with her one year old daughter on her hip divides the house into two parts including each and everything, "even the lizards on the walls were captured and evenly distributed on both sides of the great divide" (42). She partitions the house with sacks of spices and white lines. She evenly distributes everything in two equal shares but does not prefer to divide family chapel. This proves that she is sensible

enough and knows that the chapel is not a place to divide. She becomes very responsible after her husband's sentence. Even Epifania and Carmen obey her meekly after their release from jail. They both have no strength to stand against the anger of Belle after spending one week in jail. Belle has mental strength, abilities, and determination to save her husband's share. At this time she is only 21 years old. She says determinately, "let the whole she-bang go to pot or sell up, I don't care! I just will see to it that my Camoens's fifty will survive in thrive" (42). Simone de Beauvoir's observation is quite suitable here:

She stubbornly pursues the impossible quest for being through narcissism, love or religion; when she is productive and active, she regains her transcendence; she affirms herself concretely as a subject in her projects; she senses her responsibility relative to the goals she pursues and to the money and rights she appropriates. (737)

Epifania and Carmen cannot counter argue with Belle for the allocation of destroyed fields. She has to face many problems to get back the family business from public administration. The process takes many months along with bribery, flirtations and haranguing. She has to struggle a lot to win the confidence of all managers and employees. She prefers to go to every field rather than selling property. She hires new truthful and sensible managers whom the employees follow without any fear. She persuades banks to lend money. Many old clients come back with new deals. With all these struggles and dealings, she regains the belief of employees, clients and field workers. She becomes 'the mistress of small print', and in *The Moor's Last Sigh* she is nicknamed as "Queen Isabella of Cochin" (Rushdie 43).

Belle dislikes her new title and prefers to be called by the name Belle. This proves her humble and gentle nature. Belle receives more admiration and respect when she mixes Aires' fifty percent in the fairest manner. She buys Aires' share on twice the actual price. She respects her husband's sentiments and knows that he will never do anything wrong with his brother. She saves 'Aires fifty' and her success proves, "how in life fifty plus fifty equals fifty" (44). Belle is beautiful, brave, courageous, hardworking, powerful, intelligent, capable to fight for rights, and she has a sense of justice. She is a loving mother and wife. Aurora and Camoens miss her after her untimely death.

Her imperfections include she smokes like a volcano, drinks alcohol, and she is unfaithful shamelessly. However, her good characteristics dominate over her imperfections. After the release of her husband, she leaves philandering ways of hunting the tiger. At the request of her husband, she allows Aires to join the family business. She also organizes a meal of reunion in the long and unused grand dining hall. At this time, she suffers from lung cancer but very bravely assures Camoens to be always with him.

Belle is bold and soft when death approaches her. Even on the death bed, she urges to be like El Cid Campeador of Spain, who, when wounded asked his beloved Ximena to tie his corpus to his horse to give an impact that he was alive in the battlefield. Belle says, "Then tie my body to a bloody rickshaw or whatever damn mode of transport you can find, camel-cart donkey-cart, bullock-cart bike, but for god sake not a bloody elephant; okay? Because the enemy is close and in this sad story Ximena is the Lid" (52). Belle exhibits dynamism and heroism in her lifetime. Salman Rushdie has provided only 30 pages to Belle from entry to exit, 22-52, in the

novel. She loves justice and evenly divides everything in business and at the house into two equal shares. She uses manipulating ways like bribery, flirting, wheedling to run business. She faces difficult situations when her husband is in jail and welcomes him wholeheartedly when he comes back from jail. Belle can express her emotions. She rebukes Aires for his writings in the newspaper. She never likes Aires' dog. She wins back the faith of employees, but at the same time, she is unfaithful shamelessly in business transactions. She forgets past deals for the family reunion. She dies in great pain and too soon, "savagely angry with death for arriving too soon and behaving so badly" (51). She influences her only daughter, Aurora. When Aurora grows up, she behaves like her mother. Belle handles the situations very boldly and never prefers to attack or take revenge from relatives. She chooses safety measures and at last, forgives family members wholeheartedly.

Aoi Ue is a Japanese captive in Vasco's Benengeli tower along with Moor. Benengeli tower is a dwelling place of Vasco. The narrator comments about her, "Courage, inventiveness, serenity, generous strength, warmth, her formality and precision" (423). She follows a strict discipline and asks Moor to follow the same. She has self-control among the horrible situations of chained captivity. Aoi Ue has her fears, and sometimes she weeps. Moor reminds about her, "Often I stared across at Aoi Ue as she worked. This woman who was both intimate and stranger . . . So we would hate each other, and turn furiously away" (430).

Aoi Ue has an optimistic philosophy of life, and in Vasco's prison, she always hopes for her release. Aoi Ue is unfairly captured in Benengeli tower. She is terrified by the stories of da Gama and Zogioby families and their downfall. She feels disgusted and is horrified when she comes to know about the inability of

Moor's predecessor's to "know how to be calm" (428). She feels Moor's friendly presence as well as takes him as an alien invader. Her guest appearance becomes more important as she heads closer towards the completion of the work assigned by Vasco and tries her best to complete the assigned task. Moor points out, "Aoi, too, often had to stop work and drag herself off-chain clanking to nuddle against a wall and compose herself again" (428).

Moor reminds of the essential and heroic part played by Aoi Ue in Vasco prison. After her death, Moor recalls the support that he received from her during those horrible times. He remembers that without her presence, he would not have lived to share his story. She was an amazing woman who supported him in his dark days. He records, "I clung to her, and therefore did not sink" (419). When Aoi Ue encounters death in Vasco prison, she runs here and there, cries and screams helplessly. This is another side of her behaviour because she talked about the power of silence to achieve self-respect with Moor. She refused to affect her captivity to define her self, but encountering death, she gets frightened. When Vasco heads towards her with his gun, she requests Moor to save her.

Aoi Ue provides solace to Moor when he enters Vasco prison. She provides him comfort and company when he feels lonely and feels that death is approaching him. She shares jokes and songs with him. She is nourishment by day and a pillow at night for Moor. She prepares a time table for Moor and herself and strictly asks Moor to follow the same. Moor says, "In the hideous circumstances of our chained existence, she provided our necessary discipline, and I unquestioningly followed her lead" (423). So Aoi Ue is a leader to whom Moor wants to follow willingly. The

novelist does not clarify Aoi Ue's age. She has a slender, pale and tiny body. Her ageless face is unlined and oval-shaped. Moor recalls about her:

Her name was a miracle of vowels . . . Aoi Ue: the five enabling sounds of language, thus grouped ('ow-ee-oo-dy') constructed her . . . a formidably contained woman . . . indeed her self-possession . . . became my mainstay . . . Nor was she the wanton drop-out type, but rather, the most orderly of spirits. Her formality, her precision, awakened an old self in me, reminding me of my own adherence to ideas of neatness and tidiness. (423)

Aoi Ue becomes a ray of hope to Moor in Vasco castle. She plays pat-a-cake, memory games and word-games with Moor. During nights or whenever Moor feels lonely, she holds him tightly without any sexual desires. At those times, her motive was only to give refuge, company, and warmth to Moor. In a very philosophical tone, she declares, "Defeated love is still a treasure, and those who choose lovelessness have won no victory" (390). She also provides company to Moor when cockroaches and many other insects make Moor shiver during nights at their sleeping places. She very boldly and patiently faces all those creatures and wants to complete the tasks given by Vasco. Moor reminds, "She most fastidious of women, led by example, neither twitching nor complaining, displaying an iron discipline, even when the roaches tried to burrow into her hair" (426).

Aoi Ue obeys Vasco commands submissively in the hope of her release from the Vasco prison. She always tries to hide fears and to look comfortable, "How easy in herself! So it was conceivable that the self was autonomous, after all . . . Undeserved as her fate was, she faced it and for a long time, did not let Vasco see

her fear" (427). Moor discloses about the betrayals and hatred of his ancestors before Aoi Ue. All the wrong actions of Zogoiby and da Gama families horrify her. She feels that her captivity in Vasco castle was nothing against what Moor's family members did to each other. Moor wishes, "This lady of vowels . . . save them in their next lives" (428). She does not want to read what Moor has written on paper. However, she reads the paper. She is terrified after reading the paper. In the end, the task allotted by Vasco completes, and he comes to kill her. She pleads for survival before Vasco. Moor comments about her exit, "It was indeed a horror to see that strong woman weaken" (428).

Carmen da Gama, Aires' wife, cannot become a mother due to her husband's homosexual relations. In many Indian families, many women cannot obtain the right place due to this inability. This loss affects a woman's identity. She has to face mental trauma and physical suffering. A motherless woman also has to face the criticism of her family. She also has to go through emotional pain. Epifania does not like Isabella and wishes for a grandson from Carmen. Epifania says, "Carmen must conceive a male child, a king-in-waiting through whom his loving mother and grandmother would rule" (33). However, her inability to provide a male heir to da Gama family deprives her chances for socialization. The narrator says, "Aires's wife's name was Carmen, but Belle, mimicking her brother-in-law's fondness for inverting names, had named her after the desert, because she is barren-flat as sand and in all that waste ground I can't see any place to get a drink" (12). Carmen is an orphan niece of Epifania. Epifania chooses her as a daughter-in-law because she wants to fulfil her duty towards her dead sister:

Carmen's marriage prospects had been lower than zero, frozen solid until Aires amazed his mother by agreeing to the making of a match. Epifania, in a torment of indecision, suffered a week of sleepless nights, unable to choose between her dream of finding Aires a fish worth hooking and the increasingly desperate need to palm Carmen off on someone before it was too late. In the end, her duty to dead sister took precedence over her hopes for her son. (13)

Carmen loses opportunities to be a respected wife or mother. In all situations, she becomes a fooled victim. When she is unable to meet Epifania's expectations, with time, her life becomes miserable. The reality about Aires' homosexuality is revealed on the wedding night and proves disastrous for their married life:

Carmen never mentioned to a living soul that on her wedding night, her husband entered her bedroom late, ignored his terrified and scrawny young bride . . . Slipped his naked body into the wedding dress which her maidservant had left upon a tailor's dummy as a symbol of their union, and left the room through the latrine's outside door. (Rushdie 13)

When Epifania is disappointed with the progress of her sons, she says; "My sons are useless playboys. From now on, better us ladies should call-o the tune" (33). Epifania and Carmen, both call their families to handle da Gama business. With the passage of time, Epifania and Carmen's conflicts turn into a war between the Menezes family (relatives of Epifania) and Lobo family (relatives of Carmen). After the massive fire and loss of human lives, Camoen and Aires, both are sentenced. Epifania and Carmen's urge for power brings disaster to the da Gama

family. In comparison to Belle, a strong-willed woman, Carmen fails to secure a good position as a woman in society. She considers herself as miserable and graceless. But during a party given by Aurora in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, her female side also comes into light:

It turned out Carmen had rhythm, and in the evenings that followed, as Aurora's young follows queued up to ask her to dance, it was possible to see the masquerade of antiquity dropping away from Mrs Aires da Gama, to see the stoop straightening and her eyes ceasing to squint and the hangdog expression being replaced by a tentative suggestion of pleasure. She was not yet thirty-five years old, and for the first time in an eternity, she looked younger than her years. (Rushdie 65)

Zogoiby daughters, Ina, Minnie and Myna, have an urge for independence and freedom. Ina Zogoiby, eldest of daughters, is a successful model at the starting and her art is her body, "Ina, the eldest, Ina of the trio and also, I'm afraid, what her sisters liked to call "the family Stupe" (207). Minnie Zogoiby chooses to be a nun. She likes an escaped life from her family and later participates in the protest movement against birth control. Mynah, the youngest one, receives legal education and becomes an activist for women's rights.

Ina Zogoiby represents a female's urge to have some power over a man. She also wants to reveal her beauty to achieve something in life. Between mother and daughter, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, conflicts widen, when daughter starts using her body to be a successful model and uses it as a weapon:

One by one, she offered herself as a model to the male artists in Aurora's circle- the lawyer, the Sarangi player, the Jazz singer- and when she unveiled her extraordinary physique in their studios its gravitational force drew them into her at once; like satellites falling from their orbits they crash-landed on her soft hills. After every conquest, she arranged her mother to discover a lover's note or a pornographic sketch, as if an Apache brave displaying scalps to the big chief in his tent. (Rushdie 207)

Mynah represents the free spirit who wants to do something for society. She is a social activist and actively takes part in social and political life. Minnie reflects the need for religion and spirituality in life.

Uma, beloved of Moor, not only wants to get Moor's love, but she also wants to control his consciousness. Moor recalls, "Poor baby, - she said, curling against me like a spoon. How I adored her; how grateful I was, in this treacherous world, to have her maturity, her serenity her worldly wisdom, her strength, her love - poor unlucky Moor. I will be your family now" (258). She never allows Moor to know about her university and secret life. She prohibits him to visit university and Moor follows all her orders. Even Uma records Moor's conversation with her about Aurora during their private movements. She records every word used by Moor for his mother, and Moor never knows anything about it. But this romantic relationship turns into madness and Uma proves herself an instrument of destruction. To prove her love for Moor, she commits suicide. Uma brings poisonous pills for them and says, "To show you how truly I have always loved you, to prove to you at last that I have never lied, I will swallow first. If you too are true, then follow me at once, for I

will be waiting, O my only love" (280). Later Moor comes to know about her horrifying truth that she did not want to die, she only wished to separate Moor from his parents and wanted to murder him, "But now I knew everything. No more benefits of doubt. Uma, my beloved traitor, you were ready to play the game to the end; to murder me and watch my death. While hallucinogens blew your mind" (321). Uma Saraswati tries to seduce Moor in *The Moor's Last Sigh* and gets success in influencing him:

She came back to me and placed her hands over mine. As my breathing settled down she caressed my mangled 'right hand lightly and said in a voice almost too quiet to be audible, "There is a young guy in there I can see him looking out at me. What a combination year! Youthful spirit, plus this older-man look that I must tell you I have gone for all my life. Too hot, men, I swear". She took away her hands; leaving behind a Moor in love. (Rushdie 244-45)

Innumerable debates have been organized to discuss the position of women, education, and employment and to provide legal rights to women. However, the pace of improvements to change women's condition and to provide them freedom remained slow in patriarchal societies. Now, women have started participating in social, political and economic spheres. The literacy rate of women has been raised, and women are getting employment in fields earlier meant for men. In the Zogoiby family, these changes can be noticed. Aurora ignored her everyday household duties to excel in the art of paintings; Mynah becomes an advocate and social activist for women's rights, and Minnie involves herself in religious and spiritual activities to get peace. The elder one, Ina, uses her appearance and body to be a model. Her

failure in love leads to her death. She uses her body to be a successful model and to attract men. However, actually, she competes with her mother, "She blocked her ears against her mother and competed with her in the only way she thought she could: by using her looks" (207). She runs away to the USA with Jimmy Cash and delivery. But she comes back after one year as a ruined girl, "Ina come home in disgrace a year later. We were all shocked. She was greasy-haired and dishevelled and had put on over seventy pounds. Not-so-Goody Gama now!" (209). After coming back, she plans with her family and forces Jimmy to come back and pretends as she is dying from cancer. But her lie turns into a truth, "Soon after the end of the Emergency, Ina died of cancer. The lymphoma developed quite suddenly and gobbled up her body like a beggar at a feast" (216). Ina tries to build her identity with the help of love and body. However, she reflects a female who is incapable to assert her identity without a man. As Ina's relations with men are concerned, she resembles her mother. However, she lacks her mother's charm and intellect. The narrator in *The Moor's Last Sigh* points out:

Ina who was the most fragile, that she had never really been all there since her parents chopped her name in half, and that what with her nymphomania and all she had been cracking up for years. So she was drowning, she was clutching at straws as she had always clutched at men, and cheesy Jimmy was the last straw on offer. (213)

The Moor's Last Sigh represents the evolution of female characters in post-independence India. Rushdie has paid great attention to evaluate the role and place of women in family and society. He has presented women not only as wives, mothers or daughters but as a genius artist, activist, businesswoman, politician, and

influential public figures. These female characters have the courage to say no whenever the situations demand. These female characters resist playing fixed gender roles and come out of the confines of the household to become a genius painter, businesswoman, successful model, social activist and sculptor.

Salman Rushdie's 1999 published novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, is about rock and roll Vina Apsara and Ormus Cama. Umeed Rai Merchant, the childhood friend of Vina and Ormus, is the narrator of the novel. As the novel begins, Vina Apsara is honoured as a guest at Don Angel Cruz's plantation along with his childhood friend and sometime lover Umeed Rai. As an earthquake comes, a rescue helicopter is sent to save Vina and Rai. Vina requests Rai to accompany her, but he is busy with taking pictures of the earthquake. After this, the story moves backwards with flashbacks. Ormus Cama and Gayo are twin sons of Darius Xerxes Cama and Lady Spenta Cama. Ormus had two elder twin brothers Virus and Cyrus. Ameer and V. V. Merchant meet the first time when they come to meet Cama family after the birth of Ormus and Gayo. Ormus starts singing in his childhood, but he stops singing after Cyrus tries to kill him. Ormus ceases singing for fourteen years. Vina Apsara is the pivotal character of the novel. Two other important female characters are Ameer Merchant and Persis. These female characters struggle to attain economic independence, identity, self-respect, and to carve a niche for themselves. They do not submit themselves before the circumstances of life but have an urge for freedom. They dominate in marriage and love relations.

In the Merchant family, V. V. Merchant is very curious about the history of Bombay. Ameer plays word games with her son Rai. Umeed Rai sees Vina for the first time when she comes with Pilo Doodhwala family on the beach. Vina

approaches the Merchant family to save herself from Piloo. On the other hand, Lady Spenta and Mrs Kalamanja are hopeful about the marriage of Ormus and Persis in the future. However, Ormus falls in love with Vina, and he promises not to touch her before Vina's sixteenth birthday.

V. V. Merchant and Ameer fight fiercely on the night of Vina's 16th birthday. Vina is out with Ormus celebrating her birthday. Ameer maltreats her when Vina comes back. Vina leaves the Merchant house. Merchant's house is burnt down, and nobody knows anything about Vina. Vina leaves India with the help of Persis and her mother. After the burning of the house, the Merchant family starts living separately. Rai and Ormus become good friends. Yul Singh sports Ormus in a public performance and tries to motivate him to come to the United States to make a career in the music industry.

On the other side, Cyrus commits many crimes and goes to jail. Then he murders his father. After the death of Darius, Lady Spenta shifts to the U. K. along with her sons. Ameer Merchant dies early death due to brain tumour, and V. V. Merchant commits suicide on the night of his wife's funeral. The central character, Vina Apsara, comes back searching for Ormus but meets Umeed Rai. Ormus gets fame with music, but he goes into a coma for three years after an accident. Vina hears his songs and comes to take care of him. Once again, the lovers unite. Ormus approaches Vina for marriage, but she declines his proposal. Ormus pledges not to consummate their love relation for the next ten years. After one decade Vina and Ormus get married and excel in the world of music. Vina, around whom the story revolves, seems happy in her life until the earthquake comes. After her demise, both Rai and Ormus miss her very much. During those sad days, after Vina's death, one

day, Umeed gets a message from Ormus that he has found his wife, Vina. When Rai reaches Ormus' house, he is surprised to see Vina. However, she is not Vina. Actually, she is Mira Celano, a young and single mother of a baby. Once again Ormus and Mira Celano start music band and receive mixed responses from the audience. One snowy day, Ormus Cama is killed by an unknown person. Rai gets married to Mira Celano, and in the end, he is shown happy in his domestic life with Mira and her daughter.

Salman Rushdie, in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, has depicted a rebellious, free spirit, music star, straightforward and open to all Vina Apsara. Vina Apsara loses her mother and siblings at an early age. After the demise of her mother, she has to live with her relatives. Her father sends her to India to live with Piloo Doodhwala, a relative. But she never likes these relatives. One stormy night, Vina in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* leaves the family after a quarrel and comes to live with Merchant family saying courageously, "I won't go back, anyway; whatever happens" (Rushdie 84). She denies being called Nissa Doodhwala and chooses her new name for herself. She says, "Don't call me by that bastard's name, okey?". . . I left there with nothing. From now on I'll be whatever name I choose." And after a few moments later: "Vina Apsara. That's my name" (84). So from Nissa Shetty, Nissa Poe, and Nissa Doodhwala, finally, she becomes Vina Apsara. Naming herself with a new name means that she denies all the ties with her past life, relatives and gets herself free from all the restrictions. This is proof of her new self and courage. Vina Apsara, in her lifetime, resists following society norms fixed for women. She opposes society norms whenever she does not like these norms. Rushdie in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* writes:

The willingness of Vina Apsara to talk publically about private matters-her catastrophic childhood, her love affairs, her sexual preferences, her abortions-was as important as her talent, perhaps even more important in the creation of the gigantic, even oppressively symbolic figure she became. For two generations of women, she was something like a megaphone, broadcasting their common secrets to the world, some felt, liberated, others exposed; all commenced to hang upon her every word. (161)

Vina Apsara remains the central character of the novel from the beginning to the end. Rai and Ormus always yearn for her love and company. Everybody gets attracted to her. The narrator points out, “Vina, to whom even strangers would come, following her star, hoping to receive redemption from her voice, her large, damp eyes, her touch. . . . We all looked to her for peace” (20-21). She remains a princess for Ormus, her husband, and Rai, her friend. For her husband, love and life mean Vina, as the narrator explains, “for Ormus Cama, it was just a simple matter of life and death. Love was Vina, and beyond Vina, there was nothing but the void” (15). Simone de Beauvoir’s observation is quite suitable for Vina as far as love in her life is concerned:

Many women do not abandon themselves to love unless they are loved in return: and the love they are shown is something enough to make them fall in love. . . . The woman feels endowed with a sure and high value; at last, she has the right to cherish herself through the love she inspires. (703)

Salman Rushdie's female characters create positions for themselves. They face odds of life. Vina Apsara has the strength to stand alone and face tribulations. She experiences the bad relations of her parents, has seen the killing of her family and lived with remote relatives. However, she never gives up and continues her struggle until she owns a business for herself. Kate Millet's observation is quite suitable for her, "She is bitter and she is honest; a neurotic revolutionary . . . and an unconquerable determination to win through. She is a pair of eyes watching society; weighing, ridiculing, judging" (140). Vina Apsara, a singer, is also a prosperous businesswoman. The narrator in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* explains about her successful business:

Her diet books and her health and fitness regime will become worldwide best-sellers. Later, she will successfully pioneer the celebrity exercise video and license a range of organic vegetarian meals, which under the name Vina's Vegetable®, will also succeed. She is the woman most cited by the world's young women to be their role model. (Rushdie 394)

Salman Rushdie gives time and space to the female characters to make relationships. He has provided significant positions to women. Rushdie has created Vina Apsara who dominates in her relationships with others. She is the life force of Ormus Cama. About Ormus, Rushdie writes, "He is fragile too. Without her love, terminally alienated, he might go horribly wrong" (161). Vina Apsara leaves Ormus after their first love night on her sixteenth birthday when Ameer Merchant rebukes her badly. Ormus loves her passionately, is nothing without her and the narrator reveals his situation after their separation;

Vina's sudden desertion, immediately after their long-postponed and profoundly satisfying first (and only) night of love, had badly damaged Ormus's sense of himself, had left him holed below the waterline, listing in water, bailing furiously and trying not to drown. . . . He too lost his confidence . . . "I'll follow her to the ends of the earth," he boasted, but he wouldn't even go as far as the airport. (190)

Vina Apsara joins back Ormus and saves his life when he is in a coma. Her presence in Ormus' life is significant. Rushdie depicts beautifully; "She flies back into his life: and saves it'. 'Ormus', she whispers. 'Ormus, it's me.' At which he opens his eyes; it's as simple as that" (321). The narrator comments, "Ormus Cama, exiled from love by the parents whom he had failed to transfix with love's arrow, shrivelled by their lack of attention, is restored to the world of love by Vina" (148). Vina saves Ormus because he loves her unconditionally. They get married and become the jewels of the music industry. She dominates Ormus in business and personal life. However, she dies an untimely death due to an earthquake. She dies like a heroine as she lives. The narrator in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* reveals about the effect of her death on people:

The love of her muddled radiance has spread deep into the territories of the repressed. Defying the authorities, dancing in front of their tanks, linking arms before the faltering rifles, the mourners move to her phantom beat, looking increasingly like celebrants, and even seem prepared to embrace martyrdom in her name. Dead Vina is changing the world. The crowds of love are on the move. . . . If her death was the death of all the world's joy, this life after death is like that joy reborn and multiplied. (Rushdie 480-81)

After Vina's death, Ormus Cama becomes a recluse and drug-addicted. Everywhere he sees, he only sees her face and experiences mental traumas. The narrator points out about his condition as "Here he is, Ormus: unable to work, succumbing to Vina's weaknesses –the drink, the drugs –hoping to find her in her faults, by making them his own. And these are his chemically induced visions of her, of Vina's many guises" (498). Rai explains his own distress, "That whole first year after she died, I was badly off-balance, not knowing what to do for the best, where to put my own distress, how to continue" (487). So, it can be concluded that Vina Apsara remains the centre of the life of her dear ones before and after death. She dies an eternal death and becomes a motivation for many. Kate Millet's observation is entirely appropriate for Vina, "in its most agreeable contemporary manifestation, and freedom, . . . chose to retain the individualistic humanity she had shored up" (146).`

Vina's love for Ormus can be compared with Persis Kalamanja's silent sacrifice that she makes to unite Vina and Ormus. Ormus and Persis' mothers want to fix their marriage. But after Ormus-Vina's love affair, all talks of Ormus-Persis marriage proposal stop. Persis asks Ormus about the truth of his feelings for Vina. Ormus confesses his love for Vina and the novelist Salman Rushdie in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* depicts, "Persis took it on the chin, set aside all her own hopes, nodded seriously and promised to help. From that moment until Vina's sixteenth birthday, Persis joined Ormus and Vina in a conspiracy of small and large deceits" (144). Persis cries at nights for lost love but remains strong. The novelist depicts, "(Yet) it is Persis who, in many ways, was the true heroine of their love" (144). She remains silent and sacrifices for Ormus-Vina's love. In *Philosophy at the*

Limit David Wood points out about silence that it is not a limit and sometimes silence speaks for something important and meaningful. David Wood writes, "It is that the sense and significance of their being something, that cannot be said, is itself an effect of language" (24).

