

**SILENCE AND RESISTANCE: A FEMINIST
CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE
FEMALE SUBALTERN IN SOUTH ASIAN
FICTION**

By

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Analysis of the Female Subaltern in South Asian Fiction**

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Silence And Resistance: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of the Female Subaltern in South Asian Fiction

Woman is a subject of debate in South Asian society. She is the victim of male power, self - esteem, ego and supremacy. The roots of resistance lead to oppression, as subaltern woman is the one who is oppressed, marginalized, subjugated, exploited and dominated. This research involves the theory of Subaltern and method of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to the study of South Asian fiction. The researcher's main focus is to explore the elements of female resistance in the selected literary texts. Gayatri Chakrovarty Spivak's theory of 'Subaltern' is selected as a theoretical framework for this research. Michelle M. Lazar's method of "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis" is employed to analyze the silenced voices of female subaltern in the chosen texts of South Asia. Three major issues such as power, gender and ideology are essential for this research. The analysis of text is viewed from the standpoint of subaltern female, with focus on gender domination, power politics and ideology. The research is delimited to three texts; *'The Holy Woman'*, *'The Dowry Bride'* and *Brick Lane'*. The intent of the researcher is to figure out the grounds that disrupt the position of the female subaltern. The findings reveal the position of the subaltern women. The writers have effectively represented the resistance of silenced female subaltern in their texts. These writers have brought to the forefront the muted voices of female gender representative of three cultures of South Asia. This research will be helpful in raising the consciousness level of the female gender to make them understand and believe in themselves and to be aware of their legal rights.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all those women who struggle hard to attain position in society.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Woman has always been the subject of debate in South Asian society. She is exploited, marginalized, oppressed and suppressed at the hands of a patriarchal society. In other words, she is governed and ruled by social power structures. Her predicament to occupy a conspicuous place socially is attributed to her inferior status accorded to her by society rather she is never accorded proper representation due to her inferior status. She always finds herself trapped in a vicious circle of traditions and norms. Her access to modernization is denied in the name of family honor and values. There is no effective mechanism or platform for her to raise her voice and share her opinion or narrative. Woman is deprived of her fundamental and legal rights as she is subjected to the brutality of the domineering segment of society. She suffers the loss of her identity and self-esteem when her domestic labor is not appreciated by her family. Similarly, she is a victim of rape, abduction, sexual assaults and other abuses, which hurt herself-respect and dignity. She is portrayed in literature as an oppressed object. Woman is targeted, victimized and subjugated by society and her family alike and simultaneously. She resists when she is meted out unfair and unjust treatment by society and her father, brother and husband.

Woman strives to accomplish emancipation when she finds herself in mire of power structures of oppression, domination, inequalities and marginalization. Her hushed voice stimulates/encourages her to resist and rebel against the set norms and values of society and family. It is this resistance that is the subject of this research.

1.1 The Concept of Resistance in Postcolonial Studies:

In postcolonial studies, 'Resistance' is considered a critical thought, as resistance is the subversion or opposition from the forces that push one backwards. Resistance carries the ideas about human freedom, individuality, identity and liberty that cannot be held in the same way by the colonized view of humankind. Resistance is the empowerment of the down trodden against the dominant class. According to Barbara Harlow (1987) this term 'resistance' was first applied for the Palestinians in 1966 (Harlow 02). Power actually paves the way for resistance to surface in the face of oppression. Resistance has an innate tendency of refusal that gradually culminates into revolt. The truth is plain: where there is suppression and exploitation, resistance is bound to surface.

Hence, power is always encountered by resistance. The moment power relationships are exercised, resistance is detected too. Power relations indulge in a seemingly endless oppression. Power does not stand alone, but is part of a larger system of networks working in unison. Power is a universally known phenomenon and it has varyingly been interpreted throughout history. Secondly, according to Foucault (1979), power is not restricted only to the powerful rather he sees it everywhere. He proposes that it should be analyzed at the micro - level. Therefore, instead of limiting the concept of power only to institutions such as the government or the military, it spreads throughout the social spaces. Though one tends to attribute only negative traits to power as something that 'represses', 'excludes', 'conceals', 'masks' and 'censures', yet he finds it rather producing, which in his words produces reality. Domains of objects and rituals of truth are also produced by it. This process of production encompasses both the individual himself and the knowledge that emanates (Foucault 294).

Consequently, the concept of power as described by Foucault leads to form the basis of the silence concerning the world of feminism. This is a kin to Aijaz Ahmad's literary work "*In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*" (1994) and it is quite critical of the wavering, non - permanent and ever - changing stances assumed by the postcolonial intellectuals. What disappoints him much is the fact that these intellectuals indulge in many a critical practice without ever, seriously considering a single theory. What, as a matter of fact, they do is a kind of casual

dealing with many different theories at the same time. According to him, the critics belonging to the postcolonial school of thought are more interested in self - promotion as they study such theories alone as are driven by a consumptionist's attitude (Ahmad 70).

In this research, Gayatri Spivak's deconstructive Marxist thought is connected to the problems of resistance with the theoretical concept of 'Subaltern'. Spivak talks about epistemic violence and its heterogeneity whereas she also talks about imperial power structures and re - silencing the Subaltern that is involved in the process of postcolonial textual re-writing. This theory of epistemic violence is related to epistemology, the theory of knowledge. Spivak is of the view that whenever the non - western culture is under hegemonic control of the westerns ways of perceiving the world then epistemic violence can be put into practice through silence, law in order, or education to dominate the colonized culture. Similarly as, Foucault moves away from the norm, instead of believing it to be the sole or exclusive trait of the governments, rulers and oppressors, he feels power playing its role in the entire society. His findings are therefore also significant for the present study. Feminist critical discourse analysis will be helpful in anatomizing problems facing the Subaltern woman belonging to The Third World; this discourse analysis inspects the issues of gender, power and ideology. However, caught in the web of a discursive contestation, the Subaltern woman would rarely be represented. Woman is burdened with the concept of disposition; hence, there is the ideological mindset about gender that also keeps male dominant and influential.

1.2 The Idea of Subaltern:

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Communist intellectual and critic, was the one who first used a specific term for people of inferior rank or position in society, or the non - hegemonic group in society as 'Subaltern', 'Subordinate'. In the beginning, Gramsci used this term exclusively for the people holding lower ranks. He observed that seniors or the dominating class maltreated the people of lower rank in an abusive manner. The people of lower rank were not permitted to say anything in response, they were forced to be silent, their voices were muted, and therefore Gramsci called them 'Subaltern'. Editor and translator Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey

Nowell Smith in the book "*Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*" (1971) states that:

There is a specific relation between privates, NCOs, Subalterns, junior officers, General Staff, Combined Staff, etc. There is a relation between the various arms and corps among themselves, etc. Each change in a single part necessitates a new equilibrium with the whole, etc. (Gramsci 190 - 191)

They were considered to be the subjects to the hegemonic and dominant ruling imperial powers. Later on, this term was employed for the people of inferior status in society who were compelled to listen to their superiors or the dominant ones. They could not even defend themselves and their voices were suppressed through the power and hegemony enjoyed by the suppressers. Gramsci states in "*Prison Notebooks*" (1971) that, Subaltern classes include workers and peasants, rather all those groups of people who have no direct access to the 'hegemonic powers'. He further states that 'the history of the Subaltern classes is complex; there is a strategy to understand the complexities of Subaltern classes as their formation, birth of dominant groups, political parties using them for themselves and so on . . .'. (Gramsci 52). The history of the Subaltern is complex as well as fragmented and episodic for him and they are considered a subject to the ruling groups and powers, even if they are doing rebellious acts, in reality they are unable to protect and defend themselves. In the social grouping, one group is always exercising or tends to exercise hegemony and power over the other group or party. The dominant party makes other to surrender in front of them and so the Subaltern group undergoes such control and supremacy (Gramsci 53). Therefore, Subalterns have no space from where they make themselves heard, as they believe in the dominant values conditioned by hegemony.

Consequently, the term 'Subaltern' was adopted by Gramsci in Post - colonial Studies from the works of the historians under the premises of Subaltern Studies. Their aim was to investigate the Subaltern themes and issues in the postcolonial field of research such as gender discrimination, class formation or class exploitation, identity crisis and many more. The rationale is to trace out the subjugation of the oppressed, or the power of the elite or dominant group in

Subaltern Studies in all its forms. As Ranajit Guha (1982) asserts that generally it is considered that in Subaltern Studies the purpose of the critics or the researchers was to dig out the subordination, subjugation, marginalization and suppression of the particular group or people from the factors affecting in terms of differences in, gender, age, caste system, or in any other way. These themes or issues affect the Subaltern in any circumstances. They have to suffer, they are treated as if they have no existence or their existence does not matter for the dominant or the leading powers (Guha vii). Subaltern studies aim to investigate the imbalance created by the elite culture in South Asian historiography. In short, Subaltern critics deal with the attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and behavior of the dominant class over the Subaltern group. Thomas Macaulay in his famous work "Minute on Indian Education" (1935) published in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (2003) *"The Post - Colonial Studies Reader"*, states that colonizers must have a strategy to dominate. He asserts:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between the millions and us whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. (Macaulay 430)

Macaulay's perspective is to deal with the effects of colonizers, as the dominating class is always suppressing the feelings of the dormant class. They can overpower the suppressed class by imposing their language on it. The country's vernacular dialects need to be refined for the dormant class through enrichment of these dialects from the 'nomenclature of West' (Macaulay 430). The Subaltern group formed by Ranajit Guha in 1980's is based on the concept that Subaltern class is the peasants and workers belonging to the lower class. According to his viewpoint, people in a society do not have equal rights or equal status. The peasants or the workers are humiliated by the upper class or the leading powers. The subordination or dominance can be understood in a binary relationship but the aim is to examine the 'Subaltern as an objective assessment of the role of the elite' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 217). A number of critics and scholars formed a group named 'Subaltern'. Ranajit Guha was its founder, while many others, including Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, Gyanendra Pandey, David Hardiman, Sumit Sarkar, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Edward Said, Gayatri

Chakravorty Spivak and many others were also associated with this group. The term 'Subaltern' studies all the binary relationships such as colonialism and nationalism suppressed or dominated class versus suppresser or dominant elite. Guha constituted the Subaltern school to study cultural, political and social hegemony of one group over the other. Initially, Subaltern group was formed against the hegemony of the colonial and nationalists. For Guha, Subalterns were the peasants or the working class of colonial world as historiography of Nationalism is dominated by elitism (Guha, "On Some Aspects", Selected 37). Gyan Prakash (2000) in his essay "Writing Post - Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspective from Indian Historiography" (1990) states that Ranajit Guha views Subaltern as an essential object in class system, as this is a relation of dominance and subordination. This relation is expressed through various means of economic, cultural, social and linguistic background (Chaturvedi 179). Afterwards, David Washbrook considers South Asia different in its cultural, economic, or political setup. He states in "Historiographical" essay on South Asia in 1988 that India is incapable of undergoing the effects of Capitalism, as this is a different world and to prove it, he tries to wipe out Colonialism out of existence. 'Subaltern' to Edward Said (1978), has historical, intellectual and political connotation.

Although the researchers and critics keep on investigating the 'Subalterns' significant role in society and in this process, the theory goes through several transformations and shows varying interests and motives. However, the overall studies remain consistent in giving Subaltern their due place in history. In 1980, Subaltern became an important theory, when focus was narrowed on gender studies. It gives a broader perspective to Subaltern historians. Diverse themes emerged in the last two decades of the 20th century. Now, the focus is on studying Subalterns in the dominant discourse of the elites. Amrita Biswas in "Research Notes on Subaltern Studies" (2009) quoted Leela Ghandi,

Subaltern Studies defines itself as an attempt to allow people finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and in doing so, to speak for, or to sound the muted voices of, the truly oppressed. (Biswas 201)

Therefore, in this notion of Subalternity, Spivak raised a question with the argument in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak realized the invisibility and muted voice of woman in the society caused by the dishonor or shame in the dominating groups. Spivak in her essay states that in a dominating class, a Subaltern woman is marginalized and oppressed object. In this research, the researcher has taken this essay of Spivak as a conceptual framework in order to know about the silent voices of women presented in the selected texts from South Asia. Spivak discussing the notion of feminine states that a real issue is with woman, as woman can only understand and describe the relationship between herself and woman. As Subaltern subject, woman is doubly affected by sexual difference, on both ends as an 'object of colonialist historiography' and as a 'subject of insurgency'; this in result keeps the male dominant in the ideological construction of gender. In the colonial production, she states that, "the Subaltern has no history cannot speak, the Subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow . . ." (Nelson and Grossberg 287).

While Spivak's main focus remains on the tribal woman and her bodily exploitation, her other works concentrate on tracing the general genealogical practices during the colonial era and the freedom movement. Instance of this latter kind can be found in such anthologies as *Recasting Women* (1990) as well as in *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (1992). In an article appearing in the *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, Ketu H. Katrak criticizes Mr. Gandhi's philosophy of non - violence as it essentially gave women no active role (Katrak 395 - 404). In fact, they are considered to render quite passive, obedient and submissive role to their male counterparts in all spheres of life. He argues that the age-old traditions of male domination were never really challenged by this non - violent leader. In fact, to quote his words: "Gandhi sought to utilize the myth of the Indian women's submissiveness, her ability to suffer silently, as an image of the political resistance necessary for a nationalist struggle" (Katrak 13).

Gayatri Spivak believes that woman is the real Subaltern as she has no authority or she has no power to raise her voice in front of anybody; she even cannot float her opinion in front of her own family members because they are the ones who suppress her voice at first. Spivak argues that the 'Third World' woman is always in question, she is socially deprived and even writers do not give her

privilege. This creates a space to depict the silenced voices of the female Subaltern. Subaltern women writers focus on the voices of resistance. As Bell Hook states in her essay "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness" (1989) that, "in those voices there is present counter language that goes under the process of transformation" (Hooks 207). This is a voice, which is against that oppression, subjugation and domination that does not allow a woman to stand or establish her identity. These characters not only speak from a marginalized position but also from a position of resistance.

1.3 Emergence of Spivak's Notion of Subaltern:

Gayatri Chakraboty Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" was first published in WEDGE journal in 1985. Later it was published in "*Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*" edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg in 1988. She used the term Subaltern to define the "oppressed subjects" (Spivak, preface x). In postcolonial terms, 'Subaltern' refers to the group of people that are politically and socially under the hegemonic power structures. This group of people is socially restricted or bound to remain at a distance from the societies that establish structures and they are excluded from the political representation. In this way, they are left with no means through which they can raise their voice in social order. The postcolonial field seems to have found a new direction with the initiation of the Subaltern studies group. This, however, was again altered altogether when Spivak disclosed the presence of a 'gendered Subaltern' (Nelson and Grossberg 295). She pointed out that the issue of a gendered Subaltern was brought to light by her famous statement 'can the Subaltern speak?' The gendered Subaltern has historically been effaced or hushed into silence since long. Such treatment as this eventually brought the very field under much argument. It also raised a number of new questions for those practicing the post - colonialism outside of the strictly Asian context.

From a discursive perspective, there seems to have surfaced two sorts of literature during the postcolonial scenario in India as postulated by Spivak in her work "*In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*" (2006). The first category comprises such Subaltern historiographers as Ranajit Guha who stresses the need for rewriting the history under the British rule. The chief reason for the proposition

is the pathetic yet systematic exclusion of the poor population's pivotal role played during the freedom movement. The second category, led by the likes of Spivak, points to yet another division within the Subalternism itself, the gendered Subaltern. The argument goes that this latter kind of Subaltern has been overlooked by the Subaltern historiographers even (Spivak 204).

Through 'Subaltern', she defines the 'oppressed subjects' specifically identified as members of the Subaltern classes of Antonio Gramsci and generally taken as the people of inferior status. Spivak (2003) argues, "The voices, lives and struggles of 'Third World' women will be silenced . . ." (Spivak 07). According to this viewpoint, a patriarchal society suppresses the Subaltern woman by ignoring her voice. The female Subaltern struggles to resist the hegemonic designs of her husband, father and brother who even go to the extent of applying force and torture to make her voiceless/silent. All these moves on the part of her husband or her family weaken her identity. The struggle and voice of female Subaltern in this postcolonial scenario is silenced as Spivak states that the real 'Subalterns' are the women not the peasants, as they cannot raise their voices for their legal rights. Spivak in, *'Feminism and Critical Theory'*, (1987) states that,

My own definition of a woman is very simple: it rests on the word 'man' as used in texts that provide the foundation for the corner of the literary criticism establishment that I inhabit. You might say that this is a reactionary position. Should I not carve out an independent definition for myself as a woman? (Spivak 77)

Spivak is of the view that even 'independent' definition of woman is not correct, the word 'wo' has no meaning, cannot stand on its own, this has to depend on 'man' in order to form a word 'woman' and so is the case with the word 'female' and 'she' where 'fe' and 's' have no individual meaning.

Writing in *"Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism"*(1989), Trinh T. Minh-ha discusses how the postcolonial female intellectuals from the western academy were also reduced to a marginalized status. She hints at the risk of the Third World woman feeling herself 'special' even in her marginalization. This sense of specialty, she argues, goes on to soothe and anesthetize a fellow's ability to question the West alongside its continuing

injustices done to the populations across the Third World countries. Thus isolated, the Third World woman is systematically prevented from making any significant contributions to the betterment of her the society she lives in. She quotes Julia Kristeva by saying that a woman who braves sexual, social and symbolic experiences becomes something else; "a subject - in - the - making, a subject on trial" (Min-ha86). Therefore, such a woman is always a victim of the binary oppositions that brings about her subordination in society and culture. Spivak suggests a critical strategy against this system of thinking, based on binary opposition, which represents the 'minority groups' negative representation such as females and the working class or the Subaltern. The process of the subordination and domination does not complete unless the struggle and resistance of the Subaltern is in effect.

Talking about woman as subject, the discussion moves to the point of 'Third World' feminism. The third world woman struggles hard to establish her position and has to work hard to sustain as she faces a lot of atrocities in her daily routine such as torture, beating and likewise. Third world woman is the specific term used for the woman of South Asia as western feminism differs from the concepts related to the woman in Pakistan, India, or Bangladesh.

1.4 Status of Female Subaltern in the Third World:

The term "Third World" carries problematic connotation, as analytical precision seems less meaningful than rhetorical power. Firstly, this term was used by the French demographer, Alfred Sauvy in his book "*France Observateur*" published in 1952. Harlow quoted him later in 1987:

We all speak about two worlds, their wars, their co - existence and things like that, but often forget that there exists the third world, the more important, in terms of chronology, comes first . . . this Third World, scorned, exploited, ignored, as was the Third Estate, also wants to say something. (Harlow 5 - 6)

Later on, this term gets political, historical meanings that elaborate it. Eric Wolf states that the Third World is underdeveloped. This is the historical status as compared to the developed West and East. According to historians, the history of

the Third World is the history of colonialism and the relationship between societies, having its own social differences, cultures and social institutions in the colonial relationship. This is probably why, the Subaltern woman in the so - called Third World does not appear into a discourse, unless in terms of her economic exploitation and a generalized cultural discrimination. Notions such as 'false consciousness' and 'black individuality' have contributed to the reduced roles of Subaltern woman in the Third World. She seems to be moving back and forth between two points. On the one hand, she is 'the objectified other'; here, her thought processes are heavily influenced by the hegemonic/ imperialistic values; while on the other hand, she is the 'dynamic unstable subject'; here, she interweaves the discursive formulations through which 'truths' are constructed by a consideration of multiple narratives.

Marnia Lazreg in her writing *Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria*, (1988) comes up with a unique opinion. To her, the Third World intellectuals may also be involved in establishing a kind of violence against the Subaltern woman. They do this by moving away from the reality. Hence, instead of presenting their lives in heterogeneity, they just produce some sensational and uncomfortable stuff. In fact, she uses the phrase 'a museum of horrors' while describing how certain scholars present the Subaltern woman.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) in her essay "Under Western Eyes Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse" published in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory; A Reader*" raises the issue of the representation of 'Third World' Subaltern woman. Mohanty talks about feminism in the West and their approach towards 'Third World' woman. She states that the Western concept of feminism is completely different from 'Third world' woman. Scholars and critics take 'Third World' woman in constrains, oppressive traditions, urban poverty, or highly illiterate. According to the Western Feminist, viewpoint 'Third World' woman is treated as an 'Object' whom liberal democrats eradicate from history and conceal her in specific space and time. Particular cultures set arbitrary relation between woman as historical subject and hegemonic discourses that represent woman. A Western woman is educated; knows her legal rights in terms of control over her bodies and she can make decisions for themselves where as a 'Third World' woman

is in a sphere from where she cannot step out as she is ignorant, uneducated, family oriented, oppressed, marginalized, victimized, traditionally bound, and not even allowed to make decisions for herself. Thus, feminism in different world carries different meanings. She affirms that the representation of 'Third World' woman as "a singular monolithic subject" that ratifies a discursive colonization within Western Feminist theory (Mohanty 51).

1.5 Double Marginalization: Fight for Identity and Fight for Decolonization:

The Third World woman is the one who is suppressed and marginalized. Her life is full of miseries as she is fighting for her lost identities. Oppression is one of the constituent elements, which suppresses the identity of the 'Third World' woman. Therefore, in certain ways imperialist assumptions are produced by the critics and writers while talking about the status of Third World woman. Mohantay's essay is an awakening for the writers to speak for the Subaltern woman instead of only considering their subject position. In a patriarchal society like South Asia, woman is the subject to male violence; she is defined as "sexually oppressed" object. This is substantiated by Lewis and Mills (2003) in the following words:

The potential of male violence against women elucidates their social position to some extent, women is defined as an archetypal victims that freezes them into "objects - who - defined - themselves," men in to "subjects - who - perpetrate - violence," and divide society into two groups of people, powerful (men) and powerless (women). (Lewis and Mills 58)

Consequently, this indicates the patriarchal setup and colonial violence that woman is left with no space from where they can speak. Spivak deals with the absence of woman's voice in postcolonial era where the subject position is lost. Hence, the postcolonial feminists mainly focus on two-fold project: "To racialise feminist theory and to insert feminists concerns into conceptualization of colonialism and post colonialism" (Lewis and Mills 03).

In Mohanty's (2003) perspective, woman is universally dependent on man; the biological discrimination makes woman weak, subordinate, powerless object and marginal. Moreover, the status of a married woman is structured as a victim of the colonial process. In Levis Strauss's theory of kinship that constructs a system to exchange woman, not only because of subordination of woman but also because of the values attached with the modes of exchange. A man has legal rights over the female body and woman is forced to live in that power relation (Lewis and Mills 60 - 61). Spivak in "*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards A History of the Vanishing Present*" (1999) states that woman can resist but then she needs a space from where she can raise her voice. She further states that if a woman consistently remains in Subalternity, then cultural formations that bound her mind in unreasoned responsibility violate her epistemologically (Spivak 102). Moreover, Spivak also states that no matter the rights are given to the female through philosophy of Subaltern or feminism, but the reality differs and the reality is what actually happens in a factory, in prison, in school or in public (Spivak 275).

The Subaltern woman, therefore, keeps moving back and forth between these two conflicting positions. Either in the shape of false consciousness (produced by such oppressive ideologies as patriarchy and capitalism) or under the guise of subjective contemplation, it remains her destiny to suffer endlessly. As aforementioned, the whole discussion is not entirely about an over - simplified version of power inversions. In this research, the conclusion cannot simply come up with two random groups of the oppressor and the oppressed, based on the subject's economic and cultural status alone. In fact, oppression and powerlessness do not always go hand in hand, as is evident in the Subaltern's case. Subaltern is under the power structure and Subaltern is oppressed. Power plays a significant role as Subaltern has to obey and remain under that hegemonic pressure.

1.6 Spivak Viewpoint of Subaltern:

Stephen Morton in his book *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* published in 2003 states that Subaltern historians amalgamated their work with post - modernist school of thought; they borrowed the idea of power relation given by Michel Foucault. Gayatri Spivak seems critical of this model of knowledge / power given by Foucault because of the fact that this ignores the exploitation of the "Third

World' workers both at home and abroad. Spivak refers to critics like Foucault and Gilles Deleuze who consider that there is a heterogonous relationship among power / desire / interest, so it is counter - productive to reduce the legitimacy of network. Secondly, the discourse of the 'Other' should be disclosed by the intellectuals. Both of them are of the view that the intellectuals should play a role of the medium through which they can represent the voice of the oppressed. Spivak in the essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" makes a point with Foucault and Deleuze about the idea that "theory is a relay of practice" and that the oppressed can speak for themselves. Spivak (1990) states that this concept of 'speaking for themselves' questions representation and self - representation that is a problem (Spivak 57). Spivak (1999) is of the view that Deleuze and Foucault fail to recognize the process of reproduction of a system that silences Europe's 'Other'. They are not aware of the fact "what actually happens" as Foucault insists on 'speaking for themselves' as he terms the oppressed as 'subject', the 'object being' knows better than the intellectual and they can speak it well (Nelson and Grossberg 274). They talk about margins, the silenced center, the tribal, the illiterate peasantry and the lower strata of urban sub - proletariat. Bell Hook (1989) is of the view that the Subaltern is aware of those forces that make her silent and these forces differ from those forces that want the Subaltern to speak. The forces that push Subaltern to speak, want them to speak from the space in the margin, not in the voice of resistance. Hence, space in margin is the sign of deprivation, wound and an unfulfilled longing. Accordingly, Bell Hook affirms, "marginality as a site of resistance" (Hooks 209).

Gayatri Spivak moreover argues in her essay that Subaltern Studies is more 'Marxist' in its views although there is a difference in its historiography. In "Deconstructing Historiography," the relationship does not join Marxism but actually, it questions Subaltern consciousness and Subalternity. Moreover, Spivak tries to split Subaltern into a group of people that survive without history rather into a hegemonic structure. It is observed that in order to know about the marginalized and suppressed figures by colonial and nationalist historians the Subaltern critics have used post - structuralist and deconstructive strategy. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) argues that the past of Subaltern is taken as an act to the past of the historians. He further states that in India "violence and hierarchy that sustain

remain the dominant organizing principles in everyday life whereas West is characterized by individualism, democracy and egalitarianism" (Chaturvedi 56).

Gayatri Spivak through her writings talks about "colonial subject" as a philosophical agent, and the politics of representation as a problem. For Spivak the notion of 'self-other' is colonial ideology as for colonies; European calls them 'other'. Thus, for Spivak, the European's act of essentialization of the 'other' is 'reinforcement of imperial ideology' and an 'epistemic violence'. J. Maggio (2007) observes that according to Kant's theory, only European man can survive; he excludes the Subaltern from the 'subject' and thus he establishes the modern western subject that helps to define its other. Therefore, 'silencing of the Subaltern does not only shape the discourse, but also renders the Subaltern without a 'subject being' (Maggio 426).

1.7 Fiction and Feminine Focus in Postcolonial Writings:

Woman fiction in 1980's deals with the subordinate group of people that are under the spiritual and cultural hegemonic structures. Woman fiction foregrounds the banal and domestic politics that often deals with elite domination. Moreover, Spivak's theory is taken as a background for this research, where the silence of the Subaltern is considered as a lack of speech and in similar way 'banality' is considered as lack of value in epistemological, aesthetic and political sense. Brinda Bose (1997) in her review of *Subaltern Studies IX*, states that; 'Subaltern Studies is considered to be a touch stone for the research in South Asian history, culture and society'. Kate Currie (2001) states in this regard that Subaltern Studies is a shift away of Subaltern politics towards critical theory, cultural history and the representation of Subaltern subjectivity in the stratum of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault (Ludden 16 - 17).

Spivak discusses the problems and issues faced by woman in a patriarchal cultural setup as a 'colonial subject'; Spivak regrets that woman does not enjoy fair representation in any sphere of life. She is merely a victim to be rescued and pitied. In this cultural and hegemonic setup of South Asia, the ideological framework also supports male to dominate. If in colonial history, the Subaltern has no voice and no permission to speak then the female Subaltern is a glaring example of

marginalization. Woman as politically oppressed and marginalized group cannot resist the situation and 'the Subaltern woman' does not carry a dominant and distinguish language that can be heard. Spivak tries to raise voice for the Subaltern woman not for political reasons but her concern is to promote the female identity. Indeed, woman in South Asian community works hard against the patriarchal and heterosexist construction of the culture. The aim is not only to empower woman but also to share their predicament and plight in society for others to learn.

Postcolonial women writers in their writings deal with the hegemonic structures. They talk about the privileged subjects. These writers frame themselves in opposition to the silence of the colonized female subject. In order to incorporate the Subaltern voices into narratives, there is a conscious effort required to develop a text that makes the Subaltern speak from the margin. Every writer carries her experiences while writing, like writers from the privileged background talk about the efforts of the female working for the Subaltern class and the writers from the middle - class talk about the marginalized and the Subaltern woman. They know the difference between reality and fiction that when and how the room is created for the Subaltern to speak. Therefore, an author manages to write from a position in order to elaborate the silence and awakens the conscious of the reader. In a certain situation, silence can be misinterpreted like in the form of obedience and benevolence, so the subject that is represented should be able to speak for others. Even when at times the Subaltern woman speaks, the readers do not understand her stance being unable to realize the Subaltern situation and other dominating power structures over her. The silence of the Subaltern woman threatens the readers by virtue of the curiosity that what is going to happen next, or what will this silence result in.

1.8 Representation of the Unheard Subaltern:

With the issue of representation of the Subaltern woman comes the question of construction, classification, connotation and denotation. Representation, through such tools as writing and photography, attempts to present what was once absent. Stephen Tyler (1987) says that the phenomenon can be used to create as well as manipulate illusions in order to exercise power over others. The process of representation is always connected with power. It can be used either for

reproducing an image or for attempting to speak for others. In an essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak also talks about representation. Using Marx's theory, she discusses representation in terms of political and philosophical contexts. While constructing the subjectivity of the Subaltern woman, both these concepts must be considered.

Talking about representation, Deleuze (1977) argues that there always exists a multiplicity in the act of speaking, even within the individual. In fact, he is of the view that representation ceases to exist as a result. What is left is only action — both theoretical and practical (Deleuze 206 - 207). This makes Spivak quite critical of Deleuze. According to her, when outside of the situations of representation and without considering the economic and historical determinants, the oppressed subjects get still lesser opportunities to speak for themselves. In order to get better understanding and the geopolitical and economic constitution of the world, representation in terms given by Marx cannot be ignored.

Spivak is concerned about the representation of the Subaltern, but the problem that hinders the way is that nobody cares about the Subaltern logic, knowledge, or modes of thought. Spivak therefore argues that there should be a space that gives a place to the voices that are restrained, muted or muffled. She raises a question for the listeners to listen to those specific voices that are present in the postcolonial texts but are silenced, muted or unheard, so one must pay attention to those muted voices that raise the consciousness of the Subaltern. This effort of making some invisible thought or identity visible will help the Subaltern to be distinguished from the subordinating class. Spivak talks about Foucault's view that while analyzing any subject a critic must take into account the psychological, linguistic or psychoanalytical approach without thinking about the relationship of the subordinate over the marginalized one. Thus, any critical analysis of the discourse will come to know about these relationships. Subaltern's standpoint is that people from suppressed or marginalized class have less interest in possessing their status or their image in society rather they look at their society from a perspective where they are downgraded. The particular positions are taken by the 'outsiders within', the idea behind this thought is that these 'outsiders within' possess an objective and privileged standpoint in the society to dominate the things

easily. Spivak's framework is the best for challenging the patriarchal structures by interpreting the 'other' as the subject with a voice.