The next important character in the novel is Ameer Merchant, mother of Rai. She is an entrepreneur and master of construction work, a restricted area for women. She marries V. V. Merchant. She never loses her self-respect and honour. She is economically independent and is capable to take decisions. She welcomes Vina Apsara in her home and treats her as a daughter. Rai, the narrator of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, observes about her, "my mother was no artist. She was an entrepreneur, a "developer", to use the new word of those days" (Rushdie 63). Further, he observes, "For of course construction work never stops completely, and supervising such work was Ameer's particular genius. My mother, the master builder" (79). Ameer has the courage to take decisions independently as when she comes to know about the debts of V. V. Merchant, and she decides to sell her house. She defends her decision, and they enter a dreadful fight over the debts and sale of the house. Rai points out, "Glaring red-eyed at each other, they were facing something worse than the loss of the future, worse than the loss of the past. It was the loss of their love" (164). In the meantime, Vina comes after celebrating her birthday with Ormus, and in anger, Ameer rebukes her badly. Vina runs away with valuables and Merchant house, Villa Thracia, is burnt. After this Ameer and V. V. start living in separate flats. Ameer's decision to live separately proves her urge for freedom from the patriarchal norms fixed for wives that they should never raise voice and accept whatever they are asked to do or believe. Ameer dies of a brain tumour, and V. V. Merchant hangs himself after her death because he always hoped

for her coming back. Rai explains his hopes as; “He had never really believed in their separation, always hoped to win her back. One day she would wake up, he imagined, and wonder why he wasn’t in the bed beside her . . . The Ameer he wanted back was the woman he’d married” (207). But Ameer never compromises and comes back to her husband. As Beauvoir observes, “The woman who maintains her independence through all her servitudes will love her own freedom” (673).

In this path-breaking novel, Salman Rushdie has represented rebellious women. These rebellious women fight for their rights, honour and self-respect. The courageous female characters in this novel, Vina Apsara, Ameer Merchant, and Mira Celano, rebel against the patriarchal norms of society to achieve the targets of their lives. Vina Apsara becomes a motivation for women all over the world due to her struggle for survival. Ameer Merchant never submits before her husband, and Mira Celano struggles for a better life for her daughter. These female characters become the voice of women who struggle for financial independence and self-respect. They boldly face the hardships of life and secure a place in society. These female characters love freedom in life.

The novel, *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), with easy language and natural flow of events moves in movie-like style across cultures, conflicts, generations, and countries. The events of the novel are situated mainly in India, America, and France. In this novel, a village, Pachigam, is an abode of Muslim and Hindu families of cooks and actors in Kashmir. Rushdie writes in *Shalimar the Clown*, “The legendary Wazwan, the Banquet of the Thirty Six courses Minimum . . . Where . . . Their stories sit happily side by side on the same double bill; they eat from the same dishes . . . they laugh at the same jokes” (61). With the aid of flashback, Rushdie has

created the love story of Shalimar and Boonyi, which turns into tragedy. They belong to different religious sects. However, their families believe in Kashmiriyat and they get married according to Hindu and Muslim customs.

Shalimar the Clown starts with the restless sleep of India/Kashmira Ophuls. The night time dreams of India/Kashmira Ophuls represent her bad feelings and visions of the future. The language used by her, in dreams, is unknown to her. India's father, former US ambassador to India, Maximilian Ophuls, is murdered. This novel is a tale of globalization, terrorism, love, treachery, hate, and secrets. To a great extent, the story of the novel revolves around Kashmir, situated in the Indian subcontinent along with America. At the starting of the novel *Shalimar the Clown*, the narrator examines:

At twenty-four the ambassador's daughter slept badly through the warm, unsurprising nights. She woke up frequently and even when sleep did come, her body was rarely at rest, thrashing and flailing as if trying to break free of dreadful invisible manacles. At times she cried out in a language she did not speak. (Rushdie 3)

Four major characters of the novel are Shalimar, Boonyi, Maximilian Ophuls and India/Kashmira Ophuls. Shalimar is an expert tightrope performer and a Kashmiri Muslim from the village Pachigam in Kashmir. He is able to enact and complete almost impossible tricks with his talent. The next central character of the novel is Boonyi Kaul, a Kashmiri Hindu girl. She also belongs to the village of Pachigam. She is a superb dancer in the Kashmiri troupe of entertainers. Shalimar and Boonyi are devoted lovers, and they get married in a sustainable multicultural

Kashmiri society. Religion does not come in the way of their marriage. Boonyi has a revolting and restless spirit, and after her marriage, she is not happy with her lot.

The third important character is Maximilian Ophuls. Maximilian Ophuls is an American ambassador to India. He has multiple identities, and he is a self-made man. He is an Ashkenazi Jew, "a Frenchman with a German name," born in "Wealthy, cultured, conservative, cosmopolitan" (141), family in Strasbourg, France. Max, "was raised speaking High German as easily as French, and believing that the great writers and thinkers of Germany belonged to him as naturally as the poets and philosophers of France" (141). Being an American ambassador, he visits Kashmir and is entertained by a traditional troupe of Pachigam. During the performance, Boonyi tries to seduce him as she sees a chance to escape her dull life in Max. She goes to Delhi and chooses to be Max's Mistress. Their daughter, India/Kashmira Ophuls, is a connecting point of the novel. She is a western educated modern and bold girl. She searches for her roots and becomes a threat to the killer, Shalimar, of her parents.

In *Shalimar the Clown*, all the female characters, India Ophuls/Kashmira, Pamposh Kaul, Boonyi, and Firdaus Noman try to mark their own identity in a patriarchal society. Kashmir, in common, and women specifically face oppression. Women face subordination in their life due to patriarchal practices of society. They need the courage to rebel against patriarchal restrictions. Boonyi, the main female character of the novel, is named Bhoomi by her mother at the time of her birth. Her mother dies after her birth. Her birth name Bhoomi means "earth". Earth is the base of life and absorbs everything in itself. Like earth, women are also expected to sacrifice and not to bother about their identity and freedom. Bhoomi rebels and

rejects to be called by the name of Bhoomi. Rather she chooses, Boonyi, a new name for herself. Boonyi did not like her name Bhoomi which was provided by her parents. She says, “my name is mud . . . it’s mud and dirt and stone and I don’t want it” (46). Instead, she likes to be called “Boonyi”, a name of a tree “the celestial Kashmiri chinar tree” (46). Everyone calls her by the name Boonyi. Changing a name is bold action by a Kashmiri girl in a Kashmiri patriarchal society.

Women are expected to play domestic roles. In Indian culture, the second name is meant for the family title. A male child is expected to carry forward the family title. A girl can use the family title before marriage, but after marriage, she has to use her husband's title or surname. After marriage, a wife is known by her husband’s name. Boonyi’s step to change her name is proof of her revolt against the patriarchal society and sexist culture. Pamposh Kaul, Firdaus, Hasina Yambarzal, India/Kashmira Ophuls also raise voice against as well as surrender themselves to a patriarchal and sexist culture.

In day to day life, man tries to control and dominate over nature as well as over women. Males have a certain kind of ownership over their share of land. Similarly, they have ownership over the female body also. Eco feminists claim that degradation and exploitation of nature contribute to the exploitation of females. Women and nature both have creative impulses. Vandana Shiva observes, “Both are viewed as the ‘Other’, the passive non-self. Activity, productivity, creativity, which were associated with the feminine principle, are expropriated as qualities of nature and women and transformed into the exclusive qualities of man” (6).

From the beginning of the novel, Salman Rushdie has created the character of Boonyi with a new spirit and form, who can speak for herself, the one who stands

for her desires and can decide about her life. At the age of 14 years, she chooses for her sexual freedom. She does not care for any social tags as 'whore' or 'slut'. She resists fulfilling all the gender biased roles reserved for a female. Kate Millet's observation is quite appropriate as far as Boonyi is concerned, "She wants to be free; she is mad to escape, to learn, to work, to go places. . . . She is traumatically cast out of the middle class quite unprepared to live, for all the world had expected her to exist parasitically" (145). Boonyi leaves her home, one night, to meet Shalimar, her lover. She convinces him for physical relations saying, "Don't treat me like a child . . . you think I went all this trouble just for a kiddie-style session of lick and suck?" (Rushdie 60). Shalimar belongs to a Muslim family, and Boonyi is the daughter of a pandit. They are longtime lovers, and their parents get ready for their marriage. Abdullah Noman, father of Shalimar and Chief of Pachigam, proclaims, "There is no Hindu-Muslim issue. Two Kashmiri, two Pachigami youngsters wish to marry, that's all. A love match is acceptable to both families and so marriage there will be, both Hindu and Muslim customs will be observed" (110).

Like a modern woman, Boonyi speaks for her rights. She does not bother about the claptraps of societal systems for sexual desires. Salman Rushdie has created Boonyi with a voice who can speak for her identity and what she wants to do. After her marriage to Shalimar, she is not satisfied. This marriage becomes a burden for her. She transgresses the social system and decides to escape her family to fulfil her dreams, "in search of a future and though she had thought of it as an opening it had been a closing" (367).

At the starting, the love affair of Boonyi and Shalimar was bliss. They were completely wrapped up with each other. However, as the story of the novel moves

ahead, especially after their marriage, Boonyi takes this relation as a burden. Boonyi is a very ambitious girl and after her marriage, she realizes that she should escape her family, "She knew, she would do anything to get out of Pachigam" (114). Her wish to free herself from tradition bounded family is proof of a strong longing of a woman to liberate her from the clutches of patriarchal society. When Max, US Ambassador, comes to Kashmir, she gets a chance to pursue her most desired freedom. She seizes the opportunist moment and chooses her own destiny. Boonyi and Max's relationship points towards the betrayal of powerful towards powerless. Beauvoir's observation can be implemented upon the Boonyi-Max relationship, "The woman demands a favour from the lover, he grants it: he is generous, rich, magnificent, he is royal, he is divine; if he refuses he is stingy, mean and cruel" (711).

From the sexual point of view, Rushdie's female characters want to fulfil their desires and have more control over their sexual lives, while male characters are depicted as sexually weak. Boonyi and Pamposh, both can be termed as a voice for repressed female desires. Pamposh discusses her sexual experiences and Boonyi freely, at an early age, goes to meet her lover during nights to pacify her physical needs and seduces Shalimar.

Boonyi betrays her family to get freedom from rustic and orthodox society and becomes a source of disgrace for all near and dear ones. She has to lose her identity, dear ones and friends to pay for her chosen freedom. Her chosen freedom is actually an illusion, which she, "like Eve, is easily tempted and eagerly accepts the Ambassador's offer of a change" (Mathur 92). During the last years of her life, she waits for her death to free herself. She experiences psychotic degeneration also,

“Boonyi desired for independence and free life, but free isn't free of charge” (Mathur 253). Beauvoir’s observation is quite suitable as far Boonyi’s step is concerned;

According to the circumstances, the male worth will appear to her as physical force, elegance, wealth, culture, intelligence, authority, social situation or a military uniform: but she hopes for is that her lover will be the summation of the essence of man. (700-01)

Through the portrayal of Boonyi, Rushdie tries to represent women’s urge to liberate themselves from patriarchal societies. She only offers her body to Max in *Shalimar the Clown* and says, “I kept my love for my husband though my body served you Look what you have made of the body I gave you. But my heart is still my own” (Rushdie 205). She misses Kashmir, her village, and her husband in Delhi. She longs to enjoy the natural beauty of Kashmir. She also blames Shalimar for not saving her from the clutches of Max. Kate Millet’s observation is quite suitable for Boonyi, who is trapped between lover and husband; “The courtly triangle featured a lady at its apex, the prize between two rivals, her husband and legal owner, her lover and possessor” (266).

At the starting of their affair, she enjoys her freedom, but with time, Max-Boonyi affair loses its charm. She eats too much, gains fat and becomes addicted to many drugs. When Max wants to get rid of Boonyi, she reveals about her pregnancy that cannot be aborted. She uses her pregnancy as her asset. Max-Boonyi affair news is leaked out, and Max has to leave his post of ambassador.

Boonyi chooses not to leave the battleground. She stands up for herself. She chooses to act according to her desires and accuses Max of the betrayal. To protest

against Max, she gives birth to Max's bastard daughter. She is ready to accept the consequences after the birth of the child. However, Boonyi has to make a deal with Max's wife, Peggy. She names her daughter as Kashmira Noman and hands over her to Peggy. Peggy promises for her return to Kashmir and arranges for a helicopter. Boonyi returns with a bulky figure to her village Pachigam and is ready to accept her mistakes.

People from her village, even her family members, treat her as a ghost. Zoon, a girl from the village, informs her that a proper ten days mourning was done at her house after her elopement and she was registered as dead officially. Tygstrup observes, "After having mourned her desertion, the villagers have buried her *in absentia*" (209). People from Pachigam come to see her, and she becomes "a barely recognized phantom, constricted in a social limbo" (Tygstrup 209). She was buried alive. Now, Boonyi exists between life and death. After her return, she yearns to be part of her village, she wants to get back the belief and love of her husband, Shalimar, but "It was her destiny to live among the ghosts as a half-ghost until she learned how to cross the line" (Rushdie 240). Once again, Boonyi starts from a clean slate in the hut, among woods. She forgets her past deeds and tries to attract her husband. She also tries to erase her past and hopes, "by adopting the abnegatory posture of the disciple before the Divine, by erasing herself, she might also erase her crime and make herself what her husband could once again love" (226). Her father advises her to become Bhoomi, 'the earth', because, "the earth hurts no one. Be like that. The earth hates no one. Be like that as well" (225).

Boonyi accepts her mistakes and rejection by the people of the village very boldly. She starts living in the deserted hut of Nazarebadoor. During the last years,

staying in Delhi, Boonyi gained excess weight, and she lost her beauty also. In the deserted hut, she struggles to survive and rejuvenates herself waiting for her husband. After returning to her village, Boonyi experiments to be accepted by society. However, in a patriarchal society, women are not allowed to live their life as they desire. They have to confine themselves to traditional gender roles assigned by society. They have to accept the decisions made by their male counterparts. Boonyi tries to get a chance to fulfil her dreams. However, due to her laziness, she is not able to learn dance. When she comes back, she is not accepted by society. She is accused of her past mistakes and is forced to spend her life as a recluse. Before their marriage, Shalimar makes her aware not to develop any relations with other men. He says, "Don't leave me . . . Don't you love me now, or I'll never forgive you, and kill you and if you have any children by another man I'll kill the children also" (61). It is a serious question to be asked to our society, in which we argue about women empowerment and equal rights. Women are not free to take decisions and have to pay heavy prices for their past mistakes. As Beauvoir observes, "There is the same duplicitous and impossible imperative in the lover as in the husband; he wants his mistress absolutely his . . . he wants her to be the answer to his dreams" (721).

After returning to Pachigam, Boonyi is ready to face unavoidable consequences. She boldly accepts her rejection from her own family. She proclaims with pride in *Shalimar the Clown*; "The day people said I was an unfaithful wife I became Radha, the first and the best among women in love" (Rushdie 228). She lives in the hut, grows vegetables and sells milk. Once again, she regains her beauty, but the scars of her past life remain on her body. Boonyi rejects to play the role of a traditional and devoted wife and acts according to her own wishes and desires.

India/Kashmira Ophuls, daughter of Boonyi and Max, has an undaunted spirit of her mother, Boonyi, and grandmother, Pamposh. India Ophuls, who is brought up in Western society, uses her father's name. She becomes a challenge for Shalimar. At the starting of the novel, India/Kashmira is depicted as rootless and isolated in Los Angeles. She is a young girl of 24 years old. She is glamorous, bold, outspoken and slinky. She is a good athlete and spends time with boxing, martial art and use of weapons. Arrow is her favourite weapon. She is not sure who she is. Like her biological mother, she never likes her name, India. Name is an essential part of our identity. The name has psychological effects on our personality. When someone has to change his or her name, then a feeling of impermanence grows. The narrator in *Shalimar the Clown* discloses her dissatisfaction with her name as following:

“India” still felt wrong to her, it felt exoticist, colonial, suggesting the appropriation of a reality that was not her own, and she insisted to herself that it didn’t fit her anyway, she didn’t feel like an India, even if her colour was rich and high and her long hair lustrous and black. She didn’t want to be vast or sub-continental or excessive or vulgar or explosive or crowded or ancient or noisy or mystical or in any way the Third World. Quite the reverse, she presented herself as disciplined, groomed, nuanced, inward, irreligious, understated, and calm. She spoke with an English accent. (Rushdie 5-6)

She dislikes her name and is angry about it because this name symbolizes a certain kind of person, like a country, India. However, she tries to control all the Indian characteristics in her character. She never wants to be like the Third World but to search roots, she prefers the Third World. India/Kashmira refuses to know anything about her Third World inheritance at the starting of the novel:

When she spoke, she failed to hear her other inheritance, the other, unknown cadences and heard only her father's voice, its rise and fall, its mannerism and pitch. When she looked in the mirror, she blinded herself to the shadow of the unknown and saw only Max's face, his body type, his languid elegance of manner and form. (15)

She wants to be like her father, to identify with him only. It seems that it is difficult for her to recognize her multiple contradictory identities. At her school time, she was wild when she lived with her adopted mother, Peggy. One day, she was threatened with expulsion from school for her wild manners. However, like Max, she knows how to adjust according to the situation, so she, “immediately and somewhat alarmingly changed her ways completely, adopting, for the first time, the cool, restrained, disciplined persona that would become her preferred disguise throughout her life” (345). She respects to keep a distance from the world around her. As Tygstrup observes, hers is, “privileged isolation when compared to her mother’s -she is not kept at a distance from the world by a border, but herself maintains a distance from it” (212). She has more chances to enjoy freedom as compared with her biological mother, Boonyi, because she lives in the West. India/Kashmira in India/Kashmira gives the "voice to the unutterable" (Rushdie 295).

After the murder of her father, India/Kashmira comes to know about her biological mother, Boonyi and that her mother provided her name Kashmira after her birth. After that revelation, she prefers to be called by the name Kashmira. She keeps her old surname and becomes Kashmira Ophuls, “In Rushdie’s novel, India is not only a country but also a young woman in the first chapter, the hybrid child

conceived by Western power and a gorgeous but wasted land” (Fernandez-Kelly 473). India/Kashmira comes to India to search for her roots and her biological mother, Boonyi, “Kashmir lingered in her, however, and . . . Shalimar’s arrest in America, his disappearance beneath the align cadences of American speech, created turbulence in her that she did not at first identify as culture shock. She no longer saw this as an American story. It was a Kashmiri story. It was hers” (Rushdie, *Shalimar* 372).

After visiting Kashmir and knowing about her mother, Boonyi, she gains strength and confidence to face Shalimar. When India comes back to America, she rejects her gender role as a girl. She prepares herself well, mentally and physically, to take revenge of her father's murder, "After a day of archery or boxing or martial arts, or a trip out of town to Saltzman's Shooting range, she came home and retired wordlessly to her private wing . . . She no longer lived in America. She lived in a combat zone” (382).

At the end of the novel, Shalimar comes at her house after breaking the jail to kill India/Kashmira. She is ready to face him. She is depicted as very bold, having a strong will and valour. She has a single-minded obsession to take revenge from Shalimar, the murderer of her parents. Once she did not want to carry a nation on her shoulders with the name India, but now she is ready to visit India and meet her mother, Boonyi. Ghanshyam says that India/ Kashmira is a parallel to Boonyi, “Who left home and family for the sake of a false and borrowed identity, {India, Kashmira} leaves for Kashmir in quest of her true identity” (84).

When India/Kashmira reaches Pachigam, she gets information about her mother’s murder that her throat was also cut by the same knife that was used to end

her father's life. She goes to visit her mother's tomb and weeps bitterly. She perceives that she has lost someone very precious in her life. She comes back to the US and comes to know that Shalimar, the murderer of her parents, has been arrested. Finally, she embraces her Third World identity and unites it with First World- the union of East and West. She writes in a letter to Shalimar and taunts him as in *Shalimar the Clown*, "They are not dead, not gone, not forgotten, they live on in me" (379).

India/Kashmira visits Kashmir to find out her roots and mother, Boonyi. In Kashmir, she meets Yuvraj. He is, "businessman who in spite of the worsening political situation was successfully exporting Kashmiri papier-mache boxes, carved wooden tables, numdah rugs and embroidered shawls to the rest of India and to western buyers as well" (282). Yuvraj and India/Kashmira's relationship is a symbol of hope and representation of the modern globalized world. Like her mother Boonyi, Kashmira also breaks traditions by developing relations with Yuvraj. She rejects Yuvraj's marriage proposal. She wants to live with him without any boundation. She seems undisturbed when Yuvraj is away on business tours although he regularly misses her. Sometimes he complains also about India/Kashmira's disparity. About his complaints, Kashmira says, "in this relationship, I' m the guy, she told him sweetly, and you, my dear are the girl" (392). By saying this, she changes the roles fixed for men and women in our society. About this unconventional relationship, Keulks points out about its failure, "having commenced in Kashmir but succumbed to the toxicities of America, to which Yuvraj relocates in false hopes of winning her love" (158). All these signs can be seen as signs of change rather than as signs of failure. It is reversing of roles fixed for men and women by society. In this novel,

Kashmira is the only character who is not blamed for anything and becomes a hope for a better future.

In *Shalimar the Clown*, change of name according to her choice and to experience free sex proves that Boonyi is ahead of other women characters of the novel. Pamposh Kaul, Boonyi's mother, is an inspiration for her daughter due to her free spirit. Pamposh discusses openly about sexual pleasures with Firdaus. Boonyi also has physical relations with Shalimar before marriage. Rushdie has provided the freedom to mother and daughter to speak about female sexual pleasures. Pamposh's revelations about sex before Firdaus are proof of suppressed sensual desires in a female. When Pamposh Kaul reveals about sexual adventures with her husband to Firdaus in *Shalimar the Clown*, she reacts, "It's bad enough that you have filled my head with stuff that will give me nightmares for weeks . . . Don't upset me with any more of your notions today. The present is already too much for me" (Rushdie 53). All these leisurely discussions were restricted between two females who are good friends. Between these two, Pamposh was experimenting with physical pleasures, and Firdaus was frightened of these sexual adventures.

Salman Rushdie's representation of Firdaus Noman, in *Shalimar the Clown*, is ambiguous. She is the mother of Shalimar and fast friend of Pamposh. Pamposh reveals about her sexual endeavours before Firdaus. Firdaus hears her leisurely talks interestingly and surprisingly. She becomes the author's voice to rebel against the pseudo-religious systems. However, she accepts the dictates of her husband silently. Rushdie has represented the clash between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Rushdie represents women as the worst sufferers of this clash. Rushdie protests against pseudo-religiosity through Firdaus. Firdaus argues with her son, Anees, over

terrorists' order for all women to cover their faces by wearing a burqa to observe modesty. Firdaus takes this order against women's freedom, independence, and autonomy. Firdaus argues with her son, Anees:

How a woman's face be the enemy of Islam?" she asked angrily. Anees took her hand in his, "For these idiots, it's all about sex, maej, excuse me. They think it is a scientific fact that a woman's hair emits rays that arouse men to deeds of sexual depravity. They think that if a woman's bare legs rub together, even under a floor length robe, the friction her thighs will generate sexual heat, which will be transmitted through her eyes into the eyes of men and will inflame them in an unholy way. Firdaus spread her hands in a gesture of resignation, "So because men are animals, according to them, women must pay." This is an old story. Tell me something new. (Rushdie 301)

Salman Rushdie has also depicted the massacre and working of the Indian army in Kashmir. He reveals the torture of army on women as; "And the women G, H, and I, upon whom the virile wrath of Indian forces had been potently unleashed. The bayoneting of the womb of that pregnant woman J was scullions allegation, however: pure fiction. None of the personnel on duty that day had carried bayonets, only automatic weapons, grenades, knives" (293).

The man or male oriented perspective of army assault considers the destruction of rivals, along with females, their foremost victory. The innocent women are raped and dishonoured to cast the male power and domination over the fair sex. Berterand de Jouvenel in *Power: Natural History of Its Growth* argues, "A

man feels himself more of a man when he is imposing himself and making others the instruments of his will that provides him an incomparable pleasure" (121). Rushdie depicts the rape of women in general and the supposed murder of Firdaus in special in the following words in *Shalimar the Clown*, "who raped the lazy-eyed woman? Who raped that grey-haired lazy-eyed woman as she screamed about snake vengeance? Who raped that woman again? Who raped that dead woman again?" (308).

Boonyi's infidelity smashes the shared communalism and tolerance of Pachigam. When Maximilian Ophuls, American ambassador to India comes to Pachigam, Boonyi gets a chance to escape her husband and chooses to be Max's mistress. Detmers observes, "The dreadful ending of this love (between Boonyi and Shalimar), caused by Boonyi's infidelity . . . turns Kashmir into a contested war zone" (362). The following lines in *Shalimar the Clown* prove the smashing of tolerance and shared communalism:

The women of the village would take turns to tell the family anecdotes. Every family in Pachigam had its store of such narratives, and because all the stories of all the families were told to all the children, it was as though everyone belonged to everyone else. That was the magic circle which had been broken forever when Boonyi ran away to Delhi to become the American ambassador's whore. (Rushdie 295)

Shalimar's name, in Delhi, reminds her, "the other Shalimar, the Mughal garden of Kashmir, descending in verdant liquid terraces to a shining lake" (17). Tale of Shalimar's life can be read as an experience of, "drastic transition from

innocence to betrayal” (Ghanshyam 80). Detmers points out that due to his name, Shalimar has the “double role of being both a subject and agent of the expulsion, from Paradise” (362). Shalimar is the victim of Boonyi’s betrayal and unfaithfulness in marriage. His faith for their relationship and love for Boonyi are smashed by Boonyi’s deeds. He joins a terrorist group and turns out to be a killer.

Neil Murphy has provided a different reading to this novel. He points out that Boonyi symbolizes a Kashmir that has been “Polluted by greedy aspirations for Western commodities” (354). In Delhi, Boonyi eats too much, “Her appetite had grown to subcontinental size. It crossed all frontiers of language and custom. She was vegetarian and non-vegetarian, fish and meat eating, Hindu, Christian and Muslim, a democratic, secularist omnivore” (Rushdie 202). Murphy argues that this is the result of Boonyi's "placing her aspirations and trust in American hands" (354). Boonyi leaves her family and Pachigam because her life and marriage are like a trap, and she urges to see the outside world beyond Pachigam. However, she only passes her time in a pink apartment in Delhi with bright lights. She consumes her time by overeating.

The relationship between Boonyi and Max is based on a contract. The terms of the contract one negotiated by both parties, Boonyi and Max. In the novel *Shalimar the Clown*, Boonyi carefully considers that, "just as mutual self-interest was the only real guarantee of a durable accord between nations, so Boonyi's perception that this liaison was her best chance of furthering her own purposes constituted a reliable guarantee of her future seriousness and discretion" (192). The narrator in *Shalimar the Clown* observes about the deal between Boonyi and Max:

Significant requirements were in place not only discretion and seriousness but also complete docility absolute compliance, maximum attentiveness, exceptional eagerness to please and unlimited access, all fueled by the girl's determination to better herself, to make the leap from the village to the world, to give herself the future she believed she deserved. (Rushdie 192-93)

Their relation symbolizes the Western colonialism over an Oriental. However, Boonyi also affects Max's life and reputation all over the world. Boonyi left Pachigam because it became a dull place to her, and she wanted to use one little chance to advance in her life. The place was beautiful, but secluded. When Boonyi gets first chance to talk to Max Ophuls then she "feels a breeze on her cheek, as if a door was opening and the air of the outside was being allowed to enter" (184). She selected that door to cross boundaries to enter another world. Once she crossed the boundaries, she had no chance to return. After some time living in Delhi, she starts missing Kashmir and wants to return to Pachigam. She misses her past, no matter how hard she tries to forget:

Pachigam was a trap, she told herself every night, but the Muskadoon still scurried through her dreams, its cold swift mountain music singing in her ears . . . when she closed her eyes, she invariably saw her father, her husband, her companions, her appointed place on earth. Not her new lover but her old, lost life. *My old life like a prison*, she told herself savagely, but her heart called here foul. She had it all upside down and backward, her heart scolded her. What she thought of as her former imprisonment had been freedom, while this so called liberation was no more than a gilded cage. (Rushdie 193-94)

Boonyi takes Pachigam as a prison and she considers the outside world as free as the air. She flies in free air for some time. After flying sometime in free and liberal air, her construction changes. Her supposed freedom changes into a gilded cage. She cannot forget Kashmir, land of her origin, and because of her attachment with Pachigam, she cannot enter the free outside world completely. Ghanshyam points out, "though she thought that by her action she had gained release from the village existence that she so detested, yet the stirrings of her heart never let her escape the Kashmir embedded in her very being, her soul" (81). More and more she misses her place of origin, the farther away she moves from Max. The gap between them widens. The language used by them indicates their gap. At the starting of the relationship, Boonyi is very close to Max. The narrator in *Shalimar the Clown* explains their closeness, "At their closet, they had sometimes forgotten which language [English or Kashmiri] they were speaking; the two tongues blurred into one. As they drifted apart, so did their speech. Now she spoke her own language, and he spoke his. Each understood the other well enough" (205).

When Max and Boonyi are near to each other, they use a hybrid, a mixed language. Once a gap widens between them, they come to their own languages, but still, they can understand one another. When the Boonyi-Max affair is acknowledged publically, it brings disaster for him. It becomes a blow on his face. Max has to lose the significant diplomatic post of an American ambassador to India. His married life also ends. Max's wife, Peggy, asks Boonyi to handover her newborn baby to her in exchange to return to Kashmir. After birth Boonyi gives her daughter to Peggy, wife of Max and Peggy makes arrangement for Boonyi, so that she can return comfortably to Kashmir, but "As the small plane (on its way to Kashmir) flew

north the emptiness in her arms began to feel like an intolerable burden. The weight of her missing child, the cradled void, was too much to bear. Yet it had to be borne" (217).

Female characters, in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie, defy the rules of society to carve their niche and to secure a place for them. They march away from the rules of society and cultural conditions. Their rebellion against society proves their anti-patriarchal attitude of life. Margaret Rhodes, Gray Rat, Peggy, wife of Max, in *The Shalimar the Clown*, is a successful secret agent. Rushdie describes her as following, "That the Rat was beautiful, was obvious enough even though she did her best to hide it" (168). She is India/Kashmira's foster-mother. Peggy is an English woman. She is a resistance hero, like Max. She comes to India with Max when he was US ambassador to India. They did not have any child. She had a dream when she came to India that she would become a mother. In India, she is known as a philanthropist due to her work for orphans. When she came to know about Boonyi's pregnancy, she met her and fixed the terms. She managed the arrangements for Boonyi's return to Kashmir on the condition that she would have to hand over her newborn child. Peggy felt that her dream had proved right. At the time of birth, Boonyi names her daughter as Kashmira Noman. However, discarding the name, Peggy in *Shalimar the Clown* says:

Noman, indeed that's not her name. And what did you say?
Kashmira? No, no darling that can't be her future," she continues,
"Ophuls That's her father's name. And *India*'s a nice name, a name containing as it is, the truth. The question of origins is one of the two great questions. *India Ophuls* is an answer. (Rushdie 210-11)

Peggy's action to change the name of the newborn girl proves her domination over Boonyi. Peggy lies to India/Kashmira about her origin. Most of the time she says that India's mother died after her birth. Peggy did not wish to disclose anything about her parents, Max and Boonyi. Peggy proves to be a bad mother. She never pays attention to the bad manners of India. One day, Max comes to meet India/Kashmira. They mix with one another very soon. After this first meeting, she understands that Max has stolen her child. Then, Max brings his daughter with him and arranges for her schooling. He loves his daughter very much. He always wants to spend time with his daughter. India/Kashmira also loves her father. She plans to make a documentary on contemporary life in California concerning Colonial roots and the first European expedition in the land. The narrator points out regarding India's wishes, "She wanted her mother. She wanted her father to tell her about her mother, to show her letters, photographs, to bring messages from the dead. She wanted her lost story to be found. She didn't know what she wanted" (12). Peggy finally comes to meet Kashmira after Max's assassination. She discloses the truth about Max and Boonyi's relation.

Shalimar faces the infidelity of Boonyi, Boonyi and Max are killed by Shalimar. Kashmira thinks that perhaps his father got whatever he deserved. Only India/Kashmira does not seem to be guilty of any wrong action. She does not deny her past and circumstances to get something in the novel. She is not like her father, who was involved in many diplomatic actions. She does not follow her father's footsteps. This proves her to be the only hope of the novel. It can be argued that she is a true hybrid character in the novel who is aware of her identity.

Some women characters, in the novel, are strong as Boonyi, Firdaus and India/Kashmira. Boonyi stands for herself, but she has to face problems. She is rejected by her family. She is officially declared dead by her village. Boonyi is destroyed by her husband and Max when she tries to live life according to her impulses. India/Kashmira Ophuls dares to challenge Shalimar, Firdaus is aware of restrictions upon women and is daring enough to ask questions, and Pamposh becomes a voice for repressed sexual desires. Rushdie's portrayal of females, in *Shalimar the Clown*, demonstrates his feminist impulse. As Ambreen Hai argues:

Feminist/revisionist impulse in Rushdie is countered by another quite contradictory though changing one. His narratives undermine their own (proto) feminist strains by regressing (perhaps because of a concurrent anxiety about effeminisation/emasculatation) into reification of stereotypes of gender and sexuality or odd ways of asserting beleaguered masculinity, and into replaying surprisingly parochial and patriarchal discourses of gender and sexuality. (18)

The study of female characters, in Rushdie's novels, indicates a new concept of empowered women because they grow in strength and influence protagonists. Rushdie's female characters are often more powerful, more energetic and resilient than their male counterparts. In his novels, there is a predominance of female characters over males. Rushdie's representation of female characters is a counter-discourse of female identity. A woman has to surrender before situations in day-to-day life. A man constantly fights to reach somewhere. Representation of females and their roles is a voice for female identity. Salman Rushdie's women characters in his novels speak for their liberty, and they try to fulfil their dreams.

The female characters like Boonyi, Aurora, Uma, and Veena Apsara use sexuality and beauty to manipulate the circumstances and situations in their life. These female characters utilize these conventional male dominated areas in their way. In all the selected novels, Rushdie has bestowed a vast degree of liberated ideas on female characters. Rushdie's female characters are not university degree holders, but they use their links to allure others. Some female characters also use sex to escape nothingness of their life like Boonyi, Vina Apsara, and Ina, daughter of Aurora. Characters like Vina Apsara, India/Kashmira and Aurora yearn for true love in their life. So, Rushdie has used the male dominated concept of sexuality to make women aware of their looks and how they use it for their identity.

All the protagonists in the selected novels are male characters. These male protagonists are alienated, self-punishing and isolated. These protagonists try to unite with liberated, energetic and passionate females in their lives. One can, therefore, take the depiction of women in literary works as dominated, produced and created by men only for role fulfilments. The portrayal of women in fiction is not the focus of Salman Rushdie. Every novel has a male protagonist, but male thoughts and actions are dependent on the women in his life. The central characters are used or manipulated by females. These central female characters play essential roles in the life of the protagonist to evolve as a person and to fulfil their responsibilities. These active women provide assistance to men, as wives, to understand and solve the complications of their life. Wives usually rebel against the domination of the husband to act according to their desires.

In the present scenario, it is useful to discuss the relevance of Rushdie's portrayal of women. Salman Rushdie is not an overt or radical feminist. However,

his depiction of female characters proves that they are not weak or submissive. They are active, energetic, dominating and straight forward. They are not protagonists, but they are provided leading roles, having essential parts to play in the family and society affairs. Salman Rushdie encourages the concept of gender equality with the distinction of responsibility and importance in the spheres of men and women. He seems to prove that women can prove themselves as responsible human beings within the traditional roles. They can do so with communion and expansion without isolating themselves. Therefore, the women in Rushdie novels rebel against patriarchal oppression. Any analysis of females' urge for freedom, empowerment, and emancipation emphasizes their subjectivity and identity. More and more efforts should be made to represent and study the toil of women to emerge as an individual and to be independent. Women's experiences with love, marriage, and sex should be given importance as these experiences play a significant role in the emancipation of women.

Chapter – 5

Comparative Study of the Female Characters in the Selected Novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie

The word ‘comparative’, derived from Latin *comparativus*, from *comparare*, is an observation or judgement of similarities or dissimilarities between two or more branches of science or subjects of study such as comparative literature, comparative religion, comparative economics, and comparative language. Comparative study of literature deals with the literature of two or more different social, cultural, national or linguistic groups. Most of the time, comparative study in literature is made with works of different languages. However, the comparative study can be made with writers of the same language if the writers and their works are from different nations, cultures and societies where that particular language is spoken. Study of comparative literature is an interdisciplinary study that is done across language, time, national and regional borders, across genres and beyond disciplines. It is a study without any borders. In comparative literature, scholars study historical, philosophical and social changes, concepts and movements. Comparative literature is a separate branch of literary studies and literature. The way of life, behaviour, habits, and the attitude of people of different groups are compared across nations, languages and cultures. Henry H. H. Remak in “Comparative Literature: Its Definition and Function” discusses comparative literature as:

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of relationships between the literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the (fine) arts, philosophy, history,

the social sciences, the sciences, religion, etc. on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression. (1)

The objective of comparative literature is not to prove the superiority or inferiority of literary works. However, the aim is to get a better understanding of different works from different regions of the world. The purpose of comparative literature is to cross the borders and boundaries of history, culture, philosophy, myths, social behaviour, political participation, economic circumstances, and customs. The literary works of different authors from different nations or languages are compared through facts to understand human life across national boundaries. Comparative literature is a unique tool for readers, academics or scholars, who feel curious, enjoy reading and analysing literary works across nations, cultures and languages. In *Crisis of Comparative Literature*, Rene Wellek observes about the need for comparative literature as follows:

Literary scholarship will not make any progress methodologically unless it determines to study literature as a subject distinct from other activities and procedures of man. Hence, we must face the problem of 'literariness', the central issues of aesthetics, the nature of art and literature. (38)

Comparative literature has broadened the horizon of the study of literature and provides a cosmopolitan view. Comparative literature analyses the similarities, dissimilarities and parallels between works of literature, authors and texts. As, in *Comparative Literature*, Bijay Kumar Das observes, "Comparative literature analyses the similarities, dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures. It further studies themes, modes, conventions and the use of folk tales, myths in two

different literatures or even more” (32). Warren and Wellek point out three different types of comparative literature. The first type comprises the study of folk-tale themes. It is an integral part of the culture and literary scholarship. The second one is the study of relationships between two or more pieces of literature, and the third type of comparative literature has identification with World literature. As Rene Wellek points out:

Comparative literature is identical with the study of literature independent of linguist, ethnic and political boundaries. It cannot be confined to actual historical contacts. There may be . . . as much value in comparing phenomena such as languages or genres historically unrelated as in studying influence discoverable from the evidence of reading or parallels . . . The three main branches of literary study – history, theory and criticism – involve each other . . . Comparative literature can and will flourish only if it shakes off artificial limitations and becomes simply the study of literature. (36)

In the comparative study of literature, the works of greatest novelists, dramatists, poets, story-tellers, and biographers are compared side by side. Without any doubt, comparative literature is the study of the way of life of particular people, their behaviour, attitudes, beliefs and habits of particular people. As Matthew Arnold points out that everywhere there is a connection, “Everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures” (qtd. in Susan Bassnett 1). Day after day, literature is making dignified or more honourable force for humankind that goes beyond the limits of all barriers. There is

a growing relationship between comparative study and literary theory. As Susan Bassnett in *Comparative Literature* points out:

The study of themes and movements not only continues unabated but possibly is even on the increase. The difference is, of course, that the impulse is now coming from within areas of work defined under other headings than that of 'comparative literature', such as post-colonial studies or gender studies. (116)

Comparative literature is an academic field, which, in spite of its interdisciplinary structure, still tends to reinforce traditional literary-historical schemes of periodisation, canon formation and representation of certain aspects of life in society. Comparative literature still seems to receive its institutional legitimisation by reference to one of those traditional categories, to a collection of significant figures or recognised theories. Siegbert Praver in *Comparative Literary Studies* provides five different subjects for investigation for comparative study. The first subject is the literary representation of natural phenomena of what he calls "perennial human problems and patterns of behavior" (99). The second subject is an idea that repeatedly appears in a piece of writing. The third is recurrent situations. The fourth one is the literary representation of the type. The fifth one is the literary representation of named personage. Representation of women in literature has been questioned by critics from time to time. Elaine Showalter, in *The New Feminist Criticism*, points about the unchanging images of women in literature and muses that feminist literary criticism "concentrated on exposing the misogyny of literary practice: the stereotyped images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature,

and the exclusion of women from literary history” (Showalter 5). The most important point under discussion is the debate between comparative study as literary history and practical comparing of texts of different authors, movements or criticisms.

Feminist critics point out that gender is one of the categories that organise literary production. It encodes voices as masculine and feminine. Gender inequality is present all over the world. These gender divisions cross national boundaries, assume new values and definitions in each society, culture, and nation. Comparative study of the representation of women in literature is the need of the hour. A wide spectrum of comparatists now use methods borrowed from cultural studies, new historicism, feminism, or subaltern studies. In an article, “Comparative Literature on the Feminist Edge”, Margaret R. Higonnet points out:

Shuttling between languages, cultures, arts, or discourses marks the condition of a comparatist. . . . Like comparatists, feminist critics have stressed the re-examination of critical boundaries. To be sure, feminists tend to focus on the cultural construction of gender, whereas comparatists traditionally have focused on genre or period conventions and on the transnational movement of forms. (155)

The construction of feminist theories on the inscription of the body, whether through paradigmatic scenes of rape, slavery or excision, needs to be brought into perspective through comparative analysis. In recent years, many feminist critics have sought to move beyond theoretical and historical claims. Feminists have moved from women's studies toward cross-cultural gender studies and towards comparative analysis. Representation of women as subordinates, urge for freedom, identity crisis,

and roles of female characters held a special place within feminist criticism as points of comparison and contrast in the development of theory. As Margaret R. Higonnet points out, “One of the primary tasks of feminist criticism has been to interrogate the problematic assumption of a “female” identity in literary representations” (157).

Nowadays, a change can be felt in shifting attention from international differences to differences within national cultures which are determined by factors such as gender, ethnicity, economic, social or political status- lived experiences. Women, historically in most cultures, have suffered from social disadvantages that produce special behaviours. The social, economic and political roles played by female characters in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie are of paramount concern of this research.

V. S. Naipaul is descendent of an emigrant Hindu family from Trinidad and received his education in Trinidad and England. His socio-religious-cultural situations affected his writings. Salman Rushdie was born in an Indian Muslim family. Later his family shifted for Pakistan. He also received education in England and America. Therefore his writings are also influenced by his Indian and European ties. Both the selected authors have faced alienation, displacement and identity crisis in their lives. Major themes of their writing are alienation, displacement, the issues of survival of postcolonial societies, identity crisis and representation of crisis faced by the diaspora. Writing about women and the representation of women is not the primary concern of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. All the selected novels revolve around the male protagonists. Female characters in *The Mystic Masseur*, *A House for Mr Biswas*, *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River*, the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul, have been provided subordinate and minor roles to play. They are forced

to survive in traditional and stereotypically patriarchal families. Female characters in *Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Shalimar the Clown*, the selected novels of Salman Rushdie, revolt against the male dominated traditions and they have an urge for freedom. The female characters in the novels of Salman Rushdie, like V. S. Naipaul, are not protagonists but they are active participants of the novels. These female characters dominate in their marriages and love relationships. V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie have many similarities and dissimilarities as far as representation of women is concerned. The female characters have been compared and contrasted from social, economic and political roles played by them in the selected novels. The lived experiences of social, economic and political life always play an essential role in the life of an individual.

V. S. Naipaul depicts the struggles, alienation and displacement of migrants in his novels. All the selected novels have male protagonists. The male protagonists have an urge to survive in alien environments. The female characters in selected novels belong to tradition bound patriarchal families and societies. Their life is affected by the alienation, displacement and traumas of their male counterparts. They have to face double discrimination because first of all, they are from migrant families. The members of these families have to face multiple problems and discriminations. Secondly, these female characters belong to a marginal class of society being women. These tradition bound families make female inhabitants submissive, docile, self-effacing, and humble, who prefer to follow the orders of their families. They always remain self-sacrificing mothers, dominated wives or suffering mistresses. They are not well educated. More importance is given to the education of sons and females are denied intellectual development. No personal

development is provided to the female characters in Naipaul's selected novels. In *A House for Mr Biswas* and *The Mystic Masseur* women seem satisfied with their lot. In *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River*, white women are used and exploited by the men from the Third World. Jane is murdered in *Guerrillas* and Yvette has to face the hatred of Salim in *A Bend in the River*.

Salman Rushdie also portrays the problems of diaspora, postcolonial and globalised societies. Hybridity, identity crisis, urge to survive, fragmentation and alienation are major themes of his selected novels. In his selected novels, protagonists face various difficulties and alienation in their life. All his selected novels have male protagonists. However, in all the selected novels, females are central characters, and the story of the novels revolves around these important characters. They are active participants of the plot. They help their male counterparts to solve various problems. They are the controller of their relations. Women, in the selected novels of Rushdie, are art geniuses, politically active, dominating and economically strong than the women of Naipaul's selected novels. Many of the female characters die at the end of the novels. Women, in the selected novels of Rushdie, face violence and rape also. They have to wear a burqa to cover their bodies.