Through her use of Derrida's ideas of deconstruction, Spivak questions the role of representation as it negatively affects the female Subaltern. Representation through a proxy (the act of 'speaking for'), representation in terms of the image construction (that is, 'speaking as'), and a removal of the heterogeneous qualities cause serious problems in her view. The act of speaking is closely connected to the issue of epistemic violence of the West. When she speaks, the Subaltern woman acts like a native informant for the First - World intellectuals, who might be interested in hearing the voice of the 'other'. Edward Said in '*Orientalism*' (1978) discusses the binary opposition between the oriental and occidental practices. He notes that the orient is the one who is suppressed by the superior. Whereas, the superior position of the orient nourishes upon and is derived from the orient itself. This way, the West is glorified as well as exalted beyond measure (Said 57).

Gayatri Spivak (1999) argues that in order to represent the Subaltern there is no room left that can represent the Subaltern class; the Subaltern subject cannot speak itself, the actual problem lies that "the subject itinerary has not been left traced so as to offer an object of seduction to the representing intellectual" (Spivak 272). In respect with the Subaltern subject detached from the dominant discourses, they do not have any resistance or an act of dissent that actually provides a language with which the Subaltern voice can be raised. In certain cases, the mode of representation or the dominant language is aptly selected in order to hear the marginal or suppressed voices, so is the post - colonial discourse that speaks itself. Many post-colonial scholars and critics talked about the indigenous and colonized subjects who have the tendency to mute the Subaltern. She (1994) builds her argument by stating: "The substantive concern for the politics of the oppressed . . . can hide a privileging of the intellectual and of the 'concrete' subject of oppression" (Spivak 87).

Speaking about the Subaltern woman's poor plight, Spivak (1988) finds her caught between the tradition and the modernization that disturbs her very much. The sharp contrast between the Western woman and the Subaltern woman is also an irritating fact. While the former has been taking giant leaps with every passing

day, the latter continues to be in a surreal state over the years. Her life is unchanged and impoverished. She is a speechless being who cannot even represent herself. Stuck between the webs of patriarchy and imperialism, she has lost her real being as a woman, rather she is more than often reduced to nothingness. Even with the advent of the 'modernization,' things do not much change for the Subaltern woman. Capitalist and patriarchal practices seem to form certain unannounced conspiracies to keep her enchained despite her apparent 'liberation'. Her very body becomes a sort of battleground for contesting discourses aimed at her. Yet, amidst the thick din of all feminist debates, she is rendered voiceless. In addition, the fact remains that she as a person cannot be represented and both these views are significant in the present study.

Man appears to exploit woman in a systematic way by adopting various strategies. In an article entitled "The Traffic in Women: Notes of the 'Political Economy' of Sex", Gayle Rubin (1975) observes the class oppression that woman has to face. For this purpose, she employs the theories presented by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. She also sees it through the perspectives of anthropology and psychoanalysis, given respectively by Claude Levi - Strauss and Sigmund Freud. These works are presented as overlapping and help her comprehend the systematic nature of the oppression. Referring to Marxism, she notes that there is no such thing as sex. Hence, what really matters is if one is a peasant or a capitalist. On the other hand, it matters very little if one is a man or a woman (Rubin 160). In order to get a better view of feminism, both gender and sex must be considered. Rubin gives a clear definition of gender as thus: "[it is a] socially imposed division of the sexes. It is a product of the social relations of sexuality" (Rubin 179). Thus, in her opinion, sex is something biological whereas gender is something social. Though two are different entities, sex seems more crucial. The former is changed into the latter. This social relation turns into gender power relation as one gender that is male dominant over the female. Consequently, Rubin correlates gender with sex and social relations.

So in this regard, Spivak (1996) states that if the Subaltern woman wants to speak by making an effort to the death even then, she is unheard; nobody pays attention to the cause of her death. Speech act is completed by the two ways process when one speaks and the other listens to the speaker (Spivak 292). Social

location is the place from where the writer speaks for the Subaltern in South Asian society where the Subaltern woman suffers from oppression and exploitation. Spivak opines that every woman's experience differs from the other, as Subalterns are subject to the different structures of domination, which slowly and systematically oppress and marginalize the Subaltern.

Spivak states that when the Subaltern woman is marginalized through oppression in a patriarchal system, she becomes the subject of colonial outcomes. Spivak (1990) gives her opinion about the Subaltern woman and the suppression of her voice in discourse of imperialism and nationalism (Spivak 15). Spivak (1988) says that there is no space for the Third World woman to stand out as she is caught between tradition and modernization; "there is no space from where the sexed Subaltern can speak" (Spivak 307). Bart Moore - Gilbert argues that Spivak presents Subalterns as irrevocable, powerless, subjugated and defenseless that in result she fall victim to the hegemonic power structures. In this regard, Benita Parry in *"Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse"* (1987) states that the native women are surrounded by diverse and assorted social relationships and always seen from the site of class difference, cultural variation and caste distinction. They are divided into the categories that it seems impossible to recognize or locate their voice, specifically "women who adorned themselves as ascetics, healers as well as artisans and through this modifies Spivak model of the silent Subaltern" (Parry 35).

In the thought provoking essay of Gayatri Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak?", she gives the example of Sati, a ritual in Hindu society. In this tradition, if the husband dies, the wife is burned along as if the existence of woman does not matter for that society at all. Otherwise, the widow is sent to a place where she has to live all her life and is forced to wear white sari her entire lifetime. Thus, Spivak questions that why sati is enforced in Indian patriarchal society with rigor. Sometimes the widower owes property but under the influence of traditions and customs, she has to spare the share in her property for her brother or son. Therefore, in the Colonialism and Patriarchal setups the figure that is ignored, disregarded or overlooked is woman, she is considered as the "Third World Woman" always engaged and caught up in the name of traditions and customs.

1.9 Representation of the 'Unheard' Subaltern Through Fiction:

In South Asian fiction, the suppression of woman is seen through the lens of the selected South Asian writers who represent females as the Subaltern. The South Asian woman as depicted in fiction is subjugated by inhuman laws and customs, such as honor killing, sati, bride burning, miss-match making or marriage with the Quran. Many South Asian writers explore the issues of woman for instance, Shashi Deshpande, one of the Indian thought provoking writers, with the help of her writing exposes the issues haunting woman. Her writings like, *"Roots and Shadows"*, *"That Long Silence"*, *"The Dark Holds No Terrors"* and other deals with the women's struggle in society. The protagonist of the text such as Indu, Jaya and Sarita tries to escape from the harsh realities of life. The brutality and ruthlessness these characters confront at different stages of life make them the Subaltern women. They lived in a society where the voice of woman is snubbed and the dominated figure always pushes her to the dark corner of the room. Woman, who so ever, whether educated like Jaya or ignorant like Sarita has to face the cruel and unkind world. Bharati Mukherjee by dint of her writings *"Jasmine"* and *"Desirable Daughters"* trace the cultural clashes of her immigrant characters. These writings deal with woman's desire to achieve something in her life; her life seems to be meaningful and purposeful. Kamila Shamsie, a Pakistani writer, highlights the sufferings of woman in various manners. In *"Burnt Shadows"* Hiroko, the protagonist of the text, suffers not because her husband beats her or her father is an unkind person but because of her fate as she copes with the changes that took place globally such as the atomic bomb attack, the partition of Pakistan and India and the 9/11 incident. These political upheavals disturb her life and make her a Subaltern woman. Bapsi Sidhwa's *"Cracking India"*, Arundhati Roy's *"The God of Small Things"*, Uzma Aslam Khan's *"Trespassing"*, Khaled Hosseini *"A Thousand Splendid Suns"* and many other writings of South Asian writers deal with the issues of woman that they experience in their everyday life. Woman is marginalized and forced into silence for the sake of family honor of a brother, father or husband. Through all these examples, it can be seen that woman is considered to be an unheard object and this research is an attempt to give voice to the subjugated woman of South Asia through her representation in the selected texts. In Edward Said's book, *"Culture and Imperialism"* (1993) he affirms that,

We live in a world not only of commodities but also of representations - their production, circulation, history and interpretation are the very elements of culture. (Said 56)

In a patriarchal society like India, the rights of a married woman are denied domestically. At home, she is powerless, whereas all the power is vested in the husband. The social status of woman even diminishes after her divorce and after the disappearance or the death of her husband. In case of the aforementioned incidents, she encounters a sudden disappearance of the 'protecting hands'. However, if she is fortunate enough, she still manages to live somehow, which is certainly a lower life, as her powers are lessened. The element of respect is also adversely affected. Although she still carries on with the daily household chores, yet her gender still is the cause of discrimination. Rubin (1975) starts the rights - versus - obligations discussion which both men and women have a good deal of each of these. In certain cases, the situation worsens when woman is treated as though a cheap commodity worth buying and selling. In her father's home, a girl has many rights and when he marries her away, he thinks there is an end to his obligations regarding his daughter. Nonetheless, some people do display maturity. Sons and brothers realize their responsibilities and take the woman without a husband back within their folds (Rubin 140). However, despite many disadvantages associated with widowhood, it is true that a widow does have more choices to make. She can lead a freer and independent life as compared to the married woman.

After having studied gender theories and considered their application on women, Rubin went on to show several new goals to the feminist movement itself. Her advice to feminism was to abolish the matter of one's sex. In fact, she dreamt of a genderless and androgynous society where one is being a man or a woman did not matter. Rather, her argument was that one ought instead to be seen, simply as a human free to do whatever pleased and interested one.

This present study aims at discovering, knowing and exploring the mysterious figure of the Subaltern woman. To this purpose, the narrative construction and deconstruction of the elements of re-presentation have been considered in the South Asian literature. This dissertation deals with narrative as an

act that is socially symbolic. The ethnic subjectivity too has been explored at length. In addition, the critiques of the Subaltern re-presentation also make an essential part of the work. Linda Martin Alcoff (1995) in "The Problem of Speaking for Others" talks about the Subaltern woman as "arrogant and politically illegitimate". She moreover states that there is a link between feminism and the Subaltern woman. Spivak asserts that there is a difference between the "true Subaltern" and the "Subaltern" created by the authors through their fictional work (Alcoff 02). In this study, the difficulties, hardships, misgivings, turning points in the life of Subaltern women, insights and strengths are being explored, the way the protagonists of the texts build their momentum to stand straight in society built by the men, who always treat women as the second being.

1.10 Statement of the Problem:

This research concerns the silence of woman indicating her oppression in society. This is no doubt a predominant issue. In order to make the Subaltern woman speak, it is important to dismantle the power structure. The aim of this research is to highlight the complexities in the life of suppressed woman, the way she resists and creates a way out in a patriarchal society. Woman enables herself to master the art of overcoming her difficulties and she expresses her resistance to the dominant ideology through discourse. The term 'Subaltern' refers to woman in this study and the selected writer's project this issue in their texts. The theoretical framework of the study is Spivak's notion of 'Subaltern', which is conjoined with Michelle M. Lazar's method of 'Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis', will be applied to the selected literary texts of South Asia. The study will investigate not only the theoretical and practical application of discourse, but will also evoke the collective consciousness of the entire society, thereby reiterating the fact that woman needs equal and kind treatment and must be treated as a being. This is a significant issue, which needs to be highlighted and researched.

1.11 Locating the Inquiry:

The mutual interaction of gender differences, power politics, post colonialism and the national identity are some of the significant aspects of South Asian authors. In the scenario of South Asian literary tradition, the readers can

grasp the crux of Subaltern theory by knowing that woman is enchained with so many restrictions in the name of modernity. Woman is a victim of the brutality of man, subjected, marginalized, oppressed, subjugated and exploited by the dominant and governing power structures of society. Hence, this research explores the resistance of Subaltern woman to the situation where she is not only trapped but also she finds it difficult to escape from it.

1.12 Significance of Study:

The present study aims to bring to light the issue of oppression and subjugation of female as Subaltern in the South Asian fiction. The research is an attempt to raise the voice of the woman as the oppressed 'other' that is suppressed and controlled by the dominant hegemonic group. The focus of this research is on the silenced voices of the female Subaltern as presented in the selected literary texts from South Asia. The research reveals the resistance of the silenced Subaltern woman and hence aims at evoking the consciousness of woman to promote awareness about her legal rights and help her establish her identity.

1.13 Research Objectives:

As Gayatri Spivak (1985 b) states, "the particular task of a researcher is to investigate, or identify the nature, or degree of deviation between the dominant group and the marginalized group. The researcher investigates from the conceptual framework of Subaltern and then situates it historically" (Spivak 27). The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine and to see how woman is embodied as Subaltern in the selected South Asian literary fiction.
2. To evaluate the element of female resistance of Subaltern presented in South Asian fiction.

1.14 Research Questions:

1. What are the ways through which the Subaltern woman denounces the suppression of her feelings in the selected literary texts of South Asia?

2. How do South Asian writers raise their voice for the rights of the Subaltern woman in their literary works?
3. How the element of resistance is projected in the selected literary texts of South Asia?

1.15 Delimitation:

This study is delimited to the South Asian novels. The selection is based on the research paradigms as the three texts are selected from three states of South Asia: Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Primarily they are selected in order to give detailed description of Subalternity in South Asian literature. The research is further delimited to one text of the three different countries in order to know about the female as Subaltern figure in three different states of South Asia. The texts selected are:

- a) *The Holy Woman* by Qaisra Shahraz – Pakistani novelist.
- b) *The Dowry Bride* by Shobhan Bantwal – Indian novelist.
- c) *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali – Bangladeshi novelist.

1.15.1 *The Holy Woman:*

Qaisra Shahraz, a Pakistani born writer lived in England, talks about the feudal system in Pakistan where an educated woman is forced to stay in confined environment. Many of the Asian women are forced to stay quiet on the traditional conceptual framework of "Izzat". Women are not allowed to raise voice in front of their male family members, even if they have to defend their own rights.

1.15.2 *The Dowry Bride:*

Shobhan Bantwal, an Indian author, born and raised in a conservative Hindu family moved to U.S after getting married. She talks about the issue of a married woman, who has been promised by the family member to give heavy dowry but unfortunately is unable to fulfill the promise. She is the true picture of a Subaltern woman as she cannot raise her voice even after listening to the fatal plan of her husband and her mother - in - law to bury her alive. This incident makes her Subaltern - consciousness alive and she tries to get out of that vicious circle.

1.15.3 *Brick Lane:*

Monica Ali, a Bangladeshi born British novelist, presents a character that is displaced from her homeland. In spite of living in the West and a different culture, the approach of man towards the woman in that foreign land is of typical manner, where woman is considered as second being. Woman like Nazneen living in the West faces same issues as woman like Haseena living in the East; they both suffer at their end. Ali is successful in representing the Subaltern woman through her text.

1.16 Conceptual Framework:

Using insights provided by the essay '*Can the Subaltern Speak?*' by Gayatri Spivak, this research attempts to examine the re-presentation of the Subaltern woman within the narratives of these selected literary texts. It focuses on all the exclusion and inclusion of the marginal voices therein. The research will bring to the limelight the disenfranchised group of women, whose ontological existence is marginalized and silenced by mainstream social and national discourses of post - colonial countries like Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. The researcher concentrates more on the first half of the twentieth century. This research will focus in particular on the female representation of Subaltern through the marginalized space in South Asian fiction.

The texts selected for this research show the resistance of the Subaltern woman as well as the resistance of the writers towards the power structure that suppresses her identity. The Subaltern woman is aptly represented by the writers in their work as they provide her space to resist against the domination and suppression through her physical strength and consequently the society can hear her. It is the writers' credit that they make the Subaltern voices to be heard, otherwise they will always remain at a distance from the society, as Spivak asserts that 'there is little difference between subject constitution and object formation'. Gayatri Spivak says that a true Subaltern is the one whose identity is lost; the Subaltern subject cannot represent and speak itself.

In this research, the texts have been selected from a viewpoint to investigate the Subaltern notion through female. Through the hegemonic hierarchy, the writers have portrayed the protagonists as marginalized, because they consider

male as supper human or from privileged class, whereas female as Subaltern gender and the suppressed one. All the texts selected are dealing with the Subaltern women who are cornered in the male dominated society; the women from all the texts are surviving with their issues. They are the real Subaltern as they are trying to raise their voice in order to be heard by a patriarchal society.

1. 17 Outline of the Study:

This research work is divided into seven chapters so that the readers can understand and see up to what extent resistance of female as Subaltern exists in South Asian fiction. Chapter 1 deals with the foregrounding of the research as it gives brief foundation of the whole dissertation. Chapter 2 deals with the literary background of the research as it gives commencement and describes the pioneering leaders of the theory. This chapter handles the theorists and their perspective about the background of the research. Chapter 3 deals with the method and theoretical framework. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis is adopted as method and Subaltern is the theory. The Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis encompasses three elements overlapping the Subaltern theory. Firstly, gender roles that make male dominant and woman subordinate. Secondly, power politics that leads the life of woman and lastly ideology that is vanquished by the dominating power structures of the society. Chapter 4 deals with the analysis of Pakistani novel "*The Holy Woman*" by Qaisera Shahraz. It deals with the Subaltern woman in line with the researcher's viewpoint that deals with the woman presented in the text; that is the exploitation of religion. Chapter 5 deals with the Indian text "*The Dowry Bride*" by Shobhan Bantwal which highlights the terms and condition relating the school of matrimony of the Indian society, their conservative approach towards woman and how they force a woman to stay in the confined environment. They burn the woman alive, for the greed of obtaining the dowry. Chapter 6 deals with the Bangladeshi text, "*Brick Lane*" by Monica Ali that deals with the subjugation of woman. It portrays the hardships of a woman in a society, where she is alienated. Finally, chapter 7 concludes by answering the research question and presents the findings. At the end, recommendations for future researchers have also been provided.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Subaltern Studies emerged in the early 1980's as a new field and it refers to the group of people, who are socially under the hegemonic structure of the colonial powers. Eric J. Hobsbawn, Christopher Hill, E. P. Thompson and others were the developer of the most famous approach "History from Below" considered as the English tradition. The themes, critic's viewpoint and certain other aspects were common in that approach and the Subaltern Studies, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2002) in *"Habitations of Modernity: Essays in The Wake of Subaltern Studies"* states that both were influenced by 'British Marxist Historians' though modified by 'Third World Sensitivities' (Chakrabarty 07). Both of these approaches looked at the perspective from an anti - elitist approach to history and both of them owe an intellectual obligation to Antonio Gramsci for getting over with the reading of Karl Marx. The basic aim of Subaltern Studies was to give Subaltern space in history, a proper place that represented their issues, aspirations and problems. Contributions of insights from Edward Said's 'Orientalism', Homi Bhabha's 'analysis of colonial discourse' and Spivak's 'Deconstructionism' make a shift in Subaltern studies. Arif Dirlik (1994) stated in an article "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism" that 'a Subaltern study is merely an application of approaches by the Marxist historians, although modified by "Third World Sensibilities" (Dirlik 340). There were number of theorists and scholars who dealt with the issue of the Subaltern and gave their own theories to elucidate it further. Chief among them were Antonio Gramsci, Ranajit Guha and other theorists belonging to the Latin American Subaltern Group who also played an important role in popularizing the phenomenon. There existed a relationship between

postcolonial writings and historiography; certainly broader perspectives of Subaltern Studies were under the impact of social historians.

Different theorist like, Ranajit Guha, Edward Said, Arif Dirlik, Chakrabarty, Gayatri Spivak and many others deal with the theory of Subaltern. Spivak mainly deals with the female Subaltern and Guha deals with the peasant division. This chapter will deal in detail with the concepts relating to Subaltern theorist and their perception.

2.1 Kant and Subalternity:

The Italian communist Antonio Gramsci (1891 - 1937) was the first who used the term 'Subaltern' in the civil sense. Back then, it was found to be a transcendental concept in the same sense as Kant perceived. That is to say, it was a producer as well as a destroyer of all foundations and teleology. It was, hence, something similar to what Immanuel Kant (2007) called 'the sublime' in his book "*Critique of Judgement*" that was revised, edited and introduced by Nicholas Walker. Kant postulated that, 'The inner perception of the inadequacy of every standard of sense to serve for the rational estimation of magnitude is a coming into accord with reason's laws and a displeasure that arouses the feeling of our own super - sensible vocation, according to which it is purposive and consequently a pleasure, to find every standard of sensibility falling short of the ideas of reason' (Kant 88).

Defining the 'super - sensible' as "an abyss in which the imagination is afraid to lose itself" (Kant 88). Kant believed that 'the fear fades turning instead into a source of satisfaction'. This, he believes is because the reason, recovering itself from the initial awe, reflected in a sort of 'trembling in front of it,' recaptures the super - sensible as a higher - than - the - imagination faculty. Furthering his views on the matter, he remarks that, 'the sublime feelings are in one's being, in power of aesthetic judging, feeling of displeasure at an object, this is represented and purposive at certain times, representation that is derived from the fact about incapacity of the subject's consciousness of an unlimited capacity of the same subject, the mind can judge the latter through the former' (Kant 89).

As Kant also related that the 'unlimited ability' with his 'idea of the absolute whole,' the reason's end or teleological aim was ultimately recaptured via the same failed teleology. This, in simple words, means that the very conditions which previously made the understanding of a thing quite impossible now serve as those of possibility. This way, a sense of 'totality' is regained.

2.2 Subalternity: A Struggle against Social Exclusion:

The term 'Subaltern cosmopolitanism' appeared in "*Toward a New Legal Common sense: Law, Globalization and Emancipation*" by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002). He used this term to describe such concepts as the counter - hegemonic practice and resistance as well as the struggles against neoliberal - globalization and social exclusion. The socialist thinker's term is interchangeable with 'cosmopolitan legality'. This helped him reach an 'equality of difference' through normative framework. In this latter sense, the term 'Subaltern' comes to be specifically pointing to those oppressed social groups of people, who struggle against a powerful hegemonic globalization.

2.3 Gramsci's Subaltern; Resistance against Social Classes:

Editor and translator Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (1971) in the book "*Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*", while explaining the term Subaltern, he states that it makes only one half of an underlying binary relationship. The other half, to him, is the dominant class itself. His definition of the Subalterns is of a negative kind. He does not view them a 'group of classes' on their own, for unity there is none within their ranks. To see them as a group, hence, they must be seen in comparison to the 'State'. Since the State unifies the ruling or hegemonic social classes, what is left out of this united minority category is naturally the Subaltern 'group' (Gramsci 52). Among many other factors, State is the chief perpetrator with which rests the responsibility of the kind of marginalized existence, lived by the Subaltern. Politics controls over completely and the doors to power corridor largely remain shut on the poor Subaltern classes. Some members of the Subaltern group themselves exercise a sort of hegemony. This, in Gramsci views happens through the meditation of a certain party. A detailed study of the development of several parties would

eventually be helpful for comparison's sake. While some parties go on to include elements of the hegemonic group alone, others turn to consider the Subaltern groups as well (Gramsci 53).

Nonetheless, this slight hegemony exercised by a few small groups is no parallel to the one held by the ruling elite. Though placed well above many other marginalized groups, they remain subordinates to the dominant classes. For them, the situation is similar to 'something is better than nothing'. On the other hand, in other words, they are the one - eyed kings of a nation of blinds or a penguin among the peacocks. Speaking in a strictly Italian context, Gramsci advises groups aspiring to gain governmental powers to first show their leadership qualities. Moreover, they must rise to the position of exercising the political hegemony. He laments that the Subaltern group being a 'led' group rather than a 'leading' one can never reach such level of power. These findings can well be extended beyond the limited space provided to them by Gramsci. Therefore, one may move outside of Italy as well as the realm of politics to apply the same to any sort of power. If willing to gain political hegemony, unity is all that the Subaltern groups require. On the contrary, if they allow the powerful elite to lead them as before, the Subalterns would never rise to any substantial power (Gramsci 57).

2.3.1 Subalternity; A Position without Identity:

Gramsci states that the Subaltern, in its initial phase, had no history. In *"Rethinking Gramsci"* edited by Marcus E. Green (2011), his chapter entitled "Gramsci cannot speak; Presentations and interpretations of Gramsci's concept of the Subaltern", he states that Gramsci's analysis primarily lies on the class structure of the society. That is, there were no documents claiming whether their history existed. Only committed political struggles, if met with success, are capable of not just breaking the hegemonic shackles but also of bringing the Subaltern to attain dominant social positions (Green 70). This empowering of the Subaltern, however, comes always after a phased development. The Subalterns have different sets of social values. Seen from this perspective, they seem to establish a new kind of civil society. There is, hence, an obvious possibility that they might take over as the dominant group establish their new 'ethical' state (Green 78). To their disadvantage, however, they mostly lose this 'war of position' as they 'cannot

speaking'. Besides, the role of the intellectual is closely tied to the concept of the Subaltern. In this regard, Editor David Forgacs (2000) in the book *"The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writing 1916 - 1935"* throws light on Gramsci's 'philosophy of praxis' as follows:

Every struggle demands for initiative, in the absence of initiative, struggle eventually leads to the series of defeats, mechanical determinism becomes a tremendous force of moral resistance, of cohesion and of patient and obstinate perseverance. But in case when the 'Subaltern' becomes directive and responsible for the economic activity of the masses, mechanism at a certain point becomes an imminent danger and a revision must take place in modes of thinking because a change has taken place in the social mode of existence. The boundaries and the dominion of the 'force of circumstance' become restricted. But why? Because, basically, if yesterday the Subaltern element was a thing, today it is no longer a thing but a historical person, a protagonist; if yesterday it was not responsible, because 'resisting' a will external to itself, now it feels itself to be responsible because it is no longer resisting but an agent, necessarily active and taking the initiative. (Forgacs 350 - 351)

Resembling a strict consciousness of class, Subalternity becomes a position without identity. Class, rather than being a cultural origin, conveys a sense of collective economy. As its basis of action, it has social relations of formation. Though generally considered just a matter of sexual difference, the term 'gender' is based on a sense of the collective social negotiation of such differences. Where social lines of mobility disallow the formation of another worth - recognition basis of action, Subalternity comes into existence. In its inception, the Subalternists devoted much of their attention to study examples which involved a crisis. This is also found as a basis for militancy. The scholars in the colonialist and nationalist line of historiography could not recognize the close connection at first, but, then, that sounds understandable. There was essentially no question of the Subaltern 'speaking' and its voice being heard by the official historian. How could they, after all, hear them with their own elite / ruling groups literally pushing them to the wall? Bhubaneswari Bhaduri and other groups were the first to begin the resistance. Yet, so soon into the Subalternity, they could not get any notable

attention. What's more, and important still, they could not even brag about it loudly by saying; "look here, we are the Subalterns!" Subalternity is no mere recounting of the historical aspect of the dominated classes. It emerges, instead, on instances where social lines of mobility disallow the formation of whatever basis of action.

2.3.2 Gramsci's 'Proletariat' and Marxism:

While discussing Gramsci's views on the 'Subaltern', certain scholars (Spivak, being one of them) argued that he intended to use it as a synonym for 'proletariat'. It was a code - word, which would let his manuscripts out of the 'prison' by deceiving the prison censor. This view, however, has severely been questioned with the evidence suggesting that the word 'Subaltern' was instead a new concept in his political theory. The term Subaltern has its roots in a Marxist tradition, which presented it as offering resistance to capitalism and comprising the society's underclass. Seen from this perspective, they are no mere passive and resigned - to - their - fate. In the book "*Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*" (1971), he stated, "fatalism is nothing other than the clothing worn by real and active will when in a weak position" (Gramsci 337). He moreover stated that, the critical study of Subaltern consciousness "must be a criticism of 'common sense,' basing itself initially, however on common sense . . . it is not a question of introducing from scratch, a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity" (Gramsci 331). This leads Spivak to Karl Marx deconstructive reading of the representation, Marxism opposes 'Capitalism', Spivak argues in "*Supplementing Marxism*" (1995 a) that,

Socialism is not in opposition to the form of the capitalist mode of production. It is rather a constant pushing away - a differing and a deferral - of the capitalist harnessing of the social productivity of capital. (Spivak 119)

Marx was of the view that social life is based on the conflicts of interest, as there is a relationship between bourgeoisies (wealthy stratum of middle class) they control means of production in society and the proletariat (the working lower class) they sell their labor power in capitalist's market. Spivak in her essay "The New

Subaltern: A Silent Interview" (2000) states that there is theoretical difference between Marxism and Subaltern and it is that, "Subaltern studies consider to be the bottom layer of the society, not necessarily put together by capital logic alone" (Chaturvedi 324).

The colonial history began to be investigated from a proletariat perspective by the Marxist historians. For their investigations, they used the concept of social classes as one, which was determined in terms of the subjects' economic relations. The 1970s brought a remarkable change to the whole concept. The term 'Subaltern' was used to re - write the history of the British colony of India from an entirely new perspective: leaving the past practices of presenting it from the colonizers' viewpoint alone, this history provided quite another picture of the imperial colony by bringing in the point of view of the colonized as well. During the ensuing decade, the Subaltern Studies came to be considered as an 'intervention in the South Asian historiography'. When considered as a method of intellectual discourse, the 'Subaltern' becomes problematic because of its origins as a Eurocentric method of historical inquiry to be applied on the people of the non - Western regions like Asia, Africa and Middle East. As time progressed, it gradually developed into a historical research model. In later years, the critics envision it as a method indulging in vigorous post - colonial critique. Now it is studied from the point of view of the South Asians as they faced the colonizers belonging to the Great Britain. Therefore, in this regard, there is a strong connection between Marxism and Subaltern, as they are common in many standpoints and perspectives.

2.4 Subalternism and Marxism: A Blend of Economic and Social Oppression:

Gramsci's view on the concept of the Subaltern is of great significance. It moves away from the traditional Marxist studies by detaching itself from their peculiar mechanistic and economic forms. According to him, the Subaltern classes comprise any low - rank person of a group of people in a certain society that suffer from a hegemonic domination from their ruling elitist counterparts. Suffering severely under such domination, these lower classes do not possess all their rights. They are denied equal participation in every sphere of life. They, therefore, are not

even seen as active citizens of the same country, who could leave their own impressions on their history and culture. He considers as these marginalized and oppressed people can be examined within their own social prisons and their culture. There are no two opinions that, when first using the term, he only had in mind the oppressed and discriminated working and peasant classes of Italy, under the National Fascist Party leader Benito Mussolini. In a bid to make their voices heard, Gramsci saw no other way than studying the Subalterns themselves. He of course, could not rely too heavily on the information gathered from the state's narrative. The latter in fact, would merely be a distorted version of the reality by the rich, ruling classes. Throwing light on the matter, in the book "*Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*" (1971) Gramsci states that,

The Subaltern classes by definition are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a 'State': their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society and thereby with the history of States and groups of States. (Gramsci 52)

He gave a six - step plan as so to study the history of the Subaltern classes. According to him, the study should be carried out in the following order:

- (i) Their objective formation through changes in the economic production;
- (ii) Their active or passive relations with the dominant forces and efforts to influence certain of their programs;
- (iii) The emergence of new political parties and other such groups with the aim of further subjugating and dividing the Subaltern;
- (iv) The groups formed by the Subaltern classes themselves, so as to win some of their rights;
- (v) Those new formations stressing their autonomy within the same old frameworks;
- (vi) Those new formations are advocating their entire autonomy.