Female characters in these selected novels have been compared with reference to social, political and economic roles played by them in all the selected novels. Social roles comprise their participation in the family as mothers, wives, daughters, and mistresses. The study of political roles analyses women characters political participation along with their awareness of rights. Economic comparison compares the economic situations of the female characters in the selected novels of

both these writers. In the selected novels of Naipaul, Mrs Tulsi, Bipti, and Shama play the roles of traditional self-sacrificing mothers. The Great Belcher and Tara are not biological mothers of any character. However, they care and help their relatives as mothers. Their roles have been compared with Naseem Aziz, Epifania, Flory, and Aurora, female characters from Rushdie's novels. Savi, Leela, and Tulsi daughters are the focus of discussion as far as the role of the daughters is concerned. Their roles have been compared with Boonyi Kaul, India/Kashmira, and Aurora. As wives, roles of Shama, Leela, Shoba, and Yvette are compared with Amina, Naseem, Aurora, and Vina Apsara, the female characters from Rushdie's selected novels. Jane and Yvette, Naipaul's female characters, are compared as mistresses with Uma, Boonyi and India/Kashmira Ophuls, the female characters from Rushdie's selected novels.

All the selected novels of Salman Rushdie have female characters who play important social, political and economic roles. Representation of these central female characters proves him as a prominent writer from the feminist point of view. In her book *Circling the Downspout of Empire: Postcolonialism and Postmodernism* Linda Hutcheon points out about Rushdie as a feminist "Who would be categorised by others as either postcolonial or feminist in preference to the label 'postmodern'" (150). It is an important observation as far as the representation of females is concerned. Almost all the selected works have an Indian setting, but he represents global sensibility. Western and Indian amalgamation of thoughts influences his representation of female characters. Primarily, his female characters are from India or have Indian ties and V. S. Naipaul's female characters belong to migrant families in Caribbean lands.

The representation of women in novels has been changed in the last two decades of the 20th century and first two decades of the 21st century. Feminist writers have shifted from the image of suffering traditional women, who were self-sacrificing, toward women characters who are in search of identity and want to do something in life. Even some characters defy playing roles of devoted mothers and wives. The fiction of the last four decades is about the diversity of female characters. It also depicts the inner diversity of women. This fiction does not delimit the life of a woman as a wife, daughter or mother. These novels analyse the family structures, imposition of traditions, and discriminations in social organisation. These novels have become the voice of the women's demands. This fiction has become the medium for self-expression also.

Today's woman is away from her predecessors. Now, many women have been questioning about the social place reserved for them throughout the ages. They want to fulfil their desires and longings. Now, they are not the paragon of chastity celebrated by writers. They have their sensibilities and imaginations. They do not want to celebrate regression, oppression and self-pity. Now, these are not symbols of purity and growth.

V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie are considered as writers of social cause. They both are diasporic writers of postmodern and postcolonial eras. They both have been criticised as far as their depiction of women characters is concerned. Even some feminist writers accused Naipaul and Rushdie being misogynists because these critics perceive that they are hostile towards the depiction of women in fiction. Naipaul has been criticised for almost all the female characters by Athill Diana, Selwyn Cudjoe, Pyne Timothy, Elaine Fido, Ramabai Espinet, Lillian Feder and

Kevin Foster. This observation for Rushdie, mainly, depends on the representation of some female characters as Amina in *Midnight's Children* and Uma Sarasvati in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Catherine Cundy in her book, *Salman Rushdie: Contemporary World Writers*, observes about him, "Rushdie's self-appointed status as a champion of women in the face of religious, political and cultural constraints upon their freedom should not go unchallenged" (105). Salman Rushdie is a writer of many experiences and sensibilities. Many of his novels have male protagonists. If a female is not the protagonist, then it must not mean that she is not authoritative, and her role is insignificant in the progress of the narrative.

Traditionally, marriage has provided females to play the most submissive feminine role of a wife. As a wife, she submits herself to her husband and his family. As wives, they are expected to make every sacrifice for the sake of the family. A woman as a wife is denied any individuality and freedom in patriarchal societies. Simone de Beauvoir observes marriage:

The destiny that society traditionally offers women is marriage. Even today, most women are, were, or plan to be married, or they suffer from not being so. Marriage is the reference by which the single woman is defined, whether she is frustrated by, disgusted at, or even indifferent to this institution. (451)

The parameters of a good and bad wife are decided by husbands. A wife's activities, likes, dislikes, and body remain under the control of husband in male dominated families. It is considered her duty to follow her husband's commands and satisfy his desires. Thus, females are regarded as worthy only in their role as obedient wives and by honourably fulfilling this destined role, they remain

oppressed. The stereotypical image of a good or bad wife has dominated literature for a long time. The wives in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul are submissive, obedient, and self-effacing who remain under the authority of their husbands and are denied individual identity. Wives, in Naipaul, like Shama and Leela, help their husbands to solve their problems. They also had to bear domestic violence. Simone de Beauvoir's observation is quite appropriate for the life of wives in V. S. Naipaul's selected novels:

Boys marry, they take a wife. . . . She takes his name; she joins his religion; integrates into his class, his world; she belongs to his family, she becomes his other 'half'. She follows him where his work calls him . . . she breaks with her past more or less brutally; she is annexed to her husband's universe; she gives him her person. (454-55)

V. S. Naipaul has introduced the concepts and issues related to marriage in *The Mystic Masseur*, *A House for Mr Biswas*, and *A Bend in the River*. This diversity of marriage-related patterns includes arranged marriage, love marriage, dowry, living in wife's family, and caste system, which are discussed respectively providing several examples of Hindu customs and traditions performed on those occasions. As far as arranged marriages are concerned, Naipaul demonstrates how the groom's family plays a significant role in picking up the marriage partner. Groom's parents are responsible to find an eligible match for their marketable son. To put it somewhat differently, when the match finding process is completed, the two families meet to finalise dowry, venue and time of marriage. They also discuss about male and female's birth astrology and education. As the narrator in *A House*

for Mr Biswas explains, “Details of bridegrooms and dowries had been easily settled, and now the puzzling estate was forgotten and all energy went to preparing for the marriage” (Naipaul 425). Naipaul, through Mr Biswas, criticises the traditional ways in which Hindu youths get married without being familiar with or even seeing each other before the day of the wedding. Naipaul points to the fact that Hindu marriage is a very special occasion which has its own tradition. Hindu marriage is not only a legal act, but it is a religious and social one also. When Shama’s seven nieces are to be married, “Days before the ceremony guests and relatives and dancers, singers and musicians came from Arwacas. They slept in the tent, the verandah, the garage the cover space between the kitchen and house” (425-26). Naipaul criticises the way a Hindu family pays more attention to marry its son than to marry its daughters. When the Tulsis wants to marry Shekhar, the elder son, they put some desirable conditions for the daughter-in-law. They search for a beautiful and educated girl to match his son, and she should be from a wealthy family, “the search among the eligible families had failed to provide someone beautiful and educated and rich enough to satisfy Mrs Tulsi or her daughters” (239).

A House for Mr Biswas is confined to the marriage of Shama and Biswas. Shama is dominated and presented in society by her husband. Mutual understanding and bonding, in Shama-Biswas relationship, are absent at the starting of the novel. At the ending, they both show some maturity and obey each other without any quarrel. Naipaul's depiction of men and women characters, nowhere, achieves mutual bonding and understanding. Mr Biswas works at Tulsi store as a painter and gets attracted towards Shama. He writes a love letter for her, and the letter comes in the hands of Mrs Tulsi. Seth and Mrs Tulsi call him at Hanuman House and after

initial enquiries give him a proposal for marriage with Shama due to his caste, Brahmin. Mr Biswas, in the hope of excellent arrangements for marriage and dowry, gives his consent. However, Mrs Tulsi arranges a simple wedding without any dowry. After marriage, he starts living at Hanuman House with an extended Tulsi clan. Soon he comes to know about the slave-like position of sons-in-law in Hanuman House and rebels against Mrs Tulsi's authority. He decides to go back to Pagotes with or without Shama because, after his short stay at Hanuman House, he is convinced that Shama will not leave her family. Shama's reaction proves his conviction correct. Shama starts weeping before all Tulsi family members and insults him for his poverty. At this time, she also feels trapped between Tulsi clan and Mr Biswas as she cannot risk leaving her family due to her dependency upon them and being a traditional wife cannot leave her husband. Whenever Mr Biswas rebels against Tulsis, she feels ashamed. However, whenever they are not Tulsi clan, Mr Biswas notices a change in her behaviour and feels, "Shama was not the Shama, he saw downstairs, the thorough Tulsi, the antagonist the family had assigned him" (105).

A change can be noticed in Shama-Biswas relation when he becomes a reporter with a newspaper named The Sentinel. As a reporter, Mr Biswas starts receiving respect and Shama also enjoys this respect and social status of being a wife of a reporter. She encourages him to wear suits and ties. So, she learns a new loyalty towards her husband saying goodbye to Tulsi world in a way. Shama remains an obedient wife who always follows her husband. Sometimes she raises her voice but always compromises playing the role of an obedient wife.

Mr Biswas and Shama had to live separately many times because he never wants to be a Tulsi, but Shama does not afford to leave her family. Shama provides her best services during a crisis, as when he feels sad after the demise of his mother and his unemployment, she tries to cheer him up. Even she does not say anything for buying a creaky house in Sikkim Street. The narrator in *A House for Mr Biswas* observes, "Shama had never reproached him for the house, and he had begun to credit her with powers of judgement" (Naipaul 619).

Mr Biswas and Shama live in an extended family of Tulsis. No elaboration is given about their personal life. When Mr Biswas comes to know that he is going to be a father, only single sentence describes their love life, "By now Shama's head was on his soft arm, and they were lying side by side" (115). A little bit of understanding and partnership develop between Shama and Biswas after the arrival of Savi. "She was morose herself, as though she preferred this bond to the bond of sentimentality" (175). Near the end of the novel, a mutual relationship develops between them. In the last years of Biswas' life when they face an economic crisis, "Shama did not run straight off to her mother to beg for help. Ten years before that would have been her first thought. Now she tried to comfort Mr Biswas and devised plans on her own" (1). Mr Biswas also respects Shama's opinions, "he had grown to accept her judgement and to respect her optimism" (2). For Mr Biswas her distance from Tulsis is a victory, "Since they moved to the house Shama had learned a new loyalty to him and their children; away from her mother and sisters, she was able to express this without shame, and to Mr Biswas, this was a triumph as big as his own house" (2). She is depicted as calm and having patience at the death of Mr Biswas. She always remains expressionless and busy with housework, but housework does not bring any happiness or individuality in her life. As Simone de Beauvoir opines;

Her home is her earthly lot, the expression of her social worth and her intimate truth. Because she *does* nothing, she avidly seeks herself in what she *has*. It is through housework that the wife comes to make her 'nest' her own; . . . By administrating her home, she achieves her social justification; her job is also to oversee food, clothing and care of the familial society in general. Thus she too realises herself as an activity. But it is an activity that brings her no escape from her immanence and allows her no individual affirmation of herself. (484)

V. S. Naipaul has represented wife-beating in his novels. Wife-beating is a practice of patriarchal system to dominate over women. Wives, in Naipaul, take husband's habit of beating as a matter of pride. Sushila, Shama's widowed sister in *A House for Mr Biswas*, "regarded them as a necessary part of her training and often attributed the decay of Hindu society in Trinidad to the rise of a timorous, weak, non-beating class of husbands" (Naipaul 153). They conceive their passive roles as a sign of dignity. Dooley estimates about female characters in "Naipaul's Women" as, "Sisters, mothers, wives, lovers; it is true that few of Naipaul's women do not face into one of these categories. Nevertheless, it cannot be justly inferred that they are not treated as individuals. Resisting subverting, stereotypes have always been at the core of Naipaul's vision" (101).

Ganesh and Leela's marriage, in *The Mystic Masseur*, is based on greed for money rather than emotions or love. Ramlogan considers Ganesh a suitable educated young man for his daughter Leela. He gives him care, attention and respect before marriage. He tries every possible way to trap him as a son-in-law. Ganesh is not interested in Leela as a girl. He makes his mind for the marriage only for the dowry

that he will get in marriage. He acts like a traditional orthodox Hindu groom during the marriage ceremony. Ramlogan has already settled with him everything regarding the gifts provided during a ceremony. However, Ganesh behaves in an irresponsible way and demands for more and more gifts in the name of a ceremony. He grabs the money and a house in Port of Spain from Ramlogan. This demand for dowry becomes the base for endless disputes between Ganesh and Ramlogan. His greed for dowry and no emotions for Leela affect his relations with his wife. Leela is dominated by her husband, Ganesh. She is not provided with any freedom. She has to accept physical violence also. Being a wife, she is supposed not to raise voice against any brutalities and is under the impression of his husband, "the husband 'forms' his wife not only erotically but also spiritually and intellectually; he educates her, impresses her, puts his imprint on her" (Beauvoir 199). Her way to oppose the actions of her husband is to leave his house for some time. When a compromise is made between husband and wife, she comes back. She mainly concerns for her husband's progress. She never tries to search for her own identity. Leela never wishes for an independent economic status for herself. Financially she depends on her husband. When her husband is strong enough financially, only then she starts some social work. Her social services are also dependent on the financial support of her husband.

Ganesh and Leela's marriage is an ordinary marriage with quarrels and problems. This marriage lacks romantic love. They quarrel over trivial issues, mainly for Leela's father, Ramlogan. Later, they both start respecting each other but never demand more. Leela's father blames that Ganesh has 'robbed' him of everything, but Leela, in *The Mystic Masseur*, defends her husband by saying "The

man is my husband Pa” (Naipaul 52). Throughout the novel, Leela faces the dominance of her husband and the unpredictable behaviour of her father. She has no means to rebel against patriarchal ideologies of her husband and father. Like a typical traditional wife, she follows her husband in every way and every situation.

Soomintra is another dependent wife in this novel. She mainly boasts about her husband's money, status and property like a typical tradition bound dependent wife. She never opposes the beating provided by her husband. She likes to show off her riches. Her status and reputation depend upon her husband. She also has no independent identity. She is a caring mother and a submissive wife.

Yvette, in *A Bend in the River*, marries Raymond for money. She ignores the gap of age to marry a rich man. Yvette is depicted as an unfaithful wife who has multiple love affairs and tries to satisfy her physical lust by having relations with Salim and other men. Sometimes she feels bad for Raymond because he is losing his close relationship with the Big Man. She uses Raymond's money and reputation to attract other men like Salim. Shoba and Mahesh have a love marriage. Mahesh is a very caring husband and always praises his wife. Shoba is happy in her married life and helps her husband in the shop. However, their alienation and past always affect this relation. They try to find solace in this relation.

Marriage in Rushdie's selected novels proves to be a bond of companionship. Wives fulfil their responsibilities but deny playing the traditional role of an obedient wife. In *Midnight's Children*, Amina Sinai helps her husband, Ahmed Sinai, to rescue his business when he resumes bed because his business is frozen by the government. She invests her savings in horse races and earns money in a large amount. The narrator in *Midnight's Children* explains:

The streak of luck of my mother at the race-track was so long, a seam so rich, that if it hadn't happened it wouldn't have been credible . . . for month after month, she put her money on a jockey's nice tiny hair style or a horse's pretty piebald colouring; and she never left the track without a large envelope stuffed with notes. (Rushdie 192)

Amina spends the hard-earned money to provide legal services to save her husband's business. So, she helps to save her husband's life and business. Simone de Beauvoir's opinion is appropriate for Amina as far as her economic participation is concerned. Beauvoir opines, "She plays one of the most important roles in the domestic economy, she shares the man's responsibilities, his interests and his property; she is respected, and it is often she, who really governs" (155).

As Amina saves Ahmed Sinai's business and life similarly, Parvati-the-Witch uses her magical skills to save Saleem's life. She takes him out from Army unit CUTA in Pakistan and brings him back to India. After gaining consciousness, Saleem finds himself in India; Saleem in *Midnight's Children* explains, "Then Parvati whispered some other words, and inside the basket of invisibility, I, Saleem Sinai, complete with my loose anonymous garment, vanished instantly into the air" (Rushdie 380).

Naseem Aziz is a dominating wife. She always opposes whatever she does not like. As discussed earlier, she opposes Doctor Aziz when he dismisses the services of a Muslim teacher. She refuses to give food to Doctor Aziz when he declines the teaching of a religious teacher to his children. However, she is anxious about his health, "While Aziz's death would be a clear demonstration of the superiority of her idea of the world over his, she was unwilling to be widowed for a mere principle" (52). Then she balances the things with fake illness.

Most of the female characters are Muslim in the novel. K. Brill's, in *Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Culture*, defines Muslim stereotypes, "Stereotypes either depict Muslim women as exotic, oppressed and almost totally enslaved by men in Islam or as defending the virtues of Islam and the status and right accorded to women" (755). About Indian Muslim women, Brill points out, "Suffer from various stereotypes of backwardness; their status is attributed to the prevalence of purdah, polygamy, divorce and large family size. The stereotype and real situations of women are guided by the prevailing power relations but often justified in the name of religion" (755).

All the female characters of the selected novels are not working, and they do not rebel openly. They all are strong, and they prove to be a motivation to change the fixed roles. They rebel within their roles to oppose boundaries and excel in their lives. Naseem Aziz, in *Midnight's Children*, is a wife and mother. She rules over her household. She refuses to change despite the protests of her husband. In *Midnight's Children* Naseem makes an "invisible fortress of her own making, an iron-clad citadel of tradition and certainties" (Rushdie 47). She has control over her family; "Pantry and kitchen were her inalienable territory, and she defended them ferociously . . . Aziz and the children ate what she dished out" (48-49). The narrator further explains; "It is a sign of the power of this custom that, even when her husband was afflicted by constipation, she never once permitted him to choose his food, and listened to no requests or words or advice. A fortress may not move" (49).

Naseem Aziz has a prudish attitude towards physical relations. This does not diminish her locus of power over her family. Nobody else can oppose her, which matters get her validation. When all come to know about Saleem's DNA report, at

that time, she accepts Saleem as her grandson, takes him in the family and moves to Pakistan with family. As Saleem says, "Once Reverend Mother has legitimised me, there was no one to oppose her" (394). Saleem Sinai further adds about Naseem, "Reverend Mother fixed everything my mother was like putty-like potter's clay - in her omnipotent hands" (394). Saleem in *Midnight's Children* explains that towards the end of her life, Naseem seems to have a magical influence over her husband:

Reverend Mother grew larger and stronger, she who had once wailed pitifully at the sight of Mercurochrome, now appeared to thrive on his weakness, as though their marriage had been one of those mythical unions in which succubi appear to men as innocent damsels and after luring them into matrimonial bed, regain their true, awful aspects and begin to swallow their souls. (381)

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Isabella and Aurora are dominating wives. Isabella is wife of Camoens, elder son of da Gama family. She loves her husband very much and is always ready to help her husband. She takes control of the business after the jail sentence of her husband. Like a very cunning and manipulative businessman, she runs the business successfully. As Beauvoir muses, "We have seen the surprised pleasure of women who, sincerely regretting their husbands' absence, discover in themselves at such times unsuspected possibilities; they run businesses, bring up children, decide and administer without help" (512). For the sake of her husband, she leaves smoking. Isabella respects her husband so, she mixes Aires' share in a graceful and justified manner and pays the proper price. Even allows Aires to join the business. During the last time of her life, she spends her time with Camoens in a loving way and never misses a chance to be with him.

Isabella's daughter, Aurora, is of dominating nature. Aurora da Gama, at the age of 15, falls in love with Abraham Zogoiby, who is twenty one years older than her. She is not a shy, docile and ideal girl. However, Aurora seduces Abraham and enjoys intercourse with him in godown over the pepper sacks. Aurora in *The Moor's Last Sigh* denounces her family and traditions for the sake of "pepper love" (169). She is dominant in her marriage, but this marriage proves turbulent. She also has affairs with other men as indicated by Moor such as with Jawaharlal Nehru, Vasco Miranda and Raman Fielding. The narrator also explains that Aurora and Abraham never legalised their marriage, but due to social pressures, they always maintain respect for this marriage. Aurora is practical and shrewd enough to understand that Indian society will not accept a woman or mother having illegitimate relations. She has inter-cast love marriage with Abraham. She dominates in this relation from starting to end. Abraham always remains her slave-like husband and caretaker. She makes jokes of Abbie (Abraham) publically, but he never opposes. Aurora loves him passionately, and her husband always remains the first person to see her every painting. As Beauvoir points out, "she shows herself to be capricious and coquettish, imposing on him the attitude of suppliant; she flirts, she makes him jealous, she is unfaithful to him; in one way or another, she tries to humiliate him in his virility" (513). With the passage of time, a rift comes in their relationship when Aurora comes to know about Abraham's extramarital relations. They start sleeping in different rooms. She dies an accidental death, and even a hint is provided that she is killed on the instructions of Abraham. However, after her death, Abraham feels a void in his life and becomes recluse.

Aurora da Gama Zogoiby reflects qualities of being strong, dare and independent in everyday life. It seems that Aurora Zogoiby has a happy married life.

She chooses Abraham Zogoiby as her life partner. They have a love match. Aurora in *The Moor's Last Sigh* never "conservatively wedded for maintenance of the social status-quo" (189). With this marriage, she secures the services of her husband for a reliable financial future and a stable environment to excel in talent as a painter. Simone de Beauvoir states about marriage; "Marriage is dominated by family, social class, environment, and race it belongs to and is connected by a relationship of involuntary solidarity with the groups in a similar social situation" (166).

In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Vina Apsara is a dominating wife of Ormus Cama. She remains controller of her relations as a beloved and wife. She saved Ormus from the mouth of death when he was in a coma. Ormus always remains faithful for his wife, but Vina enjoys physical relation with other men also, and Rai is one of them. After her death, Ormus feels lonely, and void prevails in his life. To fill the void, Ormus finds Mira Celano and once again starts music band. Then one snowy day he is killed by an unknown woman. Rai, the narrator, gives a hint that may be he is killed by Vina's ghost. After the death of Vina, Ormus becomes a recluse. As the narrator in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* describes his miserable condition:

He hopes each night to wake and see a familiar figure standing at his window, looking out at the shadowed park, the park before dawn. How often he pictures himself slipping out of bed to stand silently beside her sweet shade and watch the fingers of first light slip across the tall houses and trees. (500)

V. S. Naipaul's female characters play the role of a docile, tolerant, obedient and submissive wife. Being part of migrant and patriarchal families and societies,

they have few chances to be independent life partners and to take decision independently. Economically, they all, Leela, Shama, Soomintra, and Yvette, depend on their husbands, and they cannot raise voice against male brutalities. Leela and Shama help their husbands for survival, but their assistance remains unnoticed throughout the novels. On the other hand, wives in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie, Amina, Naseem, Aurora, and Vina Apsara dominate in their married life. They help their husbands to face the odds of life, and their assistance is recognised by their families and society. They dare to say no whenever they do not like the actions or deeds of their husbands.

The most important duty for a female is to give birth and take care of children. Women, in general, are reared to consider themselves pre-eminently. An essential obligation of society is to protect the purity of genealogies and to protect the purity, the sexuality of women is controlled. Mother of a son, a male child, receives privilege. This privilege and respect provide her power over other women, and she does not bother about her personal desires. In *Women's Reality: An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society*, Anne Wilson Schaef discusses:

As soon as a woman gives birth to a son, she is responsible for teaching him that he is an innately superior being. At some level, she treats him with the deference befitting his station and prepares him to take his rightful place in the world. (80)

When a woman becomes a mother, this expands her power in society as well as in family. A mother has to make many sacrifices for the upbringing of children. But she is empowered because she has control over her kids. She enjoys this control and power. Betty Friedan points out in *The Feminine Mystique* about the

motherhood as “When motherhood, a fulfilment held sacred down the ages, is defined as a total way of life, must women themselves deny the world and the future open to them? Or does the denial of that world force them to make motherhood a total way of life?” (51). She further observes “Anatomy is woman's destiny . . . the identity of women is determined by her biology” (71). She means that a female’s biological identity is important. In *Mother/Daughter Plot* Marianne Hirsch observes about the complexity of the concept of motherhood, “at the breaking point between various feminist positions: between presence and absence, speech and silence, essentialism and constructivism, materialism and psychoanalysis” (38). In this book, Marianne observes that discussions about motherhood have been foremost in theories of feminism. These debates have been based on the demand for social and economic equality between men and women; they also demand acknowledgement for feminine specialness. However, Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, represents motherhood as a patriarchal construction. She observes that it is a trap that limits females' freedom. It makes them dependent on males. On the other hand, during the second-wave and third-wave, feminist theorists such as Adriene Rich, Lynne Segal, Sevenhevisen, Vries, Nancy Chodorow, Ann Kaplan and Sara Ruddick, examined motherhood positively and attached motherhood with female identity.