(Gramsci 52)

Gramsci argues that both these classes have the same complicated history even though the hegemonic ones' is the one to gain an official acceptance. However, thanks to their forced submission to their counterparts, the Subalterns' history often lacks unity. Such a sorry state of affairs is also responsible for the Subalterns' restrained roles, both in social and cultural terms. However, it is a time consuming process and the only way to break the shackles of this master - slave relation is through an inevitable 'permanent victory'. This may be done, if the non - elite classes could somehow be freed from a cultural hegemony of the dominant groups. In a post - industrial capitalist society, the Marxists of the past periods thought the peasantry had long expired. The revival of this long - sidelined group within the Subaltern classes is attributed to Gramsci. It was he, who first observed the vital role, the peasant was capable of playing in a class - conscious society.

2.5 Marxism and Subalternism; Common Diversions:

Subaltern studies are differentiated from Marxism in which they consider those segments of society that make the most bottom layer. In Vinayak Chaturvedi's book *'Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial'* (2000) Gayatri Spivak in the essay, "The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview" states that the capital logic, here, rarely comes into play. Theoretically, it is gender - based subject and is studied through feminist theory. In the subcontinent, the Subaltern term stands for those who cut off from the lines producing the colonial mindset. Under Subaltern studies, cultural considerations hence are a supplement to the Marxist theory. When it comes to the Indian colonial context, Gramsci considered his own project as flexible. South Asian historians actually, takes the word of Subaltern from Gramsci, as this word came into being for the people or group of people who are cut off from the "upward" or can be find out as restricted or 'outward from the setup of social mobility. Therefore, this issue points out that these particular people or group of people are cut off from the particular cultural lines that are produced from the colonial subject. Hence, It must be noted that;

If one follows the Gramscian line, this makes Subaltern Studies a more dynamic use of Marxian theory than the forced application of Marxian terminology upon the colonial scene. (Chaturvedi 325)

Therefore, the Subaltern and the Marxist are correlating in relation to dominance. In Vinayak Chaturvedi's book *'Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial'* (2000), David Arnold in his essay "Gramsci and Peasant Subalternity in India" states that Antonio Gramsci in his book *"Prison Notebooks,"* considers Subaltern as the particular class who are not only subjugated but are also entirely excluded from playing any meaningful role in a power - hungry power structure. In addition, what's worse this takes place through their own 'consent'. It is in the nature of hegemony that it forces the less - powerful classes to submit themselves entirely to the dominant values. They are never left with any other choice. Their voice is literally muted. For Gramsci, it is the responsibility of an intellectual to search out such Subaltern signs so that necessary political action could effectually be brought into effect. Accordingly, David Arnold states the point by arguing that;

Gramsci validated the study of Subaltern beliefs and consciousness, not because he thought them objectively correct but because they were, forms and expressions of life of the masses which no exponent of the 'philosophy of praxis' could afford to ignore. (Chaturvedi 28)

The changing focus and methodology of the Subaltern Studies can be seen from the mere fact that the first volume of the current century included no contributor coming from a 'historical' background. Though it has begun, under the Marxist influence, as the one focusing on the elite - Subaltern relationship, it has now evolved; its recent interests, under the postcolonial influence, lie in the creation of the knowledge. The whole discipline too, therefore, has seen a shift from the history to a sort of interdisciplinary approach in the shape of literary and cultural studies.

2.6 Guha's Subaltern; Question of Dominance and Subordination:

A wider definition of the term 'Subaltern' was provided by the Indian theorist Ranajit Guha. Following subcontinent's freedom from the British colonial rule, Guha further developed Gramsci theory to apply it to the local Indian population. Writing in the Subaltern Studies, he envisions the Subaltern in a binary relationship with dominance. More importantly, however, he widens the definition

of the Subaltern by presenting it as any dominated group rather than being a social group. Seen from this perspective, Subaltern can be any subordinated or marginalized group. While dealing with the questions of dominance and subordination, Guha also brings in the gender factor as a possible determining element. In this way, his work becomes indispensable equally to the Subalternity as well as the gender studies. Through this, the close connection between the two fields is also brought to light. His proposals suggest that woman can be a possible subject for studying the Subalternity. Due to their traditional, cultural and legal subordination to their male counterparts, the South Asian woman becomes 'Subaltern' in every measure. What differentiates Gramsci's theory from the later scholars is the fact that he sees the Subaltern as a social group. In the process, such factors as age, gender, caste and the colonial impact are just ruled out. Besides, Gramsci's focus remains reduced to the political power alone. By contrast, other theorists go beyond seeing the Subaltern as a social group. Therefore, they also bring out different kinds of domination. In addition, they explore many types of power that the Subaltern can or cannot achieve.

Ranajit Guha's in an essay, *The Prose of Counter Insurgency* (1988) brings out the binary nature of the Indian freedom movement to expose its heterogeneous character. He believes that the notion of domination and subordination can also be considered as a kind of struggle between feudalism and capitalism. Under this view, undemocratic relationships are seen as the grim reminders of a pre - capitalist era. The transition, therefore, of feudal mode of production to a quite modern capitalism is pretty problematic issue. Until the beginning of the 20th century, capitalist development merely remained in its incipient stages in the subcontinent. Lands yielded most income in rents on property. The landlord - peasant relationship of this colonial era remained strained. In simple words, this relationship was one of domination and subordination. Owing to its reliance on pre - capitalist conditions of production as well as traditional culture, it can most appropriately be called a semi - feudal relationship. Indian capitalism was 'featured' by a constant social domination and subordination of the Subaltern group at the hands of the elite classes. Guha argues that this modern or colonial capitalism is tended to establish itself in the non - Western societies without necessitating any democratic transformations of power. It resulted in rendering India largely to a

'colonial state'. Guha observes that the colonizers failed to live up to their universal aspirations, colonialism continue in the subcontinent as a power relation. In the domain of civil society, the power effects of the ruling groups on the Subaltern are of such a nature that this latter class seems even consents to its own subjection; hence strengthening the hegemony. This comes as a stark contrast to the generally held liberal notions which view civil society as a non - governmental field of freedom (Guha 6). The local subjects and their imperialist masters are continuously at a struggle. Homi Bhabha (1985) observes how the various groups oppose the colonial rule. In this regard, he gives the example of numerous peasant uprisings. Sectarian politics and various populist groups also play an important role in this regard.

It is a pressure and a presence, that acts constantly, if unevenly, along the entire boundary of authorization, that is, on the surface between what is disposal - as - bestowal and disposition - as - inclination. The contour of difference is agonistic, shifting, splitting. (Bhabha 152)

The Subaltern Studies group led by Ranajit Guha dealt especially with Indian historiography. Gaurav Gajanan Desai and Suprya Nair in the book *"Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism"* (2005) defines 'Subaltern' essentially as the way the dominant elite and the general masses demographically differ. The feudal, industrialist and mercantile classes as well as the elements in the highest bureaucratic ranks have been considered as the elite (Gajanan Desai and Nair 408). The Subaltern Studies aimed to be a kind of historical analysis with the Subaltern groups being its chief subjects of history. As the past academic practices in historiography failed to acknowledge the undeniable significance of the Subaltern, Guha (1984) set out to redefine the category of "the political" in British colonial India. He further argued that the Cambridge and the nationalist historians presented only the governmental side of the political picture. All writings of elitist historiography suggest that the politics in India is from the perspective of the colonial rulers. The British, in order to better govern the country (colony), laid the foundation of several institutions. The historians dealing with such issues see politics in its exaggerated form of activities and ideas introduced by the very colonialists (Guha 03 - 04). In an article titled "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" (2000), he regards the elite as a heterogeneous

group. That is to say, it has different aspects on national, regional and local fronts; and it varies from area to area (Chaturvedi 07). Taking the terms 'people' and 'Subalterns' for synonyms, Guha defines them as the demographic difference between the total Indian population and the foreign elites. Based on this definition, he (1984) claims that there in the British colony of India, two sorts of autonomous political domains, are organized differently: politics of the people and politics of the elite (Guha 4 - 05).

In South Asia, the Subalternity has become one of the often - talked topics of discussion in the last few decades. The British Empire has ruled the Indo - Pak subcontinent for more than a century. This colonial history of the region does have an impact on both the dominant and the subordinated groups. Hence, while studying Subalternity, critics like Guha must also address the issues of colonialism alongside its social impacts on the local population. The Subaltern studies, therefore, do differ from area to area. They are never the same in the West and in the East. Writing in the Subaltern Studies, Jose Rabasa notes a remarkable change that the term 'Subaltern' has undergone, since its introduction by Gramsci. Terming the change as 'radical,' he talks about several alternations seen by the concept as it travelled from a 1930s - era Italy to the Latin American context of the 1990s.

Later, the Subaltern Studies group began to take up Gramsci's term of 'Subaltern,' and applied it to the peasants in the Indian society. Their earlier findings focus simply on the peasants and their Subaltern class agency. With the progress of time, however, the term expanded to a wider degree to take in its folds such subordinated groups as the poor Muslim minority, citizens belonging to the lower Hindu castes, rural laborers working in the urban areas and so on. The initial application of the word 'Subaltern' for the peasants was restricted largely to the description of their social and economic positioning alone. Later works, nonetheless, shifted this focus and came to use the term for the Dalits, tribals, migrants and the partition - victims among many others. Gyanendra Pandey (2000) believes that with the word 'Subaltern,' the critical historiography can be based on feminist, Marxist, minority or anti - colonial, as it is generally burdened with the responsibility to recover subject positions, lives, possibilities and political action that have been marginalized, distorted, suppressed and even forgotten.

2.7 Denying Caste and Gender; Upraise of National Consciousness:

Following the Subcontinent's freedom in August 1947, the strengthening of a so - called 'caste system' troubled both the Marxists and the nationalists. Both schools of thought, however, held entirely opposite views. While the Marxists denounced it as oppressive as well as anti - modern, the nationalists maintained, as Chatterjee (1993) state; "caste in its ideal form is not oppressive and not inconsistent with the aspirations of individuality within the harmony of a unified social order" (Chatterjee 174 - 175). Calling 'caste system' as an inherent aspect of India, Chatterjee notes that the apparent distinction between the whole idea and its enacted shape opens for it the doors of critique. The chief finding of his work is this; all debates of a political or intellectual nature surrounding the concept of caste tend to pay no heed whatever to the actual victims. Those at the receiving end of the castes - the 'lowest castes of untouchables — who are marginalized even here have been called 'the Subalterns'. From here, Chatterjee's views on the 'Subaltern' seem to surface. He considers the colonized country to comprise of an imagined community of the 'nationalist elites'. This same segment then marginalizes or oppresses the members who happen to be below them on the social strand.

The national consciousness was on the rise in the nineteenth - century British colony of India. Revisiting the era, Chatterjee (1993) explores the history of the 'lower' Hindu sects like Vaishnavism. This 'minor' community became quite active in Bengal. The actual activities of the sect leaders are also described in the same breath. While they preached against caste, they too became ignorant of a shift in class representation. Hence, slowly the number of their upper - class followers increased. The preachers of these sects drew such lines of distinction as the 'practical aspect of the life of the devotee' and the 'supreme spiritual aspect'. Being wisely alive to these matters, therefore, they accordingly molded their discourses to fit into specific situations. As a consequence, the 'lower classes' passively and mutely admitted their own domination at the hands of their elite / colonial counterparts without ever sensing the need to overstep their social demarcations (Chatterjee 187). They, nonetheless, did not lose the spiritual side of their beings. The extent of how deep the curse of the 'caste system' had taken roots in the social

structure of India can be judged from the fact that the 'lower classes' or the 'untouchables' were quite painfully aware of their outsider status and tried passing their days as per the requirements of the tradition. The nationalists took distinctions of the 'spiritual' and the 'material' from the British. Along the similar lines, the country's 'outsiders' adopted the same from the nationalist. The nation's 'others,' nonetheless, remained a sad reality for decades to follow.

The nineteenth century has seen the emergence of quite a few spiritual leaders from the untouchable castes on a national scale. Balaram's example is found in Chatterjee's work. This man from Meherpur (Bengal) has risen to prominence because of his anti - caste - system and anti - Brahmanism stance. His confrontationally aggressive songs also received much fame. However, as he was from 'Hadi' sub - caste, the lowest of the low, his voice made no remarkable difference to the caste system. The discriminating practices hence continued ceaselessly. By exposing, the poorest state of the Dalits and several other minority communities in the pre - independence India, Chatterjee (1993) suggests that religion or faith do not actually form the basis of the caste divisions. Rather, to him, the deplorable trend has created an entirely new 'nation' for whom religious conflicts rarely come into play. Instead, what really matters is the political demands (Chatterjee 190 - 198). With a passage of time, civilization have traveled a long way, the castes oftentimes shown by a fellow's family name continue to ruin lives of millions of Indian masses. In a patriarchal society like that of India, the gender bias too has taken deeper roots in the social structure. In the context of sexism, the woman's identity becomes more at stake. The historical subjugation along with the lines of race and caste reaches alarming heights while looking at the looming threat of gender discrimination. In a specific Indian context, the Subaltern woman faces a two - way war. Firstly, she continues to struggle against her sexual exploiters from the higher classes to establish her identity as 'other' and win back her lost respect. Secondly, her fight is also against the men of her own class. They not only deny her basic rights but also even remain greatly ignorant of her contributions to the overall anti - oppression movement. Regarding the chief focus of the Subaltern studies in an article on Subaltern Studies; 'From Writing with (Socialist) Passion to Following the (Postmodern) Fashion' Hannah Altern quotes the following remark by a critic that looks closer to the reality:

[they] moved from documenting [the] Subaltern dissent, to dissecting [the] elite discourse, from writing with [a sort of socialist] passion to following the [contemporary postmodern] fashion. (Alvern p. 63)

With its ever - widening scope, the Subaltern now allows social groups (or those otherwise) to play the dominant or subordinate role. It is the focus of Subaltern theory to study the impacts of the colonialism as well as post - colonialism of the domestic populations. This hints towards the presence of situation - based domination as well as Subalternity. We can hence call all women as 'Subaltern'. Yet, by so doing, we might be making the false assumption that all women are alike. In fact, we find two types of women in colonial situation: dominant (those belonging to the colonizing country); and dominated or Subaltern (those belonging to the native colonized country).

2.8 Scholars Interest and Subalternity:

The philosophical approach to the historical inquiry has been termed as dialectical materialism. In Karl Marx's dealing with the subject of the Subaltern, however, it rarely comes to the surface. The working classes, during various past periods, have been seen by the contemporary scholar from entirely varied perspectives. This different treatment depended on two things; the structure and function of the economy in various countries; the degree as well the time period when the industrial revolution reached the region's shores. In the early 1700's, has first seen the emergence of the modern concept of 'labour unions' in the Great Britain. By the end of the eighteenth century, they had spread their wings over most parts of the country. It is for this reason that the U.K. been considered among the first few nations to have undergone the full transition to the industrial revolution. As a natural consequence, the British universities were the first to study the phenomenon. It also resulted in the rise of the 'trade unions' in certain other countries; and hence an expansion of the research works on a global level. To this same British influence can be traced the roots of the proliferation of the labour unions in the United States and the subsequent emergence of a good many scholarly studies on them.

It was during the latter part of the nineteenth century that the labour unions began appearing in India and other colonies of the British Empire. Their rapid emergence was influenced largely by the British emigrants coming to dwell in those countries. Besides, a good number of natives too worked as 'catalysts' since they had got their learning from scholars with a leaning towards the industrial revolution. The freedom movement of India is closely connected to a gradual rise in awareness among the working classes. Unity and organization within their own ranks was deemed necessary to convey a strong, collective voice. With the independence luminaries like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru at its forefront, this newly - discovered sense of 'power' continued to develop before, during and after the country's liberation from the colonial rule in the year 1947. In fact, the post - independence decades only made it more influential. The economic impact of the labour union was ignored by the scholars in the academy. Even at its prime, before the World War - II, when the unions' sphere was large and were giving more academic attention this trend had been practiced likewise. Since 1950, the unions had not only lost their influence but also seen a lack of attention from the scholars. Much of the blame for this decline can be given to the 'bourgeois science'. Another reason appears to be an increasing emphasis on the specialization of the academic disciplines; that is to say, the interdisciplinary studies are seldom pursued now.

The economic changes, for the most part, were studied on their own. Under the supposition that the political activities of the unions largely remained marginal, they were isolated while considering their overall effects on the economic growth. Hence, the genuine effects of the unions could not be assessed. On the other hand, the scholars who dealt with anthropology and psychology devoted their attentions to such human behaviours which had nothing to do with the economic impact and its various effects. Sociologist concentrated on such categories of human existence as race, gender, class, poverty and so on. A historian, likewise, focuses merely on exploring ancient, medieval and modern events; the post - modern or contemporary phenomenon interest him the least. This is chiefly why; the academy only brought out the day's supposed 'popular' culture as a result of its academic inquiries. The philosophies of protecting the private property or believing the market's value as the most sacred entity rarely mattered a straw. Instead, the relations of an employee

with the industry received only a secondary priority. They were also thought to be small private concerns alone. As a matter of fact, any attempts intending to find out the labour's influence on the economy were treated as interferences with the domain of the free market economy.

Nowadays, the term 'Subaltern' has come to be used in such diverse fields as history, sociology, anthropology and literary criticism among others. According to the postcolonial theory, the 'Subaltern' denotes the lower social classes found at the margins of the every society. Owing to the lack of a prominent or stable 'social status', the Subaltern is often rendered without agency. For Gayatri Spivak (1992), the literary critic, it is also inadvisable to apply the term in too broad terms; she in an interview with Leon de Kock, makes a point and states that, 'Subaltern is not suitable word for "Oppressed". In terms of post - colonial studies there is a difference in space, as everything that has no access or limited access to cultural imperialism. She further argues that calling the working class as oppressed is not correct as sometime people call them oppressed and Subaltern. These people are dangerous and least interesting. She quotes the example of minority students in university, as these students cannot be fixed into the category of 'Subaltern' as they are not discriminated. Although they are in hegemonic discourse, in certain conditions where they cannot speak, but still they can raise their voice and can be heard, so instead of calling themselves as Subaltern let them speak" (Spivak 45 - 46).

Nonetheless, it is such considerations as time, place and context that ultimately decide which of the communities, among those occurring at the margins of a society, would be placed under the category of a 'Subaltern'. The subjects' economic relations had little to say in this regard. In a country - wide perspective, the women, the dalits, labours, immigrants, rural and tribal populations constitute the 'Subaltern'. On the contrary, in a state - wise perspective it would count such people as the rural folk, illiterate women and the poor dalits as the 'Subalterns' in the Indian state of Punjab.

2.9 Spivak and Derrida's Defense:

Spivak's defense of Derrida, as it is found in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" has been heavily criticized by Warren Montag. He is quite critical of the sense of a complete disjuncture between political or academic representation of various forms and their relevant practices in the Indian historical context. The two, he blames, have brought a transcendental turn to the Subaltern studies. Montag (1998) holds that Spivak's delimitation of the 'Subaltern' renders the marginalized groups as entities that are virtually a 'figural externality'. Supposing Derrida's views to hold water, the Subalternity evidently means more than a mere mapping of the semiotic thought indicating gaps of a political as well as academic nature. As emphasized by Martin Hagglund in "*Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life*" (2008), that Derrida's concepts of hospitality broadly conform to deconstruction as a basic process involving temporal change. He states;

There is a relationship between critical philosophy of Kant and deconstruction of Derrida. I maintain that for Derrida the spacing of time is an "ultra - transcendental" condition from which nothing can be exempt, while Kant restricted time to a "transcendental" condition for the experience of a finite consciousness. (Hagglund 10)

In her writing "Deconstructing Historiography," Spivak provides a good critique of the theoretical approaches adopted in the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group. In the same work, she talks about a critical strategy commonly called 'strategic essentialism'. The scholars in the U.S. academy seem to have grabbed the ending part 'essentialism' more often as compared to the beginning part 'strategy'. This practice has resulted in the production of analyses which are essentially a political with hardly any rules governing the process.

The term deconstruction is very vital. It performs quite a few significant functions. Due to its effect, the very philosophy of the text gets undermined. In addition, the hierarchies and hierarchical relations are inverted and displaced. Moreover, most of all, what was absent or suppressed is made present. It views systems both from the outside and from the inside. Culler (1992) believes that

deconstruction brings out the truths. Consequently, the marginalized groups like women can contradict issues supposedly having a consensus.

Gayatri Spivak (1988) in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" sees it as the recognition of the provisional and intractable starting points in any kind of an investigative effort. Through its disclosure of complicities, it creates oppositions. During this process the critic, as subject, she becomes complicit with the object she is about to critique. This complicity can be traced in history and the ethical - political factor. It also goes on to show that no critical space can be entirely free of such sorts of traces (Spivak 180).

In Barthes' (1990) views, deconstruction, through its application to texts, also ensures a virtual 'death of the author'. The argument is quite simple; if there had been an author, certain limits would naturally be imposed on the text; besides its being finally furnished with a signified. However, in Barthes' own words: "the space of writing is to be traversed, not pierced". In the 'significance principle', Barthes makes the presupposition regarding the subject / author is being engulfed by the text, resulting in a kind of loss (Barthes 38). Having been lost thus, no single author enjoys any authority. He can hence be identified with 'jouissance' that Barthes believes, essentially paves way for endless operations in a given field of any language being considered.

Spivak's political interests are endorsed through their articulation in the scholarship. This is where her theoretical critique is also located. Her later discussions concentrating strategic essentialism made the methodological and theoretical preoccupations of the U.S. academic audience. Besides, this also served as a motivation for the essential content of the entire critique. In the book "*Theory after Theory*" edited by Jane Elliot and Derek Attridge (2000 b) in an essay "The Canny Subaltern" by Eva Cherniavsky, she stresses the significance of investigation, she quoted Gayatri Spivak: "Subaltern Studies never presupposed a consciousness for 'their own group,' but rather for their object of investigation and for the sake of the investigation" (Spivak 332). In her revision of her own work in the year 2005, however, she admits her hastiness in having failed to deduce Subalternity from the elite texts. This, she adds, was due largely to the introduction of what she terms the 'negative consciousness' (Spivak 477).

2.9.1 Derrida and Foucault:

Language enjoys an unparalleled and unimaginable power. Linguistic expressions and discursive activity are, in fact, the very elements that render all knowledge comprehensible. One understands things in terms of language and not the individual's intension or consciousness. Derrida and Foucault, scholars of fame, were of the first few who attempted to demystify texts. They took on themselves to bring to light what was in the dark. Their scholarly journey from the unknown to the known was aimed at unmasking such matters of significance as the movements, underlying rules, plays of textuality and so forth. However, despite being bound for the same destination, they take contrasting routes.

For Foucault, textuality must deal with knowledge, discourse and power. For Derrida, the infinite differences within texts matter more. Nonetheless, what brings them together is the common desire to counteracting dominance (that of scientific knowledge) and hegemony (that of reason). Derrida comes up with 'différance' or 'différance'. By deconstructing the same, he hopes to discover what is yet undiscovered. On the contrary, Foucault adopts the archaeological and genealogical methods of unveiling and unmasking language as well as knowledge. In the book edited and introduced by Robert Young "*Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*" published in 1981, Foucault writing in an essay *The Orders of Discourse*, (1970) he elucidates the fact as follows:

. . . in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. (Foucault 52)

In strictly linguistic terms, the ideas of both these scholars are not entirely removed either. In many of his essays and interviews appearing in "*Language, Counter - Memory, Practice*" (1977), he talks about the possibilities in case the author / subject is present or absent. It looks essential to look at the linguistic theory that has been presented by Ferdinand De Saussure.

2.9.2 Saussure and Derrida:

Language, according to him, is a model for all reality. He is of the view that thoughts are an unclear pile or heap. This accumulation within a human mind is then shaped, molded and directed by language. Language thus functions as a link between thought and sound. When these two combine, a form (and not a substance) is produced. Saussure (1993) also distinguishes words from signs.

Words, for him, are the homogenous entities referring to the things in the world. Linguistic signs, by contrast, comprise certain complex psychological relations that a community of speakers shares. Moreover, his linguistic system is binary in nature in that the linguistic signs have been seen as two - sided psychological entities. The linguistic sign is essentially combines: the signified (that is, the concept); and the signifier (that is, the sound image). (Saussure 13)

Here, the term 'concept' denotes what Saussure calls 'langue'. Sheriff (1989) defines it as, "an institution, a set of impersonal rules and conventions, a self - contained whole and a principle of classification" (Sheriff 6). The sound - image has been termed as the 'parole'. The parole points to the way a language is spoken by its users on various occasions. The argument is that there ought always to be an underlying structure that ultimately gives meanings to any particular words or speech acts. Saussure illustrates the relationship between langue and parole through the analogy of the game of chess. In this game, despite the presence of rules for every single game, they acquire a certain form because of the internal - pieces relations only. After a similar fashion, both the langue and parole cannot exist individually. While langue must manifest itself in speech, parole is dependent upon langue for it to have any meaning.

Despite being arbitrary as well as differential, Saussure (1989) also sees the signs as immutable. Though freely chosen, the signifier, for instance, remains fixed in terms of its usage by a linguistic community (Saussure, quoted in Sheriff 08). As the relations between the signified and the signifier shift, the language also undergoes changes. As Spivak (1976) says, with the desire for a central presence is connected to the existence of hierarchies' oppositions. Here, 'presence' is the

superior term with the 'logos' being the inferior. This latter not only defines the status of the former, but also marks its fall (Spivak 1.xix). This shows that logo - centricism is essentially behind the logic of the binary oppositions, domination and subordination. Hence, 'A' is enabled by 'B', the Oriental enable the Occidental, woman enables man, the Third World woman enables the Western feminists and so on and so forth. The undoing of the logo - centricism can be called deconstruction according to Derrida (1976) in "*Of Grammatology*". This is a sort of double gesture or double writing. Under it, such classic oppositions as man and woman, or nature and culture are reversed as well as displaced (Derrida 49). It also opens up literally limitless possibilities of reading. Consequently, the author too is dissolved into the evidently infinite textual layers. One of the women from the selected text belongs to a privileged family; she has obtained higher education, so she hardly comes up to Spivak's definition of 'true Subaltern' but most likely falls under Derrida's concept of 'Antre' that is 'the dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels' (Spivak 26). Therefore, the individual in this category is in a state of in - between.

Spivak (1993) points out several challenges that deconstruction must face. Since the element of thought is reduced to be only a blank part of the text which passes on to the coming future, this future becomes not just a 'future present' but also a 'future anterior' (Spivak 22). While the author thus dissolves within the text, the reader, on the contrary, becomes supreme under the concept of deconstruction. Therefore, deconstruction is often seen as an act of 'critical affirmation' rather than that of 'closure'. The scheme of cause and effect too is not observable since the presence of a cause would indicate an origin in the first place; bestowing it, hence, with a kind of metaphysical privilege that it does not actually possess or deserve.

2.10 Viewing Subaltern with the Lens of World-ling:

Spivak argues to the Immanuel Kant theory of universal subject or 'man' who does not refer to all humanity but only refer to educated bourgeois, masculine subject of European enlightenment. In this intellectual debate, Derrida 'Deconstructionism' deals with the contradictions discover hidden and the concealed meaning that is present in the text. He states that in all texts in order to construct meaning and values, binary opposition is used. In Stephen Morton (2003)

view Derrida challenges structuralism idea by Ferdinand de Saussure then by Roland Barthes and by Claude Levi Strauss that 'one could study language scientifically as a structure of signs made up of signifiers and signified. Moreover in "Textuality and Worlding" it is stated that,

Derrida challenges the scientific claims of early structuralism, emphasizing instead that language is a sign of differences in which signification or meaning is perpetually deferred and cannot be reduced to any structure. . . . Derrida argued that language does not transparently reflect the social and historical world. As Derrida asserts in "*Of Grammatology*" (1976), 'there is nothing outside of the text (Derrida 1976, 163). (Morton 17 - 18)

Thus, Spivak (1988) states that 'worlding' refers to the dominant representation of the world. Moreover, she responds to Edward Said construction of the false dichotomy of the text and the world she asserts, "Derrida's criticism moves us *into* the text and Foucault's *in* and *out*" (Spivak 292).

Gayatri Spivak states that Western thinking always supports their interests and benefits. So, knowledge is one of the factors that West gives to East and thinking about colonial studies again Western thought take East as a commodity, they take colonial subject as 'other'. West may take Subaltern as an object to analyze, intimate or investigate their findings to draw a result but still their view point will be different as for them feminism is different as this stands in South Asian countries. As in terms of feminism, critics consider female as "caught up in the trap of transition from tradition to modernity" (Bhatnagar 299). Spivak is of the view that a feminist writer should produce a distinct discourse that establishes female identity marked by the struggle of the oppressed subjects against the power structures. Spivak is of the view that 'other' is known by the European intellectuals and in the narrative of the oppressed, the context can be placed. For Europe the colonies are 'other' and the subjectivity of the Subaltern is destroyed by the representation of the 'other' (Maggio 422). As J. Maggio (2007) states in his essay "Can the Subaltern be Heard?" that the creation of the 'West' as a subject is dependent on the production of the postcolonial subject as in Edward Said '*Orientalism*'. The work of Edward Said in order to explain the Eurocentric

perspective of 'Orientalism' addresses the oppressed Subaltern both man and woman, to show the justification for the domination of the 'Other' by means of colonialism. The voices of the oriental or the Subaltern does not include in the discourse of 'Orientalism' as it is Eurocentric.

The key point is that Subaltern is re - presented in the texts, as their existence does not matter for any one rather their existence is a mark of question. Their individuality is lost and they are under the hegemonic pressure of society and the ruling powers. Spivak states a question to be answered as she said; "Can the Subaltern Speak?" it seems as if there is no space left where the voices of the Subaltern can be heard. She exemplifies her argument by stating the viewpoint of peasants, tribal members and lower strata of society, Spivak considers that woman is an entity that is considered lower than the other entire Subaltern groups so she is the real Subaltern. She further states that if the outsider attempts to enrich the condition of Subaltern by giving way to let her speak one will run into the problems. The cultural barriers hinders in the process of Subaltern's independence. The major factor that makes man empower over woman is the biological fact that she is weaker than man is and the physical difference makes her surrender in front of man, as said by Simone de Beauvoir, "it is always he who commands". She talks about the problems of Subaltern and their missing identity, both from the perspective of object and subject, object of 'colonial historiography' and subject of 'insurgency'.

2.11 A Rejection to Objectification:

In terms of their potential for power, the object appears in a better position. Moreover, the object does not as much depend on the symbolic order for its reality. Subjects are in no such need of objects either. In a bid totally outsmart the object; the subject manifests itself in reality through the exercise of violence. Lacan, Roi Wagner in an article "Silence as Resistance before the Subject, or Could the Subaltern Remain Silent?" (2012), quoted Baudrillard (1999) viewpoint that nicely sums up the debate as thus:

[The object] knows no alterity and is inalienable. It is not divided with itself – which is the destiny of the subject – and it knows nothing of the

mirror phase, where it would come to be caught by its own imaginary.
(Baudrillard 114)

From the 'object' viewpoint, he further states that, 'power of the dominant lies in them as pure object – this object cannot oppose their silence. Power can also be found in the form of absence of their desires against any political wish to make them speak. Due to the subject's silence, everyone tries to solicit, seduce and invest on them. He states that, "Atonal, abysmal and amorphous, they exercise a passive and opaque sovereignty they say nothing against violence but subtly . . . they neutralize the completely political scene and discourse" (Baudrillard 104).

The social groups who remain silent while standing at the limit of the discourse as objects are termed as the Subalterns. Though there is every possibility that they might have been hushed into silence forcibly, there potential for exercising power remains intact. More than often, they are scolded rarely carrying a message, making a strong statement of theirs and presenting their demands in a logical manner.

The limits of the historical knowledge, for the sake of its re - inscription, have been used by Shahid Amin in the Subaltern studies. His long piece on the peasant violence of Chauri Chaura, in the year 1922, is a localization as well as generalization of the event. By making use of such practices as nationalism and historiography, he richly describes this event of a local scale. This way, he denotes the emergence of the Indian nation from such like past. Besides, at the same time, the tension between the two categories has also been clearly marked as early as the third decade of the twentieth century. Shahid's 'invocation' of his memory neither gives the event a newer sense of 'completeness' nor does it recover the Subaltern. Instead, actually, this serves as a means to dislocate and re - inscribe the historical record of the country. Not all these things end up in some lifeless form of nationalist archaeology. Rather, what we get is a bigger 'stage' where performances of a different yet interrelated kind must be made. The eagerness for the slightest attention even is evident in each. When one of them succeeds in receiving the required prominence, we indeed get to hear the sound of the small peasant protagonists too. Yet, instead of being conveyed direct to the ear, their voices only reach us through 'other' more powerful voices present in their very surroundings.

2.12 Power and Western Dominance; Subaltern and Intellectual Inquiry:

Power and Western dominance in intellectual enquiry are studied under the postcolonial theory. The issues concerning the oppressed Subaltern man and woman have been conceptually addressed by a book of Edward Said titled "*Orientalism*" (1978). For him, the foundations of the others' domination through colonialism can be traced back to the Eurocentric perspective of the oriental practices. He explains his point by stressing that the Europeans began by creating an 'imaged geography' of the term 'the orient'. It was believed to a certain savage and monstrous place lying at the farthest corner of the world. Such mythological tales were reinforced by the relations of the returning travellers who confirmed to have witnessed 'savage and monstrous' lands with their own eyes.

The advent of the mass media added fuel to the fire. What was stressed more than any other aspect was the point of a supposed 'difference' or 'strangeness' between the two places and the two people. Lines came to be drawn between 'us' and 'them'. This same 'us - and - them' binary social relation is responsible for the foundation and establishment of colonialism. The 'orient' was seen as an irrational and backward world — and hence in dire need of the European 'help' to 'modernize' itself for 'survival's sake'. As a natural consequence, we discover the oriental discourse to be unmistakably 'Eurocentric' in its approach. The real oriental voices, the voices of the Subalterns, were hence never sought and never heard; thus making room for an undying 'silence'. According to Stuart Hall, the cultural theorist, the Western dominance was created and reinforced through the power of discourse. Through such discourses as stressing the differences between 'us' and 'them', the Europe made an extensive use of its languages and ideas to describe 'the other'. Through this same 'discourse of difference', the Europe managed to maintain its dominance over 'the other'. As this practice entirely excluded the other in the very production of the discourse, the marginalized group of the 'Subaltern' also came to be created and established (Said 98).

Joanne Sharp's book titled "*Geographies of Post - colonialism*" (2009) has been believed by many to have influenced and shaped Gayatri Spivak's views on the Subaltern. According to Sharp, the Western intellectuals systematically

sidelined their non - Western (Asian, African and Middle Eastern etc.) counterparts in terms of their forms of 'knowing'. Their 'knowledge of the world' was hence only given a secondary place in the intellectual discourse. The non - Western forms were even censured as merely being myths and folklores. Here, a 'suggestion' was also forwarded. According to this, the 'oppressed Subaltern' were advised to also adopt the Western ways of knowing, reasoning, language and thought if they wished to be ever heard. They were also told to conform to the Western ways even to convey their experiences of the colonial life. Without this Westernization, there was no possibility for them to make their voices heard in the wide intellectual sphere. Sharp asserts:

For knowledge to be powerful it is hegemonic and also legitimate, up to some extent both by the rulers and by the ruled. Consistent with this view everyone has power, even if only the power to resist, as in the case of the least powerful (the poorest classes, women, tribal groups and other marginalised people, sometimes collectively referred to as 'Subaltern'), the power not to believe in what is presented. . . . The others who are represented may sometimes resist interpretations of themselves which demonstrates the important political role within post - colonialism for writing Subaltern histories. (Sharp 110 - 111)

Many post - colonial situations necessitate the Subaltern to abandon his or her 'culture and custom' that originated ways of thinking. The former are subsequently replaced by the Western ways. This even seems understandable. Any subordinated / colonized man and woman would only be heard once he or she starts speaking the same language as understand and speak by his or her oppressor. A clear picture of the situation can be seen in the case of the colonial Latin American context, the local oppressed communities of people were forced to leave their own language and culture in order to be in the 'good graces' of their Spanish imperialists. The natives had to relinquish what was so dear to them formerly. They could never have access to those representing the Spanish Crown in their own country. Thus, such intellectual and cultural forms of submission views the true voice of the Subaltern slowly but surely silenced.

Relevant to our discussion are the views expressed in an article "Listening to the Subaltern: The Poetics of Neo colonial States" (1994) by Fernando Coronil, the colonial historian. According to him, the realistic approach of an investigator must only be "to listen to the Subaltern subjects and to interpret what I hear" (Coronil 645). His suggestion sounds so saner when he humbly admits the impossibility of such a near situation where they should succeed in ascending to 'a position of dominance over the voice'. The words, he says, cannot hence be given such meanings as 'we desire to attribute to them'. Calling it yet another form of discrimination, he observes that narrating someone's story becomes quite difficult a task as the narrator must always remain cautious of the following complications and consequences in case of going even a little awry.

Questioning the academic's aforementioned sort of engagement with the Subaltern, Spivak and Gloria Jean Watkins (1990) (widely known as 'Bell Hooks') make the interesting observation that a true engagement with the oppressed group must require an immediate removal of the intellectual from the self - assumed role of 'the expert' found at the centre of 'us' and 'them'. The academic finds him - or her at a crossroad. One must know how the Subaltern experiences colonialism. Yet, at the same time, he or she cannot afford to hear the latter's own explanation of the whole experience under the colonial rule. Since the 'true explanation' rests with the academic having a mastery of the Western knowledge, the Subaltern man or woman must surrender his or her firsthand knowledge of colonialism in the former's favour. Adopting quite a sarcastic tone, she further elaborates the academic - Subaltern relationship; she is of the view that Western scholars and researchers do need her 'experiences' but actually they do not need her 'explanations', she states in her essay "Marginality as a site of Resistance":

[Well, there's just] no need to hear your voice, when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re - writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still [the] colonizer, the speaking subject and you are now at the centre of my talk. (Hooks 343)

If a greater historical picture of the society is to be constructed, the Subaltern's story should serve as a revealing examination. The perspectives of these most powerless men and women within the colonial confines are a must to make the narrative real and reliable. While studying the voices of these oppressed classes, therefore, a post - colonial investigator ought not to assume an air of 'cultural superiority'. Modernization theory proposes that any undeveloped country in the world must follow the same path to 'modernization' which was taken as well as established by the West itself. Based on the knowledge of colonialism and orientalism, the mainstream development discourse stresses upon the adaption of the same theory. In general terms, the Westernization or modernization are characterized by democracy, capitalism, free trade and open markets. In a bid to firmly establish such modernization universally, the mainstream development discourse also stresses upon applying the above political, cultural, social and economic policies in letter and spirit.

Victoria Lawson notes in "*Making Development Geography*" (2007), that the mainstream discourse is a mere recreation of the Subaltern. She says that this is done by entirely disengaging the Subaltern from such social scales as the local and the community. Besides, the differences of region, gender, social class and ethnicity of the population being modernized are also ignored. The Subaltern is seen in the socio - cultural sense as a subject of development. He is a person who is totally ignorant. He / she do not even know that, what exactly to do and how precisely to do the same. The policies and practices that ultimately establish the modernization simply exclude the voice of the subject people.

According to Stuart Hall, the cultural theorist, the Western dominance was created and reinforced through the power of discourse. Through such discourses as stressing the differences between 'us' and 'them', Europe made an extensive use of its languages and ideas to describe 'the other'. Through this same 'discourse of difference,' Europe managed to maintain its dominance over 'the other'. As this practice entirely excluded the other in the very production of the discourse, the marginalized group of the 'Subaltern' also came to be created and established. Throwing light on the matter, Anna Lovelace (2014) in her article titled "Empowerment through Empathy: A Literary Analysis of Subaltern Studies"

quoted Owen Alik Shahadah remarks from his work "*The Removal of Agency from Africa*" that;

The Eurocentric discourse on Africa is in error, because those foundational paradigms, which inspired the study, in the first place, were rooted in the denial of [the] African agency; political intellectualism bent on its own self - affirmation, rather than [an] objective study. (Lovelace 136)

In his introduction to "*Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory*" (1999), John Beverley writes that both the South Asian and Latin American Subaltern studies entertain question concerning the limits and possibilities of the Subaltern representation. When it comes to the representation of the historically helpless communities, both the South Asia and the Subaltern studies seem to complement each other. To stress the Subaltern and representation at the same time is comparable to the creation of 'new others'. According to Beverley, it could prove a dangerous tendency if those subjects are discovered that in the past they remained ignored in the past. The pages of history and literature are filled with a great many 'silent characters'. An inseparable part, they have been there like a perpetual presence. As they have less social importance in literature, they essentially constitute the 'other'. Theory — if taken to be an impulse to extract such meanings and insights from the texts that fit in our times makes the search for new 'others' inevitable.

2.13 Muting Doubly Marginalized Subaltern:

Gyanendra Pandey (2000) deals with these matters at length in his essay "Voices from the Edge: The Struggle to Write Subaltern Histories". Employing the concept 'Subaltern' in the same context as Gramsci, Gayatri Spivak sees the Subaltern to be an economically powerless class that is denied from properly representing itself or articulating its voice in a meaningful manner. Her chief concern is for what she calls "the doubly silenced Subaltern woman who is always spoken for" is manifested in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She is distressed when she sees the postcolonial scholars who repeatedly ask to 'speak for' the powerless. To her, the simple attempt of giving a voice to the silenced

Subaltern is not enough. Instead, her focus is for the female intellectuals of the postcolonial era to question a systematic muting of the Subaltern woman. Though the attempts of reviving the role of the common Indian masses during the independence movement are an encouraging sign for her, she also stresses a heterogeneous (rather than the homogeneous) identity and speech upon them. Homogeneity, she believes, indeed goes on to reinforce the colonial experience while threatening a cultural erasure. In her opinion, the investigators, who try unearthing the Subaltern voices from among the diversified elite discourses, have a great responsibility in this regard. She also devotes much of her attention to get the silenced Subalterns being represented in the day's power corridors. A feminist analysis of literature allows the reader to understand the role of the female figure within the society in which she is being described, along with the social changes around her. Zia Ahmed (2009) a literary scholar stresses;

How literature proves crucial in representing social changes in a society. The representation of women through literature constitutes a significant contribution towards understanding the position of women in that society. (Ahmed 90)

David Arnold (1984) in his essay "Gramsci and Peasant Subalternity in India" provides justification for the use of an Italy - originated concept in quite another context; that is, applying it on the peasant class in India. He argues that the word 'Subaltern' connects social groups in terms of their respect powers. What he means is that there are not simply two categories of peasants and their property owners. Instead, they also indicated an intricate system that reduces one to the state of subordinates while elevating the other to the apparently prestigious position of being their masters. Seen from Tom Brass' perspective, as it is explained in his essay "Moral Economists, Subalterns, New Social Movements and the Emergence of a Modernized Peasant", that merely class identity is not the only issue but to him, the gender, ethnicity, religion, region and ecology are also some important differences between the elite and the masses. In a strictly Indian context, it is hard to see 'Subaltern' simply for a class - consciousness as has been put forward by Gramsci. This, for Brass, (2000) is because the concepts of "ethnic, gender, religious, or regional identity and experience" are inseparable from the peasantry in a typically Indian society (Chaturvedi 135).

Hence, ever since its very beginning, the Subaltern Studies group used the word 'Subaltern' not only to reflect class identity, but also to denote such varied aspects as the social, cultural and political identities. Similarly, Gyan Prakash (2000) views the gradual emergence of Subalternity as a major contribution made by the new historiography. To him, Ranajit Guha 'views Subalternity as an essential object in place of class -- an effect of power relations and expressed through a variety of means -- linguistic, economic, social and cultural' (Chaturvedi 179).

2.14 The Subaltern and the Colonized; Deconstructing the Double Burden:

While considering the difficult question of where the realms of Subalternity lied, Spivak's attention gets back to the issues surrounding the Subaltern groups. The matter of gender also came up here. The problems of the Indian woman of the British colonial era struck her in particular. Having once analyzed a case of the 'Sati woman' practices, she now turns to reflect upon the status of the Indian woman, in general. These unfortunate creatures, she argues, are stuck between two stark polarities. The foreign colonialists, through the British humanist discourse, stressed the point of individual freedom of such women who had lost their husbands. The native Hindu conservatives, by contrast, called upon the women who are without a husband to 'voluntarily participate' in the inhuman 'ritual'. Here emerged the conflict. Here two totally opposite positions that came to produce two different types of discourses. Remarkably, however, it left no plausible solution. William Paul Simmons in his book "*Human Rights Law and the Marginalized Other*" (1999) states that there are two extremes, in Spivak's own words, it is like this: 'white man [is] saving brown women from brown men;' alternately, however, 'the woman actually wanted to die' (Spivak 297). Caught between two antagonistic poles compelling her to make a conscious choice, the Hindu woman loses her own voice. Ironically, however, despite the two discursive groups' apparent claims to give the woman a voice, the voice of the Hindu woman lost itself completely. Those who promised to represent her, in fact contributed greatly to a gradual deprivation of the 'Sati woman' from having a sort of subjectivity. In other words, she was left no space to freely speak and willingly decide for herself.

Consequently, the Hindu woman, that is quoted by Spivak's (1988) in her very own words that, "disappeared, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling, which is the displaced figuration of the 'third - world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (Spivak 306). This led Spivak to declare that 'the Subaltern cannot speak'. This last assertion of her essay produced certain controversial interpretations. It was seen as a statement hinting at the impossibility of a resistance. Under the impression of being represented for, the oppressed communities were systematically silenced or muted. If wishing to be 'heard,' the Subalterns were rendered dependent on the dominant language, culture and values. From this perspective, one can presume that the post - colonial discourse is but an effort by the intellectual to speak for the voiceless or politically marginalized communities.

Spivak elaborates exploration of the history of the oppressed woman that is a further extension of the same concept of the 'Subaltern' as developed by Ranajit Guha and the likes. To do this, she digs into the life experiences and struggles of the Indian women from across the class boundaries; that is, women from the upper middle class were as much her subjects as were those belonging to the peasantry and the poorest lot, that is, below them on the social strand. In a traditionally and ideologically male - dominated Indian society, Spivak is clearly outraged at the highhanded exclusion of the female gender from the entire anti - colonial history. "*The Post - Colonial Studies Reader*" Edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin Gayatri Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1995) gives her view that, "the question is not of woman participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labor, for both of which there is 'evidence'" (Spivak 28). Rather the picture painted by her looks rather gloomier. In the colonial context, if the Subalterns cannot speak for themselves and have no history of their own, the 'Subaltern woman' should surely be considered under a deeper, graver trouble (Spivak, 1988).

Thanks to the changing world of post modernism, the task to define the term 'Subaltern' as a distinct category became all the more difficult. Against this backdrop, Gyanendra Pandey (2006) the editor of the book "*Subaltern Citizens and their Histories: Investigations from India and the USA*" in his essay entitled "The Subaltern as Subaltern Citizens" observes a shocking shift of the marginalized

communities' priorities from 'the struggles of recognition as equals' to a much lower "demand for recognition of difference" (Pandey 07). As they moved between the rural and urban spaces, the positions of the peasant and working classes became intermingled in a variety of situations. This shift of approach in the 'third world' mind was chiefly owed to the influence of the neighboring European countries. The colonial discourse theory proposes native transgressions of the colonial authority as a corrective measure to the discourse analysis. Since it shows reluctance in voicing a more oppositional version of the politics, Benita Parry, in her review, casts apprehensions over it. In the same breath, she criticizes Homi Bhabha's stance of resistance being no more than a questioning of the colonial authority. Homi K. Bhabha in his book "*The Location of Culture*" (1994) states that for 'subordinate people their cultural traditions and retrieving their repressed histories is of great substance for Fanon' (Bhabha 09). Therefore, he is also critical of Spivak's perspective of merely muting the Subaltern woman. Here, she leans towards Bhabha for having tried to recover a native voice from the colonial texts. Challenging Spivak's 'silence theory,' Benita Parry writes; 'the Subaltern has spoken'. Assuming 'the native' in Bhabha to be 'the Subaltern,' she puts the colonized groups in the separate category of 'a native voice'. Here, she seems too eager to hear the native's voice. This way, however, the very class of the Subalterns comes under threat of extinction. Spivak's opinions regarding the Subaltern woman as being one who cannot be reduced to a particular class of caste under the colonial settings also come under fire from Benita Parry. What she fails to notice, nevertheless, is the fact that Spivak saw the Subalternity itself for being a topological move threatening to silence the Subaltern voice. Through her claims of having heard the Subaltern speak in a 'figurative manner,' she seems to side with the colonizers' 'civilizing mission'. This latter was a failed move to 'substitute' an educated pro - colonialism individual for the original native.

2.15 A Tint of Culture and Globalization:

Homi Bhabha, a significant post - colonial thinker, brings out the importance of social power relations in several of his essays. He gives the 'Subaltern' a new working definition. The Subaltern, to him, comprises an oppressed minority group whose very presence serves to provide the majority

group with a self - definition. If Homi Bhabha's (1996) postulations — expressed in his pioneering publication "*The Location of Culture*" are to be believed, the Subaltern probably does not exist anymore in a postmodern capitalist world. He observes that they (the Subalterns) were even capable of subverting the authority of their hegemonic masters (Laura Garcia et.al. 191 - 207). In his book, Bonaventura de Sousa Santos (2002) has made an extensive use of the term 'Subaltern cosmopolitanism'. This term has been used in the context of certain counter - hegemonic practices and resistant movements. It also includes struggles against social exclusion and neoliberal globalization. The term is also interchangeable with 'cosmopolitan legality'. His use of the term 'Subaltern' specifically indicates those oppressed and marginalized groups who struggle against the hegemonic globalization. In the book "*Decolonization and African Society: the Labor Question in French and British Africa*" Frederick Cooper (1996) states that, the actual problem lies with the very concept of 'Subalternity' itself:

... Subalterns are to be autonomous and agents of their lives, yet to remain Subaltern. Are not structures of power and the idioms in which power is expressed forged and re - forged in relationships unequal as they may be and does not this give - and - take test, at the very least, the boundaries of groups? (Cooper 09)

With the advent of capitalism and globalization, the revolutionary voices soon died away because of the widening rifts amongst the labor classes. The new historical developments of this sort made Spivak reconsider her views on Subalternity. Firstly, she outright rejected Gramsci's assertion that the Subalterns comprised autonomous social groups. To justify her fresh standpoint, she adds that such autonomy results in the homogeneity of the Subaltern group as well as a subjective identity of the Subaltern. Secondly, she now believes that essentialism cannot be avoided, no matter how ambitious Marxist methodologies are applied, while defining the 'who' and 'what' of the Subaltern group. As a result, she adopts the notion of the Subaltern being truly situational. The word 'Subaltern' has its roots in the description of a certain military rank that Gramsci used it under censorship. That is, while he called Marxism 'monism,' he termed the proletariat a 'Subaltern'. In an apparent attempt of defining the term, Spivak (1991) writes;

"That word, used under dress, has been transformed into the description of everything that does not fall under strict class analysis" (Spivak 78).

2.16 Feminism and Subaltern Studies; A Cross Fertilization:

Gayatri Spivak is of the view that all research that is conducted in the Subaltern Studies make a theory of culture of consciousness and creates a crisis to the hegemonic historiography. The Subaltern Studies group performs a very vital function; it brings out the elitist nature of the Indian National Movement. According to this view, the peasants (or Subaltern classes) make no significant contribution towards the success of this movement. Instead, it only views the local Indian elite (the Congress leadership etc.) to have been engaged in serious attempts to end the foreign colonial rule. The historians belonging to the Subaltern school of thought argue that the peasantry was no mere passive spectator to all these historic happenings. Actually, great many Subalterns - led anti - colonial insurgencies ultimately led the movement to its triumphant end. Claiming to be in possession of certain important documents, such historians stress the point that the country's history must be revised. They hold that many a great peasantry - initiated rebellion during this era ought also to be considered before rushing to certain hasty conclusions in this regard. The role of feminism in literature is significant as Miti Pandey (2003) asserts:

In literature, feminism refers to a mode that approaches a text with foremost concern for the nature of woman experience in it. The fictional experience of the rational, characters, imaginative capacity of an author or intuitional, the experience implicit in language of structure that interrogates the cultural prescriptions, that trivialize and subordinate women and treat them as inferiors are the primary concerns of female fiction writers from feminist perspective. (Pandey 01)

The Subaltern in this sense is the one whose voices have forcibly been muted when it comes to administering the same states that they constitute under the foreign colonial powers. In order to get themselves heard, they must become politically prominent through such means as their protests against the discourse of the mainstream development. This way, they can even create their own models of

development as well as modernization. Through some social, cultural and political movements of theirs, the Subaltern classes can hope to challenge the Western imperialists. Hence, new spaces of opposition are created using the local knowledge. This goes on to pave way for the imminence of non - imperialist futures. The unthinkable experience of self - immolation by the 19th century Indian widow has been explored by Spivak. Her interrogation of the phenomenon is along the same lines as have been used by her to question the parameters of the academic historical discourse of the present - day. Spivak's theory of the gendered Subaltern is based on the practice of 'sati' or 'widow immolation'. She laments the fact that not all Sati - related discourse leaves any room whatever for the unfortunate woman to express her own self freely. That is to say, not once has she been allowed to write her own account. Instead, the colonizer as well as the native male collaborate and conspire with each other and render her objectified hence. As a natural consequence, her original voice is erased from the pages of history. These parameters term such inhuman practices as 'normatively incomprehensible'. They, she believes, point to the modern intellectuals' epistemic continuity with the colonialists (Spivak 1988). As the human social system undergoes uncontrolled changes with the passage of time, one is like lire to get disillusioned with certain harsh realities in one's own surroundings. Following the same sorry pattern, if some fellows ever came forward claiming to 'speak for' the Subaltern, Spivak would be up against them as the most skeptic figure. In an interview with Leon de Kock, (1992) she was hence reported to have cynically asked; "Who the hell wants to mesmerize or protect Subalternity?" (Spivak 46) The colonialist texts could certainly be considered to have already carried Subaltern's native voice. Thus, having well featured itself in a particular system of representation, the Subaltern ultimately moves into a deep sea of silence.

2.17 Sex and Gender; The idea of Performativity:

Judith Butler is a well - known and very influential gender theorist. In her, book *Gender Trouble*, (1999) she ventures to present the sex - gender relation in a fresh perspective. She also attempts to transform the traditional male - female binary gender system. She doubts that two sexes are indeed binary when it comes to their constitution or morphology. However, she argues that this sense of

separateness should not also be true in case of their gender and gender roles. Butler blames the binary nature of the gender system to bring a bad name to the traditional concepts of feminism. She stands for change in the way one views gender. This way, it is her hopes that even those females who do not look woman in her traditional role alone, can also be considered an important part of the movement (Butler 09). By being critical of the gender system, she clearly rejects the notion that certain types of behaviors could be feminine or female - specific. She says that gender is not a choice one makes out of two available options. If such is the case, nothing should limit their roles in any way. Hence, woman can also occupy positions, generally supposed masculine (and vice versa), with absolute confidence. In addition, Butler believes, this does not make them 'less feminine' or 'manly woman'. In her opinion, behaviors have nothing to do with the gender that one is born with. Explaining her beliefs further, she wrote in the preface of the 1999 - edition of her book; 'I sought to counter those views that made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to receive notions of masculinity and femininity' (Butler 07).

In rejection to see gender in the classifications of masculine and feminine, Butler (1999) in his book, "*Gender Trouble*" goes on to claim that gender is a continuum that can change just like culture. This viewpoint opens unlimited opportunities for both the sexes. Since there is no truth in the traditional belief in the existence of certain male - only or female - only behaviors, both man and woman can do anything freely. Nonetheless, both Rubin and Butler have assigned a significant role to society in their consideration of the matters regarding gender and sex. Rubin studies the relationship that is created by the society. Butler, (1999) on the other hand, sees both as social constructs. She sums up her theory as 'the unproblematic unity of woman that is invoked to raise the solidarity of identity. This distinction between gender and sex is split because of feminist subject. This distinction formulation serves the argument that the construction of gender is culturally constructed but this argument disputes the biology science. Hence, gender neither is the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex (Butler 8).

Arguing that 'the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all,' Butler also introduces the idea of 'performativity'. According to her, it is not a single act; but a repetition, a ritual. This repeated entity then

achieves its effects through its naturalization. Therefore gender too - being an unstable and performance is based on body that is naturalized through repetition. Gender divisions, alongside the specifically prescribed roles, are created and imposed by society. Small boys and girls observe and follow the examples set by their parents. This practice reinforces a good number of characteristics and duties on the male and female. Butler's theory of 'performativity' explores and explains the same gender divisions. She also talks about the supposed 'appropriateness' of certain actions. She blames the society and culture for having enforced the repetition of certain roles and behaviors on both the sexes (Butler 34).

What seriously concerns, such theorists as Butler and Rubin is this harsh reality: for generations, men have been inheriting an absolute power; the women, on the contrary, have also been forced into the most debasing subjugation since ages. Marx views help us reaching this conclusion. Gramsci in "*Prison Writings 1929 - 1935*" from the text "*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*", (2000) talks about two types of class formation. He asserts that the same group of people can and cannot be called a 'class'. This, he added in the argument, depends on the fact whether or not they are class conscious. He illustrates these arguments through small French peasants. They are, according to him, a class in 'contrastive' terms alone. As a performative, they are not. In the same sense, he wrote: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented". These two class categories differentiate Subalternity from agency; with the latter denoting an institutionally validated action which is a sort of collective effort (Forgacs 218 - 219).

2.18 Spivak's Subaltern: A Gendered Perspective:

Gayatri Spivak makes a point through her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", that the 'Subaltern' is a gendered entity. While the dominant class and the patriarchal setup continue to challenge and contest each other, the voiceless woman moves further into obscurity. It is the intention of the present study to deconstruct the very patriarchal ideology running behind this systematic sidelining and silencing of the woman. Though the researcher's chief focus remains on the Subaltern women, the point of concern is that all women do have to suffer in one way or another. In a purely Indian context, even the widows from the 'highest' Brahmin caste can be subjected to the 'religious ritual' of immolation (what they

call the practice of 'Sati'). Coming to the Subaltern woman, Spivak uses the phrase 'impersonal indifference' to indicate the type of treatment she receives in her everyday life. Despite the fact that both the man and woman find themselves in a collective struggle against the elite classes, the woman gets no room anywhere to express herself in the social sphere (Spivak 1988).

In the postcolonial theory, one important issue is that of complicity. On the one hand, we have the power elite who are complicit with almost everybody. On the other, there is the complicity of the Subaltern woman. Spivak says that the Subaltern woman is forced into complete submission through two means: by presenting subordination as 'an ethical choice' for her sex; and by chaining her with certain constraints as 'a responsibility'. Spivak and Said dealt with the issue of complicity and imperialism in entirely different ways. Spivak's interest is reduced to the consideration of the Third World intellectual as well as the dominant elite. While exploring various forms of exploration, she at times takes into account the idea of global capitalism. Said, on the contrary, centers around the West's cultural hegemony in the Third World nations. In so doing, the elements of colonialism and neo - colonialism are also given much attention. Despite her stress on the heterogeneous production and constitution of woman as 'sexed subjects', Spivak's persistent focus on the silenced Subaltern in Young's opinion also creates a sense of homogeneity of the very same Subaltern.

In her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she exemplifies the epistemic violence through the imperialist design wherewith to present the colonized as the 'other'. Similarly, with regard to the widow burning 'ritual,' she views the Sati - related discourse to be yet another example of the epistemic violence. The widow is considered a victim of patriarchy by the colonialist discourse. The native account, on the contrary, argues that she is in fact a 'willing participant' in the 'ritual'. Spivak maintains that both sides act in a complicit manner. Consequently, the voice of the Subaltern woman is silenced.

After more than twenty - five years of work on Subaltern Studies, the terms 'Subaltern' and 'Subaltern historiography' have gone a long way. Having been born in India, it has now crossed the borders to move also into Brazil, Japan, Latin America and Africa. People with no or less access to power institutions across

societies are its subjects too. The historical narratives of the Bengalis, which present 'spirits' as the agents to have incited rebellion, find the defense of their epistemic legitimacy in Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000). Exploring the subject further, he points out the historians' problematic denial of such claims. Such account of the Subaltern helps one to understand the parameters of the knowable. In this sense, the Subaltern can be seen as a 'known unknown'. To get a slightly better view of it, the scholars must be able seriously interrogate the 'boundary conditions of their own thought'. Derrida does this interrogation even without taking the 'undue' risk of accessing 'positive knowledge'. The crucial distinction, hence, lies between the two views, in their ability to limit the unknowable within a historical or empirical context. Subaltern remains Subaltern whatever circumstances and changes take place as in class conscious and conservative society woman is sometimes treated as slave with no voice, without any feelings and sensations.

2.19 The Investigation of Third World Feminism:

The subject to "Third World Feminism" the question is left for the South Asian woman rather she can speak or not, cultural nationalism and religious fundamentalism are going together in South Asian countries. Honor killing, domestic violence, forced marriages such as marriage with Holy Book and sexual abuse, these are some of the key issues that forced woman to remain silent. However, representation of Subaltern in "Third World" literature gives rise to certain controversial issues. In "*Dialogic of the Oppressed*" Peter Hitchcock (1993) states that 'voices are not the only feature produced by Subalternity but strategic silences are also produced in any communication system, the signals disabling the traditional mode of speaking, this silence lies in the language is known as "language of transgression" (Hitchcock xvii). Silence in communication plays a vital role as in certain cases it is given political interpretation as absence of possible voices. Peter Hitchcock states that in verbal communication if something is not said that even carries meaning, silence do persists particularly when the silence is strategic. In this book, "*Dialogics of the Oppressed*" for the analysis of Subaltern, Mikhail Bakhtin theory of Dialogism is gone through.