Maternal and matriarchal are different concepts even though they relate with mother. A maternal woman is a self-sacrificing, caring, loving and dutiful mother. Sara Suleri attaches mother with the home in *Meatless Days*. Suleri muses, “oh, home is where your mother is, one, it is where you are mother, two” (147). A matriarch woman enjoys and exercises power over her family. She rules and dominates over members of the family. She has a powerful position in her family or

group. Betty Friedan points out, “the power of that choice to have children” (XIV). Friedan further explains, “To be well done, the mother’s job in training children and shaping the life of her family should draw on all a woman’s resources, emotional and intellectual and upon all her skills” (365). A matriarch lives on her conditions and is a decision maker of her life and others. A matriarchal family system is a female-centric form of society. In this system, the leading or central role is occupied by the mother or a woman. Rushdie's selected novels have mothers and matriarchs. They are sturdy and active as mothers who control their families in day to day life as well as during crisis times as Naseem, Amina, and mother of Aadam Sinai in *Midnight's Children*. *The Moor's Last Sigh* also has powerful matriarchs as Flory, Epifania, Isabella and Aurora.

Patriarchal societies demand total devotion of women as mother, wife or daughter. They should be loyal and self-sacrificing also. However, matriarchy and powerful females question male dominance and demand for self-respect. With the passage of time, society, culture and literature change. In *Image of Woman in the Indo Anglian Novel*, Meena Shirwadkar points out about transformation of the depiction of women in novels, “Tradition, transition and modernity are the stages through which the women in Indo- Anglian novel is passing”(153-54). For women rights, western notion defies the labels linked with women. The women from the Third World still stay under the pressures of the society of being a mother and try to fulfil their roles as cooks, baby carriers and source of comfort. Kate Millet muses, “For her, the world is her husband, her family, her children and her home, hence the outstanding and highest calling of women is always that of wife and mother” (164). Patriarchal societies teach females to be an obedient wife or self- sacrificing mother. However, in matriarchal families and societies, they enjoy power also. Naseem

Aziz, in *Midnight's Children*, and Aurora, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, are powerful figures. The first matriarchal mother, the reader comes to know in *Midnight's Children*, is Naseem Aziz, Reverend Mother. Her nickname suggests that she is worthy of respect in her family. She is mother of Mumtaz, Alia, Hanif, Mustapha and Emerald and grandmother of Saleem Sinai, the protagonist of the novel. As a matriarch, she has complete control over the lives of her children and grandchildren. She always dictates her commands to her son, daughters and daughter-in-law, whenever the situations demand. All her children follow her commands willingly. She is portrayed as a daughter of a well to do father and is of shy nature during her teenage. Her father arranged the lady attendants for her. She feels uncomfortable whenever minute changes come in her life and routine. She marries Doctor Aadam Aziz and after marriage moves to Amritsar and Agra from Kashmir. The narrator in *Midnight's Children* comments about this shift in her life, "Naseem Aziz had a sharp of headache. . . Life outside her quiet valley had come as something of a shock to her" (Rushdie 36). Her attempts to adopt situation are accompanied by complaints. This sacrificing complex in Salman Rushdie's female characters becomes evident when they focus obsessively on their biological roles as wives, mothers and housekeepers. Amina Sinai also feels low and guilty when she thinks about children. She perceives her diseases as sentences for her past sins and negligence. The narrator of the novel comments, "So it was not difficult to think of the verrucas as a punishment . . . not only for the years ago escapade at Mahalaxmi, but for failing to save her husband from the pink chitties of alcoholism; for the Brass Monkey's untamed, unfeminine ways; and for the size of her son's nose" (218).

Anne Wilson Schaef explains about the feeling of guilt among women, "Guilt is another stopper for women. Because we constantly bear with us the

original sin of being born female - of being inherently “wrong”- we readily accept the corporate guilt of the world” (49). For Amina Sinai in *Midnight’s Children*, fault finding in her self flourishes into the capability to take on other’s pains, “Amina had become one of those rare people who take the burdens of the world upon their own backs; she began to exude the magnetism of the willingly guilty; and from then on everyone who came into contact with her felt the most powerful urges to confess their own, private guilts” (Rushdie 218). Amina, as a mother, is strict for her kids, Saleem and Jamila Singer. She punishes them whenever they make mistakes. Amina accepts Saleem as her son, even though she knows that he is not her biological son.

So, it seems that women in this novel find their identity more as mothers than as wives. As mothers, they identify with their own selves. Rushdie also depicts that a child creates parents in portraying the life of Saleem Sinai. He experiences different homes in different places. Saleem in *Midnight’s Children* depicts his extraordinary life as following:

Child of an unknown union, I have had more mothers than most mothers have children; giving birth to parents has been one of my stranger talents—a form of reverse fertility beyond the control of contraception, and even of the widow herself. (Rushdie 337)

Salman Rushdie does not rely only on the actual parents to depict the notion of the child adopting parent. Writer occupies the mother, Amina’s mind with doubts about who is the father of her first child. She dreams about her previous husband. Rushdie describes the dream as, "In it, Nadir Khan came to her bed and impregnated her; such was the mischievous perversity of the dream that it confused Amina about the parentage of her child, and provided me, the child of midnight, with a fourth

father to set beside Winkie and Methwold and Ahmed Sinai” (174). So, Saleem Sinai can claim many parents-many fathers and many mothers, and he is the person who makes them parents. As Pope has said, that child is the father of the man.

Saleem Sinai has one non-biological mother also, nurse Mary Pereira. Although she is not the biological mother of Saleem, but she also plays her role by exchanging him with another boy at the time of his birth. So, she also becomes his mother. Due to Mary Pereira's exchange, Saleem became the heir of Sinai family-becomes a celebrity child. Padma is right when she says, “She made you, you know” (119). Saleem reminds about the unconscious competition between his mother and Mary Pereira to love him. In the narrator’s words, “Baby Saleem became, after that, the battleground of their loves; they strove to outdo one another in demonstration of affection” (174). Ahmed Sinai gets angry about his wife’s actions, “and his growing anger at my mother’s preoccupation with her child found a new outlet behind his office door- Ahmed Sinai began to flirt with his secretaries” (181). It seems that Rushdie suggests that the role of the mother becomes more significant than the role of a wife. Many women select the biological role of being a mother to achieve a right for validation and to have power over children. Ravina Agarwal, in her famous article “Trials of Torquoise- Feminist Enquiry and Counter- Development in Ladakh, India”, observes about the importance of being a mother:

Because female fertility is the way most women secure their future, to be without children, is to know the desolate possibility of being without name, without status, without family and of dying without leaving any memory. Bearing children, therefore, is one of the primary ways through which women can stake a claim in familial, religious and national heritage. (80)

Rushdie provides the pleasure and happiness of being a mother and the duty of bringing up the children to women. It also seems that parenthood is not predominantly masculine in the life of children in Rushdie. Instead, it is the woman, the mother who is more important and central in the life of children. Elisabeth Bumiller quotes Barbara Tuchman's speech, a historian, at an award ceremony at Washington's "men only" cosmos club; "I have never felt that I belong to inferior sex. On the contrary, I think nature's selection of us as the sex that procreates the species and nurtures it through infancy- men's role being momentary and casual in comparison - is an obvious indication of superiority and privilege" (287).

Rushdie does not address Doctor Aadam Aziz's mother by name. Aadam's mother is also a strong matriarch who decides what should be informed or not to her son when he was abroad. She does not inform her son about her husband's stroke. She says, "Because your studies were too important" (Rushdie, *Midnight* 7). She does not want to disturb and distract her son. Rushdie represents her energy and power as follows in *Midnight's Children*, "This mother, who had spent her life household, in purdah, had suddenly found enormous strength and gone out to run the small gemstone business (turquoise, rubies, diamonds) which had put Aadam through college, with the help of a scholarship" (7).

She strongly faces the problems of life. It becomes clear that she is a strong woman when she says, "I have worked in shops and been undressed by the eyes of strangers" (27). She steps out of her traditional ways of life, comfort zone and does not reluctant in appearing in front of unknown persons. It is proof of her determined spirit to do something good and helpful for her son, Aadam.

Mother is a larger figure in the selected novels of Rushdie. Rushdie also emphasises the closeness of the mother-son relationship in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Mother-son relations of Flory-Abraham, Aurora-Moor, Epifania-Aires are examples of unusual attachments. Flory Zogoiby feels deceived after Abraham-Aurora marriage. She feels lonely. She helps her son with ancestral jewels. Flory wants another son to fill the void of her life. In Indian societies, mothers have special strong attachment with their sons. In some cases, their feelings are threatened by the entry of daughter-in-law in son's life. Salman Rushdie has represented the psychological condition of Flory after Abraham's marriage. Her character is which-like and quasi-realistic. With prophetic insight, she predicts the disastrous bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. She sings songs of death and destruction; as following in *The Moor's Last Sigh* ;

Obeah, Jadoo, fo, fum,

Chicken entrails, kingdom come.

Ju-ju, voodoo, fee, fit

Piddle cocktails, time to die. (Rushdie 73)

Flory, a conspiring mother, helps Abraham financially to take the business to his hands on one condition. Her condition is that first-born male child of Aurora-Abraham will be given to her, to raise as a Jew. Abraham agrees with his mother to get the loan, but Aurora opposes him and leaves him. She shifts to Bombay. Aurora and Abraham unite only after the death of Flory Zogoiby. Abraham defies his mother, Flory, cause of his love for Aurora. The community leader, Moshe Cohen, comments, "A bad mistake, Abie; old Moshe Cohen commented", to make an enemy of your mother, enemies are plentiful, but mothers are hard to find" (83).

The matriarchs in these novels have control over the life of other women as well as over family members. Reverent Mother, Naseem Aziz, has this dominant position in her family in *Midnight's Children*. Epifania, Isabella and Aurora also have powerful and strong positions in their families in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Nicola Graves discusses about these powerful matriarchs as following:

In both *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *Shame*, Rushdie depicts prominent female characters (Epifania da Gama and Briamma) as the matriarchs of their families. Although this may seem odd in such a male-dominated society, in southern India matriarchy is actually a common family organisation, and women even own property jointly with men.
(27)

Other powerful mothers, in this novel, are Flory Zogoiby, Epifania da Gama, and Isabella da Gama. Along with Aurora, these women represent three generations of mothers, and they have conflicts between them. At the starting of the novel, we come to know the conflict between Epifania and her only granddaughter, Aurora. The conflict between them is so heated that Young Aurora is near committing the murder of her grandmother and this proves her cruel, "It was that Aurora da Gama got the idea of murdering her grandmother from the lips of the intended victim herself. After that, she began making plans." (Rushdie 8)

Epifania da Gama is head of da Gama family and has matriarchal control and power over her family. With her manipulative ways, she becomes head of da Gama family after the death of her husband. She uses every possible way to maintain her power. The narrator in *The Moor's Last Sigh* depicts this matriarch, Epifania, as, "Widowed at forty-five, Epifania at once commenced to play the

matriarch and would sit with a lapful of pistachios in the morning shadow of her favourite courtyard, fanning herself cracking nutshells with her teeth in a loud impressive demonstration of power, singing the while in a power, singing the while in a high, implacable voice" (Rushdie 11). Rushdie further depicts Epifania as, "most severe and least forgiving of mothers" (34). She is a matriarch who takes family matters and business into her control. Her strong will joins the power of a matriarch who has a desire for a male heir. Rushdie describes power-wielding women in the novel as, "The women are now moving to the centre of my little stage. Epifania, Carmen, Belle and the newly arrived Aurora- they not the men, were the true protagonists on the struggle; and inevitably, it was great-grandmother Epifania who was the troublemaker-in-chief" (33).

The persona of the conventional docile and self-sacrificing mother is shattered in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Aurora da Gama, from her childhood, is outspoken, manipulative and powerful. Aurora received disliking for her grandmother from her mother, Isabella. Aurora remained silent when Epifania was dying slowly before her eyes in the family chapel. P. Balaguruswamy comments about Aurora, "A bitchy, Goan, Catholic/Jewess substitutes the Kum-Kum clad, devout and divine Hindu female. This "dark, bloody mother India" " (160). He further explains:

The fixed idea of Mother India has to have undergone a change seeing how India is pluralistic, progressive, polyglot, multiethnic . . . Rushdie clings on to this idea of a required drastic change and presents his mother India as fiery and glitzy and he is not far from the truth in his portrayal of a provocative and metropolitan Mother India in *Aurora Zogoiby*. (Balaguruswamy 165)

Aurora is a sharply retaliating and Rushdie portrays Aurora as a cosmopolitan modern woman who is not over-sensitive and over-caring about her children. Aurora shows little affection for her children except for her son Moor, who has some abnormalities. Even she provides names to her kids matching with a childhood game 'Eevy, Meeny, Miney, Moe'. In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Aurora's special language style, children, "can't growofy fast enough for (her). God! How long this childhood business drag goes on" (Rushdie 141). Moor also observes in the same way about the birth of his sisters, "My three sisters were born in quick succession, and Aurora carried and ejected each of them with such perfunctory attention to their presence that they knew, long before their births, that she would make few concessions to their post-partum needs" (139). DCRA Goonetilleke in *Salman Rushdie* comments, "Three daughters represent three tendencies, three possible faces of Eve- the superficial glamorous (Ina), the religious (Minnie becomes a nun) and the activist (Mynah) campaigns for a radical feminist group, WWSTP" (87). Aurora's paintings also depict a cosmopolitan mother in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, "That exploration of an alternative vision of India-as-mother, not Nargis's sentimental village mother, but a mother of cities, as heartless and lovable, brilliant and dark, multiple and lovely, mesmeric and repugnant, pregnant and empty, truthful and deceitful" (204).

People cannot deny the influence of the mother on the development of a child. The principles and attitudes of a mother pass to the children. Aurora, mother of Moor, has a symbolic name- means day-dawn or day spring. Unconsciously, Moor has made two images of his mother being ambiguous and powerful. In her paintings, Aurora reflects images of her own family, her own self and the world

around her. Her top priorities are painting, self-realisation and independence. Her children and husband come after painting and her independence. Aurora focuses more on painting and her personal life, so her relations with family members become complicated and troubled. Ambreen Hai depicts Aurora as, "The culmination of Rushdie's female artists with revolutionary potential, now for the first time taking centre stage . . . A "mother" she is called, "of us all" (42). Aurora's children love her, but they suffer negligence of their mother also, "mother Aurora, nee da Gama, most illustrious of our modern artists, a great beauty who was also the sharpest tongued women of her generation, handing out the hot stuff to anybody who came within range. Her children were shown no mercy" (Rushdie, *Moor's* 5).

N. W. Thiara points out about Aurora, "Aurora's character as an alternative Mother India is fully revealed in the episode when she is opposed to, the actress that played this role in M. Khan's movie and became an impersonification of this character in mass consciousness" (138). When Aurora becomes a mother, she frivolously treats her own children many times. They all grow up in the hands of servants, and Aurora remains busy with her own bohemian life and art of painting. In Aurora's life, son and daughters play a low-key role. Center of her life is her freedom, her ways of life and art. As a mother, she is not ready to treat her children as independent human beings. Simone de Beauvoir points out about being a mother:

Like the women in love, the mother is delighted to feel needed; she is justified by the demands she responds to; but what makes maternal love difficult and great is that it implies no reciprocity; the woman is not before a man, a hero, a demigod, but a little stammering consciousness, lost in a fragile and contingent body; the infant

possesses no value, and he can bestow none; the woman remains alone before him; she expects no compensation in exchange for her gifts, she justifies them with her own freedom. (570)

Aurora does not show anxious maternal care to her children in day to day life; however, she tries to support them in critical times. Conflicts arose between Aurora and Ina, due to Ina's exploitation of her appearance and body, and when she elopes with a guy to another country. After some time, Ina realises her mistake and is deceived by her husband, and she returns back to her family. At that time, mother Aurora supports her and welcomes Ina in *The Moor's Last Sigh* saying, "We will fix-o that rotter, - she comforted weeping Ina, just tell us what you want" (Rushdie 209). Aurora and Ina have dramatic relations. Ina strives for recognition from her mother. However, Ina fails to secure her mother's love and attention, and she becomes her competitor. She starts using her appearance and body to make her career. As Beauvoir points out:

It is when the girl grows up that the real conflicts arise; we have seen that she wishes to affirm her autonomy from her mother: this is, in her mother's eyes, a mark of detestable ingratitude; she obstinately tries to 'tame' this determination that is lurking; she can not accept that her double becomes an other. (577)

Zogoiby children receive less attention from their parents in the novel. Their father, Abraham Zogoiby, is busy with business and mother, Aurora gives more importance to her paintings and is busy with her Bohemian life. Moor feels as an offcast and art object. He sometimes feels that his mother possesses the rights to rule his life. Aurora was only one year old when her father got jail sentence, and after

that, her mother was too busy with business matters. Her childhood was spent almost without her parents. So, Aurora's motherhood, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, is affected from her childhood, "What is probably true is that Aurora began her life in art during those long motherless hours; that she had a talent for drawing and as a colourist, perhaps even one that an expert eye could have" (Rushdie 45). Moor further comments about his mother, "Yes mother; once you were a daughter, too. You were given life, and you took it away" (61).

Salman Rushdie, in *Shalimar the Clown*, depicts Boonyi Kaul, who dreams about her dead mother. Boonyi's dead mother, Pamposh, comes in her dreams and guides her during critical times. This dead mother provides the best company to her daughter, Boonyi, when she lives a lonely life in the hut after receiving rejection from the people of her village. Boonyi's father, Pandit Pyarelal Kaul, tries his best for the upbringing of his daughter. However, a father cannot compete with a dead mother who nurtures their daughter in dreams. Rushdie in *Shalimar the Clown* depicts Pandit's effort as, "So he had done his best, but a girl's mother is her mother even if she existed without actually existing, in the noncorporeal form of a dream, even if her experience could only be proved by her effect on the one human being whose fate still cared to influence" (51). Mothers have an overbearing presence in the life of children in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie. Mothers have maximum influence on the children as caretakers or care deniers, and self-sacrificing or self-centred.

V. S. Naipaul has assigned, in *The Mystic Masseur* and *A House for Mr Biswas*, the role of mother to Mrs Tulsi, Shama, Bipti, Tara and The Great Belcher. Mrs Tulsi is head of Hanuman House. Tulsi clan has a joint family system. Mrs

Tulsi, along with families of daughters, lives in Hanuman House. They follow the traditional joint family system. Mrs Tulsi is head of this joint family. She is the matriarch who has control over the life of her daughters and their families. Mrs Tulsi remains dominant throughout the novel. However, she is also abandoned by her sons at the end of the novel. Shekhar lives with his wife and daughters at his in-law's house. Owad also leaves Mrs Tulsi for a well-established career with his wife. She is neglected by her sons in old age. Mrs Tulsi never blames her sons, but daughters feel sorry for mother in *A House for Mr Biswas*, "The sisters felt that Shekhar was under the influence of his wife, and the fault was wholly hers" (Naipaul 385). She keeps all her daughters busy, all her caprices have to be tolerated, and her irritable moods have to be endured. When she does not like anything, she cries that all her children are waiting for her death and threatens them with expelling them from the family. She does not enjoy anything, and in the end, she becomes obsessed with her illness. The narrator in *A House for Mr Biswas* comments, "The more she was recommended not to exert herself, the less she was able to exert herself, until she appeared to live only for her illness" (551). Although she is not the head of the family anymore, she still dramatically influences her daughters and sons-in-law and manipulates them for her benefits.

This study focuses on roles played by women in the social, economic and political domain. Religion, economic development, past, tradition and culture play important roles in constructing womanhood. Nowadays, women have access to the modern education system, techniques and employability. Still, their identity is constructed with gendered discourses, and still, they are bound to some cultural tradition and fixed roles. N.W. Thiara comments, "In nationalist discourse, Indian

women played a role of those who were supposed to represent the essence of Indian culture and the nuclear of the authentic Indian nation" (56). In Indian societies, women are considered as key keepers of family honour. They are expected to be idle wives like Sita and Savitri. As a wife, their identity is fixed with the status of her husband. A widow has to face the loss of husband and well as the loss of status.

Bipti is a weak widow and a mother of four in *A House for Mr Biswas*. She is not depicted as a responsible mother. Bipti does not have warm relations with her children. She is a shy mother and never shows her love for her children. She gives the responsibility of Dehuti to Tara after the death of her husband and thinks; "in four or five years Dehuti would have to be married and it was better that she should be given to Tara. She would learn manners, acquire graces and with a dowry from Tara, might even make a good match" (Naipaul 32). She has to suppress the mother inside due to her financial dependency on her sister Tara. She can not express the grief of losing her daughter Dehuti after her elopement with Ramchand. She has to take Tara's side for Dehuti's shameful act. She defends Tara's decision taken for Dehuti that nobody will have any contact with Dehuti. Dehuti is not the only girl who faces discrimination but Tulsi daughters, also face gender discrimination being part of patriarchal families. Mrs Tulsi gives more importance to the education, marriage and career of her sons than her daughters. All the Tulsi daughters are able to get basic school education, and Mrs Tulsi gives more preference to the cast of her sons-in-law rather than their education and career. Beauvoir discusses the freedom granted to boys and girls:

The mother, as we shall see, is secretly hostile to her daughter's liberation . . . but the boy's effort to become a man is respected, and

is granted much liberty. The girl is required to stay at home; her comings and goings are watched . . . if they roam the streets, they are stared at and accosted. (351-52)

Bipti blames her destiny for the situations of her life. When Mr Biswas blames her for never doing anything for him in *A House for Mr Biswas*, she says, “It is my fate. I have had no luck with my children. And you, Mohun, I have the least luck of all” (Naipaul 65). After marriage, Mr Biswas moves to Hanuman House and the gap widens between mother and son. He rarely visits his mother as he is always busy with solving his problems. Once on Christmas, Mr Biswas visits his mother and observes:

She was happy where she was and did not want to be a burden to any of her sons; her life was over, she had nothing more to do, and was waiting for death. To feel sympathy for her he had to look, not at her face, but at the thinness of her hair. It was still black; however, which was pity, for grey hair would have helped to put him in a more tender mood. (Naipaul 198-99)

Thus, Mr Biswas does not feel bad for the loneliness of his mother, and mother-son relation remains calm. Her attitude towards life changes when she goes to live with Pratap, her son, “She was active and lucid; she was a lively and important part of Pratap’s household” (346). When Bipti comes to visit Mr Biswas’s home at Shorthills, she does not show any excitement: “Her feeling could not be read. He was at first extravagantly affectionate. But Bipti remained calm, and Mr Biswas followed her example. It was as if the relationship between them had been granted without their asking and had only to be accepted” (450). Mr Biswas’

relations remain calm with his mother. They never share loving and caring mother-son relation. Her behaviour is cold but helps him growing vegetables but remains silent. After her death, Mr Biswas feels a personal loss and remains silent, “oppressed by a sense of loss: not of present loss, but of something missed in the past” (507).

Shama and Chinta are anxious mothers. They mainly live in an extended family of Tulsi clan. So they have to act according to the beliefs of Tulsi clan. As when they live in an extended family, they have to suppress their motherly feelings. Shama’s behaviour changes when she does not live in an extended family with Tulsi clan. Her tone of speaking also changes. Shama and Chints give more importance to the education of their sons than daughters like Mrs Tulsi. This is due to the social and cultural effects in which they grow. On one or two occasions, even they, Shama and Chinta, quarrel for the performance of their sons in tests. Sometimes they become competitors like their sons.