The concept of dialogism refers to resistance of the Subaltern as, it gives importance to "specific situations of dialogic exchange" (Hitchcock xv). Bakhtin

states that in this regard, dialogics are not the means, but the logic of resistance is constituted by them. By the term "oppressed" he talks about the people who are economically, socially and culturally subordinated, marginalized or subjugated in myriad of ways. Social injustice and inequality victimizes the oppressed and makes them Subaltern not to even resist. Through the term, silenced Subaltern, means to say something. Moreover, the fact is that as the critic it is not possible for the researcher to wait for the Subaltern to speak out rather being a critic one takes the position of Subaltern. Critically one listens to the silence and hears the Subaltern silence as if they are managing to speak. Spivak says in respect with the Subaltern subject that it never ignores the "subject relations produced in the interaction of historian, critics, writers or readers in the representation and re - presentation of the Subaltern" (Hitchcock 12).

Subaltern studies group talks about the consciousness of the Subaltern, Spivak states that it is elite thought that Subaltern consciousness could never be heard. Spivak states that writer even cannot describe Subaltern in an apt way because Subaltern cannot even speak within the confines of the text. Spivak states that the writers carry critical views regarding the Subaltern because if Subaltern is a woman then the assumption is presupposed that a space will be created from where the oppressed can speak. For Spivak, Subaltern subject is muted historically and politically. It is of great significance to create the consciousness of the Subaltern woman. Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" gives the example of "Sati" bride burning as Subaltern. Thus, the task of the postcolonial feminist is to make the Subaltern woman speak instead of speaking for the Subaltern woman. She moreover states that, the word "Third World" no longer exists now people say "the so - called Third World" and for her between the speaker and the listener there should be a transaction.

In Subaltern Studies, historiography is institutionalized through the marginalized spaces. Partha Chatterjee talks about inner and outer domains of national culture that is 'Subaltern pasts' concept given by Dipesh Chakrabarty. Yet another factor of significance is a clear lack of culture in the Subaltern classes. In "*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present*" (1999) Spivak argues that those poor unfortunate beings who are themselves alien to a culture they live in can never really become a powerful part of the same

(Spivak 12). Initially, the series of Subaltern Studies deals with the opposition to the hegemony of nationalist and colonial state centered histories. Partha Chatterjee's *'Nation and its Fragments'* (1993) states that in our day to day life inner and outer distinction separates social space into 'ghar' and 'bahir', the home and the world (Chatterjee 120). The world represents the outer side, the external whereas home represents ones inner side, identity. According to Chatterjee's point of view home is the representation of woman where external forces should not correspond but actually, there is a typical conception of gender roles in traditional patriarchal setup. In this process, he tries to erase colonialism out of existence.

Similarly, writing for the *Recasting Women*, (1990) Chatterjee holds that the rising popularity of the nationalist agenda actually contributes to promote patriarchy by virtually sending the female issue in the background. He blames the nationalists of having double standards. On the one hand, they stressed the need to educate themselves in the modern sciences and arts to be equipped with proper weaponry to thwart the danger of the foreign colonialism. Nevertheless, on the other, they adopted an opposite strategy when it came to their domestic affairs. Here, their priorities too underwent great alterations. In Chatterjee's own words, the main aim here was to "preserve and strengthen the inner core of the national culture, its spiritual essence" (Chatterjee 239). Simply put, this latter category of woman and home, symbolizing spirituality, was supposed just to give up any 'material' elements in order to keep their 'purity' intact.

Dipesh Chakraborty is of the view that Subaltern classes are divided into two groups' middle class and the upper class. Dipesh Chakraborty talks about Subaltern pasts in *'Habitations of Modernity'* published in 2002; he states that Subaltern is a notion of resistance to the elite domination. He argues that in an institutionalized discipline Subaltern relation deals with the dominant ideologies of history. In this respect, Guha talks about two terms 'domination' and 'subordination', the elite has a social domination over the Subaltern this was under capitalism and concept of imperialism. Women writings show their stance that they were against the structures and prevention of patriarchal setup; this actually complicates and substantiates the inner domain of the everyday life.

In Vinayak Chaturvedi's book *'Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial'* (2000), in an essay "Can the 'Subaltern' Ride?" Gyan Prakash states about Spivak argument that Subaltern theorists has taken deconstructive approach in order to articulate, she is of the view that it is significant for the Subalternists to deconstruct the mode of deconstruction as 'objectification' and 'control' of the Subaltern subject with the historical knowledge about Subalternity. Spivak talks about the subjectivity of the Subaltern woman as she considers the absence of subject positioning or the subjectivity of woman as 'indifference'. Although Ranajit Guha in reference to South Asian society take gender as subordinate class but still critics has not given much importance to gender analysis in their writings. Gyan Prakash states in response to O'Hanlon and Washbrook viewpoint (2000) that is;

Deconstruction is unable to take responsibility for interpretation; Spivak in the appropriate manner marks the silencing of the Subaltern woman as the point at which the interpreter must acknowledge the limits of historical understanding; for it is impossible to retrieve the woman's voice when she was not given a subject position from which to speak. (Chaturvedi 227)

Therefore, the voices that came were the suppressed and the unfinished contests. Veena Das states that woman body that sustained violence can be seen through the body language, she writes that, "a woman hides the faults of her husband inside her womb" (Chaturvedi 286). She talks about the partition of 1947 when woman was subjugated and marginalized; she not only had to face the antagonism and aggression of men as enemies but also treachery, unfaithfulness and betrayal of their own men. However, in certain cases body forms its own speech because of the suppression of her voice. Therefore, in the narratives historians and critics considers that the construction of the Subaltern voices is significant, the voices of slaves, untouchables, workers, marginalized groups, sufferers and women.

2.20 The Historiographic Female Subaltern:

The year 1988 brought a new boom to the concept. It was a critical essay on the Subaltern studies along the same lines as those of Spivak's. It only differed

in its technical adoption of a more historiographic mode. The article, titled "Recovering the Subject Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia," by Rosalind O'Hanlon published in *"Modern Asian Studies Journal"* (1988), is of greater significance in that it was authored by a Cambridge scholar rather than by one concerned only with the postcolonial studies. However, her analysis seems so similar to the critique of Spivak. Having observed that a good many contributions have deconstruction as their result, he believes that 'the classic unitary self - constituting subject - agent of liberal humanism' still succeeds in making its way into the body of the various analyses (O'Hanlon 145). Again, the same observation has been made by Spivak as well. This understandable tendency does not denote that the series is merely characterized by a simplistic positivism. Nevertheless, since the project aims at recovering a particular 'own' history of the subjugated, it does appear to have been used in a metaphorical sense.

A kind of analysis aiming at recovering presence does not look easy to conduct. It becomes more difficult in societies where a sort of supremacy belongs to the sovereign subject as well as ontological individualism. The same applies also to social situations where the powerful groups show the least interest in deconstructing their subjectivities or altering the positions of power. In order to explore the theoretical complexities underlying the concept of Subalternity, Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is of chief importance. Neither the interest of the academic community shows signs of a lessening interest in it, nor has its overall influence decreased over the years. To its credit, the article inspired two decades of debate centering on the conceptions of the term 'Subaltern' as presented by Spivak and her contemporary intellectuals coming from the Subaltern Studies Group. O'Hanlon also hints at the possibility of writing the 'Subaltern' history even without "transforming them into autonomous subject agents or unitary consciousnesses". However, this task seems extremely difficult to him. Histories and identities can still be constructed without necessitating an origin from within the subject itself. The Subaltern, to O'Hanlon (1988) does not still dissolve itself into invisibility. This is due to two chief reasons: the same de - centering is applied to the monolithic subject - agents coming from the elite historiography as well; the Subaltern has the creative ability to mould certain cultural materials that could

serve his / her own purposes, while discarding, at the same time, those that serve them no longer (O'Hanlon 145 - 146).

However, a detailed perusal of the pieces produced on the Subalternity would show that a great many of the works have drawn largely from the vast concepts of Gramsci and Guha. By contrast, Spivak's relatively narrower notion does not draw as much attention. Jill Didur and Teresa Heffernan in the article "Revisiting the Subaltern in the New Empire" published in "*Cultural Studies*" (2003) journal, he notes that the growing trend of broadening of its definition to include more of 'oppression' or 'otherness' has pushed the term 'Subaltern' into a kind of vagueness (Didur and Heffernan 9). This trend, they remark, has also reduced its effectiveness as a category in itself. Assuming an altogether different stance, Sumit Sarkar (2002) in his book "*Beyond Nationalist Frames*" points out a movement of the 'Subaltern' through 'peasant' up to a community (Sarkar 304). He also moves away from the views of Gramsci and Thompson. Following the footsteps of Spivak, he also criticizes the categorizations of 'Subaltern' and 'autonomy' in the name of theory. He considers it a dangerous development in that it prevents the conducting of an accurate analysis. He also opposes the substitution of the term 'class' with 'Subaltern' or 'community'. Detaching the concept from the socioeconomic contexts for fear of economic reductionism has also been greatly criticized by him. He censures Spivak in the following terms: "Spivak . . . has not changed things much in this respect for the bulk of later Subaltern Studies work, except in purely verbal terms" (Sarkar 304). Though a prominent figure to say this, his is not the lonely voice in this regard. He is even led to consider the situation as the demise of the 'Subaltern'.

2.21 Postcolonial Voices and Female Subaltern:

The Subaltern studies, born out of the work of the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group, has become quite a useful resource available to those scholars whose chief interest lies in critically considering the issues of power and representation. To this end, they explore the history and literature concerning the groups who have remained disenfranchised historically. In their historical representations, the oppressed communities remained 'silent' and 'ambiguous'. The Subaltern studies raise questions regarding their limited representation. This way,

they attempt to represent the same who have not been represented in the history. Under the term 'Subaltern', the scholars deal with the element of 'silence' at two levels: they discover 'silence' as it appears through narrative gaps within the long literary pieces reviewed; and, they explore an enduring historical 'silence' associated with the disenfranchised groups. In addition, the novels in particular attempt to end this latter 'silence' mostly work through a technique known as symbolism. In her introduction to the "Selected Subaltern Studies", Spivak presents the notion of a double articulation through her phrase 'strategic essentialism'. It may also be termed as 'tactical essentialism'. It was her intension to appropriate the work done under the category of Subaltern studies with that of a former practice of hers, i.e. deconstruction. It means that the Subaltern studies always move through 'theoretical actions'.

In "*The Nation and its Fragments*", (1993) Partha Chatterjee discusses a gradual and systematic emergence and development of a sort of 'anti - colonial' sentiments in the colonized country of India. Soon after an essential difference between the 'material' and the 'spiritual' began to be felt, attempts were made by certain circles to assert the masses' domestic sovereignty under the British imperialism. Under the banner of the 'spiritual' part of the growing feelings, the Indians created their own national culture. This way, the citizens tried resisting the foreign rulers' oppression in all its forms. With the creation of an 'inner spiritualism', the country witnessed a period of true nationalism. For Chatterjee, since this spiritual element cannot be called 'Western', it should be termed as 'modern'. He is also of the view that this early phase of nationalism meant an independent India that was being 'imagined'.

2.22 Role of Subalternity in Exploring the Role of Woman:

Though the Subalternity chiefly focuses on the colonial - native relations, many theorists concern themselves with exploring the role of the woman. The harsh reality is; the woman in colonized situations has no choice but to be oppressed. There is hardly any way she can escape from an unfortunate fate. Their challenging task is multiplied, as they must also face oppression of their own male members. If scholars like Gramsci, Guha and Spivak are to be believed that the present - day woman is no more than slighted, subordinated or Subaltern figures.

The dominant groups of men exploit their supposed 'weaknesses' rather badly. Since they see no way to empower themselves, their lot largely remains at a constant risk. Talking about this gendered Subalternity; one must bear in mind that it varies from group to group and area to area. No two women can experience anything exactly in the same way. Their history, culture and traditions all combine to make Subalternity change that shapes swiftly.

According to Sumit Sarkar, the first and the second volume of the *Subaltern Studies* were entirely concerned with the Subaltern people. This trend, having undergone a gradual lessening of the intellectual interest in the subject, reduced almost to the third of the articles by the seventh and the eighth publication. The newer articles now covered both historiographic and colonial aspects of the creation of discourse. The use of the difficult and often incomprehensible jargon became frequent with such scholars as Spivak. Reading and understanding her work was a challenge too big for those with little training or familiarity with the literary studies. Although there does seem a hint of exaggeration in John Beverley's (1997) interesting remark "most of them [the historians] would rather be tortured than have to read Spivak", it also has some truth in it at the same time (Alvern p. 63). Sarkar's criticism concerned itself with the political and intellectual context in his country. The initial Subaltern studies discovered in India carries a proper political context. However, the political and social realities can be seen suddenly, somewhat shocking. In particular, the last decade of the twentieth century clearly witnessed the revival of a conservative 'Hindutva movement'. This becomes a worrying and troubling development for such intellectuals as Sarkar. An extremely conservative 'sarkar' (government) in New Delhi, waving the flags of 'the revival of Hinduism in India', looked set even to censor the academic works of several scholars including Sumit Sarkar. Sarkar, through his articles in the journal, sharply compared and contrasted the situation of the colonial and post-colonial India. His arguments sound saner when he is full of criticism of the growing tendency of returning to what he calls 'so-called traditional Indian values'. Obviously enough, the use of violence and destruction, under the guise of 'reviving' religion and culture, becomes simply unacceptable and unjustifiable. Here, he gives the instance of the 16th century Babri Masjid. This historical mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, was demolished by a gang of Hindu hardliners

on December 6, 1992. Expressing serious concerns over the rising influence of the extremists, he fears that even the enlightened Hindus — those refusing to come out to promote such 'lofty ideals' as they cannot consider themselves safe in India. In his book "*Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory*", (1999) John Beverley provides a simple, brief, concise and precise summary of what the Subaltern studies in essence are. In his own words:

Subaltern Studies is about power, who has it and who does not, who is gaining and who is losing it. Power is related to representation: which representations have cognitive authority or can secure hegemony; which do not have authority or are not hegemonic. Gayatri Spivak formulated the problem concisely: If the Subaltern could speak — that is, speak in a way that really mattered to us — then it would not be [a] Subaltern [at all]. (Beverley 01)

For him, there is no such thing as representation of the Subaltern. Instead, the Subaltern studies only discover how the academic knowledge is impacted and influenced by the presence or absence of the representation of the Subaltern. Since it ignores the Subaltern as a victim, this theory receives little attention. With the change of its intellectual and political contexts as well as with its members and readers' base, the aims of the Subaltern Studies have also changed. While such intellectual minds as Guha and Spivak has given the project its initial shape, it cannot avoid moving away from the proposed guidelines. It can be better understood when one also keeps in mind a gradual decline of the Marxism as well as the rapid rise of cultural, literary and postcolonial studies. The projects' varied reception is also connected with the changing contexts.

2.23 Can the Subaltern Speak? As Theory:

Spivak's (1988) claim that the 'Subaltern cannot speak' (Spivak 308) as they are dependent on the immediate discourse as well as the discursive partners. It is not just that the Subalterns are silenced for getting no opportunity or are linguistically incapable of speaking and hearing. Instead, the issue is that of the discursive mechanisms. It is because of these mechanisms that all oppositional statements go on to make no sense and are rendered entirely unworthy and useless.

All attempts to interpret or replicate the speech render the Subaltern unable to speak. These processes in fact prevent a fellow from exercising his / her power through the medium of speech. Spivak considers it a complex phenomenon. The hypothesis that the Subaltern classes can speak through various forms of representation is seen as an indication of the utopian or essentialist politics by her. Moreover, she also opposes Foucault's observation regarding the role of repression in silencing the subject or making him / her non - existent. However, she is quite confident in claiming 'there is no space from which the sexed Subaltern subject can speak' (Spivak 307). She consider that the silencing place is marked with 'something other than silence and nonexistence; [it's] a violent aporia between [the] subject and object status' (Spivak 306). This latter term has posed a serious challenged for the practitioners of critical theory. The contemporary theory appears to focus on differences and plurality of voice. Also, as its practical focus are the stress on direct action and participating solidarity. In order to avoid certain confusions, it is essential to concentrate more on 'silences' of Spivak's 'Subalterns'. Through their symbolic overturning of 'silence,' authors give new meanings to their literary texts. In addition, they attempt to portray entirely different worlds through their Subaltern protagonists. They also give rise to certain political complicities. These minor characters of history, commonly called the 'Subalterns,' often make great leaps out of silence into voice of a historic essence. The same applies to the historical protagonists appearing in the South Asian literature. Different factors are involved that makes a woman Subaltern. Education and awareness is one of them as the focus on female education is not given that creates hindrance and obstacle in her way.

As aforementioned, the matter of Subaltern representation, especially in case of the South Asian literature, is full of complications. In order to discover the possibility of voice, certain conditions and presuppositions ought to be considered. The silence has its value in presenting itself as a paradox from the reading perspective. Silence, the 'absent possibility of voice,' has been politicized historically. It is something that is present there but must be sought somehow. Yet, in its muted shape, it remains a disturbing presence. Only voice has the ability either to eliminate or replace it. With a sort of strategic silence persisting, something is always said even though it is not uttered from the human lips. Despite

its being a 'possibility of voice,' the silence certainly disables the known 'traditional modes' of hearing directly from the Subaltern. It is possible to say that the Subaltern says something (attribute a thing to him) or, more accurately perhaps, to force him to say a specific thing. This event of speech, however, takes place through silence. The silence seems to make the thing more acute and critical in nature. In addition, the original speech is politicized during this whole process. The Subaltern is the one who is imminently silenced. There is no such thing as to go on expecting to hear a word, or waiting for him / her to speak finally. Instead, it is the intellectual's job to attend carefully to the silence itself and make out his / her own meanings out of the voiceless utterances. Instances of it are to be found in abundance in the South Asian literature where the Subaltern supposedly does manage to 'speak silently'.

As discourse relations follow no implicit or explicit rules, they are bound to silence. Their power is exercised through offering, determining and characterizing. Besides, they never really impose themselves from outside. Such a positioning as this limits their relation to violence. Thanks to this limit of discourse, silence formatively influences the discourse. Though silent, this resistance is powerful. What's more, it does not even manifest itself through violent means. A symbolic violence, nonetheless, is on display when agents of the oppressing forces try to exclude their weaker opponents. Within a dominant discursive formation, the silence is forced from her marginal position to 'speak'. The subsequent statements issuing from her 'closed lips' only conform to the several subordinating lines of division there are. The relationship between speaking or silence and subjectivity or objectivity can be better understood by closely looking at observations made by Lacan, Roi Wagner (2006) in an article "Silence as Resistance before the Subject, or Could the Subaltern Remain Silent?" quoted Lacan:

The effect of language is to introduce the cause into the subject . . . For this cause is the signifier, without which there would be no subject in the real. Nevertheless, this subject is what the signifier represents and the latter cannot represent anything except to another signifier: to which the subject who listens is thus reduced. (Lacan 708)

Here, the effects of the above statement on the objects (and not the subjects) are our chief concern for the purpose of the present study. As it is evident, the subject seems to be dependent upon the signifier in terms of its cause. It must also be kept in mind that the object - symbolic order link is weaker than the subject is - symbolic order link is. Similarly, it is again the presence of the subject, which depends on the signifier.

2.24 Reading the Silence through Critics:

Over the years, the term 'Subaltern' has witnessed not only a vast expansion in its definition, but the theoretical framework of the Subaltern Studies is also being rapidly adapted outside the South Asia. Gyanendra Pandey, (2010) in his publication "Subaltern Citizens and Their Histories", argues why and how Subalternity could equally be applied both to the "Third World" citizens and such modernized industrial societies as the U.S (Subaltern Citizens 4). Amidst the 'conditions' of Subalternity are cultural, social and economic impoverishments of certain sections of every society. As domination forces them into submission and subordination, they continue to be humiliated unabated. Throwing light on its initiation, C.A. Bayly (2000) in his essay "Rallying around the Subaltern" makes the important observation that the Subaltern Studies began soon after the Emergency regime of Ms. Indira Gandhi in India. Calling the Indian National Congress a party with 'hegemonic ideology', he says that this era has witnessed that the country caught in the dilemma of violence, in official discourse, several resistance movements, agitated working classes and awakening peasants could be bundled into the category of archaic disturbance, communalism or 'Naxalism'. The social, political and economic issues, hence, became an inseparable part of the Subaltern movement. Poor people were all prepared to rewrite their gloomy past in a hopeful future (Chaturvedi 118 - 119).

The word 'Subaltern,' in Pandey's words, is no new phenomenon in the U.S. context. In his views, what the South Asian Subalternists offer to study is the same that the American scholars dealing with the African - Americanism, labor history and Latino - Latina Studies have already been engaged in. Both the schools of thought revolve around the marginalized and subordinated communities (Subaltern Citizens 2). Owing to their counter - hegemonic resistance, the African -

Americans and other U.S ethnic minority groups can also be explored from a Subaltern perspective. Joanne P. Sharp (2009) in his book "*Geographies of Post-colonialism; Spaces of Power and Representation*" states that:

Postcolonial feminists blame western feminists for forgetting the fact that many of the world's women are oppressed by much more than patriarchy; they also face exploitation by global economic systems, race and class. Many Third World women would consider that they have more in common with men of their class and nationality than they have in common with privileged white women. (Sharp 116)

Moreover, it is the job of the intellectual to engage himself in talking to and not talking for, the Subaltern woman whom history kept silenced for decades if not centuries (Spivak 295). Therefore, Spivak gives task to the Subaltern historian that they need to 'read silences'. While the Subaltern historian such as Ranajit Guha (1999) in his book "*Elementary Aspects of Peasants Insurgency in Colonial India*" uses his abilities to retrieve the lives and experiences of the marginalized groups as he sees and hears them, the literary scholar instead takes up examining the same lives and experiences through their literary narratives. The Subaltern mother's predicament is retrieved by Tony Morrison through the tale of Margaret Garner and the creation of the character of Sethe. Similarly, Skekhar Kapur appropriates Phoolan Devi's biography and mutes the Subaltern voice. Marxist historiography of the seventies has seen peasant revolts as sorts of movements which exhibited a backward consciousness. Such movements have been termed 'pre - political' by Hobsbawm (Guha 5 - 6). Though not having come to terms with modernity or capitalism yet, a consciousness it was seen to be nonetheless.

If considered from a post - modernity perspective, the Subaltern seems to sit uneasily with the Marxism. A better judge than that any other of Spivak's phrase 'Subaltern speaks,' Beverley in his book, *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory* says that the Subaltern studies is a 'project of Marxism' even without being a 'Marxist project' as such. He explains his stance by reverting to Althusser. Referring to the latter is theoretical anti - humanism; he brings out the difficulty involved in retrieving Subaltern as a subject of history. In the same breath, he also speaks about Althusser's notion of history being a process

without the need of having a subject. Explaining Beverley's views, Gomez (2005) writes; "there is a moment in which deconstruction and Subaltern studies move away from each other". For him, Beverley opinions indeed give a mere reflection of "the recognition of the limits of critical thinking and the limits of intellectuals" (Gomez 109).

Spivak (2000) claimed that any attempts of putting history and fiction in a deconstruction relation to each other have certain political limits. Seen from this stance, Beverley seems to make much sense. According to him, Spivak has in fact rendered the Subaltern 'ontologically incapable of being heard; that is to say, the Subaltern can hence never speak. Nevertheless, we cannot agree with him when he thinks 'the claims for testimonial voice are the fake claims: the intellectual still [does] the job of representing' (Gomez 353). Too much technicalities and skillfulness backfire in that Spivak seems to have been rendered incomprehensible. In colonial and postcolonial situations, she implements the structuralist and post - structuralist theories in a rather unclear manner.

2.25 Subaltern and their Representation:

In Beverley's opinion, the Subaltern studies are all about the role played by power in representation. Such power, for Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001), manifests itself in the politics of representation. Writing in "*Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*", they talk about the democratic politics of the day. In this regard, a clear distinction is observed between the 'democratic subject - position' and 'popular subject - position'. The 'democratic subject - position' concentrates on a sort of identity politics of mass inclusion relating multiculturalism. The 'popular subject - position,' by contrast, deals with the politics of power involved in the matters of identity. The latter rarely turns up during such critical explorations as the question of the Subaltern groups (Laclau and Mouffe 131).

Gerard Genette a French writer, in his book "*Fiction and Diction*" (1993) translated by Catherine Porter points out that, a certain process of focalization is needed to achieve a point of view in literary narratives. In his view, this process answers such questions as who is the character, who is the narrator and who is the

speaker. The U.S. - specific multicultural sensibility, however, equates representation with voice. In addition, there is an assumption that the unique perspectives constituting representation give voice to those experiences that were once silenced. Gerard Genette quoted Valery, according to him, this is considered true that a piece of literature "act on us without telling us much of anything and which may teach us that they have nothing to teach" (Genette 21). When read as a multicultural literature, the difference between voice and representation becomes nominal in the South Asian fiction. However, the use of the phrase 'South Asian' for a specific literature is not only controversial but it also invites a host of discursive problems. This, as observed by Foucault, is in fact quite relevant to the functioning of the discursive formation. Writing in "*The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*", Michel Foucault (1971) maintains that considering control and containment of the power to be an inherent element of the discursive functions, the inevitable result is 'rarefaction'. This phenomenon has been described as thus: "the amounts to a rarefaction among speaking subjects: none may enter into discourse on a specific subject unless he has satisfied certain conditions or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so" (Foucault 224 - 225). According to him, the analysis of such processes as rarefaction is the duty of the critic. Within the domain of cultural studies, certain critics indulge in the politics of inclusion to establish cultural representation. In studies of the disenfranchised groups, voice receives more privilege over silence; hence giving rise to the question of the representation of the Subaltern. This insists on inclusion to group membership and identity based on strict yet unwritten criteria. Stressing the significance of native's silence, Rey Chow (1993) writing in "*Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies*," states that;

The oppressed, whose voices we seldom hear, are robbed twice - the first time of their economic chances and the second time of their language, which is now no longer distinguishable from those of us who have had our consciousness raised. (Chow 13)

In the customary readings of inclusion, the cultural representations matter more than the considerations regarding which is voiced. Chow's chief argument is that since the silences surface owing to the presence of the cultural representation, they should be given serious consideration. Many a silent clue occurring in the

works of fiction writers form part of what has been termed 'traces of the heterogeneous' by Spivak (1999) in her book *"A Critique of Post - colonial Reason Towards a History of the Vanishing Present"*. In terms of subject positioning, any theory concerning cultural dominants needs be cautious enough. It is because such a relation as this always caught in a sort of double bind. If a power analysis of the 'cultural dominant' is carried out, it undoubtedly gives prominence to the repression of the emergent heterogeneity. If care is not exercised, the analysis itself comes to collaborate in producing the said repression. This happens when it is denied access to the idiom status of the cultural description. Hence, the traces of the heterogeneous must always become the centre of the focus (Spivak 313 - 314).

The entire narrative journey of the principle native character is to be closely followed in such silent traces of the heterogeneous are to be found. The next significant step would be the critical examination of the one who has been de - emphasized, marginalized or obscured while overwhelmingly considering the 'self present voice - consciousness'. This latter displays itself through the native informant character. In fact, it is merely through those surroundings that generally remain unacknowledged and through those experiences that are rarely elaborated that bring out the silent clues of the heterogeneous.

Gayatri Spivak's oft - quoted and much debated essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" insists that the authentic Subaltern female voice can never be 'heard' because she is always spoken for by supremacists or elites who control or delimit the agency of Subalterns. Spivak's engagement with the issue of the Subaltern voice has involved the question of the representation of the Subaltern and her agency and not necessarily her actual agency (no matter how limited) in real life. Put another way, even if we hear the Subaltern woman through her self - representation, there is no guarantee that the resulting voice would truly be hers without restraints of any kind. On the contrary, when the dominant groups promise to speak for her, her original voice is considerably silenced.

Of note in this regard are the views of J. Walkowitz (1989) writing in "Patrolling the Borders, Feminist Historiography and the New Historicism", he maintains that despite drawing on the cultural resources at their disposal, the Subaltern woman still is heavily reliant upon certain cultural parameters.

Moreover, in a complicated manner, they function both as makers and as users of the culture. However, subject to several social as well as ideological constraints, they do manage to resist those same forcefully. The problematic nature of the phenomenon becomes more apparent when we consider the fact that the Subaltern female voice attempts to acquire a sort of agency in representation while still working under certain cruel restrictions imposed on her by her dominant counterparts.

In order to alter the false representation of the woman, the postcolonial feminists are in a dire need to shift their focus rather on the poor creatures' 'lived experiences'. This will at least remove the inadequacies arising out of the erroneous categorization. In "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria," Marnia Lazreg (1990) states that "'grand' narratives tend often times to hide the intricacies and complexities of the lives of the Third World woman". The need is for the complex fabric of their lives to be fully understood. They too have to struggle for their existence. They too are quite capable of showing strong resistance. Subalternity, through hegemony, marginalizes woman. The Subalterns are there to suffer. The present study not only sees woman as silenced, non - resistant beings but also shows their resistance in a way that they raise their voice and attain position in the society. Despite being greatly oppressed in a number of ways, their fighting spirit does not die a premature death. Oppressions and oppressors there are many and everywhere.

2.26 Primary Texts and Scholars Viewpoint:

The researcher has selected three texts for the analysis. *The Holy Woman* by Qaisra Shahraz deals with the Pakistani society, their norms and traditions are depicted in an apt manner. The researchers have highlighted certain themes from this text and then bring them in to light of discussion. Atur Semartini through her research in 2008 deals with the society depicted by the writer. The aim of her research was to see the characters and their depiction in Pakistani society in 20th century. The way writer has presented the characters and society in novel are dissimilar in reality. Zia Ahmed, a Pakistani scholar deals with the portrayal of women in Pakistani Postcolonial Feminist fiction. Najia Asrar Zaidi, Pakistani scholar has written an article titled "From Victim to Survivor: A Critical Study of

Qaisra Shahraz's *The Holy Woman*" (2009). Other scholars have done work on this text from different perspectives.

"The Dowry Bride" by Shoban Bantwal deals with issues like dowry, caste system and many others. The researcher and scholars deal with these perspectives in different manner. R. Saradha, an Indian scholar writes an article titled "From a Marginalist Vacuum towards a Nominalist Continuum: A Study of Shoban Bantwal *The Dowry Bride*" (2014). He is of the view that writer has portrayed an emergence of new woman through the protagonist of the novel. Megha suffers a lot but reconstructs and builds a successful tomorrow.

Different scholars have worked on *"Brick Lane"* by Monica Ali with different viewpoints. One of the scholars, Ali Rezaie in his article "Cultural Dislocation in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*: Freedom or Anomie?" (2014), deals with cultural dislocation and multiculturalism present in the 'West'. He deals with Ali's viewpoint about Western cultural and stereotypical views about native land Bangladesh. Many other scholars and researcher in their work deal with the theme of Post - Colonialism. Another research scholar Seda Arikan in an article "Double Alienation in Monica Ali's Novel *Brick Lane*" (2010) deals with the fact of alienation through the character of Nazneen. Bei Zhang in "The Awakening of Nazneen' Independent Consciousness in *Brick Lane*" (2010), deals with Nazneen' journey of moving from submissiveness to independence.

2.27 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Subaltern; A New Dimension:

In this research, a new literary dimension is presented through a modal that combines Subalternity and feminist critical discourse analysis that is suggestive of new ways to view feminist elements in the contemporary literature. This study focuses on the silenced voices of the female Subaltern as presented in the selected literary texts from South Asia. This research will reveal the resistance of the silenced female Subaltern and hence aims to evoke the consciousness of the female gender to make them understand and establish their identity and to be aware of their legal rights. The researcher has analysed the texts from the standpoint of Subaltern female, with focus on three concepts that is gender domination, power

politics and ideology. These concepts are essential part of research plan. These points are linked with feminist critical discourse analysis gender, power and ideology.

Michelle M. Lazar (2005) in her book, *"Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse"* focuses on gender that adopts a critical feminist view of gender relations. It deals with gender representation in the social and cultural context from the feministic view. Secondly feminist critical discourse analysis examines the power relation between man and woman that are similar to the relationship between the ruling dominant class and the marginalized ruled class (Lazar 3). In ideological setup, patriarchy is one of the factors that interact in a very complex way. Feminist critical discourse analysis demystifies this common assumption of hegemony and dominance by stating them as ideological, in this regard people are divided into two classes as "man and woman" on the bases of classified relation of "domination and subordination" (Lazar 07).

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Subaltern Studies has certain points in common, both have economic and social foregrounding. Both are affected by the hegemonic power structures, the ideology, or their existence is objectified by discourse. Both are deconstructed and reconstructed under hegemonic powers. Hence, through the effective framework of gender, power and ideology an analysis can be conducted on the Subaltern discourse from the South Asian selected literary texts. Discourses always play a significant role in the construction of gendered ideology. In particular patriarchal system that serves in a power structures propagate their own ideology that women are weak and treated as 'others' so its mandatory for the male to rule over them.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHOD

Research can be conducted on 'Qualitative' and 'Quantitative' grounds, but the nature of this research is Qualitative. It is library oriented literary research. Paul (2005) is of the view that the subject matter of Qualitative research is to describe ordinary life and get the meaning. According to the critic's viewpoint, the researchers build their own opinion and in natural process, they interact with the situation and surroundings. Qualitative research, according to Scott and Usher (1999) different incidents and situations are interpreted and these interpretations are completely subjective. The task of the researcher is to make sense of the world in a realistic manner (Scott and Usher 24). Another critic Kothari (2004) considers that this research concerns with the subjective implication of behavior, attitude and opinions (Kothari 5). According to the viewpoint of Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (1994), the basic aim of qualitative research is interpretation, explanation and to discover the underlying motives of human behavior. (Denzin and Lincoln 02). Therefore, based on these grounds by the critics this research is qualitative, it will highlight the issue of Subaltern, and method of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis will be employed for analysis of selected texts.

3.1 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as Research Method:

In this research, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis has been adopted as a method to analyze the selected literary texts. Michelle M. Lazar in his book, "*Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse*" (2005) states that the concept of Feminist CDA is influenced by the existing theories such as feminism and other related theories. The aim of Feminist CDA is not to recognize gender as a product of discourse rather the way gender is discursively produced and analyzed, meanings are grasped in order to interpret human psychology (Lazar 11).

3.1.1 Defining Discourse:

In the analysis of discourse from a critical viewpoint the researcher deals with the text on many levels, it concerns with the economic, social, political and cultural factors that exists in a text. As Fairclough (1992) states that discourse is socially constructed, (Fairclough 36), thus, it depends upon the complexities in relationship, the way social relations are exercised and social identities are revealed through particular discourse (Fairclough 137). In "*Language and Power*" (1989) critic states that discourse is part of the society's utterances, it is a social phenomenon as language is a part of the society and language represents the society's social setup and their behavior. Text is the part of the whole of the social interaction so text analysis is a part of the discourse analysis (Fairclough 24). In this research, discourse analysis helps us to understand the vantage point of female as it is a complex ongoing process that is influenced by the dominant forces in their surroundings such as marriage, violence, family setup, sexuality, social pressure and all other assumptions contemplates them to live in that contested world. Subsequently, Lazar (2005) is of the view that discourse of the text will be analyzed from feministic critic's point of view, so in this case their interest lies on the 're - presentation' of gender and their power relations in the particular texts and contexts (Lazar 11). According to Feminist CDA, discourse is considered to be one element of social practices and specifically certain aspects that are discursive in nature and are discursively re - presented in an ideological way whereas in Fairclough's viewpoint there is dialectal relationship between discourse and society.

3.1.1.1 The Notion of Discourse:

As quoted in Ruth Wodak (2001) book "*Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*" Michel Foucault describes the formation of gender as an 'object', he is of the view that discourse can be treated as practices that form the objects of which they speak; this has been developed by the literary and cultural theorist Juergen Link and his team (Wodak 33). Moreover, discourses are a social practice that exercises power with all its effects. The existence of an object and shaping its ideology through discursive practice gives way to hegemony, according to Gramsci's idea it evokes resistance. In a text, discourse is a site of struggle so in discourse analysis against power structures, resistance plays an important part. Ruth Wodak explains phenomenon of 'objectification' she states that there exists a bond that intrudes between subject and object, the social world and the realities of the object (Wodak 41), so object changes its meaning with the change in discourse rather that turns into a different object, it loses its ideology. The new discourse that is produced by the change in the meaning of the discourse is actually based on false distinction that is 'Dualism' introduced by Siegfried Jager who is actually closer to the notion of discourse where as on discourse Michel Foucault gives explanation from structuralist viewpoint. Foucault believes dualism between discourse and reality as he considers discourses and realities are not interrelated and there independent existence is not present. Therefore, dualism not only deals with the subordinate objects to be rule upon but also with the gender relations.

3.1.2 Elaborating Discourse Analysis:

Fairclough (1992) considers that discourse analysis as the reproduction, contestation and restructuring of the social identities presented in the text (Fairclough 137). According to Michel Foucault (1989) in his book "*Archaeology of Knowledge*", states that objects can be made alive through the discourse present in it. Therefore, in certain conditions if object is same but the analysis of the discourse differs, then in that state meaning of the object depends upon the perspective generated by that discourse that also changes and shapes a different ideology (Foucault 25). In social, political and cultural context, discourse is interpreted with realistic aspects. In discourse analysis sometime things are not

presented as they exist rather they are from the perspective of fictitious characteristics near to existing reality.

In the analysis of the discourse, 'coherence' is figured out as the researcher builds the connection between the text and the real world. This is sort of connection that is built by the interpreter of the text not by the text itself. Interpretation is the combination of the 'what's in the text' and 'what's in the interpreter's mind', so to some extent assumption and expectations becomes the part of the text (Fairclough 78).

3.1.3 Critical Discourse Analysis and Its Implications:

Fairclough (1992) is of the view that Critical Discourse Analysis serves as a medium to create a link between society and text through means of language. CDA is a form of discourse that has an explicit position and it has an emancipatory agenda. It deals with social problems that can be interpreted by readers. The focus of CDA is on language that is used by the people with emotion and real intention and people are the part of the society their behavior and talk can be taken as relational and experimental (Fairclough 110). CDA main concern is to challenge and enacts the relation of dominance and power in the society. Fairclough in "*Discourse and Social Change*," states:

Discursive practice is constitutive in both conventional and creative ways: it contributes to reproduce society (social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it contributes to transform society. (Fairclough 65)

According to the social situation or social factor different types of discourses are produced, so in different social contexts, texts are consumed differently. Regarding micro and macro levels of discourse analysis, this research is based on macro level of analysis as it deals with the concepts of power, hegemony, dominance and inequality that lies between socially constructed groups (Fairclough 354).

Hence, CDA not only includes texts and interactions but also addresses social issues and problems; the root problem here is the struggle between the

power relations, the way in which the gender relations interact with each other and ideology.

3.2 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis:

Michelle Lazar's (2005) book "*Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse*" deals with the method of this research. Feminist research is considered to be epistemological research as well, as epistemology is the study of knowledge, it keeps in view from what source knowledge is attained and how we know about it. The struggles and hardships of women are misrepresented rather sometimes ignored by the society, so Feminist method is taken in order to analyze the discourse. FCDA has a feministic perspective, it is interdisciplinary in nature, this approach deals with the 'patriarchal society on the core structure of power relationship that privilege men and disempowered or exclude women from the social setup' (lazar 5). Therefore, the aim of the FCDA is to build connection between gender discourse in the text, and it deals with gender representation in the social and cultural context from the feministic view. On the one side, it analyzes language and discourse from a feministic viewpoint whereas on the other side, it traces out feministic issues in gender through language and discourse. Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell Ginnet (2003) in their book, "*Language and Gender*" discuss the complex relationship of gender order:

The gender order is based on a system that is allocation, divided between rights and obligations, limits and possibilities, freedom and constraints, power and subordination. This structure is supported by and supports structures of convention, emotion, ideology and desire. (Eckert and McConnell 34)

Therefore, according to this viewpoint the notions of power and ideology are so interconnected that it seems impossible to separate them from gender. This process of 'allocation' is structured in order to gain many benefits such as by making the female 'other' as an object of sympathy. This can be seen through the fact where these structures make the shape of convention that keeps on changing and the society members sometimes as a key order take them important,

everlasting or endless. Thus, the power structures of the society have control over the discourse that actually not only supports them but also supports the ideological framework that is again made by these power structures in the society.

Feminist critical discourse analysis is considered significant for different reasons. Firstly, in order to study gender differences, feministic view of gender relations is required. Secondly, within Critical Discourse Analysis it is obligatory to establish or inaugurate 'feminist politics of Articulation' (Lazar 3) in order to analyze text from a critical feministic standpoint. Thirdly, absence of 'self - naming' means that feminist critical discourse analysts have played a role in dissemination to the world. These feminist critical discourse analysts need a platform where they stand as one single voice for the oppressed and marginalized nature of female in the social practices.

In Michelle M. Lazar (2005) views Feminist CDA is political in nature because of the fact that FCDA elucidates the relationship of gender and power in discourse, besides it raises consciousness in the society, gives awareness to develop feminist policies for resistance and brings social change. To Wodak and Van Dijk, CDA deals with the relationship between discourse structures and social practices. Raising voice as a feminist is different from the one who speaks from the position of the woman. Lazar quoted the viewpoint of Grant (1993) in his book by giving an argument that, 'to know as a woman means to know from the perspective of the structure of gender' whereas a feminist analysis means one's critical distance on gender and on oneself' (Lazar 6). The intention of Feminist CDA is to transform society and provide social justice to all the human beings as man and woman as for these critics and scholars both man and woman are the pillars of society they walk parallel so they should be treated equally in all matters of life.

3.2.1 Deconstructing Gendered Discourse:

In "*The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*" in the essay dealing with 'Discourse and Gender' by Shari Kendall and Deborah Tannen (2001), the writers agree to the point that the meaning of "gender is culturally mediated and gendered identities are interactional achieved" (Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton 556 - 557). The focus of Feminist CDA is on gender relations, Lazar quoting Eckert's essay

"*Politicizing Gender in Discourse: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as Political Perspective and Praxis*" by asserting that gender under oppression always works in a complex way. The power relation between man and woman is similar to the relationship between the ruling dominant class and the marginalized ruled class (Lazar 3). Eckert and McConnell Ginet (2003) in "*Language and Gender*" states that there is a correlation between language and gender, rather gender can be defined as 'social distinction of biological sex' and so naming male and female to the sexes is under the influence of the society. Therefore, this predominant concept of gender divides group of people in to two main classes male and female. In this respect, feminist studies in CDA focuses on gender that adopts a critical feminist view of gender relations which shows 'the complex and subtle ways in which social assumptions of gender and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, perpetuated negotiated and contested' (Lazar 1 - 2).

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis links together social injustice and inequality and the usage of language. Jane Sunderland (2006) in "*Language and Gender: An Advanced Resource Book*" argues that the relationship between language and gender evolved after second wave of Feminism, almost, in late 1960's and early 1970's (Sunderland 22). Therefore, from 1980's onward, the connection between feminism and CDA was given due consideration along with gender ideology and power relations were given importance. In 1992, Cameron through her writings "*Feminism and Linguistic Theory*" talks about linguistic biases in patriarchal ideological set up (Lazar 02). Through literary writings, the difference between the discourse of the male and female can be seen with clear difference. Woman is subjugated and oppressed and to some extent is not able to express her thought, as domination of men suppresses her ideology. As Cameron states, men writers even hesitate to give acknowledgement to the female writers although they cite their work, so within CDA it seems to be of great significance to establish "Feminist politics of articulation" (Lazar 03). A gender relation not only differentiates on the basis of sex relation but also on inequality in each setup such as educational, political, economic or domestic distribution. In an essay 'Developing Understandings of Gender' in book entitled '*Language and Gender*', Jane Sunderland (2006) states that, "gender relations entail the potential for those relations to be maintained and perpetuated in part through language" (Sunderland

25). According to Sunderland, Gender and Language study has been provoked after second wave of Feminism, but the theory of Post - Structuralism has certain terms in common for gender possibilities. Dominance and notion of power are the subsequent element of feminist theory, whereas Post - Structuralism provides a basic notion of gender understanding. Deborah Cameron (2006) states that,

Dominance represented a particular moment in feminism; dominance was the moment of feminist outrage, of bearing witness to oppression in all aspects of women's lives. With hindsight informed by post - structuralism, women's silence can be read as actively subversive rather than enforced in meaningful contexts and active strategy of resistance. (Sunderland 18 - 19)

In texts from discourse the reader can see the power relationships, the gendered discourses identifies the contemporary social setup in which woman is struggling hard to acquire their position.

This methodology of FCDA builds a bond between the discourse structure and the social practices, so this helps the researcher to explore the text in particular direction in which they are interconnected. According to Jane Sunderland and Lia Litosseliti (2002) in "*Gender Identity and Discourse Analysis*" the textual representation can be explored through the discourse that shows the struggle of the contradictory forces in the society as CDA studies the gender identities and power of discourse that is 'constructed', 'contested' and 'represented' in language (Sunderland and Litosseliti 01). So after the social emancipation and transformation, feminism based on gender inequality and injustice emerged with Critical Discourse Analysis and forms Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis in order to study power and hegemony in discourse with respect to gendered social arrangements. According to Lazar, socially gender interconnects with identity, age, ethnicity, social status, sexuality and geographical location. It has an ideological system that deals with modern communities. Feminist CDA identifies language and discourse on both the end from the viewpoint of feminist studies and on the other side; it investigates feminist issues and problems in gender studies.

This research will analyze the dominant discourses that forced the woman to live in that confined environment. At the same time, the researcher will

investigate, the way in which woman resists to the forces that creates their own vision to look at the society from their perspective. Thus the aim of this research by applying Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis is to highlight the complex, elusive and taken for - granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations that are been challenged in the different contexts. The women develop their inner strength in order to get over with the dominant forces; they struggle hard to take decision and to make themselves move out or into a relationship. Therefore as Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminist CDA does not have any emancipatory agenda rather a 'transformative quest' that gives voice to the marginalized, suppressed and silenced voices.

3.2.2 Analyzing Power Politics:

As far as Critical Discourse Analysis is correlated with feminist linguistics, power is institutionalized and associated with hegemonic masculinity (Sunderland 37). A power relation is the relation of social struggle with one's own self and with others; this is a relationship that brings together the people with different interests (Fairclough 34). FCDA focuses on gender ideology and gender power relations and critical discourse analysis studies the way in which social power is abused. It is a form of social practice where discursive events are shaped by the social structures. Hence, such discursive practice helps in production and reproduction of unequal power relationship between two conflicting groups that is of women and men. There is an influence of society on discourse and that raises the basic issues of power between the groups.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis concerns with interrelationships of "gender, power and ideology" in discourse, (Lazar 5) it takes discourse as social practice that is discursive in practice. Feminist CDA examines the manner where dominance, power and hegemony are repelled or produced by gendered social practices through textual representation (Lazar 10). Power is one of the construct used in CDA; the concept was given by Fairclough in 1992, the researcher has to analyze the authority and hegemony of the specific group or person through their use of language. The concept of 'hegemony' interlinked with power is again given by Fairclough in 1995; in this process, the mind of the suppresser is accepting the power and dominance of the suppressed with their will. Although firstly, the idea

of hegemony was introduced by Antonio Gramsci in 1971, he considers hegemony as 'imperial dominance' that controls the mind of the people. It can be established through culture, language, values and norms. Fairclough states that power is one of the elements that can be 'institutionalized' whereas hegemony is accepting other person's dominance. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (2001) in the book "*Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*" figure out 'power' as key point in CDA, as discursive differences existing in the text can be negotiated. So text is considered a site of struggle where different ideologies and discourses are competing for dominance, this helps in social life as "power is about relations of differences and about the effects of differences in social structures" (Wodak 11).

Van Dijk states that in the analysis of discourse that shows power sustaining the oppressive social relation is a form of 'analytical resistance' that helps in the ongoing process of struggle and contestation (Lazar 6). There is an indirect relationship between gender and discourse. So, according to Ronald Wardhaugh (2006) "*An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*", states that 'in a society gender cannot be avoided, but the differences lies between them the way that society is ordered, therefore gender becomes the key component of identity' (Wardhaugh 316). Gender is divided in to two kinds of relationships according to Lazar, the one in which the emphasis is on being a woman, this not only deals with women but also with men in a gender order relationship, the way men talk and they are represented in the texts. The other kind of relationship deals with the order of subjugation that has an emotional impact on woman. Therefore, among the relations there is need of critical awareness, so that woman knows how to oppose certain forms of discrimination (Lazar 12).

3.2.3 Feminist Discourse and Its Ideological Grounds:

In the critical analysis of discourses, many approaches can be figured out in which there is difference in theory, constructs or issues, but they are of equal importance. Teun A. Van Dijk (1998) in his book "*Discourse as Interaction in Society*" states that "identity is both a personal and social construct; a mental representation" (Van Dijk, p 118). Marginal position has been occupied by the feminist critics as they focus on feminist discourse that is in patriarchal social status such as power, considers as one of the factors that gives privilege to men in

the same social order whereas dis - empowers woman in that particular social structure. In ideological setup, patriarchy is one of the factors that interact in a very complex way. So, Feminist CDA demystifies this common assumption of hegemony and dominance by stating them as ideological, as in this regard people are divided into two classes as "men and women" on the bases of classified relation of "domination and subordination" (Lazar 07).

Literature is the genre that is covered by the gender relationships; discourse is the medium through which the reader can understand the gender orientation. This is rooted in our social structure, actions and to some extent our belief that in South Asian context it seems quite natural phenomenon. This typical sort of discourse is known as "ideological common sense" that Fairclough (1989) states "Process of Naturalization" in his book "*Language and Power*" he is of the view that ideology is the basic concept that turns into common sense through the process of naturalization (Fairclough 92). Ideology is not only the process of naturalization but also it is the process through which male can rule and gain legitimacy over woman. He says that discourse is ideological in respect that it helps in sustaining unequal power relations, but certain ideologies require ideological struggles not only 'in' language but also 'over' language. These ideological varieties comes from difference in social status, position, interests or experiences between socially divided classes as men versus women and finally establish a relationship with one another on the bases of power. Such kind of ideological struggle determines the relation of power and dominance between their linked ideologies. Michelle Lazar in his book states that CDA and the approaches to language are socially structured, they shapes, changes and challenges the cultural ideologies (Lazar, p 116). In ideological setup, interruption and silencing are the factors that predominates the social groups. Interruption is a form of control where one is not allowed to complete the thought; it can be analyzed through the texts where woman talk is interrupted by the male supremacy (Lazar 132). Patriarchal gender ideology is hegemonic and structural as it is commonly exercised in the social practices. Thus, gender relations cannot be described by the individual's intention rather sometimes the individual acts as an 'agent of oppression' (Weedon 1997). The gender discourse is often deconstructed and reconstructed under the concealed blind of ideology and power relations (Lazar 8).

3.3 Theoretical Framework of the Research:

The theoretical framework applied on this research is based on conceptual paradigm of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's theory of "Subaltern". The theoretical framework deals with the concept of Third World woman, along with the postcolonial feminist approach as presented in her 1988 article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" The term Subaltern deals with the characters that are not able to represent themselves rather their voices are not even heard. Spivak deals with the doubly silenced or muted voices of the female. Spivak states that the responsibility of the researcher is not to speak for the Subaltern class but to investigate and unearth the silenced voices that are represented in the text. There is a politics of re - presenting the Subaltern consciousness and the silenced voices of Subaltern. The analysis will deal with the issue of representation of the females as if in South Asian society woman is considered as subordinated or marginalized figure. According to Gayatri Spivak (2006) *"In Other Worlds; Essays in Cultural Politics"* western feminists apply their theories on the Third World woman in order to express their love for the female who are subordinated and marginalized that they cannot even speak for their legitimate rights (Spivak 184 - 211). Although the woman around the globe does share biological features but their culture, society, experiences and beliefs differ from each other. Thus the stance is developed on the context provided in the texts and in the light of the selected texts the voice of the Subaltern woman will be seen. Gayatri Spivak deals with the Subaltern studies in detail and she states in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that it is difficult to understand the "Subaltern consciousness" as no one can recreate on their behalf as they are quite deep in their shadows even and this is because of Subaltern insurgency of male dominance. In her book, "The Spivak Reader" edited by Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean, Spivak argues that the word of "Subaltern" is losing its power as it is taken as a buzzword for any type of subordinated classes any group that want something is under the category of Subaltern whereas the true Subaltern is the one who cannot raise his or her voice in social hierarchical setup. She states that,

There has been a very strong critical debate about whether "postcolonial" is okay anymore, etc. So "Subaltern" has somehow come to stand for all of that. When we act we don't act out of thinking through details; we act

in something that Derrida calls, following Kierkegaard, the "night of non - knowledge. (Spivak 299 - 300)

So Spivak clearly deals with the notion of Subalternity. She states in her critical essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that if in the democratic election the person is voting freely then she is entered into the "long road of hegemony" so that particular person cannot be classified as Subaltern. So the term of Subalternity should be delimited as anyone cannot easily fall in the category of Subaltern. So, Subaltern is the power relationship between the subordinate and the dominant, the one who is overcoming the inherited marks of Subalternity and the one who is striving to negotiate with it. Thus, both literature and history involves the issue of re - presentation as Subaltern historian's plays important role after hearing in retrieving the traces of Subaltern experiences and lives. The literary scholars deal with the more delicate matter that is after hearing their task is to examine Subaltern experiences and lives in the literary narratives. So literature is the ground to reveal the hegemonic and dominant voices that re - present Subaltern experiences. In this research the researcher will examine the muted or silenced voices that are doubly marginalized by applying the theory of Subaltern and the method of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis.

CHAPTER 4

**REPRESENTATION OF WOMAN AS THE
OPPRESSED 'OTHER' IN QAISRA SHAHRAZ'S:
'THE HOLY WOMAN'**

The postcolonial literature deals with the issues of race, class difference and the oppression due to tradition and culture. The term representation carries significant meaning as in literature it reflects the society, it re-present what Spivak talks about. In Sara Suleri's (1992) essay "Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition" she is of the view that there is a strong relationship between postcolonial and woman. A dichotomy redefines the term postcolonial from the perception of female vocal articulation of marginality. She is of the view that in Pakistan there must be certain amendments regarding law and order, woman is victim to the rules like *Hadd* (limit) and *Tazir* (punish) (p. 273 - 280). Hence, just like any other type of discourse, the postcolonial literature has several characteristics that make it stands apart for its distinct style.

Postcolonial feminists like Chandra Mohanty (2003) in her essay "Under Western Eyes Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse" published in "*Feminist Postcolonial Theory; A Reader*" points out to a literary problem with regard to the Third World woman, through their colonizing tendencies, the Western feminist scholars reduce her to the status of a monolithic signifier. To prove her point, she gives certain examples. She notes that there are a good many analytical strategies, rules and principles that combine together to present the Third World Woman as a helpless victim. The Western feminists points out the family structure that are the cause of gender oppression. In saying so, they tend to ignore

totally the social and historical changes that continue to take place. She talks about the Islamic ideology, for the personal security, 'Purdah' is important but Islam is a moderate religion it does not force woman to bound on the name of 'Shareyat' and 'Purdah'. She quoted Mina Modares who states "'Islamic theology' then becomes imposed on separate and given entity called 'woman'. Woman (meaning *all women*), regardless of their differing positions within societies, come to be affected or not affected by Islam" (Mohanty 62).

Similarly, writing in "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria," Marnia Lazreg (1990) is quite critical of the Western paradigm of the Third World woman. Because of the traditional and fundamental emphasis on religion, she believes that the woman lives in a non-historical time: without even slightly changed with the speedy passage of time. There is a general tendency to presuppose a sort of sameness of oppression that the woman has to face. In this process, such significant issues as the subject's class, race and ethnicity go in the background. She stresses that such differences cannot be overlooked in these surroundings. Even the followers of a particular religion cannot be dealt with as comprising the same entity across cultures. She exemplifies this through her description of the practice of wearing a veil by the Iranian women. In the present-day Iran, it has become more of a law for every single woman to cover her body with a veil. The historical context, hence, brings an entirely new interpretation to the same thing. Jasmine Zine (2006), in her article titled "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women's Feminist Engagement" has made certain matter-of-fact observation. She says 'women in Muslim states like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan under oppressive laws are forced to veil even in democratic societies like Turkey and France they had to wear head scarves' (Zine 11).

Hence, if waving flags of the so-called freedom, the ultramodern countries like France put a public ban on the veiling practice and go on to expel Muslim girls from schools and workplaces just because of this, the reaction looks too much and too immature. In fact, it goes against the very democratic, free-speech, independent-expression claims they rarely tire of repeating. Dictatorship is also a form of colonial rule. Some scholars have preferred an authoritative feudalistic life of a village better than a comfortable modernized existence in cities. The latter has

the disadvantage of rendering a fellow insignificant, as he / she get lost in the busiest life - styles of a city. Though simple - minded, the villagers are constantly chained by their customs, traditions and social values. Self - sufficiency, nevertheless, makes them a happier lot.

In the Subcontinent, the leading scholar Spivak is chiefly concerned with the practice of Sati in India. The concept as explained earlier is any woman whose husband dies has no right to live on; therefore, she should also die soon by burning herself. Nonetheless, Sati continues to be the worst kind of cruelty that a woman can ever meet. The ritual is limited amidst the followers of Hinduism only. On the other hand, Muslim women, also have to face a number of issues. They too are subordinated. When and if divorced, their heavenly home becomes a hell. They may be forced into marriage by their elders against their consent. Their husbands may remarry while they are still alive and so forth. Hence, struggle against the patriarchal practices amongst the Third World woman remains an important issue; it varies from place to place and situation to situation. The West's position on the issue of the Third - World Woman has been severely challenged and critically questioned by Gayatri Spivak -- in her essay (and subsequent book) "Can the Subaltern Speak?" According to her, the Third - World Woman is forced into such a silence that she virtually remains without words for life. Her top - most objection of the Western interpretation of the issue is its oversimplification: it makes the mistake of seeing the lives and histories of all women to be precisely 'the same'. This way, she believes, though the hegemonic powers seem to extend their frontiers, there is little or no progress on the knowledge front. In the same vein, she uses the phrase 'epistemic violence' to refer to the maltreatment of the Subaltern woman. In this context, Stephen Morton (2003) asserts that everyday life or routine of the commonly 'Third World Woman' is not easy; it is quite complex, chaotic and muddled with unknown issues. To the West, they cannot be represented or known by the vocabularies of their critical theory. Furthermore, she states that;

For Spivak, this crisis in knowledge highlights the ethical risks at stake when privileged intellectuals make political claims on behalf of oppressed groups. These risks include the danger that the struggles, lives and voices of 'Third World' woman will be silenced and contained within the technical vocabulary of western critical theory. (Morton 07)

The Oriental school of thought has vastly been criticized and challenged. Calling it a concept that differentiates the East from the West, Edward Said (2007) terms it as an 'exclusively male province'. Citing various novels and works on travel writing, he adds that they mostly present woman living under male supremacy or dominance. Though pictured as 'sexually attractive', they still are ridiculed for their excessive 'stupidity'. Too willing to submission, they would do anything to please the male. When it comes to the Muslim woman, they seem to be constantly in a double dilemma. Their very appearance and apparel are made a matter of serious controversy. While several Islamic states and scholars stress the need to wear a veil, the West goes to another extreme length by barring the practice as altogether 'anti - law'.

In spite of the fact that scholars talk about Muslim world not specifically about Pakistan in mind as they talk about the oppressed woman, the same holds water for the woman from this part of the world as well, with all certainty. They have witnessed decades of subjugation and suffering under the guise of religion and tradition. Having been devised by men, these sick traditions are pathetically anti - women. The patriarchal society continues to form cultures that press and oppress all members of the fair sex. With the passage of time, these abstract sets of ideas have come to be established as 'rules', impossible to be broken by anybody. We do not deny the place a woman enjoys in her capacity of a mother, sister or daughter. Nevertheless, the point is, the moment a woman appears to deviate from the long - held norms, there oppression begins.

4.1 Subjugation of Pakistani Woman:

In today's Muslim world, it seems fair to say a woman has come to be reduced only as the social "other". This separation, segregation and a growing sense of otherness amongst the Muslim societies has given rise to a number of serious problems. It has also become a favorite subject of debate amidst the followers of the postcolonial and feminist schools of thought. The West is out too to denounce what it sees as discriminatory practices. The media groups, both print and electronic, regularly publish reports and show documentaries that represent a Third - World Muslim woman as a victim of the male dominance. Homi Bhabha

(1990) notes that such sensational pictures regarding certain nations and countries surface and spread due mainly to the epistemological generalizations.

Amongst postcolonial writers born in Pakistan yet preferring foreign soils as their habitat and still attempt to portray life as they suppose it to be, one prominent name amongst them is of British Pakistani novelist Qaisra Shahraz. Despite having moved to Great Britain to pursue her teaching profession, Qaisra's roots are firmly fixed in Pakistan, the country of her birth. Irrespective of a good many people who has forgotten the home values and traditions most willingly, and replace them with the new, apparently attractive ones, she still has a Pakistani body, mind and soul. Though her body is in a foreign land, it seems she has left her soul and mind back in Pakistan. She thinks about the countless problems every fellow citizen must encounter. Her chief focus, however, remains with the issues concerning the Pakistani woman that makes them Subalterns; that is, the neglected and oppressed poor rural woman. Having greatly been impressed and influenced by the feminist movement, her preference in choosing such sensitive a matter, as the feudal tradition of the 'holy woman' is understandable. Born in the present era, the issues concerning the contemporary Muslim societies receive much of her attention. As she takes her reader on a vocal journey of Pakistani culture and heritage, she does peek into many different faiths, customs, rituals, norms and traditions. Presented in a subtle and explicit manner, her characters depict rustic life of Pakistan. In this regard, the instance of the 'Hudood Ordinance' has been presented as the one that curbs women's freedom in 1980, when the military dictator General Zia was at the helm. It has given rise to a growing disparity between the fundamentalist and modern schools of thought. Nevertheless, they still have the same 'human feelings'. They are pleased, they are pained; they suffer, they tolerate; and they love. Their joys and sorrows, doubtless, are universal among human being no matter wherever they live.