Shama is a mother of three daughters and one son. She takes good care of her kids and is always ready to provide her best services to her children. She never minds that her husband, Mr Biswas, does not help her as far care of children is concerned because as Kate Millet opines, “It is intellectually understood that the assignment of child care is cultural rather than biological, middle class . . . will let that slip by and infer that childbirth must mean child care, the two together again constituting “biology”. It is one of the conservative's favourite myths that every woman is a mother” (225). She manages everything at her own being a self-sacrificing mother. Being a part of Tulsi clan, she never minds beating her kids whenever it is necessary. The beating of kids is not treated badly in Tulsi family.

Moreover, it is a way to use power by women over kids. All Tulsi sisters in *A House for Mr Biswas* also received their share of beatings during childhood, "At Hanuman House, the sisters still talked with pride of the floggings they had received from Mrs Tulsi. And there was even some rivalry among the sisters as to who had been flogged worst of all" (Naipaul 206).

Shama feels proud for Savi and Anand's academic achievements and makes every possible effort for the betterment of Anand. She is a biased mother because she is more conscious for the study of Anand, her only son, and does not care much about her daughters. This is due to her upbringing in the Tulsi family. Her mother, Mrs Tulsi also paid more attention to her sons. The patriarchal family system affects their attitude of life.

Shama remains under the influence of Tulsi code. It can be traced in the care of kids. One day, Anand disagrees with his uncle Owad and gets angry with him. At that time, Shama knows that her son is right, but even then she forces him to feel sorry. She is aware of her dependence upon Tulsis and never wants to disrespect her brother. She also breaks a dolls house, a gift provided by Mr Biswas at Christmas, to pacify her sisters. Thus she sacrifices her motherly love for the sake of good terms with her family.

Shama is a strict mother and wants to make her children independent. Once, Savi in her childhood was not able to tie her shoelaces. Mr Biswas offers his help to tie laces, but Shama denies saying "She must learn to tie her laces. Otherwise, I will keep her at home and beat her until she can tie them" (205). As a caring and devoted mother, she is always ready to sacrifice her comforts.

Tara, in *A House for Mr Biswas*, and The Great Belcher, in *The Mystic Masseur*, are not biological mothers of Mr Biswas and Ganesh, respectively. Tara, an aunt of Mr Biswas, provides help to Mr Biswas whenever he needs. She is the only person whom he can approach in his dire needs. After the death of his father, Raghu, Tara acts like a mother for Mr Biswas. She sends him to become a pundit in the supervision of Jairam. She goes to meet Mrs Tulsi when the marriage of Mr Biswas is fixed with Shama. Even after his marriage, whenever he needs money, he approaches Tara, his aunt. Tara always helps him and asks her husband to provide financial aid to Mr Biswas.

The Great Belcher, an aunt of Ganesh, takes control of his house after the death of his father. She weeps bitterly and arranges for the ceremonies of the funeral. At the time of Ganesh's marriage, she supervises everything very responsibly. She is an orthodox lady, so she advises Ganesh to keep complete control over Leela. She motivates Ganesh to be a pundit, writer and a politician according to the demand of the situation. Not only motivates but helps him also. She gives him religious books of her late husband to Ganesh and advises for the sailing of his books. So, Tara and Great Belcher are not biological mothers, but they play the roles of helping mothers in Naipaul's selected novels.

Mothers in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul are self-sacrificing, caring and strict. Shama and Chinta are very anxious about the study and the future of their kids. Care of kids remains their priority. They never wish anything for themselves and manage the meagre income of their husbands for the family needs. Mrs Tulsi is a matriarch at the starting of the novel, but as the narrative moves ahead, she loses her authority over her children. Mothers in Tulsi clan are biased as they give priority to

their sons than their daughters. Mrs Tulsi, Shama and Chinta care more their sons than their daughters. On the other hand, mothers in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie are matriarchs. Epifania, Naseem, Amina, and Aurora all are authoritative mothers. Their children have to follow them willingly or unwillingly. They seldom sacrifice their freedom and personal desires for the sake of their children. The children, in the Rushdie's novels, remain under the control of their mothers. If ever, they try to free themselves, as Moor and Ina in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, they have to pay a heavy price. Mothers in the selected novels of Rushdie are authoritative but provide possible help to children to face the odds of life. So, they are authoritative as well as helping mothers.

In different societies, daughters have different roles to play, and they have different rights. As in patriarchal societies, more importance is given to sons than daughters. Daughters are provided lesser attention and rights. In these societies, the birth of a son is celebrated, and many times female fetus is aborted. In these male dominated families, more focus concentrates on the upbringing and education of sons. They are provided better eatables, schools and career options in comparison to daughters. The family property is owned by a son. In some societies, daughters are sold to husbands at the time of marriage, as a thing, whether in some others, dowry is given to husband at the time of marriage.

In literature, the role of a daughter has remained a significant theme. The portrayal of daughters becomes important when a writer explores family relationships and gender roles. It is a well-known fact that daughter also can do best in education, career and family matters if they are provided proper care and opportunities in life. In patriarchal societies, daughters are expected to be very

obedient, docile and submissive. They have to follow their fathers or brothers. Feminists demanded equal rights for women within and outside the family. With the passage of time, girls were provided more chances to get education and excel in life. This change can be seen in V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Savi is financially more secure than Tulsi daughters. She gets a good job with a good salary and comes to help her family during very crucial times.

In Naipaul's, *The Mystic Masseur*, Leela is the younger daughter of shopkeeper Ramlogan. She is a motherless child. Ramlogan did not pay much attention to her education, and she is capable to read and write only. When Ramlogan fixes her marriage with Ganesh, he boasts about her these abilities. After her marriage, a period of endless quarrels starts between Ramlogan and Ganesh. They both never think about Leela. They become the reason for Leela's dilemmas. She cannot decide which side she should join. Her father creates problems for Ganesh. However, ultimately he creates a mental crisis for his daughter also. Leela cannot force her father and husband to end their disputes because she is a dependent wife and obedient daughter. She is not educated properly, so she is ignorant about her rights. Her traditional and conventional upbringing has only made her docile and submissive. As Kate Millet opines "The position of women in patriarchy is such that they are expected to be passive, to suffer, and to be sexual objects; it is unquestionable that they are, with varying degrees of success, socialised into such roles" (194).

Generally, *A House for Mr Biswas* is about the oppressed Mr Mohun Biswas who feels trapped after marriage. He is expected to be a labourer on Tulsi estate like other sons-in-law. He has to face homelessness, oppression, identity crisis and quest

for a house. However, daughters, in the Tulsi family, are also oppressed because they are not provided with any freedom or place. If examined closely, they also form an oppressed group like Mr Biswas. But they are scarcely aware of their subordinate position. Hanuman House and Tulsi store thrive on females' hard work, mainly daughters. Females feed and raise children and help with endless housework. Daughters are a vulnerable group. However, they are unaware of their object situation. They manage Tulsi store, Hanuman House, cook food for all, wash clothes and manage their children. All Tulsi daughters have to experience oppression in their lives, but they have made it part of their life and never complain about the subordinate position. Instead, they are thankful to Tulsi clan for the help and support they get in their day to day life. Mr Biswas is an outsider in this family, and he remains an outsider. The daughters, the insiders, are also not allowed to flourish and develop in biased society as narrator clarifies in *A House for Mr Biswas*, "the daughters and their children swept and washed and cooked and served in the store . . . In return, they were given food, shelter, and a little money" (98).

D. N. Ganjeshwar points out, "Daughters had no real position in the Tulsi family. They were to live there as second class citizens. Whereas Mrs Tulsi, Mr Seth and the 'two gods', Mr Shekhar and Owad, Mrs Tulsi's Sons, were to live very comfortably with privilege and luxury" (99). The daughters have to face discrimination, but they never complain. They do not get proper education, but only primary school education is provided to them. Mrs Tulsi takes them as a burden. For Mrs Tulsi, the caste of the would be son-in-law is more important than education and financial stability. Seth introduces Shama in *A House for Mr Biswas* as "She is a good child. A little bit of reading and writing even . . . Just a little bit. So much.

Nothing to worry about. In two or three years she might even forget” (91). Seth’s introduction clarifies that very soon Shama will forget what a little bit she has learnt at school. However, she always makes calculations to manage the expenses of her house. Once she very proudly says to Mr Biswas, “I would like you to know that I used to come first in Arithmetic” (357). They had potential but are not provided opportunities. Shama and her sisters never wish for anything. They do not have any ambitions. Naipaul depicts in the novel, "For Shama and her sisters and women like them, ambition, if the world could be used, was a series of negatives; not to be childless, not to be an undutiful daughter, sister, wife, mother and widow” (165). However, these women are supposed:

To be taken through every stage, to fulfil every function, to have her share of the established emotion: joy at birth or marriage, distress during illness and hardship, grief at death. Life, to be full, had to be this established pattern of sensation. (Naipaul 165)

Therefore, for Tulsi daughters, life is an 'established pattern of sensation'. They have to follow specific rules, and they cannot deviate from the set pattern. But their brothers, Shekhar and Owad, are free enough to decide about their life. Daughters cannot grow like sons in Tulsi family, but they also have a spark of ambition. They fix some goals for themselves to achieve which they can achieve at home. It is out of such ambition that Chinta urges to complete the reading of the Hindu religious text the Ramayana. Naipaul depicts, “Chinta . . . continually sets herself new ambition and at the moment wanted to be the first woman in the family to read the epic from beginning to end” (307).

Shama, Chinta, Sushila and other daughters never complain about their education or marriages. They are well-wishers of their brothers and hope for their better future. When Shama comes to know that Shekhar could not go to Cambridge to study due to the interference of Seth, she "clearly felt that an injustice had been done" (369). Mr Biswas was also surprised about her reaction:

Knew the Tulsi's too well, be surprised that the sisters, who never questioned their own neglected education, cat-in-bag marriage and precarious position, should yet feel concerned that Shekhar, whose marriage was happy and whose business was flourishing had not had all that he might. (369)

It seems that Shama, Chinta, Sushila, widows and all other daughters are like robots. They work from morning till night but are devoid of normal life. Their upbringing has made them self-denial. They have learnt from childhood to fulfil the task given to them. Like sons-in-law daughters are also workers. Being workers, they cannot claim anything. Their husbands are dependent on Mrs Tulsi's help and are homeless, displaced and oppressed. So daughters face double oppression being daughters and being wives of oppressed husbands. Not only Shama, along with her sisters, faces discrimination but Savi, Myna and Kamla also face the same discrimination. More importance is provided to Anand's education by Mr Biswas and Shama, and for them, Anand's failure becomes their own failure. When Mr Biswas has high hopes for Anand, and he expects for a scholarship, then Savi reacts, "I am so glad . . . that God did not give me a brain" (378). Girls are so docile that they never raise their voice against discrimination. In Tulsi clan, daughters are treated indifferently. They are aware of their dependency on Hanuman House and

Tulsi clan; therefore, they never speak against biases but accept every situation. Shama's reaction for Mr Biswas' complain about bad food provided at Hanuman house clarifies her dependency, "I always say . . . that you must complain only when you start providing you own food" (135).

Savi is the eldest daughter of Mr Biswas and Shama. She is a very docile and obedient daughter. Mr Biswas and Shama are not as serious for her study as they are for Anand's study. When Mr Biswas and Shama force their son for a competition to win a scholarship, Savi feels satisfied that she is not as brainy as her brother and will not be forced for difficult study. But later, she proves herself a responsible daughter and secures a good job. During childhood, she has to face problems along with other children to reach school when her parents stay at The Shorthills. She feels more comfortable with her father than mother because her father is the only person who can understand her. As during a quarrel with her cousin about their fathers, she does not argue for much time. Her cousin hurts her feeling when she says "people have nothing at all". At that time, Savi goes into her room and "lay down on the four-poster. Not wishing to hurt herself again or hurt her father, she could not tell him what had happened; and he was the only person who could have comforted her" (485). During the last phase of his life, Mr Biswas calls back his son Anand to take responsibilities. However, he could not come. At that crucial time, Savi comes. She is independent now and helps her father to solve financial problems. The narrator in *A House for Mr Biswas* explains as following:

And right at the end, everything seemed to grow bright. Savi returned, and Mr Biswas welcomed her as though she were herself and Anand combined. Savi got a job, at a bigger salary than Mr

Biswas could ever have got; and events organised themselves so neatly that Savi began to work as soon as Mr Biswas ceased to be paid. . . . He was enjoying Savi's company; she had learned to drive and went on little excursions. (Naipaul 622)

In Salman Rushdie's, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, daughter as well as sole heiress of da Gama family, Aurora is very ambitious and loves her freedom. She is daughter of Camoens and Isabella da Gama. She is very outspoken. She has the courage to admit her mistakes in childhood. As discussed earlier, she saves servants of the house and admits her guilt and happily bears her punishment. She has to bear the loss of her mother and father very early during childhood. She depicts the loss of her mother in her paintings. Like her mother, she never compromises in her life and likes freedom. Being last support of Aires during old age, she forgets previous disputes of the family and receives him in her Bombay house, gives him proper care and respect. Aurora's daughters have an urge to establish their own identity. Like their mother, Zogoiby daughters love freedom. Ina becomes a model and chooses her life partner. Minnie chooses the path of religion and becomes a nun. The third one, Mynah becomes a lawyer and a social activist. She raises voice for equality for women. They all live their life according to their own choices, fulfil their desires and urges. However, at the end of the novel, they all die. Aurora dies an accidental death, Ina dies due to cancer, and Minnie and Mynah also die during massive fires in the city.

Boonyi Kaul, in *Shalimar the Clown*, is the daughter of Pundit Payarelal Kaul and Pamposh. She is a free spirit and wishes to fulfil her dreams. She denies using her birth name Bhoomi and prefers to be called Boonyi. Her mother dies at the

time of her birth. Her father plays the role of a father as well as a mother. She never denies anything to her and even gets ready for inter-caste marriage of his daughter. But Boonyi proves to be an irresponsible daughter and brings shame for her father when she elopes with Max and denies coming back. When she comes back from Delhi, her father helps her to survive in the desolate hut on the hills. He sells vegetables grown by Boonyi, but he dies alone in his apple orchard. Boonyi, as a daughter, fails to provide the necessary care to her father. She is also killed by Shalimar.

Boonyi and Max's illegitimate daughter India/Kashmira Ophuls is of 24 years old at the beginning of the novel. She loves her father and compares her body with her father. When she comes to know about her biological mother Boonyi and her birth name Kashmira, then she starts using name Kashmira for herself and becomes Kashmira Ophuls. She comes to India to search for her mother and weeps bitterly when she acknowledges her mother's murder. She writes letters to Shalimar in prison and becomes a headache for the killer of her parents. She wishes the most stringent punishment for the killer of her parents. She wants to make a documentary so that her father can feel proud of her. She makes a documentary after the death of her father and misses him very much. So it can be said that as a daughter, only India/Kashmira Ophuls proves to be a responsible daughter. Dr Laura Schlessinger in *Ten Stupid Things Women do to Mess up Their Lives* observes about daughter-father relation that the notion of controlling a man, especially an older man is the result of females' afraid of life. She observes as following:

At first, they see such a man as providing a sense of security reminiscent of when Daddy took care of things- may be even find

him sexy, because he embodies masculine power. Inevitably when you make this choice and then decide to grow up a bit and start being more powerful in your own life, you become the adolescent child rebelling against the rigid dad. (124)

When Max Ophuls, in *Shalimar the Clown*, comes to greet his daughter India on her 24th birthday with flowers, she says, “people will think you’re my lover . . . my cradle snatching valentine” (Rushdie 7). During childhood, India does not spend time with her father because she is taken care of by her step-mother. So there is a lack between father-daughter relations. Despite this abandonment, she resembles or notices more of Max in herself, such as his body type, his face reflection and manners, “All along one wall of her bedroom were mirrored, sliding doors, and when she lay on her bed and admired her naked body, turning and turning it, striking attitudes of her delight, she was frequently aroused, actually turned on, by the notion that this was the body her father would have had if he had been a woman” (Rushdie 15).

So, Shama, Savi, Chinta, all other Tulsi daughters and Leela in V. S. Naipaul's selected novels are submissive and obedient. They never get equal opportunities for education and career advancement. Their brothers have more opportunities and get the attention of their parents. They have to face gender discrimination being part of patriarchal families. These daughters never raise any question for gender bias they have to face in families. Instead, they are in favour of male supremacy because being brought up in a patriarchal system, all these daughters believe in patriarchal beliefs. On the other hand, daughters in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie are outspoken, decision makers and challenge the

patriarchal norms to fulfil their desires. As daughters, Aurora and India/Kashmira fulfil their responsibilities for their parents. But Boonyi proves to be an irresponsible daughter. Daughters in Rushdie's novels are not submissive; rather, they have the courage to speak for rights. Rushdie has introduced the single girl child concept in his novels as Aurora, Boonyi and India/Kashmira are sole heiresses of their family properties.

A mistress is a female companion and a sexual partner whom a man has known for a very long time, but they are not married. There is no legality of this relationship. The law does not recognise a mistress. Throughout history, mistresses have been described as people who live a lavish lifestyle owing to the vast allowances they get from their lovers. It is challenging to realise the predicaments that mistresses face every day. They are merely treated as beauty objects to fulfil male sexual desires. Throughout the ages, beauty has universal appeal in the human race. Women have been described with reference to bodily beauty. Physical appearance and its use play a significant role in fixing a character. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan writes:

In an earlier time, the image of the woman was also split in two- the good, pure woman on the pedestal, and the whores of the desires of the flesh. The split in the new image opens a different fissure- the feminine women, whose goodness includes the desires of the flesh, and the career woman whose evil includes every desire of the separate self. (40)

Women's body has been used as a means to overpower women. Women have been treated like land or property that can be conquered and controlled by men. The

notion of the body seldom exceeds the fleshy parts of bodies- breast, hips, face, sexual experiences, menstruation, and rape. In *Body Politics - Revisiting the Population Question*, Wendy Harcourt writes:

Women's bodies are the first place that defines political struggle for autonomy, for reproductive and sexual integrity and right, for safe motherhood, for freedom from violence and sexual oppression. The body is the site for many struggles over different modern/traditional- or hybrid-identities. (292)

Masculine parameters establish women sexuality in society. These parameters assume that the qualities of power, beauty, reasoning, intelligence and sexuality are impossible to possess by women. It is also believed that if any female possesses standardised beauty, then she automatically possesses the other qualities also. More or less, a female's sexual imagery is meant to support a male's desires.

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Shalimar the Clown*, female characters use their beauty and sexuality to manipulate their surroundings. They try to find their identity and fulfil voice. They find control and pleasure with sexuality and become mistresses. From the gender point of view, lasciviousness and eroticism are accepted for women in terms of fertility. However, not just because she gives birth and is a source of new life, they are also subjects of desire. Feminists have struggled to bring change in concepts of woman sexual behaviour. Society accepts multiple sexual partners for men; similarly, some feminists also demanded sexual liberation for women and acceptance for having physical relations with multiple partners for pleasure. In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Vina Apsara is free to have sex with multiple partners. As the narrator in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* explains:

Once, casually, she had married and divorced, and the list of her lovers was long. Interestingly, though she liked to hint at bisexuality, the list was exclusively male. . . . Like many women of the time, she had used abortion as a supplementary birth control technique. (Rushdie 226)

Some feminist critics observe the developments in sexual revolution mainly as a means to be used by men to have an easy approach to have physical relations without the responsibilities forced by traditional social norms and marriage. They take the relaxation of social norms for physical relation as a source for the sexual objectification of females by males. Naomi Wolf in *The Beauty Myth* observes correctly that females are often subverted on the basis of standards of beauty. She declares that firstly, they are seen as females and then as human beings. Women have to struggle with the issues of stereotyping, discrimination, patriarchal systems and oppression. Rearing of children, marriage, domestic duties and prostitution are the means to exploit women. The patriarchal societies devalue the roles played by women and work done by them. Naomi Wolf states that beauty "objectively and universally exists" (114). It is something that women want to possess so that men desire them. In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* Vina Apsara uses her personal appearance to gain services:

She appeared regularly on the covers of underground magazines, those new cracks in the media facade caused by the Western youthquake. By pouring her rage and passion in those journals of narcotic typography, and posing pneumatically for their porno-liberal pix, she became one of the first sacred monsters of the counter-

culture, aggressive iconoclast, half-genius, half egomaniac, who lost no opportunity to roar and suck and boo and preen and demolish and cheerland and revolutionise and innovate and flash and boast and scold. (225)

Women are still treated like a vessel that should be filled. She is the receiver, and man is the provider, giver. The society gives more importance to reproductive women than women who are not able to become mothers, who are the source of life. This kind of bifurcation between reproductive or fertile and unproductive or unfertile affects the lives and identities of women. It also steals their abilities to enjoy, live and love their own life. Naomi Wolf discusses that divisiveness is the core of the beauty myth. She says, "Rivalry, resentment and hostility provoked by the beauty myth run deep" (Wolf 284). She further adds that to achieve this divisiveness, "Women will have to break a lot of taboos against talking about it, including the one that prohibits women from narrating the dark side of being treated as a beautiful object" (285).

Richard Dyer, in his famous book *White: Essays in Race and Culture*, observes about white beauty, "to be a really, absolutely white is to be nothing . . . to be nothing is to be dead" (78-81). The white women have become the desired object of Indian or African men in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* and *Guerrillas*. Their male identity is validated through their hold on the white female body. In *The Subjection of Women*, John Stuart Mill observes "All men, except the most brutish, desire to have, in the woman most nearly connected to them, not a forced slave but a willing one" (19). Women mere get slave and doll-like treatment in these novels. The doll and slave-like treatment of white women makes them willing objects in

male dominated societies. Marilyn Frye states that “Whiteness helps repress the white woman's low status as a woman” (126). She concludes, “A white woman's whiteness is deeply involved in her oppression” (126). In V. S Naipaul's *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River*, white women are represented in the service of black and Indian migrated men. They remain under the control and supremacy of males and become objects of desire. In *Guerrillas*, Jane is depicted as a characterless white woman having no mind, vision and perception of her own. Jimmy in *Guerrillas* compares her with a prostitute “the manners of a prostitute, one of those prostitutes who after defeat and degradation celebrate a triumph, revenging themselves on the maid of a brothel-hotel” (Naipaul 77). When Roche criticises Jane for being brainless, she herself remarks, “Perhaps I don't have a point of view” (22). Jane performs the role that is expected from a decadent and fallen object, and she has no objection. As Marie N. Robinson opines in *The Power of Sexual Surrender*:

We know in sexual intercourse, as in life, man is the actor, woman the passive one, the receiver, the acted upon. There is a tremendous surging physical ecstasy in the yielding itself, in the feeling of being the passive instrument of another person, of being stretched out supinely beneath him, taken up will-lessly by his passion as leaves are swept before a wind. (qtd. by Millet 206)

In *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, Michele Wallace observes, “As long as black man did not have access to white woman, he was not a man” (30). Jimmy proves vision of black manhood by dominating, treating harshly and murdering Jane. Jane, at starting, unmans Jimmy with her violent actions during their first intercourse. The narrator in *Guerrillas* points out that Jimmy “felt he was

losing it. He edged his mouth from hers at last and, holding her tight against him, drew breath. He felt that the moment had gone and was irrecoverable” (Naipaul 73).

Jane was slapped by her previous lover, and in a way, she enjoyed that physical violence. Her previous lover becomes angry because "she was dry and he had trouble entering . . . She was slapped so hard that her Jaw jarred and then she was slapped again” (42). When she was waiting in the bathroom for her lover, “She discovered to her dismay and disgust that she was moist” (43). Jane and Jimmy’s first sexual engagement is unsatisfactory for Jane at Thrushcross Grange. During the last physical intercourse, she is raped and murdered. Bruce King in *V. S. Naipaul* states, “Jane is symbolic of whiteness . . . the white woman is the white man’s most guarded possession that which must be possessed, loved, defiled, killed, in the love-hate psychodrama of the black man’s relationship to whiteness and his own self hatred” (104-5). During first love scene Jimmy faces humiliation in *Guerrillas*:

He entered her and said, “I am not good. I am not good, you know.”

“All men say that.”

“and then, just like that, without convulsions, his little strained strength leaked out of him, it was all over and he raged outside.

(Naipaul 75)

Yvette, in *A Bend in the River*, becomes Salim’s mistress. Salim is amazed by her white beauty. Her beauty mesmerises him. He sees dreams of her beauty. He knowingly ignores her weaknesses and only enjoys sexual pleasures with her. Salim is capable of finding a new aim in his life and comes to know about his manliness through all their physical attachments. He knows her meanness, low judgement

powers and her sexual impulses. However, he is owned by her beauty and sexual attachment, so he overlooks her faults. He feels near power because Yvette's husband is near to the President. But soon, Salim in *A Bend in the River* feels trapped and thinks "to have reduced my manhood just to that" (Naipaul 231). After some time he realises that his attachment is dependent on the reputation of Raymond, and due to political upheavals, they all have to leave the country. He comes to know about Yvette's other love affairs and starts hating her. He loses his interest in her and spits between her legs and rejects her in a very humiliating way. As Beauvoir opines, "During a longer or shorter crisis, sometimes for whole life, she will be a willing victim; she will go out of her way to harm this self that has not been able to satisfy her lover" (709). In this novel, Yvette is depicted in a negative way, as a sex object only. She is given a degraded treatment in this novel, who only craves to fulfil her sexual needs and lacks self-respect. A white woman is used and discarded by a migrant Indian whenever he wishes.

Yvette and Jane are provided with the role of "an object of contention between black and white men" (Clever 147). Eldridge Cleaver further writes about this strife between black and white men, "I don't know just how it works . . . but I know that the white man made the black woman the symbol of slavery and the white woman the symbol of freedom. Men die for freedom, but black men die for white women, who are the symbol of freedom" (149).

A passionately demanding mistress cannot find tranquillity in love, because she sets her sights on a contradictory aim. Torn and tormented, she risks being a burden to the one for whom she dreamed of being a slave; she becomes importunate and obnoxious for want of feeling indispensable. Here is a common tragedy. Wiser

and less intransigent, mistress resigns herself. She is not necessary; it is enough for her to be useful. Another woman can easily replace her, and she easily recognises her servitude without asking for reciprocity. Authentic love must be founded on reciprocal recognition of freedom. Man would then experience himself as himself and as the other. Neither would abdicate his transcendence and together they would both reveal values and ends in the world. For each of them, love would be the revelation of self through the gift of self and the enrichment of the universe.

Jane and Yvette devalued female characters, become the object of male sexual desire. These devalued female characters have been controlled and possessed by their male counterparts. Male, as dominating and aggressor, takes advantage of female sexuality by objectifying it in many harmful ways such as sexual harassment, rape and even murder. Both these characters have been treated as a body to make them subordinate, a mere puppet in the hands of men. They are depicted having vague dissatisfactions and are deprived of any respect. As Sarah M. Grimke, in *Letters on Equality of the Sexes and Condition of Women*, observes, “Fashionable women regard themselves and are regarded by men, as pretty toys or as mere instruments of pleasure” (47).

Uma Sarasvati, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, loves freedom and never compromises for her liberty. She is not answerable to anyone in her life like Aurora. Even she instructs Moor not to visit her workplace and forbids him to ask any questions. She controls him psychologically and provokes him against his family members. Uma also makes him doubtful about his mother's character saying that Aurora has love affairs with many men. When Moor comes to know about Uma's reality, he realises about her influence upon him. Moor in *The Moor's Last Sigh* says:

All at once, I realised that many of the judgements I had recently made about my family were based on things Uma had said. Was it true . . . and if not, then it must be true that Uma- O my best beloved! had sought deliberately to damage my opinion of those to whom I was closest so that she could insert herself between me and mine. (Rushdie 267)

Uma persuades Moor that she will convince his parents about their relationship. When the next day, he visits his home, he is disowned by his parents and is asked to leave the house by Aurora. Later, he comes to know about her deception and the secret tapes prepared by Uma during their private moments. He comments, "I spoke in the privacy and complicity of the act of love. Which too was a part of Uma's deception, a necessary means to her end" (321). After disowned by parents, Moor comes back at Uma's place, and she urges him to suicide with her. The mystery of the tablets- one is poisonous and other is sugar- is never resolved. It is never resolved whether she wanted to kill Moor or herself.

In *Shalimar the Clown*, Boonyi escapes customary patriarchal village, Pachigam, to fulfil her dreams. Her choice is to live in the Roosevelt House at Delhi as Max's Mistress. After deciding on terms and conditions of the deal with Max, she offers herself entirely to Maximillian. Boonyi replies in *Shalimar the Clown*, "I will do anything you want, whenever you want it, she replied in immaculate English. My body will be at your command and it will be my joy to obey" (192). Their relationship brings disgrace for both of them. She sacrifices herself to live a high profile life in glamorous society. Her life of glitter and glamour was for a short period of time and brought disrespect for her. Her chosen glamorous life only brings

disaster in her life. Simone de Beauvoir's observation is quite appropriate for her, "The beauty of flowers and women's charms can be appreciated for what they are worth; if these treasures are paid with blood or misery, one must be willing to sacrifice them" (781).

In Boonyi-Max affair, Boonyi becomes an object of Max's desire. At the initial level of relationship, Max provides a high and costly lifestyle along with branded products. However, later he loses his interest in Boonyi and abandons her. She gets pregnant with Max's child. She eats too much and gains weight. He wants to get rid of her in any way. Boonyi has to pay for pseudo-love of Max. Women's body is also treated like nature to serve man. It can be possessed as a commodity. Janis Birkeland in *Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice* observes:

Because it is identified with the "feminine", nature is regarded as existing to serve Man's physical needs [and the reverse]. This association of nature and women in patriarchal societies underwrites instrumentalism, whereby things are valued only to the extent that they are useful to Man. (24)

When Max comes to know about the pregnancy of Boonyi, he comes to meet her and argues about the deal fixed between them. According to the deal, Boonyi had to use contraceptive pills and would never get pregnant. But Boonyi never used the pills to control pregnancy, so again denies male power and control. Boonyi replies Max in *Shalimar the Clown* as following:

I am your handiwork made flesh. You took beauty and created hideousness, and out of this monstrosity your child will be born . . . I

am the meaning of your deeds. I am the meaning of your so-called love, your destructive, selfish, wanton love. Look at me. Your love looks just like hatred. I never spoke of love, . . . I was honest and you have turned me into your lie. This is not me. This is not me. This is you. (Rushdie 205)

Boonyi's anger is proof that she was used as a thing, object and commodity by Max. Through the representation of female characters, Rushdie tries to prove time-old systems of patriarchal societies towards women disapproving their liberation, desires and rights. They are only used to fulfil male desires. As Beauvoir opines:

The word 'love' has not at all the same meaning for both sexes and this is a source of grave misunderstandings that separate them. . . . Men might be passionate lovers at certain moments of their existence, but there is no one who could be defined as 'a man in love'; in their most violent passions, they never abandon themselves completely; even if they fall on their knees before their mistresses, they still wish to possess them, annex them; at the heart of their lives, they remain sovereign subjects; the woman they love is merely one value among others; they want to integrate her into their existence, not submerge their entire existence in her. By contrast, love for the woman is a total abdication for the benefit of a master. (699)

Women are not independent as far as love is concerned. If they choose an independent path, the road is still the one that seems the most attractive to most women; it is agonising to take responsibility for one's life endeavour. Woman's

misfortune is that she is surrounded by nearly irresistible temptations; everything incites her to take the easy way out. Instead of being encouraged to fight on her own account, she is told that she can let herself to achieve anything and she will reach enchanted paradise; when she realises she was fooled by a mirage, it is too late. She has been worn out in this adventure. As Kate Millet opines “her only meaningful existence is sexual and has been distorted by education and the indecent liberties of the modern life” (242).

Growth of a family, community and society depends on equal opportunities provided to men and women. Financial independence makes men and women more creative and honourable. Economic empowerment of women includes their participation in existing economic sectors. It also includes women’s access to and control over time, opportunities, lives and productive resources because as Simone de Beauvoir opines “woman’s consciousness of herself is not defined by her sexuality alone: it reflects a situation that depends on society’s economic structure, a structure that indicates the degree of technical evolution humanity has attained” (63). Females’ economic participation boosts economic development and productivity with positive results. In patriarchal societies, women were denied having equal jobs and careers as males. Business, agriculture, science and other economic sectors were meant for men only. Women were deprived of equal educational and income-oriented career options. When with time, women started working outside the world, they were paid less than their male co-workers. Feminists, especially during the second and third wave, struggled for equal pay for women. Women have to spend many hours for the care of family, i.e. cooking, washing, cleaning and all other house activities. They do not receive any payment

for these services, even not a thanksgiving word. These are the necessary duties of a mother or wife, but these services often go unrecognised and uncounted. Women have to face gender bias in the choice of career. Even in contemporary times, many tradition bound families do not allow women to join army, police and other field jobs because, for these families, these jobs are meant for men.

In contemporary times, many doors have been opened for the economic development of women. Today, females are providing their services in various sectors on good pay scales such as being doctors, CEOs, engineers, professors, army officers, and scientists. Their participation in the fields of business, agriculture, science and arts has a positive impact on the economic growth of a society. Still, many women lack opportunities for economic empowerment. They have to do unpaid and low paid jobs. Lack of self-earned money affects their status at home and in society. They can play a pivotal role to support their families to solve financial problems. A woman's financial support can transform the conditions of a family, community or whole society. As Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN, opines, "When women are empowered and can claim their rights and access to land, leadership, opportunities and choices, economies grow, food security is enhanced, and prospects are improved for the current and future generations".

In the selected novels of Naipaul and Rushdie, women characters provide their participation to solve the financial crisis of their families directly or indirectly. Mrs Tulsi, Shama, and Savi provide services in *A House for Mr Biswas*. Mrs Tulsi is the sole controller of Tulsi estate, business and store. She, along with Seth, manages the income resources of her family. Seth depends on her suggestion to solve

economic problems. She provides financial help to Mr Biswas whenever he requests. Shama provides her services at Tulsi store. She does not get any pay but is provided shelter at Hanuman House with her family. She also manages the expenses of her house with the meagre income of Mr Biswas. She counts and recounts the money again and again. So, Shama gives her services indirectly to solve the financial problems of her family. She never gets the chance to work outside her family. Leela in *The Mystic Masseur*, like Shama, gives her participation indirectly. She helps Ganesh in publishing and selling his books. Like Shama, she also never gets the opportunities to work on paid jobs. Savi, daughter of Mr Biswas, has to face discrimination in her own family. More significance is given on the education of Anand. Anand cannot come for the care of his father, Mr Biswas. He, thus, disappoints Shama and Mr Biswas. On the contrary, Savi's education was neglected by Mr Biswas and Shama, but she takes care of her family and supports them. Savi's support signifies a victory of oppressed and vulnerable daughters.

Women characters in selected novels of Salman Rushdie are more active and financially secure than the female characters of Naipaul. They are businesswomen and own property. Amina Sinai, in *Midnight's Children*, uses her savings to save the family business. Jamila Singer becomes a source of income for her family and earns money by singing. Parvati also earns money in her own ways. Aurora, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, is sole heiress of da Gama family's property. She is a genius painter and earns money from her paintings also. Her daughters Ina and Mynah also earn money for themselves. Ina becomes a successful model and Mynah is an advocate. Vina Apsara in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* is a successful businesswoman. She runs a music band VTO with Ormus Cama, writes beauty and

dietician books and earns good money. India/Kashmira Ophuls, in *Shalimar the Clown*, is the sole owner of her father's business and the whole property. She is independent and works to earn money. She makes a documentary also. So, it can be argued that Salman Rushdie's female characters are more active participants from an economic point of view. They give direct economic participation to earn money and solve crises.

Political participation of women is equally required for the sustainable development of society, along with economic and social participation. Political participation includes the right to vote, protest and public consultation. A person can participate in the political process by giving his or her views about social, government, and economic issues of society. Many reform movements have struggled for the political participation of women. Feminists struggled for the voting rights of women during the second-wave and third-wave times. Now, almost every nation has provided voting rights to women. In this research, political participation means how conscious female characters are about their rights and what type of participation they have for equal rights for everyone.

In the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul, female characters are not aware of their rights. They are submissive, docile, oppressed, but they never raise voice against atrocities. They have to face violence within the family and in the outside world. But they never raise their voice as Tulsi daughters are beaten by their husbands, Leela and Soomintra face domestic violence, Yvette is slapped and disrespected by Salim, and Jane is murdered. Naipaul has provided no voice to female rights. In the selected novels of Rushdie Nassem, Rani of Cooch Naheen, Mynah, Aurora, Vina Apsara, India Ophuls, and Boonyi are aware of their rights.

They try to fulfil their impulses. Vina Apsara becomes part of a movement for forced sterilisation of women's womb. Vina Apsara, in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, starts a movement against forced sterilisation started by Sanjay Gandhi to control the population. Vina says, "We must not let this man conquer Indian women's wombs" (250). The word 'conquer' seems to prove that a womb is also a place and a man can attack upon it. Mynah also participates with an organisation for equal opportunities for women. So Rushdie's female characters are more active politically than Naipaul's characters.

The female characters are not as praised for their virtues as much they are punished for their mistakes and wrong actions in the selected novels of Rushdie. Lila Sabarmati is brutally murdered by her own husband in *Midnight's Children*. Amina is frightened of her body during pregnancy. Parvati also meets her end. Mary Pereira is frightened by the ghost of a man. Amina's visits to meet ex-husband are labelled as unfaithful action for a wife. Even Saleem, her son wants to teach her a lesson for unfaithfulness. Nevertheless, he plans to teach a lesson to his drunkard father, who also flirts with his secretaries. Boonyi is not forgiven by the people of her village for deserting them. Women also face violence, even they are raped, as Zoon, in *Shalimar the Clown*, and Anita Dharkar, a journalist in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, are raped brutally. Many female characters die at the end of Rushdie's selected novels. Similarly, the women in Naipaul's novels also face physical brutalities and mental traumas in their lives. Leela, Soomintra, Shama, Chinta, Sushila, Yvette, Jane have to face disrespect in patriarchal societies. In male dominated patriarchal society, females are crushed by males.

Family and social pressures control the life of females. The pressures can break females or alter them into agents of change. In society, it is observed that women's lack of confidence, self-respect, and their standing of as human beings render them without power and oppressed against male domination. Women have to face societal discriminations as individuals and members of a group or community. Literary works are occupied with the representation of women. Female characters in fiction represent various types of discriminations faced by females in society. They have to experience economic, physical, colour, and caste discriminations. When an active woman seeks her own identity and worth, she detaches herself from the gender biased existence. She experiences the changes of the searched new world and in search of her identity moves on a mission.

The definitions of fixed roles for men and women are rigid in patriarchal societies. A woman is always expected to compromise her personal desires, impulses and dreams for the sake of her family. She has to pay a great personal cost for sacrifices and to become subservient. Many of the times, she has to adjust herself according to the demands of the situations. Her uniqueness is crushed under male dominance. Simone de Beauvoir comments:

In no country is her legal status identical to man's, and often it puts her at a considerable disadvantage. Even when her rights are recognised abstractly, long-standing habit keeps them from being concretely manifested in customs. Economically, men and women form two classes; all things being equal, the former have better jobs, higher wages and greater chances to succeed than their new female competitors. (9-10)

Power structures govern relationships and play salient roles in the life of human beings. Some people receive power in inheritance, and some others acquire it over a group of people. The husband orders, wife obeys, and man demands and wife gives. She surrenders before the wishes of a man. However, in the selected novels of Rushdie, women dominate and rule over the family. Female characters help males at crucial times. There is a reversal of gender roles in these novels. Rushdie's representation of females' physical appearance also echoes with the female aesthetic. Feminist critics focus on the female experience from a biological point of view. The female characters in the selected novels of Rushdie spread out the light from within and without. They use beauty to attain an end. They do not allow defining themselves in corporeal terms. So the author has created strong-willed women in his novels.

A novelist, to describe what happens to people and what they do in the story uses the point of view of narration. V. S. Naipaul is much more than a storyteller. He is a full-fledged man of letters, with a style of his own that makes his works stand apart in the broader field of world literature. These characteristics have made him create immortal characters as well. One of his immortal characters is Mr Mohun Biswas, the protagonist of *A House for Mr Biswas*. Lack of socialisation and the least resistance of female characters in Naipaul's novels indicate the existence of a patriarchal system that controls the participation of women in society. Leela, Shama, Soomintra and Shoba play roles of ideal and good wives as per the demands of patriarchal standards. They bear the frustration of their partners and are victims of domestic violence. Leela and Shama are dependent economically on their husbands. They try to raise their voices sometimes. At the beginning, their voices are unheard,

but at the end of novels, Leela and Shama have healthy relationships with their husbands. Leela-Ganesh and Shama-Biswas respect each other's opinions. However, control of males is their destiny, as Beauvoir opines "man still remains the truth of the universe, the supreme authority, the wonderful, the adventure, master, gaze, prey, pleasure, salvation; he still embodies transcendence, he is the answer to all questions" (603). Their participation, at the end, proves that a change can be brought into society. Socialisation and choice of a better path can bring better changes in the lives of women. Yvette is a disloyal wife who runs after other men to satisfy her sexual desires. Shoba also bears frustration along with her husband in an alien environment. They both try to provide company to each other and seem good partners. All the wives in Naipaul are economically dependent on husbands. Their upbringing and financial dependency make them submissive, docile and self-erasing. Kate Millet's opinion is quite applicable for Naipaul, his "sexual affinity from mother to mistress, a shift that, when accomplished, finally produces a powerful feeling of hostility and a negative attitude toward women of his generation" (257).

On the other hand, in Rushdie's selected novels, women do not have to lean before men to fulfil their dreams. They do not fall prey to the traps of customs and seriousness as Aurora, Vina and Boonyi. They are free and true beings and love their freedom, and oppose the social traditions openly which come in their way of dreams. They own money, family property and business. If they are dependent financially on men, even then they have the courage to say no, as Naseem. Aurora is the sole heiress of da Gama family, but her business is in the control of her husband. So, Rushdie has not provided the business handling qualities to all the females.

Boonyi elopes with Max, denies fulfilling the role of a traditional wife and throws herself ardently into the intriguing world of a wealthy man. Others, like Vina, Amina, India/Kashmira, rise above the vulgar through the vigour of their minds and criticise, denigrate and scorn the society that surrounds them. They want to stand apart from it. For Boonyi her chosen freedom takes a wholly negative form; she becomes a source of shame for near ones and is not able to achieve anything. Aurora is an independent soul who lives her life according to her choices. She has kept a generous heart, she is capable of violent emotions, and she has a taste for happiness. Simone de Beauvoir's opinion is quite suitable for these female characters, "They know the source of real values is not in exterior things but in the heart; that is what makes the charm of the world they inhabit: they chase away boredom merely being present with their dreams, desires, pleasures, and emotions" (264). These women, who have preserved their freedom, albeit unfulfilled, rise up by the passion to heroism as soon as they meet an object worthy of them. Their force of soul and their energy attest to the fierce purity of total commitment.

The female characters, in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul, are obedient wives, mothers and daughters. Both these writers have presented the concept of mother and matriarch. As a mother, the female characters in Naipaul, are dutiful, strict, and self-sacrificing. As Shama, Chinta and Soomintra always stay busy with the care of children and sacrifice their comforts. Bipti is the only helpless and irresponsible mother who never does anything for her sons and daughter. She does not own any money, so she always puts the blame on destiny. She does not show any love for them, as motherly love does not require any money. Opposite of Bipti is Mrs Tulsi. She has been represented as a matriarch. She is very concerned about the marriage of her daughters. But for her, the caste of a son-in-law is more important

than his income. However, it seems that for a single mother, it is not easy to marry many daughters. She is also a biased mother who is more anxious for the education of sons than daughters. Daughters receive slave like treatment. Stuart Mill's opinion suits best as far as female characters in Naipaul's selected novels are concerned:

A woman, born to the present lot of women, and content with it, how should she appreciate the value of self-dependency? She is not self-dependent; her destiny is to receive everything from others . . . Her familiar notions of good are of blessings descending from a superior.
(qtd. by Millet 105)

Salman Rushdie has also represented mothers and matriarchs. Amina accepts Salim as a son even she knows that he is not her biological son. She is a strict mother and tries to do best for her children. Naseem, Flory, Epifania and Aurora are matriarchs. They use power over children and other females in their families. They are also concerned about the betterment of their children, but they are not self-sacrificing as Aurora prefers painting and her Bohemian life rather than running after kids. Flory helps Abraham, her son, but never favours his decision of marriage with Aurora. Epifania uses power over sons and daughters-in-law when she gets a chance. Naseem's orders are also followed by her children. When family comes to know from DNA report about Salim, not being the son of Ahmed and Amina, at that time Naseem comes to save him. She accepts him as her grandson, and nobody has the courage to oppose her.

V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, both, have used the concept of the non-biological mother also. Mary Pereira in *Midnight's Children*, Tara in *A House for Mr Biswas* and Great Belcher in *The Mystic Masseur* are non-biological mothers.

Mary Pereira exchanges Salim at the time of birth with Sinai child and commits a crime. But, as his caretaker, she proves herself as a good woman. Even the narrator discusses that sometimes there was a competition between his mother and aaya for his care. Tara cares a lot about Biswas and tries to help in every possible way. The Great Belcher also provides her best services whenever Ganesh needs.

V. S. Naipaul's daughters, Leela, all Tulsi daughters and Savi, are submissive and obedient daughters. They are trained by their families to never raise voice against their elders and husbands. Leela and Shama bear the dilemma of conflicts between their husbands and parents. They always provide respect to their families and are anxious about the well-being of their parents. Their education and personal development are ignored by their parents, but they never say a word. Savi is the only daughter, in the selected novels of Naipaul, who is successful in attaining her identity and employment. She becomes a source of happiness when her father is helpless. On the other hand, daughters in Rushdie's novels are not as submissive as in Naipaul's novels. Rushdie has also used the idea of the single girl child as Aurora, Boonyi and India/Kasmira are only daughters of their families. They receive the best care of their parents. As a daughter, Aurora is a responsible, bold and outspoken. She always speaks out before her father whatever she does not like. She receives her uncle Aires in her family and forgives him for his misdeeds of the past. Boonyi is not a responsible daughter. Her father provides his best care for her upbringing after the death of her mother. But she ignores her father, and he dies alone in his apple orchard. In Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown*, India/Kashmira proves herself as a responsible daughter. She becomes a challenge for Shalimar and tries her best for the punishment of the murderer of her parents.

As mistresses, the female characters become objects of desire in the selected novels of Rushdie and Naipaul. Jane and Yvette are denied any respect, and they are only used for the sake of pleasure. Jane and Yvette dominate at the starting of their relations with Jimmy and Saleem. However, with the passage of time, they become only the empty vessels to be filled by male partners. Jane and Yvette run after men to fulfil their exotic sexual desires, but Jimmy and Salim ignore their existence at the end of novels. Boonyi in *Shalimar the Clown* elopes with Max to fulfil her dreams. At starting, she puts her conditions, but in the end, she is ignored by Max. Boonyi is not a passive mistress. To revolt against Max, she gives birth to their illegitimate daughter. Uma, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, dominates over Moor. She never allows him to interfere in her life and is very manipulative. But, over time, she becomes frustrated and suicides. So as mistresses, these female characters are not capable of achieving anything in their life, and they only become the source of pleasure for the men in their life and remain others. As Kate Millet opines:

The primitive and the civilised worlds are male worlds, the ideas which shaped culture in regard to the female were also of male design. The image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs. These needs spring from a fear of the “otherness” of woman. Yet this notion itself presupposes that patriarchy has already been established and the male has set himself as the human norm, the subject to which the female is “other” or alien. (46)

V. S. Naipaul's representation of females in many ways is traditional and patriarchal stereotypical. Naipaul uses an explicit way of characterisation for female

characters. The narrators of the selected novels and characters describe each other's abilities, likes and dislikes. Naipaul represents docile, tolerant, traditional, passive and meek female characters who never try to speak for their rights. They mutely tolerate sufferings and brutalities of their husbands or sexual partners in their life. These women characters never feel to liberate themselves. They are always seen as preserving the status quo in their lives. These female characters are the predictable outcome of a highly artificial system of cultivation. V. S. Naipaul has not raised any voice for the cause of women. However, Rushdie assumes a feminist stand in his works. The comparative study of female characters reveals remarkable similarities and differences in Naipaul and Rushdie's portrayal of women. They are from different cultural, religious and political backgrounds, which have had a significant influence on their views of life. Naipaul's characters are conventional, deprived of opportunities, victims of domestic violence, but in the end, they seem satisfied with their life. Female characters in the selected novels of Rushdie are active, bold, outspoken and try to fulfil their desires. Rushdie has used an implicit way of characterisation for the female characters. Female characters' speeches, actions, and thoughts help the reader to understand the behaviour, type and role of the female characters. Most of Naipaul's female characters are flat characters, and Rushdie's female characters are round.