In an interview, Shahraz explains her reasons behind writing the present novel, *The Holy Woman*. Her focus is mainly aimed at dispelling certain "negative views [spread over the decades] about Islam and Muslims at large". She does this smartly by introducing what she calls 'the vibrant Muslim world' alongside its varied cultures, traditions and rituals. She also uncovers the West's hidden agenda of making issues out of non - issues. A practice that almost everybody looks with

scorn, suspicion and hatred is the question of Muslim woman covering their bodies and faces with a veil. She outright rejects the Western myth that 'women are oppressed'. Responding to a question of the interviewer, she summed the whole things nicely as thus: "...in the modern Muslim world[,] most women are making choices in taking to the veil whole heartedly and for personal reasons and feelings of self - esteem, dignity and a Muslim identity" (Ahmede Hussain, 2007). Burak Fazyl Cabuk, a Turkish scholar, has made the interesting observation regarding their role in bringing the clashing civilizations together. He also talks about their reliability and usefulness for interpreting the West differently from the East.

Qaisra Shahraz, deals with the feminist issues, discusses the problems and hegemony of the dominating structure that suppresses the identity of woman. The rural part of Sindh, one of the four provinces of Pakistan, forms the setting of Shahraz's best - known novel — *The Holy Woman* (2001). Chiraghpur (the imaginary village) and Tanda Adam (an adjoining town) bring out divisions along class system in rural Pakistani societies. Here, women are no better than any lower animals. The evil of the so - called 'honor killing' has taken many lives and continues to do so - in the 21st century. All of Shahraz's women characters portrayed have troubles, agonies, dejections, insecurities and fears. They are like puppets in the hand of their male counterparts. In the matters of marriage, as with anything else, their wishes and their desires do not matter at all. Whatever a man would say becomes a fixed and static rule that must always be followed in letter and spirit. If not, the culprits (referring to male) must prepare the woman to face the worst kind of punishment, that is, death. The continuation of this anti - woman (inhuman) traditions in the rural parts of Pakistan continue to invite denouncement from various quarters; both domestic and foreign. Ali Ahmad Kharal, (2011) in an article titled "The Holy Woman: The Feminist Perspective", laments:

The reality is these male - made postulates are allowed neither by any religion nor by any law of the land; but males have been sacrificing females and their basic rights in the name of so - called family honor since the time immemorial. (Kharal 53)

This actually happens in conventional societies like Pakistan where male is dominating and woman is dominant, she has to obey and follow the rules or laws

implicated on her. Through this text, the woman characters are highlighted to identify the elements of Subalternity. Analysis of "*The Holy Woman*" will now be conducted within the parameters of the selected theoretical framework including the premises of feminist critical discourse analysis. The point of discussion revolves around gender, power and ideology, the key components of FCDA and the way these three points makes a woman Subaltern.

4.2 Woman as Suppressed Subaltern:

The novel revolves around a woman named, Zarri Bano who is caught in the hands of tradition. She is mistreated in the hands of patriarchal setup, for the sake of brother's honor, in order to remove the evil eye effect from the family. It is observed that Zarri Bano feels 'pained' and 'imprisoned' as she covers her face and body with a long black veil (called 'burqa' in Urdu). Burying her love in her heart, she is forced to marry Sikander later. Earlier, her father Habib has declared that she will become a 'Holy Woman', as per the family traditions. The eldest daughter and once her father's favorite must make this sacrifice for the sake of keeping his 'land' well within home. He feared, in case of the girl's marriage, the son - in - law would get some of it. Under the same selfishness, Zarri's father threatens to divorce his wife. Therefore, Zarri was trapped as if she had to fulfill his father's demand otherwise her mother would suffer; it feels as if there were two persons in one soul. Firstly, the university student who was a darling and beloved to her father, secondly, the religious scholar in the post 'holy woman' scenario. The worldly - female figure of Shahraz's protagonist was rather pretty dominating one. She was independent woman, for her fashion matters she talked on woman rights but fate had played its part and she was caught in the hands of tradition. The following two dialogues spoken to Ruby, her younger sister, provide evidence of her daring character as well as her independent frame of mind; "I am not a fish to be angled at, caught and trapped, Ruby" (Shahraz 16).

This reveals that although she is a dominating woman but at the end, she is left with no choice. On the other side, snakes and serpents surround Naghmana's dreams and life. A past life of humiliation, fear and insecurity makes her a disturbed psychological person. Not able to bear the past and present agonies any more, the poor thing embraces an unnatural death. One ill - fated event in her teen

years has spoiled Chaudhrani Kannez's peace of mind. She is always nervous, guilty and ashamed. After her marriage with a rich man, she becomes feudal, haughty and arrogant. Yet, she, the woman, actually goes 'begging' the hand of Firdaus to bring back her son. Her apparent sourness and egoism are a mere farce. She has never forgotten her past — first, the molestation; and then the rejection from her husband. The world can call her cruel, cross and acidic; but deep inside, she is shattered and broken. Throughout the text, the writer has revealed the behavior of the characters that helps the reader to understand human feelings. She has presented universal complexities between the characters in an artistic way; the characters presented in the story are real images from the modern world.

4.2.1 Rural Customs and Subaltern's Submission:

Every society has its specific norms and traditions. They, for the most part, remain wrapped in mysterious covers for those outside. Shahraz's novel attempts to provide a perfect picture, whether good or bad, of the rural parts of Pakistan. She demystifies the myths of the West about the Pakistani society as well as briefs them on the question of people's attachment to the religion. All religions have particular ways of worship and leading the life in general. Yet, all the followers of any religion are never equally ardent about their religious practices. So is the case with Islam and such also are Pakistanis. This topic will infer the question of ideology according to Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Subalternism.

Rural traditions are based on such issues as marriage, divorce, 'izzat', 'ghairat' and honor killing. These traditions, as witnessed by the novelist, conveys a sense of hollowness about them. Woman enjoys lesser and lesser freedom even among the educated, upper - class families. Woman is embattled with certain circumstances that she has no ground to move on. In the text, just to prevent land and property from going out of the family, the parents (father, in particular) do not even hesitate from forcing their own daughters into leading an unnatural single life under the pretention of making her a 'holy woman'. Here, the point worth remembrance is that these notions are mere distortions of the Muslim faith. Islam does not teach any such thing as "marriage with the Holy Quran". In fact, the traditions seem to hold edge over faith. The Muslim communities, burdened under the so - called tradition or social values, abandon the religion and repeatedly

indulge in practices that go against the very spirit of Islam. The story presents on the feudal setup of Karachi. Sikander, a businessperson falls in love at the first sight with the protagonist of the text, Zarri Bano; she is described by the author as:

Dressed in an elegant black shalwar kameze, a matching black chiffon dupatta that was casually draped around her shoulders and over her hair, forming a very becoming frame for her strikingly beautiful face. (Shahraz 12)

There was a mela going on, no woman was there except her, as it was not considered good or socially acceptable for a woman to be the part of such activities. This shows that she was of modern views although the family was conservative and conventional so she was daring and secretly coming to the mela. Zarri, Shahraz's central character, grew to be a learned modern woman who did not care much for traditions. In a patriarchal society, when father told her about his decision to make her "Shahzadi Ibaadat, the Holy Woman", she finds it impossible to refuse him out - rightly.

The Holy Woman ('Shahzaddi Ibbadat') is a tradition that denies a woman from marrying a man. They do marry with the exception that there is no groom. On the fixed day for the ceremony, Zarri, in a normal bride's appearance, renounces the material aspect of the tradition; while taking up the spiritual part, she does agree to wear a black veil. When Gulshan one of the characters, hears that Zarri Bano is becoming a holy woman she becomes sad, but she cannot protest against that ritual because of family traditions and so called izzat (honor) of the family. Shahraz portrays character in following words:

Her lips, however, remained sealed, bound by centuries old patriarchal customs and conventions of female silence and obedience. What could she do, anyway, if Zarri Bano's own mother and sister had been powerless to help? Gulshan, as a mere young woman, was just a pebble in the company of giant rocks, to be easily trodden upon and crushed if the need arose. (Shahraz 152)

Zarri could not deny her fate rather she protested as much as she could but she had to obey the orders, her family members were unable to help her in this

matter so she surrendered later on. As the time proceeds, Zarri Bano converted herself into the role of a holy woman from a modern woman. Hers, however, was a different case in that she seeks the true knowledge of religion by travelling to Cairo's best institute of learning. It was something new. Her elders oppose some designs who believed such things did not suit the person of a 'bibi' (the Holy Woman). Through the character of Zarri, Shahraz highlights the fact that the rural population of Pakistan lacks in knowledge, awareness and are greatly ignorant of the real teachings of Islam. This contrast between religion and tradition is a matter of serious concern.

4.3 Woman as Oppressed 'Other':

While for the most part, hatred, anger and conflicts are reflected throughout the novel, besides the themes of love, passion, kindness and reconciliation that also run parallel. Marriage is a recurrence in the tale. In order to make weddings successful and last longing, love and respect of the partner is an essential element. On the contrary, lack of the same, ends up marriage that leads to broken homes in the form of divorce. Here again, the woman endures the most of the separation. While the man has no problems making a new match, a woman's post - divorce life becomes a path sprinkled with thorns. They wound and hurt her body and soul at every moment. Seeing that father of Zarri is represented as respectable man and he loves his wife but for the sake of family tradition, he was ready to divorce his wife at old age. Habib Khan is the head of family and dominate male who actually suppresses the feelings of his daughter and his wife. He threatens his wife with "triple talaq" (divorce) that is again considered a defaming element in the traditional social setup. A divorced woman is not accepted by the conventional and conservative society, mostly without knowing the reason; woman is always blamed for divorce. It is considered, as it is the misconduct or disobedience of a woman so man has given her divorce. Baba Siraj din has forced Naghmana to suffer all her life as he forced divorce on an innocent woman though he regrets later and feels guilty for his act as he is not guided by his brain but by his heart. Zarri makes herself and Sikander realizes that she is also a living human being with feelings and emotions. They being woman should be given importance, instead of

threatening or menacing. Zarri said, "We are woman, Sikander Sahib! Not vegetables that you can swap at your will" (Shahraz p. 369).

Zarri and Sikander are in a sort of platonic love. Having fallen in love at the first sight, they stood all the tests of time and circumstances. Their marriage is hoped to be one of lasting bliss and happiness. Now, when Sikander heard of Zarri Bano becoming holy woman he reacted bitterly,

They can't do this! It is barbaric! What age, what country do they live in? In Islam, there are no nuns, no such things as women married to the Holy Quran! What nonsense is this? No woman is to be denied her natural role as a wife and a mother. Who has invented these traditions? Have they studied the Holy Quran... Do they realise that they are committing a crime? Do they ... (Shahraz p. 119 - 120)

Like, in the Subaltern society where male is a dominant figure, man in the vein of Sikander can resist but cannot change the fate of woman. On the other side, Younus Raees is a steadfast lover who waited years to win over Chaudhrani Kaniz. Theirs is a more mature, well - thought relation. However, he has divorced Naghmana, but still Haroon never really forgets her. As a result, he and Gulshan, his new wife, are always at loggerheads. Likewise, childhood fascination of Firdaus and Khawar turns into love for each other. Love and hate struggle with one another. Where love succeeds, happiness succeeds. Such evils as unrest and murders follow where hate has the upper hand.

Shahraz brings forth the issue of oppressed woman in the text. In her view, behind the traditional idea of 'Holy Woman' is male chauvinism, the main aim is to keep lands within the family. In the novel, when Habib tells Zari Bano to be a Holy Woman she goes into the state of shock and utters;

There is no way I will become a Holy Woman, I know what it entails, and I am not cut out for that role. As you know, I have hardly ever covered my head properly. I know very little about religion. I am very much a worldly woman. I cannot become a nun! (Shahraz 79)

Shahraz portrays her feelings, as Zarri Bano's voice is not heard by her father. She is displaced in a sphere where she is standing alone no one is listening

or responding to the voice, she is forced to be silent and do whatever is asked by the dominating male members of the family. She has to play a role of a Holy Woman for what she is not prepared, but unwillingly and reluctantly, she has to follow the tradition of the family.

4.4 Gender Dominance and Subaltern's Sufferings:

Class distinction exists in almost every society. Nevertheless, their worst effects are felt amidst the poorer lot. These are divisions among people based on the economic and social status. The differences of race and gender too cannot be ignored. Women of Pakistan are also oppressed in many different ways by the male members of their own families. Womenfolk belonging both to the upper and to lower classes suffer due to gender discrimination. While the woman belongs to the wealthy families are not heard in the matters of marriage, those coming from the lowest strata of society live a slighted, hard and labored life. They have to earn their own living. In the text, among such women are Kulsoom Ji, Sardara and Naimat Bibi. Fatima is clearly the symbol of change. People of her kind can change circumstances for the good. For realization to prevail, mindset must change. In addition, education just does the same by enlightening and broadening the individuals' minds. She comprehends the significance of learning better than men do in her surroundings. Therefore, she accepts the job of a housekeeper at Habib Khan's dwelling just to earn enough to provide for her daughter's education. She is repaid for her trials when Firdaus, after receiving higher education, is appointed the Principal of the village school. She is a hope for the poor. Coming from a humble background, she has studied hard and has whatever she could aspire in her life. She stands for self - respect and self - esteem. Though secretly in love with Chaudhrani Kaniz's only son, she refuses the offer as, in arrogance he once mocked her for being a 'washerwoman's daughter'. If the very roots of the authoritarian feudal classes are to be shaken, such strong, confident and educated young women like Firdaus are all that the society needs. In another incident when Fatima comes to visit her daughter in village, Kaniz snorted in disgust when she saw Fatima coming out of a car, she sniffed bitchily to herself,

A washerwoman barking orders to another servant, and riding in an Audi car! How vulgar she sounded "Ten parcels," she mimicked. As if it

mattered to anyone here how many bars of Lux soap and Colgate toothpaste, she had brought from the city for her daughters. The parcels probably contain cast - off clothes from Chaudharani Shahzada's daughters anyway. (Shahraz 97)

If Firdaus and her mother symbolize poor class, those who are rich are represented through the egoist figure of Chaudhrani Kaniz. Not realizing that the times have changed, she still believes that her 'lower subjects' are there just to obey her. She will not feel comfortable, if her daughter - in - law is from a poor background. The rich are always like that: hating the poor for no apparent fault of theirs. The final reconciliation between Kaneez and Firdaus is a positive sign. There are certain psychological insinuation behind Chaudhrani Kaneez's egoism and bitterness. If they can forget their egos, the rich and the poor classes will remove much of the ills that are prevalent in Pakistan. Subalterns need power to speak. The new generation of learned women emerging from the rural parts of Sindh can now look towards oppressors in the eye by challenging their feudal authority. Rather belonging to the poor class or the upper class, they are human only, there is a widening gap between them and it needs to be bridged somehow.

A strange contrast is to be found in the figures of Zarri and Firdaus. Both are educated, young and enthusiastic girls. Though Zarri represents the elite, she succumbed to her father's patriarchal pressure. Firdaus, despite belonging to the poor lot, has the strength to resist the feudal authority. From the feminist perspective, Zarri appears to be enjoying more of freedom. Yet, it really is not so. Though she has all the luxuries of life that a girl of her age can wish for, she cannot freely flip her wings to fly over to her favorite destination; a bird imprisoned in a golden cage is actually, what her situation is. The so - called honor debases the upper - class women. Prisoners of their own circumstances, these women easily fall prey to certain hollow family traditions.

Therefore, the fate of Zarri Bano was not in her own hands, she was forced to do whatever was dictated by the leading male member of the family. On the other side, if Firdaus is the symbol of the new - era woman, Sikander is her male counterpart. He is a liberal and open - minded man who hates the ritual of the 'holy woman' and calls the practice inhuman. It is his desire to free the Muslims' faith off

the shackles of false traditions. Khawar shares his views. Refusing to accept class distinction, he takes the hand of a housekeeper's daughter in marriage. Largely, Younus Raees also represents changing mindsets. He marries Kaneez 'with a shameful past'. He gives her the honor and dignity that is due to every woman. On the contrary, Baba Siraj Din, Habib is the true symbol of feudal and traditional norms. However, by showing him seeking pardon of everybody on his deathbed, Shahraz is full of hopes that the primitive feudal and tribal traditions will not be here for long.

Shahraz's story is set in the rustic areas of Sindh, one of the provinces in Pakistan. Chiragpur and Tanda are the villagers that provide a perfect picture of life as it is in these parts even today. Life in far - flung villages has its own charms. Despite the absence of modern - day facilities, the villagers do find certain interests that keep them going. This makes countryside apart from the larger cities as it is the fact of people - to - people contacts. While those in cities at certain times do not even know their next - door neighbors, but on the other hand the villagers keep complete information about every single person in their surroundings, be it a man, woman or child. They share each other's joys and sorrows and take interest in the small everyday activities. All villagers have the likes of Naimat Bibi and Kulsoom Jee, the gossip - mongers. The former is a cook with the latter being a matchmaker 'by profession'. A completely carefree lot, it is their favorite pastime to discuss the lives of other people. They bring different sections of society together by not sparing anybody from their idle gossiping. This way, they become a good source of information about all that takes place in Chiragpur. Aside from their tittle-tattle, these women can comfort others through their sincere counseling. When Khawar as an act of flirtation salutes her, Firdaus get terrified, she thinks:

What if somebody had seen him salute her just now? Tongues could begin to wag! A hot little titbit of village gossip could escalate to a volcano. She was soon to become headmistress, when Madam retired in the summer, therefore really could not afford any hint of scandal to tarnish her reputation. (Shahraz 91)

During a visit to Jamila, a close friend, they help her out of her immediate worries through their encouraging words. If an important event has to occur, they

would take the charge on themselves to inform all. Similarly, Sardara, the prosperous dairy - owner also brings the folks together by supplying milk and milk - made products to every household.

Though it is expected of all women to be 'morally good', there are no such - like laws for men. If an act of immorality is discovered, the culprit is considered mostly a woman and she is severely punished. Lack of education makes villagers form a mixture of religion and tradition. They then stick to it like an unbreakable law. It is in the same vein that Naghmana, the urban woman with modern education, receives three divorces from Haroon, her husband; thus separating the couple forever. Supposed to be an 'evil woman,' she is disliked by everybody. Even Fatima, her own aunt and host, shares the 'shame' of having her under her roof. This is tragic; and this is ironic. Yet, when the truth comes out, everybody feels sorry about the tragedy that befell this unfortunate woman. Religion had been held supreme; such a fate would not come her way. The present day Muslim societies globally suffer from the evil. Their traditions keep imprisoning them where their religion would have given them liberation.

The feudal lords have rightly been shown by Shahraz as fearsome, dreadful and detestable creatures. Despite being the masters of everybody and everything, their thirst for 'more' does not quench. To them, a small piece of land matters more than, their daughters. Their treatment of the womenfolk overall is disgraceful. Hearing 'no' from a girl is intolerable in their traditional culture. All they expect from them is absolute obedience. On top of all, they do not seem to realize the brutal and barbaric nature of their primitive traditions. Their women are reduced to a secondary status; those poor bright things are made to understand as though they represent a lesser gender with no voice of its own. They must not protest, they must not oppose; they must just submit to the wishes of the family's male members. Ironically, Zuleikha, Baba Siraj Din's wife, showed her assertiveness. She has seen herself as an equal to her husband. This strong woman even awed the village head. Nonetheless, his ego disallowed him from taking a woman's advice, no matter how prudent and he went ahead with permanently separating a loving couple through an enforced divorce.

Shahraz portrays a confident and educated woman who knows about her basic rights, from a class of society that is dominant but still she is there to suffer - and to be oppressed by their dominant males. In fact, against the backdrop of a typical Pakistani rural feudal society, the poor women seem freer than their rich social sisters do. Those who earn their living are more powerful in economic terms as well. The economic factor, doubtless, is the chief reason-making woman dependent on their males. If only they can overcome this hurdle, life would offer as many opportunities to them as to any man of authority. Education and employment are considered to be the tools that can empower the rural woman enough to ultimately stand up and snatch their rights but sometimes as in Zarri's case, her education was of no use, she still has to be a submissive and subservient.

4.5 Power Politics:

One of the key points of FCDA is power; it plays its role in every form so here the researcher will bridge the gap between the power politics and the Subaltern's suffering under hegemonic conditions. There is always a hidden, supreme power behind all the worldly circumstances. At times, things change so suddenly and unexpectedly that one is left wondering. That is the destiny. It plays a vital role in every human being's life circle. Time tests most of Shahraz's characters. Those who stay strong, hopeful and confident are richly rewarded for their patience. There also are those who get tired only half - way, lose their heart and are defeated bitterly. The woman in particular are led more by destiny. They do not seem to do anything on their own to change the way life moves for them. They are ever ready to meet good and bad things on their way. Instead of complaining for their many woes, they accept their situation and try living life as it is. They even seek happiness within their limited resources. In an article "Cultural Articulation of Patriarchy," Farida Shaheed (1991), a woman rights activist, carries the point further that;

We witness with serious concern that the Islamic injunctions protecting or promoting the rights of women have been systematically rejected. Inversely, what actually happens in Pakistan is customs which contradict Islam but which ensure the supremacy of men has been accepted and continue to operate. (Shaheed 140)

Therefore, seeing the calamity befall her daughter, the mother cannot control her emotions. She blames her husband and her father - in - law for hatching the conspiracy. In the same breath, she also admits her helplessness - a peculiar trait of the rural woman - in these clear terms:

What choice do I have? I can only swing and dangle along in whichever direction you pull and manoeuvre my strings. What can I do to save my daughter from the fate you have destined for her . . . Of course, nothing!
(Shahraz 71)

Then stating the true nature of the sort of place a great many of the Pakistani women find themselves in, she says that she is chained up under the male domination setup, the customs, traditions and specifically the "ressmeh" (Shahraz 71). When caught in the web of the feudal culture, Zarri could not help her destined transition from a free woman of the world into a plaything in her father's hands. Seeing her appeals entirely going in vain, she submits sacrifices herself at the altar of the male supremacy. On her way to become a 'holy woman,' she does not even believe all this could happen to her. Her former self died that day. That moment made her 'dehumanized'. In Shahraz's words, her new role actually makes her deprived of her real identity (Shahraz 144). The poor girl also made the following emotional speech addressing her mother,

I am not only your daughter or my father's daughter, I am me! But you and father have brutally stripped me of my identity as a normal woman and instead reduced me to the role of a puppet. I am, he said, to do his bidding. I never knew my father could do this to me. I used to feel sorry for other women whose men folk were tyrants. Little did I guess that I was being brought - up in the lap of a male tyrant myself? You have all numbed me into a commitment, with which I will have to go along; but not willingly, Mother. (Shahraz 87)

Shahraz is critical of the assumed traditional gender roles in a Muslim society like Pakistan and their Subaltern role in particular. Women, she resents, are subjected to the worst sort of patriarchal violence. In addition, this, to complete the unfortunate tale, is done in the name of religion and tradition. Nobody seems to realize religion must be prioritized in circumstances where the two contradict each

other. The concept of forced marriages in the rural areas of the country has also been criticized. If she silently accepts her fate, she is titled 'good', 'obedient' and 'chaste'. In the case of a possible rebellion, however, there is no escape for the unfortunate girl; there would be inhuman violence, torture (both mental and physical) and a series of other exploitative moves for her. In addition, most of the times, she is killed for the sake of the family's "honor".

Zarri and Naghmana were dealt with most unfairly by their own people. Yet, both the women stood firm. They humbly accepted all the cruel afflictions. They bore everything with tolerance and did manage to defeat the harsh destiny. Zarri was most unfortunate as her only brother Jaffer died suddenly. Had he been alive, hers could be a normal, comfortable life. Destiny, nonetheless, had other plans in store for her and the whole family. In the typical feudal mindset of the rural parts of Pakistan, her father endears every small acre of land that he has inherited from his ancestors. He could not bear the thought of being deprived of even a single inch of it. He has only two ways before him: marry off his only daughter and lose his land; force her to remain single and keep all the land to himself. He chooses the latter and commands his only living child to become a 'holy woman' in order to save the property. Ironically, the very concept of a holy woman is un-Islamic. There are no 'Muslim nuns'; those renouncing life and its joys and pleasures to pursue the distorted forms of religion. The oppression ends when Zarri, ties the conjugal knot with Sikander. Zarri Bano replied to her Sister Nighat's question about her choice to become Holy Woman and she replied:

I woke up one morning, to find my identity stripped off me and learned that somebody else, my father, held it in his hands and that he is going to shape it for me. I woke up to find that books, feminism, campaigns, and education are all utterly useless against the patriarchal tyranny of our feudal landlords. (Shahraz 171)

She has to be submissive, subordinate and oppressed, as she has to accept the decision of burying her alive and becoming so - called nun. Although she is not accepting the decision by heart but she is compelled to follow the instructions given by her father.

4.6 Identity Theft:

There is a strong connection between discourse and social practices. The ideologies within discourses actually provide structure and form to people's understanding of family setup, marriage relationship, abuse and social policies that frame their experiences. FCDA deals with the social ideology with relation to gender and power relation. Gender ideology is hegemonic and is exercised in social practices. Woman in Pakistan is a subject of debate she is taken as an object. That is one sentence that Shahraz probably had in mind as she sat to pen down her novel. Pakistan is a male - dominated or patriarchal society. All the privilege belongs to men. The decision - makers, the power structures have been exclusively and entirely concentrated on them. Women, on the contrary, are always treated in a harsh manner. In addition, see the irony; these oppressions are justified in the name of religion, culture and traditions. There is no recognition of a woman in this part of the world. A woman can be a body; but never an individual: having her own voice, wishes and ways with life. She must, fully entrust some basic needs of hers in the hands of a male member of her family. Then, it is up to him and him alone to choose whatever route he thinks best for the future of the family (and not hers). Girls are supposed lesser human beings; having no rights of their own. Wherever she is, whatever she does, there always are innumerable eyes to examine her most critically. The issues of gender discrimination and the young girls' constant exploitation by men are a matter of serious concern. Especially when it comes to marriage, their wishes are never even sought. Supposed to be a 'shy sex' by nature, the males take it on their shoulders to see through such affairs high - handedly. While making such serious decisions concerning a girl's entire future life, she herself is simply sidelined. It is as though she was a tradable commodity: to be bought and to be sold. As Siraj - Din assures Shahzada about the customs and izzat of their family in the gesture of insult, he states;

Shahzada, I know that I am an old man and am fast becoming obsolete in the rapidly changing world. Day by day, we are being invaded by the Western values, via the satellite and dishes and television programs. But I must be allowed to say that my clan had not yet had the misfortune to become so outrageously "advance", so morally corrupt that we let our

beautiful young unmarried daughters stay in strange people's houses un -
 chaperoned. . . We never ever compromise on the issue of our women and
 our izzat! No matter what age we live in; no matter what the world
 outside dictates; no matter what evil lies outside our door. (Shahraz 36 -
 37)

A woman struggles hard to win the desired place in the society. The spread of education and literacy in the remotest parts has become a blessing of awareness. The girl is slowly begun to know how unfairly they have hitherto been treated. To their utter dismay, the males did not limit themselves only to make traditions as per their own liking; but even went ahead to distort the religious teachings to their benefit. See the contrast: men cannot bear a girl heir to their lands and property. Yet, regarding her a property of another sort, do not hesitate from destroying her very being to keep the same lands intact. Though they have started playing a very important role in all occupations, the Pakistani women still have a long way to go before they can establish their place on the same footing with men.

Shahraz in *'The Holy Woman'* gives detailed depiction of life in rural Sindh province. The tradition and religion are in a continuous struggle. It is unfortunate that with the continuation of centuries - old cultures, the religious teachings appear to lose ground at a brisk pace. If the Western scholars are skeptic about Islam and the Shariah, it too is chiefly due to the negative portrayal of this religion. Those with little or no knowledge of Islam use its name for their own petty purposes. Shahraz unmasks many un - Islamic practices and stresses for their immediate abolition in order to lead a balanced life for the whole community. Zarri Bano is not a rebel; far from it, she is a blend of modern world with the traditional side. Being a feudal - lord's only daughter, she gets to receive the university education. Yet her brother's sudden death forces her into an unnatural life of singlehood. She accepts her fate in part. Her later travels across to Cairo do her much service in terms of increasing her religious knowledge. It is only through her thorough understanding of the true Islamic teachings that she finally succeeds in challenging and breaking the cursed custom. The writer's intention is quite clear: which the modern education is necessary have; the religious part too cannot be ignored at any cost. In fact, it is with the impressions taken both from the West and from the East that the Pakistani woman can dream about liberating herself.

One significant aspect of the novel is that Zarri is not a single young woman belonging to the rural parts of Pakistan; in fact, she is local, national, regional, international and universal - all at the same time. While it might not have been the author's original aim to picture her in so dynamic and diverse colors, she does emerge in such a light as to represent the entire female sex who has to encounter violence of various sorts from their male counterparts. The girls, supposedly the 'weaker sex', find themselves at the receiving end of the harsh treatment. They are systematically deprived of all their basic rights and are victimized on daily basis. From a wider perspective, the writer moves beyond the both end the physical and cultural boundaries to narrate her story in a global context. By so doing, she also counters the false notions of the oriental doctrine. Not just that, she even contests her own community's fundamental standpoint.

4.7 Zarri Bano Representing Subaltern Class:

Muslim women are supposedly subject to the most grievous 'tyrannies' imposed on them by their religion. Qaisra Shahraz just proves the notion wrong. In fact, if one bothers to study the history of Islam, it turns out to be the first religion that accepted women as equal human beings who also had great many rights. In fact, before the dawn of Islam, a daughter was thought of as a symbol of 'shame' for the family she was born. The tyrannical fathers did not even hesitate from burying their female children alive. That was utter ignorance; that was pure darkness. With the advent of Islam, the very stigma from the womenfolk was removed. She was made a sign of love, kindness and respect.