V. S. Naipaul's female characters fail to identify themselves, and they have to follow a set pattern in their life. Most of the female characters are flat as Chinta, Bipti, Mrs Tulsi, Tara, Soomintra, Yvette and Jane. They have not been provided with any chance to develop. Human destiny looms large in the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul and is reflected largely in his art of characterisation. Naipaul's characters

represent a world not moved by love but dominated by greed, conflict and futility. It is easy to recognise the miseries and sufferings faced by the female characters. These female characters have natural conformity with the experiences of people all over the world, living in alien lands. Naipaul's world is the world of helpless, nomadic migrants making an escape route from Africa or India to the West Indies, then to England and back again. There is no society or system of values in which these female characters can take root. Naipaul has a pitiless attitude towards female characters. On the contrary, Salman Rushdie's selected novels have a female holding sway. Direct description of some personality traits and indirect representation of characters, through action and dialogue, are the specialities of Rushdie's art of characterisation. In these selected novels, Naseem, Belle, Aurora, Vina Apsara, Ameer Merchant, Pamposh, Boonyi and India/Kashmira, through their actions and speech, dominate their environment and most notably their menfolk. Unlike the women of V. S. Naipaul's novels, who are too passive, the female characters in Rushdie, appear to act, rather than be acted upon. In the novels of Naipaul, men are very much action heroes, but the women are, to a large extent, victims of their circumstances and their own emotions.

Conclusion

Women occupy a pivotal position in the society. They play a significant role in family, community, and society, but throughout the history of the world, their role and importance have been underestimated. We have stepped in the 21st century, but even today they are in most cases homemakers. Women have to face discrimination in social, economic and political spheres of life. They have to face problems and traumas related to domestic violence, economic dependence, dowry, rape, oppression, subordination and inequality in life. Women have struggled a lot for social, economic and political equality. It is known to us that women equality is the result of various struggles and movements. Equality refers to active participation in the domain of policy making and decision making processes of the society. Equality enables an individual or a group of individuals to get the realization of their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. It provides greater autonomy to women in decision making and empowers them to face the odds of life. Equality enables women to have a greater ability to plan their lives and free themselves from the shackles imposed on them by customs, beliefs, and cultural practices. Empowerment of women includes higher literacy level and education for women, better health care, increased participation in economic, political and social sectors, awareness of their rights and responsibilities, improved standards of living, self-esteem, and self-confidence. All these elements are essential for the well-being of women in society.

Women have to play the roles of mother, wife, daughter and sister. While playing these roles, women have become an integral part of the societal setup. In this new millennium, they have been able to show their excellence in all fields of life.

Their active participation and contribution to social, political and economic development cannot be ignored. However, the sad part is that a major chunk of women is still deprived of opportunities, and they are considered as a neglected segment of society. There is no practical equality between men and women. Although theoretically, they might be enjoying a respectable status and position. If we take into account the practical position, it would be evident that still, they are subject to all sorts of ill-treatment, discriminations, injustices, and violence. Economic, political and social empowerment of women is required for the upliftment of women in society. Equal access to opportunities and justice for all irrespective of race, caste, and gender is the prerequisite for the sustainable development of all.

In a patriarchal society, a woman as a mother, wife or daughter is expected to be docile, obedient and passive as per the demands of the society. Violence and abuse are used to maintain passivity and obedience among women. Due to social and cultural taboos and practices, women avoid to raise their voice and to approach laws made for them. Women's economic dependence upon men forces them to be silent and makes them passive spectators. Lack of expression and exposure leads them towards suppression of desires, feelings, and talents.

As a movement, feminism has worked to raise consciousness, to provide equal social, political and economic rights to females. Feminists have struggled that women should have equal access to education, employment and all other opportunities in life. The feminist movement reacted against the patriarchal ideologies and demanded equality for women in every sphere of life. Women have every right to perceive and interpret life as they prefer. Tracing the journey of

feminism reveals that the situation of women has changed, but still, many aspects of women's lives are unchanged. Feminist literary critics study the dynamics of representation of women in literature. The aim of their study is not only to insist on the rights, equality, and privileges for women, but they also focus on to indicate how the depiction by writers exhibits the grounds of representation. It is need of the hour to examine whether females are portrayed in their stereotypical roles as daughters, submissive wives, devoted mother, and betrayers or literature represents their actual experiences of the real world. Christina Crosby, in her article "Stranger than Truth: Feminist Literary Criticism and Speculations on Women", writes about feminist critics:

Feminist critics who turn to theory, are not star-gazers . . . they are examining the generally unexamined foundationalism which has a place for woman-always the same place, opposite, under man. Only when one moves off those grounds can one see how shaky they are and what subverts their order. If in studying women and representation, one takes women as the truth and representation as the problem; feminist criticism will do little to alter our thinking about either. (256)

The claims for gender equality are not a priority in literature. In literature, women remained unrepresented as significant, active and speaking characters. Women characters were provided minor roles than their male counterparts. Women characters were not provided with any identifiable aims of life and were not characterized as leaders of the family. Elaine Showalter in "Feminist Criticism in Wilderness" observes, "We need more subtle and supple accounts of influence, not

just to explain women's writing but also to understand how men's writing has resisted the acknowledgement of female precursors" (344). In any traditional society, women are supposed to be obedient daughters, devoted mothers, and wives. In patriarchal societies, men expect that women should follow male orders. They should do everything to satisfy men. In this system, they are supposed to live for men. Women have to ignore their own selves, feelings, and needs.

V. S. Naipaul, an acclaimed name in literature, provides an unpleasant depiction of women in his selected fiction. A serious study of V.S. Naipaul's selected novels proves that female characters are not treated well, and they are not central. The way female characters are treated in his works may disappoint women readers. His novels contain a feeling of disgust towards females. His novels depict the transnational, multi-ethnic diasporic world. Female characters such as Shama, Leela, Chinta, Soomintra, Jane and Yvette in his novels are weak, deprived, oppressed, victims of male dominance, defeated and abandoned. Some of his female characters, Mrs Tulsi and Tara, are important but not central. The action of his novels revolves around men. As Diana Athill in *Stet*, writes, "He is not interested in the writing about women, and when he does so, usually with dislike" (224). When women try to speak against discrimination and injustices done to them, they are silenced with forceful means. Christopher Morrison, in "Sexuality in V. S. Naipaul's Novels", points out, "The target of seemingly irrational anger, Yvette in *A Bend in the River* is beaten liberally around the face and between the legs; Jane in *Guerrillas* suffers the dignity of anal rape before she is cutlashed to death" (1).

Naipaul has been labelled as a misogynist for his criticism of female writers, the portrayal of Jane in *Guerrillas* and Yvette in *A Bend in the River*. In his novels,

women are represented as others. V. S. Naipaul was brought up in a traditional Hindu family, and he spent the most time in England. His depiction of women and man-woman relations are influenced by his patriarchal mindset. As Bruce King in *V. S. Naipaul* points out, “Naipaul’s novels differ from most European and American fiction in portraying romantic love and sexual freedom as destructive, a dereliction of one’s duties. The perspective is Indian, rather than European” (31).

Female characters in Naipaul’s novels are not attractive. His literary works represented the ground realities of migrant families in alien societies. Some of his female characters are based on real-life figures. Regarding women, he can be pitiless, but he accurately depicts what is real. Women in migrant societies face male brutalities, inequality, oppression and subordination. Naipaul’s female characters also face these problems being part of migrant societies. Martha Lewis writes, “Naipaul’s harsh treatment of his fictional figures men and women alike, and his often scathing remarks about his fellow beings do not spring from sheer hatred and misanthropy, but an underlying idealism resulting in uncompromising views” (210).

Women, in *A House for Mr Biswas* and *The Mystic Masseur*, hardly enjoy any freedom or independence. Females characters’ social existence is fixed by the social status of their husbands and parents. Violence between husband and wife is a common feature of their life. He depicts domestic violence impassively. It seems that he only tries to depict the realities of the societies in which he grew up. Robert Hemenway argues, “There are no successful love affairs, no successful marriages . . . Women appear repulsive, and sex becomes either boring, violent, or abhorrent” (193). Romantic love between husbands and wives is not depicted in his novels. In *The Mystic Masseur*, Ganesh stops beating Leela when they both come to know

about Leela's inability to conceive a baby. After that, they remain partners only, and no love is portrayed between them. Dooley in "Naipaul's Women" states; "It is possible to speculate that Naipaul is using wife-beating here as a metaphor for sexual relations. Significantly, once there is a no beating, or presumably sex, in their marriage, it becomes an extremely successful working partnership" (90). In *A House for Mr Biswas*, Mr Biswas and Shama never enjoy romantic love. They just fulfil their duties as husband and wife. In the beginning, they quarrel a lot, but towards the end, they respect each other's opinions. However, no space has been provided for personal and romantic movements in Shama-Biswas relation.

In the later novels of Naipaul, a perceptible change can be noticed for the depiction of female characters. Female characters, in his early novels, play the domestic roles of a mother, wife, daughter and sister. But female characters, in *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River*, are not provided traditional domestic roles of a wife, mother or daughter. They run merely to fulfil sexual needs. The sexual relations play essential roles in fixing identities and places of characters in both these novels. Extramarital relations are depicted in the later novels. Jane-Roche and Salim-Yvette's extramarital sexual relations are only meant to fulfil their physical needs, and Jane and Yvette receive degraded treatment from their male counterparts. In the writings of Naipaul, sex has been represented as unpleasant and violent. He wrote when he was in his twenties, "I cannot write sex . . . I would be embarrassed even at the moment of writing. My friends would laugh. My mother would be shocked and with reason" (French 13).

V. S. Naipaul has never been interested in the intellectual output of women. Naipaul resists any evaluation of feminism in his selected novels. No examination of

female rights is available in his selected novels. Only some individual women, like Tara and Mrs Tulsi, are effective. Dooley observes in "Naipaul's Women", "Women represent the other for him" (88). Dooley further concludes:

Naipaul's imagination has always been a matter of depth rather than breadth, and he has attended more and more to look inward for material for his fiction. He will rarely write from the point of view very far outside his personal experience. He must have at least something in common with his main focalizing characters. His avoidance of women's issues in his fiction stems from the distance he himself feels from women as subjects, and is part of the concern he has developed during his career clarifying the subjective position from which he writes. (89)

These female characters do what they are supposed to do. They never oppose or complain like dutiful wives or mothers. The families or societies, of which they are part, are responsible for making them down to earth and their potentialities are restricted by patriarchal values and practices. They remain others, and the male dominated societies of these novels are not able to understand women's psyche. As Simone de Beauvoir opines, "psychoanalysts, in particular, define man as a human being and woman as a female: every time she acts like a human being, she is said to be imitating the male" (61). In these novels, female characters are ignorant, backward, fragile and weak personalities, who are sidelined and depend on men in day to day life. Simone de Beauvoir's observation is quite suitable for many of Naipaul's female characters, "As their education and their parasitic situation make them dependent on men, they never dare to voice their claim: those who do are hardly heard" (132).

These women are bound to follow their husbands, fathers or brothers because they do not have any options to grow. If they try to speak against the harshness of their husbands, they become a cause of irritation. Their husbands cannot tolerate their demands of equal space. V. S. Naipaul's protagonists face oppression and remain segregated from the mainstream, and these female characters suffer more because they live under the oppression of the oppressed. They never question their subordination and oppression because they have adopted patriarchy as a natural law. They remain ignorant human beings.

Salman Rushdie with his fiction, non-fiction, and short stories occupies a high position among his contemporary writers and readers. He has represented the social realities, complex human relations, and clash of cultures of globalized societies through his literary works. He is an observer of the past and present, and his literary works help to understand human life. Above all, his works of various genres offer us a map and a tool to understand the new world of the second half of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century. Political, historical, social roots and cultural dualism provide a necessary thrust to his imagination. He uses dual strategy as for as language, plot or narrative technique of his novels is concerned. Rushdie's fictional strategy contains complex human relations along with subcontinental fictional plots. His use of magical realism, music, a wide range of topics, and crafty use of language along with mythical cross-cultural references distinguishes him as a famous writer of contemporary times. The critics have perhaps undermined Salman Rushdie's genius for the representation of women.

A detectable change can be noticed in the portrayal of female characters in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie also. Rushdie, in *Midnight's Children*, very

carefully creates female characters in the domestic sphere. They are caring mothers as Naseem Aziz and Amina Sinai. They are comfortable in their family life but are not independent outside their home. When Amina tries to step out of her home, it is a secret. She goes for horse races and earns money, but she can not disclose her secret horse races. They also hold cultural and traditional decorum as Jamila Singer sings publically but behind a veil. They are partners also in the form of Parvati and Padma. They support their male counterparts to survive. However, in his other selected novels, the life of women is not primarily focused around their families.

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Rushdie has created free-spirited and straightforward women characters. Every generation receives willful, bold and strong females. These strong characters are Epifania, Flory, Isabella, Aurora, and Uma. They are career-oriented, businesswomen or art geniuses. They make careers in art as well as in law and modelling. In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Rushdie has portrayed multifaceted Vina Apsara. She is an artist and a successful businesswoman. She is the life spring of Ormus Cama's music. Vina is depicted as who was sometimes victimized, but she was strong enough to face the problems of routine life and career. Vina has domestic bliss in the form of Ormus Cama.

In *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie has depicted urban and rural women. Rushdie has created ambitious Boonyi from Pachigam. She defies patriarchal norms to marry her lover from the Muslim community. After some time, she defies her marriage to fulfil her ambitions. Her decision brings disaster for her family and herself. Rushdie has also created glamorous India/Kashmira Ophuls, Boonyi's daughter in the U. S. It seems that through India/Kashmira, Rushdie has depicted his own journey from India to America.

A tale of revenge and rivalry to own a beautiful woman is intermingled with the territorial controversy of Kashmir between India and Pakistan. In *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie has tried to depict the struggle of Kashmiri women for freedom and empowerment. So, the struggle of Boonyi Kaul becomes the mouthpiece for Kashmiri people's struggle in common and women's struggle specifically.

In *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie has revolted against traditional construction of gender in phallogocentric societies that consider women as an object to be used according to the wishes of men. In this novel, Rushdie has depicted the loss of Paradise in Kashmir along with treatment given to females and their urge to liberate themselves from male dominance. Rushdie's characters Boonyi, Pamposh, and India/Kashmira defy phallogocentric societal constrictions to achieve their freedom and empowerment. Female characters have been given a chance to speak for their right in *Shalimar the Clown*.

Female characters in the selected novels of Salman Rushdie are articulate, convinced of what they feel wrong and right, and they dare to stand resolutely for the cause of women. They are young, and they have the courage to speak against the norms of patriarchy. They are bold, angry, outspoken, and are not ready to give up. These female characters show that they will persist with their aspirations and rebel for their freedom. They attain a space for themselves to express their emotions, desires and thoughts. However, their struggle is part of the more extensive process of expression and emancipation of women. These active women no longer nurse the view that they are weak, and these armed women demolish thousands of hurdles, disregard thousands of dangers and struggle for freedom. A woman speaking her mind is a positive sign for society. There has been a long time subjugation of women

who have been pushed to the back. The empowerment efforts of these female characters work to correct the gender imbalance in society.

On the other hand, V. S. Naipaul does not permit females to have an authoritative position in their lives. In the selected novels of Naipaul, female characters are not expected to be as competent as male characters. In comparison to male characters, they receive less attention from the author. They are denied education in *A House for Mr Biswas* and *The Mystic Masseur*. Educated and aware women can help to educate children in families. These educated children can surely participate in the growth of society. Education is an essential and safe way for the upliftment, freedom, and growth of women. But the female characters, in Naipaul's novels, have to bear abuse, discrimination, beating, and rape. These oppressed female characters experience subordination and oppression due to the deep-rooted patriarchal culture of society. The male characters sexually exploit, mentally harass, and physically assault their female counterparts. Female characters from the First and Third World receive the same treatment from the males. Leela, Shama, Chinta, and Soomintra are ignorant, docile and obedient female characters from the Third World. Jane and Yvette are educated and modern women from the First World, but they also are denied any respect, and they both face rejection from men. Husbands and sexual partners dominate the relationships in the selected novels of Naipaul.

Both these renowned writers have ignored the intellectual development of women in the selected novels. No female character is portrayed as an intelligent and intellectual human being. It seems that the patriarchal mindset of the writers denies seeing any women as intellectually equal to men. Women in Naipaul and Rushdie are not much educated. They receive only basic education. In Rushdie's novels, a

genius painter, model, and businesswoman are present, but the novelist has not depicted any female intellectual participant. In Naipaul, they remain typical housewives, sex seekers and are denied any vision of their own. In migrated worlds, they are denied opportunities. Women in Rushdie struggle for freedom from patriarchal norms and live their life as they wish to live. However, in all the selected novels, it can be noticed that they all die a natural or unnatural death. Salman Rushdie, being postmodern, has represented fragmented, diffused characters. His tone is humorous and ironic. V. S. Naipaul, being a realist, has represented unified identities and his tone is not ironic. A change can be felt in the representation of women in their earlier and later novels. In *A House for Mr Biswas*, *The Mystic Masseur*, *Midnight's Children* they have depicted devoted mothers and responsible wives. But in their later novels, *A Bend in the River*, *Guerrillas*, *Shalimar the Clown* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, female characters are bold enough to deny playing traditional roles. Overall they both are patriarchal.

Salman Rushdie's portrayal of females is an area of strife and debate among critics. Critics have observed a strange attitude towards the depiction of female characters. Catherine Cundy in "Rushdie's Women" points out, "Rushdie's problematic depiction of women appear as a thread running through his work, seemingly trivial in isolation but disturbing with their cumulative weight" (13). However, the writer has created strong-willed women in his novels. A voice like Salman Rushdie is needed during these times when sureties of religion, faith, literary value and science often come under doubts. A study on the portrayal of female characters is needed when women empowerment is a globalized issue, and equal opportunities are the demand of the time. The females, who are expected to stay

behind the four walls of their home, find a voice for forced silences in the selected fiction of Salman Rushdie. The female characters walk on the path of life to search their identity and secure a place in society. They cross cultural, traditional, religious and emotional walls to achieve the goals of their lives.

Women, in V. S. Naipaul's selected novels, are provided many roles to play as wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. Many of them are submissive and docile, and they have to bear the traumas of their male counterparts. They are tradition-loving and dutiful. Naipaul has not provided economic and political participation to the female characters. Tradition bound females are denied opportunities for education and jobs. As Hemenway points out:

A Naipaul reader has a right to ask, does this author hate women? Unattractive women inhabit his fiction from the beginning, and one searches hard in his more recent fiction to find a woman who has not been denied the reader's sympathy. His women characters are either reversely limited by tradition, seem semi whores bent on using men for personal ends. (192)

Two well-educated European women, Jane and Yvette, in *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River* respectively, end in the hands of black and migrant Indian men. Pyne Timothy observes, "What is alarming is the way in which the author treats this visitation of outrage and horrors on a woman . . . Women are apparently glutted for punishment. And the perpetrator of this deed is absolved by author's deliberate attempt to channel the reader's sympathy towards Salim" (304-305). His representation of violence against females and male domination cannot affect his

readers. Readers enjoy reading his novels, as Gillian Dooley in an article, *Naipaul's Women Revisited*, writes:

I am certainly not inclined to forgo the pleasure of his writing to make some kind of principled stand about his bad behaviour. I can open just about any of his books at random and be mesmerized by the balance and grace of his sentences and the clarity of his insight- even if it is an insight that comes from a certain willful blindness. (161)

Women, in general, do not form a class but they form an oppressed class. Domination upon women by men is the major cause behind social inequality. The economic, social, and cultural subordination of women is due to social inequality between women and men. Sexual tortures, gender oppression, and mental tortures are the most fundamental forms of oppression. They determine the place of women in society and family. The sexualized hierarchy theory believes that marginalized women's state is determined by dominant men. Domination, power, and activity are masculine and are erotic in males. Marginalization, submissiveness, and passivity are feminine and are erotic in females. Women are provided passivity and subordination in male dominated patriarchal societies. They cannot resist male power and control.

In society, women tend to limit themselves to achieve everything within the confines of family life and rituals of society. They do not conceive that it is possible to liberate them from shackles of society, or that it is possible to achieve greater heights within the framework of these constraints. They also fail to realize that in their inherent genius for intuitive thought lays the key to creativity, and the source of this creativity is the passionate embodiment of womanhood both as a physical reality

and a state of mind. In order to achieve equality to empower themselves and overcome oppression, women might start to make efforts and changes on their own. They will have to unravel themselves, and the mindset of the society should be changed practically to end subordination, distress, and discrimination faced by women in general in a patriarchal society. Women will have to participate and support to end oppression and subordination in a practical sense.

The condition of women is improving in society with time. More and more girls are joining higher education institutions, and the birth rate of girls is also improving. But along with these changes, rape cases, harassment, violence, and crimes against women are also increasing. Many people do not choose to register an FIR against the violence faced by women due to the social pressure of losing respect in society. Domestic violence, molestation, deaths of women due to dowry and mental stress have become part of the daily news on television and in newspapers. Their foremost duties are still considered to take care of families, to please and obey their husbands.

Many women from middle and lower classes are still maltreated, disrespected, suppressed and face violence. In a patriarchal society, a married woman is still under pressure to give birth to a male heir. Birth of daughter is still considered bad, and she is taken as a burden. Women are provided lesser opportunities for career development. Women from the rural middle and lower classes are financially dependent on their fathers or husbands who make them vulnerable and inactive. Their economic dependency becomes a reason for suppression and sexual abuse. Economic dependency forces women to be un-decisive person, and financial independence makes women strong and bold enough to take decisions of life.

Women will have to struggle for their survival and to improve the conditions of their lives. They will have to break the silences, fight for equal rights, break the chains and stand up for equal opportunities in every part of life. Men should contribute to gender equality in society. They should motivate their sisters, daughters and wives to achieve career goals. Parents should raise their daughters in such a way, that in future, their daughters play significant roles in the development of society. Everyone has to fight against discrimination, violence, rape, and crimes against women. We will have to discard parochial ways for the sustainable development of society and the emancipation of women. Quality education, career opportunities and financial independence of women are cardinal for the emancipation of women in society. Equal opportunities will help to gain confidence and solve their problems. Gender responsive budgeting can help to ensure a more equitable and effective allocation of resources that would foster distributional outcomes in favour of the growth of women. At the global level, there is a need for an agreement on sustainable development and economic growth, which measures gender equality, participation, and empowerment of women.

This research will contribute to literature in the field of feminist literary theory and criticism. This study will help the readers in understanding the reasons behind the patriarchal oppression and subordination of women in society. This research work will help in understanding the social, economic and political roles played by women in the societies of which they are part. The reader will be able to compare the situation of women in different regions, classes, migrated and globalized societies. This research offers a systematic analysis of the position, role, situation and experiences of women through the in-depth analysis of the selected novels of V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. Women's contribution to society,

whether in the domestic sphere or the wider world, has been, for the most part, degraded. This research will enable the reader to examine and understand how social norms, cultural practices and power structure relations impact on the lives and opportunities available to women. Comprehension of the social norms and cultural practices is a prerequisite for understanding an individual's access to and the ability to make decisions. This research will help women to understand the social and cultural norms behind their subordination, and this study will make them aware that only legal provisions are not sufficient for the equality and empowerment of women. Some practical changes in social, economic, cultural and political spheres are required to provide equality to women in the 21st century. While the treatment for women in society has significantly improved, but still much progress has to be made. This research will open the gates for further comparative research in the field of feminist literary criticism.

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