The culture one lives in does affect one's way of living quite remarkably. The pre - partition sub - continent was a great territory where - clearly and evidently - Hindus were in majority. It was just not possible for each to be influenced from the practices of the other, having lived together for centuries. This way, besides several other disadvantages, Muslim also lost the original shape of their religion. They would offer prayers, observe fasts, perform the Holy Pilgrimage, give alms and so forth - all right! Nevertheless, when it came to the application of the Islamic teachings in matters outside of the sphere of worshipping, they just shunned. As Zarri Bano talking to her mother said;

Do you know, Mother, women came with different desires and hopes, seeking my audience. They had heard that I was a Holy Woman, and therefore they treated me with great reverence. . . "Look, I am a mere woman like you," but my lips remained sealed; I found I was reluctant to disillusion them and turn them away from their inner belief that my prayers could help them. (Shahraz 232)

Zarri is quite unlike the supposed concept of a Muslim girl from rural areas. Women from these rustic parts are far removed, from the light of literacy and hence very unaware of the modern civilization. She, on the contrary, forms just the contrast. Having been allowed to attend university, she developed herself into a fashionable woman. She was confident, frank and mannered. A favorite of her father, she seemed all set for a beautiful, blessed and satisfied life. Then she was struck by a misfortune of the worst sort imaginable. Jaffer, her brother and the only male child in the family, breathed his last. This incident changed everything. The girl who had no match in the whole village came to be regarded with pity rather than the former sentiments of a close - to - jealousy admiration. Her father's feudal instincts awakened all of a sudden. He dreaded the thought of marrying off his daughter. By so doing, he was sure to lose a part of his property. He could either save his lands or ensure his daughter's joyous life. To the poor girl and her mother's dismay, he chose the former. In addition, she, being a woman after all, did not rebel; instead, she submitted herself to the desires read commands of his father. Such is the dilemma of the patriarchal societies. For no apparent fault of theirs and at time even for the heinous crimes of the family's male members, the girls and the women are always made to sacrifice.

When the misfortune comes, nonetheless, this same resolute woman becomes a fish trapped by the cursed traditions. From being a free woman, she comes to be demoted to the status of a caged bird that could fly no more (her wings had been clipped by the cruel hand of the destiny). Here, what is quite remarkable is the fact that not all these oppressions fell on a poor voiceless woman. From Spivak's viewpoint, Zarri was none of those Subalterns who "could not speak". Ironically, she was one of the most outspoken young girls of her generations. In fact, in her social circle, she was known for her feminist stance. When the

oppressive order was passed, she tried to fight her father by the following moving appeal:

I want to be a normal woman, and live a normal life! I want to get married. I am not a very religious person you know. I am a twentieth - century modern, educated woman. I am not living in the Mughal period - a pawn in the game of male chess -- don't you know father? I have hardly ever prayed in my life, nor opened the Holy Quran on a regular basis. How can I become a Holy Woman, I am not suited to that role. (Shahraz 85)

Had she been an uneducated, uninformed and ignorant girl like hundreds of thousands of her 'feudal sisters', she might not even have realized something was seriously wrong somewhere. She would not recognize her rights and accept her lot patiently. However, the plain truth is, she is not. In fact, she knew precisely what rights belonged to women under the country's constitution. Having worked with many famous NGOs, who could tell them better than her? Nevertheless, she failed to get those same rights for herself! Such was the power of patriarchy. This makes the poor puppet of a girl learn to divorce such things as marriage and men from her life. In the book "*Violence against Woman*", Bennett and Manderson (2003) bring out the typical feudal mindset as follows:

Hegemonic constructions of gender are pivotal in the formation of women and men's social identities, their personal subjectivities, their status and the power dynamics of female / male dynamics. In the Asian society represented, the expectation that women should remain faithful to the domestic sphere, obedient to male authority and sexually passive is pervasive. (Bennett & Manderson 11)

Explaining the nature and extent of the patriarchal powers in Pakistan, Zarri tells Sikander about their traditions and customs, any outsider cannot understand the social etiquette of any particular clan, one belonging to that part of world can actually realize the code of ethics and values (Shahraz 126). Regardless of her prominent past, her helplessness in the face of the changing circumstances is manifest when she makes this humble admission:

Yes, I could have refused my father, if I had wanted to. But I didn't do so at the end, for the same reason as thousands of other young women in our patriarchal society end up saying 'YES'. (Shahraz 173)

The reason she refers to is simply this; Zarri wanted to live! She did not dare invite her own death through this refusal. It is not altogether wrong to say Zarri's calamity ultimately proved a blessing in disguise. Her university education had distanced her from religion in whole. She who once was fond of fashions began wearing a veil: and not by force, but willingly! A religious scholar in England, she answers Jane's question by saying that now she gets use to it and she cannot live without it, it gives her feeling of nakedness but at the time she wear 'hijab' for the first time she does not like it rather she wants to tear it (Shahraz 184). She says that, "We women are just small beads in the tapestries of our clans, cleverly woven by our fathers and other male members" (Shahraz 176).

Through the character of Zarri, hence, the West's anti - Islamic propaganda dies its own death. They say it enslaves women; no, it frees them, it favors them, it empowers them. Ill - luck keeps chasing Shahraz's protagonist even in her ultimate union with Sikander. The marriage did not come by choice. Rather, it was forced. In addition, once more a sibling's death led the woman to that decision. Her misfortunes had begun with the sad demise of Jaffer, her only brother. It made her "marry the Holy Quran" to become the 'holy woman'. In the latter case, her younger sister Ruby died. Moreover, ironically, she was not just her sister; but also Sikander's wife and the mother to a baby boy named Haris. In fact, this new sacrifice was asked of her by her own mother — for the sake of her nephew now! Poor Subaltern women! One is left wondering if they exist just to offer sacrifice after sacrifice; at times to keep the family's property from going into the stranger hands; and at times to be a mother to a motherless child. When her mother first offered the suggestion, she was outraged. She tells her:

How convenient of you to remind me now, mother now that it suits all of you, I am asked to marry. Do you think I am a wax doll (a putley) that you can mould to dance to your tune when and however, it suits you? I am a human being! A woman who can never contemplate entering wedlock. (Shahraz 349)

Shahraz's biggest achievement is made through Zarri; her representative is to defend Islam in the newly emerging global context following the events of the 9/11 in the U.S. There was, and there still is, a growing sense in the West of labeling Islam as a religion based on militant violence and extremism. They even made this religion a synonym of 'terrorism'. Against this backdrop, Zarri assumes the role of a faith - based feminist. She strongly rejects the notion that religion could be an oppressive element in a woman's life. Conversely, she blames traditions as well as the misinterpretation of the religious teachings that raise untoward barriers in their way.

Shahraz in the novel *The Holy Woman* has a unique approach to the matters concerning religion and tradition. Her views are in direct contrast to the Pakistani - American writer Bapsi Sidhwa. She blamed religion for everything bad in the society. Her novels, especially "*An American Brat*," even seem to convey her hidden hatred of her own homeland. Having moved to the most advanced country on earth, she pose as though she has already reached the paradise; where everything is just perfect and nothing is or can be wrong. Shahraz can in fact be compared with Tehmina Durrani in many respects. What brings the two Pakistani feminists together is the point that they both consider culture and not the religion, responsible for the constant exploitation of the womenfolk. There are a good many common factors between Shahraz's *The Holy Woman* (2001) and Durrani's '*Blasphemy*' (1998). Both the characters, Zarri and Heer, bring out how the feudalists distort the holy teachings of Islam and misuse them to oppress the woman. At the stage when shahzada finally spoke to her husband she state,

I am a stupid woman. For only a really stupid woman would have let her daughter go through that pantomime of a ceremony - just in order to please you. What I do know is that I hate you, Habib, so much for sacrificing our beautiful daughter. (Shahraz 161)

Ultimately, Shahraz makes the submissive and the marginalized Subaltern speak out but the question is; she is still not heard by anyone. She speaks in air where voices are not responded. After reading her novels, Asim Siddiqui (2012) introduces an interesting term "Islamic Feminism". A professor at India's famous centre of higher learning and the co - editor of "*The Holy and the Unholy: Critical*

Essays on the Craft of Qaisra Shahraz's Fiction" (2011), his opinion does carry much weight. In an interview he says that there is no doubt that, Shahraz has redefined feminism for a Pakistani countryside woman. She stands for peace and dialogue. Her target is to talk about oppressive customs that has enchained the life of rural woman. Instead of constantly being in a war - like situation, she convinces the "First" and the "Third" World women to make peace. This can only be achieved when the similarities and differences of both the forms can be understood. While similarities invite no adversity, it is important to respect each other's differences as well. If the feminists belonging to both the views can reach some sort of compromise, they would be in a far better position to defeat male oppression. This way, Shahraz shows her realistic instincts. She does not present her icons as too bold or outgoing female figures. By doing this, her readership would doubtless increase. Yet her work would then be a mere fancy without a hint of reality therein. After all, this is how THE REAL rural woman in Pakistan are.

This viewpoint allocates her a distinguished position among Pakistani novelists. She is a realist not a fantasist. If her characters are not dependent souls, it is because women are like that specially in rural Pakistan. She does not have any agenda to promote but tries to show things as they appear to her. All that Pakistani woman need is respect and equal opportunities. Zarri has been lucky to get them. Therefore, she has not disappointed anyone, an Al - Azhar scholar; she becomes a preacher of her religion in the West. She clears many doubts in the Western minds. She tells the fiction and fact apart. *The Holy Woman* is also a slap on the face of the so - called "secular" scholars in Pakistan who waste all their energies to show it is the religion that prevents the country's progress. In fact, Islam does just the reverse. Being a complete code of life, it gives guidance to the humanity on all sorts of matters. If the followers of a particular faith fail to apply their religious teachings, it is no fault of the religion itself. Nothing is flawless in this world. Faults there are everywhere. Nevertheless, one can hope to set things straight only after one becomes a part of the same system. In the same spirit, Mir - Hosseni (1999) gives Muslim women the following precious piece of advice:

It is important to locate women's demands in a political context that is not isolated from the women's movements and experiences elsewhere in the world. Feminism is a part of twentieth century politics, and only through

participation in this global feminist politics can Muslim women benefit from it and its agenda. (Hosseni 89)

Countering both the oriental and fundamental doctrines, Shahraz ventures on a voyage to depict the true picture of the Pakistani culture and society to the Western eye. *The Holy Woman* represents how very tough life can actually be for the women coming from the rural parts. This way, becoming a guide, she assumes the role of a native informant. This speaks volumes about the impacts made on her mind by Spivak's theory of the Subaltern. Literature, to her, is capable of providing the oppressed third - world communities with a sort of rhetorical space wherein the Subaltern groups can hope to express their histories of long - sustained suppressions.

Indeed, the rustic rules and cruel customs are a curse. They are boorish, they are brutal, they are primitive and they are long out - dated now. They dictatorially snatch the majority's rights and concentrate them in a few powerful families alone. In addition, even within those families, there unfold further disparities between the two sexes. As has been depicted by Shahraz in the text, women cannot have their say even in matters concerning their own future. This oppression, this submission and this slavery has done the cause of the women a great damage. If the woman has to survive in a patriarchal society like Pakistan, they must empower themselves through education (both worldly and religious) and employment. Only this way would the Subaltern speak! If they do not, the ghost of the 'holy woman' will live on.

Shahraz has presented the story of a woman who is full of life but due to certain misfortune in the family her life is dealt by the power structure of the family, later on she is transformed in to a religious lady known as "Shahzadi Ibaadat" as "Holy Woman". Being a Holy woman, she was prohibited to get married there were two proposals for her but she was not allowed to be married, later, after so many upheavals, there comes the stage that she was allowed to be married. In patriarchal setup woman is enchained in the social and financial variable where so many things for the girls are not allowed but men can easily get that, woman has to follow rituals, needs to satisfy the male - arranged socially built rules, obligations and compulsions. Therefore, we cannot say that Subaltern cannot

speak, she can, but whether the voices are properly heard and responded in the social setup. This study makes a picture in the mind of the readers about woman in Pakistani society, how she suffers, struggles and deals with the clashing philosophies of the male.

This chapter deals with the women of Pakistani society, as the hardships they suffer throughout their life. Tahira Khan (2006) puts things more plainly perhaps she said that 'in the Pakistani context, it could be a woman's assertion of sexual rights or defiance of dictatorial male attitudes towards sexual or marital choices' (Khan 43). Therefore, Zarri Bano the main protagonist of the story and other women presented in the story are true depiction of rural traditions in Pakistan. Zarri, the protagonist of the text, shows her resistance but she suffers at the time but attains the position by marrying Skindar at the end of the story. Firdous, a Subaltern woman resist and at the end, she acquires the position in the society on her own terms and conditions. Therefore, it is in the hands of the Subaltern woman to speak but certainly at times, traditions, customs and norms does not allow them to speak in this process their identity is devastated, power structures ruins their personality and male gender oppress them completely. Actually, this process of oppression leads towards resistance. Subsequently is the case with the protagonist of the text, she is oppressed, subjugated and exploited at every step of her life. All the women like Zarri and Firdous (example of young educated girls) or else being mature old woman as Habib's wife, they all are victimized and targeted. The silenced female Subaltern resists at the stage where they are completely deprived of their legal rights they obey to the extent they can manage but overpowering factors forces them to resist.

CHAPTER 5

WOMAN AS VICTIM OF DOMINATION IN SHOBHAN BANTWAL'S '*THE DOWRY BRIDE*'

India is amongst one of the South Asian countries where patriarchal system prevails. This research deals with female Subaltern and their position in society, seen through the lens of patriarchy. The research brings forth the woman who asserts their humanness, contest hierarchy of patriarchal society and construct their identities. Spivak's theory is a major contribution in the postcolonial discourse and from the theoretical framework of FCDA is present for the study. She talked about gendered Subaltern, the issue of representation and the tendencies of the intellect that represents the Subaltern. Ranajit Guha also talks about Subalterns specifically based on gender, as woman is the one who is submissive and subordinate to the counter gender that is male. Shobhan Bantwal presents a woman in her novel that truly represents Subaltern class. In Subaltern studies woman is hegemonic because of their social class whereas they are 'Subaltern' because of their gender. Women specifically represented as "marginality in hegemony" are those who do not have male dominating factor in their lives. Although, the male presence is missing but still they are under the influence of patriarchal prevailing setup. In 2003, Stephen Morton in the book entitled as "Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak", states that hegemony is a term taken by Gramsci and it means that in everyday routine life the identities are under dominant social structures, moreover Spivak states that; "hegemony depends upon the consent and agreement of the individual" (Morton

65). Woman and man are divided into categories because of social standing of power and dominance. Many scholars such as Butler, Beauvoir and Rubin are of the view that woman is subversive and subordinate characters only. In certain conditions, Subaltern woman cannot avoid these norms and circumstances but if they behave against the standards of norms, they are considered rebels, such as woman is not supposed to speak in front of family male elder members but if she speaks that is against the norms of the family and society. Therefore, in this context for the analysis of text FCDA is taken to evaluate the level of gender supremacy, the way power plays its role and ideology.

5.1 Woman as Hegemonic Subject:

Woman in traditional state of affairs follow the norms and culture of the society and the traditionally married woman is doubly suppressed and "Other". Not only their sex makes them 'other' but also their status among women is there to make them 'Other'. The male figure in the family is the hegemonic subject. In any family structure male is there to run the family and woman is the Subaltern class to suffer. Class system and cultural traditions are represented by the dominant culture of the ruling class and gender ideology is seen from the perspective of the caste groups and upper class. The duality and complexities lies between the self, dominating class and the other, suppressed class in South Asian society. Simone Beauvoir in the book "*The Second Sex*" talks about woman as 'other', she states that woman is always taken as an entity to be vanished off her existence does not matter whether her needs are fulfilled or not. She asserts as if woman is not considered as human beings they are considered insidious and despotic. Beauvoir quotes Monsieur Banda:

A body of the man has meaning by itself, disregarding the body of the woman, whereas the body of a woman seems devoid of meaning without reference to the male. Man thinks without woman. Woman does not think herself without man. And 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, so she is it in the absolute. She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while

he is not in relation to her. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the 'Other'. (Beauvoir 26)

So she is of the view that woman is the 'Other' she is marginalized, dominated, subjugated and has no voice to utter.

Michael Foucault (1972) in his work *"The Archaeology of Knowledge"* affirms that there are no implicit and explicit rules for the discourse relations; rather the Subaltern subject is forced to silence. There can be certain violent subject that binds the Subaltern to keep silent. Violence can be symbolic as the dominant subject treats the Subaltern in a way that she cannot resist or cannot raise their voice and if they try to resist then they are forced to speak in dominant discursive formation that deals with the subordinating discourse. The silence that deals with this research is the silence of the Subaltern that carries meaning in it; the discourse present in the text explains the condition of the object. In Lacan's perspective, the subject depends upon the signifier not the object. Therefore, the female Subaltern is the object that is under the dominant and suppressed male subject. Man is the subject and the dominant part of the society and on the other hand, woman is considered as only the supporter of the male so treated as secondary object whose existence matters for the man but to some extent. Spivak talks about the ritual of 'Sati' in the Indian society according to this ritual if the husband dies woman is forced to move to the funeral pyre, as she is no more required, she has no authority to live any more. Although it is a matter of proud for the woman to die after his husband's death and this is acceptable for the society as no one consider it a crime. In Indian society woman has only certain roles to play, she has to fulfill household duties and to manage her domestic task. However, she is not allowed to think independently. Representation of woman voice is a prominent issue in post - colonial texts, as there are patriarchal and hierarchal issues that suppress the voice of the female Subaltern. Trinh Minh - ha (1989) in the book *"Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism"* states that a woman living in patriarchal setup is not only doubly but triply bound to the marginalized and suppressed forces. Women in Indian society are living in a paralyzed society where their wretchedness, grief and woes are not paid heed. In a situation where she is dying the male counterpart is there to see the episode instead of resisting or taking any action.

Silence is a major factor in Subaltern studies. Gayatri Spivak states that silences are the embodied and personified actions in South Asian society. Spivak states that Subaltern cannot speak but instead of decoding or interpreting meanings from the silence one should observe the causes of silence. May be one can speak well but in certain discursive situation the woman is forced to keep quite. Spivak argues that this is not the case that the woman is unable to speak rather she is not heard, she might have voice, can speak well but in patriarchal setup she is not allowed to speak and certain power structures of the society force her into silence. Silence of Subaltern actually is a site of struggle for the woman to be heard and the primary role as a researcher is to identify the causes of silence of the victim and to classify the power structures working at her back. Hence, the researcher is going to deal with the text from the perspective of feminist critical discourse analysis as a methodological framework and Subaltern as a theoretical perspective. In this chapter, the researcher is going to highlight the issue of Subalternity dealing with the woman where the husband wants to burn his wife alive just for the sake that she did not bring the dowry that he was expecting. This is a narrative of woman struggling to acquire her place in the society. She wants to prove her identity and for this sake, she bears the hardships of life. At last, she gains what she wants but in this gender - based society she is still alone and not given the place what she actually deserves.

5.2 *The Dowry Bride; a Marginalized Subaltern:*

Shobhan Bantwal is a well - known Indian author of *'The Dowry Bride'*. She writes about woman suppression, containment and marginalization. She talks about the traditional circumstances in India in which woman is enchained, she is oppressed under the male hegemonic power structure. The society does not pay heed to the women who are on the margin of marriage, as they do not want to get any association with the male. In this chapter the researcher is going to investigate the Subalternity of the woman who does not want to engage into a relationship, her identity is being questioned, they are considered as 'Other' for the society, even for their own gender. Girls at the age of sixteen are forced to be married and if they are not married until twenty to twenty - five years, it becomes a problem for the family. To get their girls married, family has to pay heavy price in the form of

dowry that seems to be the culture or tradition. If a family is not able to pay this heavy price, then the girl is not acceptable by her in-laws and they torture her in different ways.

The novel "*The Dowry Bride*" is a realistic portrayal of Indian society and culture. The primitive orthodox society thinks in an old-fashioned way although there is a change in time and age. This is a story of a woman who struggles to rescue her life from her in-laws. A woman is not given any importance and at the time when that daughter turns into a wife, she is given least importance and place in her new home and is given secondary place in the society. According to Spivak, woman is considered, as 'Subaltern' and this text is a true picture of a Subaltern woman. She is not supposed to clarify her position; her struggle to build a happy family is not fulfilled, as she is considered as an outsider who only exist to give them comfort and to do domestic chores. The story revolves around the woman protagonist Megha who hears the planning of her mother-in-law and her husband named Suresh, about murdering her. They are planning to kill her in a way where it seems like an accident so that they will be not caught by the police and Suresh can re-marry. The plan that has been made by her in-laws is not because she is not pretty, or she has misbehaved, or she is unable to perform her duties in right manner but the dowry. They plan to kill her, as she has not brought enough dowries to fulfill the requirements of her mother-in-law and after one year of marriage, she has not been able to give child to the family. A woman loses all notions about her individuality, strength and her independence; she is not allowed to move freely or to take any decision. In a society like India, young newlywed girls are tortured, abused and killed by the in-laws in such manner where no one hears their woes and see their pain and agony.

5.3 Power Structure of the Dominant Society:

Power plays leading role in a society like India, male is the dominant figure, he rules the life and makes decision for family but in this novel it is a woman that is her mother-in-law who has plotted to kill her own son's wife, Megha. This is the traditional Indian society where greed for dowry by the groom's family prevails, but if the dowry given to the girl by her family is not up to the expectations of the boy's family then her life is hell in vicious environment

of in - laws home. This story deals with the hardships of Megha that she faces and endures in her life. She has tried hard to give meaning to her life to establish herself. Through the character of Megha, the author wants to bring forth this issue and reveals the resistance to change the society and the traditional customs.

Victimization and ill - treatment of woman for sake of dowry is considered to be an issue that prevails in Indian society. This story revolves around Megha who was an unwanted child, her parent wanted a boy as they already had two daughters but she was an unpleasant and unexpected surprise for them. She was born "with all the wants and needs and tribulations of a woman, all the burdens of a Hindu Brahmin woman" (Bantwal 01). Her parents were worried because they had to pay a heavy price; now they need to prepare three "varadakhshinas" means dowries. After her marriage and spending one year with her in - laws, she had listened to the plotting of her execution. Her only fault was that she was unable to produce a child in this one year of time. On the biological ground, which was not her fault, she was not required anymore; it was the in - laws who plotted to finish her. Her main fault however was that her parents were unable to pay the promised dowry and as a result, she was there to suffer death. When Megha heard about the planning she felt sick, she realized that she was going to die and would become the victim and no one would come to know that how she died because of her husband and mother - in - law's arrangement. When Chandramma Ramnath her mother - in - law planned to kill Megha, her husband Suresh asserted that it was illegal, he could divorce her but his mother did not agree. In her view, people would consider the death of his wife as an accident and would forget, then they would find a wealthy family who would give a lot of dowry and he would be happily married again. As she said, "divorced men are treated like donkey dung, but a widowed man is looked at with sympathy specially one whose wife dies a tragic death" (Bantwal 10 - 11).

Indian society is male dominated and conservative society where woman is not allowed to step out from her husband's home. Megha planned to run after listening to the planning of her murder but she found no place, where she could hide. She thought about her father who instead of protecting her would say that, "a married woman belongs to her husband's home; no matter how he treats her ... it is a wife's duty to remain loyal to her family at any cost" (Bantwal 17 - 18). She

had no right to be heard and her parents would consider as if it was her mistake so she thought that there was no point in telling them. At the time of marriage, when she was told about the proposal of Suresh she was shocked to know that there were many beautiful girls with a lot of dowry in their surroundings. The question comes up that why they selected Megha her Appa said that they want good - looking daughter in law in order to have good - looking grand children. So considering this viewpoint, woman is taken as an entity that has to look after domestic chores and raise the children. Megha initially shows her inclination to work for earning a living, she was told by the family that "Good girls from orthodox families do not work for a living; they get married so their husbands can provide them with a respectable home and a comfortable life" (Bantwal 74).

Afterwards, when she heard to the planning of her in - laws Megha ran away from home into the streets that were lit up for the festival of Diwali, she wanted to run away from the tragic death by fire. Megha went to her husband's cousin's flat as she considered that her family would send her back to her in - laws house and going there was not a good option. Kiran made her hide in his house but suffering of Megha did not stop she kept on suffering as when she felt secure in Kiran house she fell in love with him and for an Indian woman this is a matter of shame. Subsequently, she tried to kill herself, she attempted suicide by planning to jump into the river, but Kiran saved her life for second time. According to Hindu belief and the holy book, the *Bhagvad Gita*, suicide is allowed although it is considered bad ritual but for Megha, life became burden she wanted to attempt suicide she thought; "by living she continued to be both a burden and a threat to everyone around her. It was best for her to leave" (Bantwal 217). In male dominated society woman is a Subaltern, who had no decision power rather never given an opportunity to make any decision in any matter of life. Woman is always blamed for the things she has not even done; fate sometimes leads their life. In power relations women is taught to be subservient, never to disobey, for this sake she put up with all sort of domestic violence and she has to bear all pains. This deals with the patriarchal setup that woman herself is nothing without man she has to live on mercy of a man. Men with low esteem destroys the self - worth of a woman as they consider that woman should not think about anything, she acts like a living being without any mind of her own, without any sensibility and feelings.

Megha tried to adjust with new terms and conditions, but amma did not allow her to do so, she kidnapped Megha and tried to kill her. Megha's mother - in-law, hired people for her kidnapping, they took Megha to the place where funerals were held. There were pyre of woods and they tried to bury her alive, but police came there on time and their plan was not fulfilled. No doubt, a Subaltern woman is submissive, passive and marginalized, who cannot resist. Megha could never get out of that trance she had nightmares about amma trying to kill her. Spivak states that a marginalized woman stays in that contemplated environment and has no right to raise her voice rather she dies and no one listen to her. As Megha has lived in a scenario, where she cannot quit but time comes when she escape, this is not from her difficult life, or unbearable pain she receives from her in-laws but she run away to save her life.

5.4 Identity Politics:

Indian society is a complex society; accustom with culture, gender issues, and ethnicity. Identity deals with the female recognition, woman is taken as an entity that is taken for - granted. She has no existence, no voice and no standing in the society. Man is there to take major decision about his or her children and other issues, no one asks from the mother about her point of view. Megha is one of such girl whose life is lead by her father first and then by her husband. She has to obey her father as she does not want to get married but her father considered this proposal the most suitable in the world. In India, dowry is given for the facilitation of the girl or as a protection to the girl, but later on, it becomes a curse. Dowry may include property, household gifts, money and jewellery given to the girl at the time of marriage but in-laws expect that everything is coming to their house. Greed makes the in-law to demand a heavy dowry but if the dowry is not according to their expectation and then a horrible future waits for the girls. Woman in the conservative Indian society is reflected through Megha's character, as she is the true depiction of most of the Indian woman who suffer on the name of traditions, customs and norms. Her life was dominated by Amma who did not allow her to wear gowns as amma told her that 'woman in this house do no wear shameful dresses like gowns or frocks that shows the legs and bosoms, ladies in their house only wear saris' (Bantwal 07).

Megha belongs to the society where she has to stay in that contemplated environment but cannot raise her voice. This novel is about a woman who struggle against traditional norms and values. A married girl living alone in an apartment with her husband's cousin is a shameful act but one who dares to cross the boundaries and strike against conventions are treated in harsh and brutal manner. A woman approaching an unknown male can make a scandal for an innocent woman but she was left with no other option. Megha finds her rescue in Kiran's house just for the sake that he was the only man in family who shows respect and honor towards Megha, he becomes her guardian and defender.

Bantwal also talks about the lower caste people, their lives are miserable, as people from middle or elite class do not consider them even human. In Indian culture it is caste system where people from lower class are degraded they do work for the upper class but are never given respect. Subaltern studies deals with the sort of people who cannot raise their voice and they are not represented in literature. So is the case with the servants in Megha's house, Megha treats her servants nicely and humbly but her mother - in - law does not like this. She has warned Megha that she is not allowed to offer them any tea or coffee as they should buy their own, she says; "he is a useless, low - caste fellow, a *shudhra*, so you treat him like a servant" (Bantwal 77). When Megha argues that, he is a human being so a cup of tea does not matter she states;

Thoo, Amma had spat out, it is not the cost of the tea, you silly girl! Offering him refreshment and conversing with him is like accepting him on our own level, no? Remember, low - caste people are not our equal --- they are not even fit for us to spit on. (Bantwal 77)

This shows that Indian society is a caste - based society; even they consider that some people are untouchable. Megha has to follow boundaries set by amma as she is not even allowed to go to her neighborhood as Sharifa who belongs to Muslim family and amma considered that Megha has tainted their house. Sharifa has appendicitis attack, she needs help Megha helps her out, but amma becomes furious at her and has never forgiven her as amma think that she has done an unforgiveable sin. Thus, Megha has been treated like a fugitive slave by the mother - in - law and her husband: she thought as if "To him I'm just a

slave, cook and servant rolled into one" (Bantwal 163). Her identity was dispersed, destroyed and demolished by the terms and conditions of her in - laws.

5.5 Resistance to Dowry Death:

Dowry is a curse in societies, as in India it has become a nuisance for the parents to fulfill. This text of Shobhan Bantwal revolves around the issue of dowry and its after effects. Feminist critics take the stance of politics in the transformation of quality upon dowry and dowry related deaths. In the premises of four walls of home, actions like carnages, deaths and harassment take place and the victim is not allowed to resist even if resistance is shown there is no relaxation. Subaltern woman is the victim and in male dominating society woman is suppressed and not allowed to resist, if she resist her identity is questioned as if she is a woman with bad traits and her family is not noble and so on. In India, feminist scholars have observed gender inequality. Women are not allowed to take household decisions; they are not allowed to interfere in the family matters or to give their suggestion or point of view in certain household discussions. Women are silent because of certain reasons such as they are marginalized in household matters and society never pays attention to their sufferings and miseries. They face physical, mental and psychological violence that shatters their personality.

In Indian society, male is dominating he is decisive, arrogant, decision maker and holds primary power in his hands. So, women are targeted they cannot even take any decision for their own sake so is the problem with dowry related deaths, woman faces violence after marriage. There are different reasons for violence for instance the family of the girl promises some dowry at the time of wedding but because of certain economic issues they fail to give promised dowry now the girl has to face the after effects of that promise. In other case, at the time of wedding when the family of the groom has received the initial dowry they demand some extra dowry whether his in - laws can afford or not they demand some extraordinary things. At this stage, the girl's family has to fulfill the demand as they are left with no choice otherwise the groom and her family is not ready to take the bride with them. As nobody is aware of their daily struggles, they live in the society like ghosts. In all the cases, the victim is the girl who is going to live with her in - laws and will bear the pain and face the hardships of life. Major role

is played by the husbands and some time the mother - in - law who tortures the girl to force her parents to pay extra dowry and plan to extract as much money as they can. The husband and his family behave in an ill - mannered way, abuse her, torture her and force her to bring money from her parent's home. The family of the girl is socially bounded and restricted; they are left with no option but to pay, as they are afraid of divorce, they prefer to fulfill the demand instead of their daughters dishonor in the name of divorce. They are under the pressure so sometimes they take loan that they have to pay afterwards but that loan is much more than their income. Economically they are unable to afford the expenses but for the sake of their daughter, they do their best. On the other side, if the family of the boy demands dowry and because of some reason, they are unable to fulfill the demand they plan to kill the present wife and will remarry for the sake of money and dowry. This murder is planned in a systematic way as no one can judge as if it is a murder or an accident. Sheetal Sekhri and Adam Storeygard in an article "Dowry Deaths: Consumptions Smoothing in Response to Climate Variability in India" (2013) quoted Jutla and Heimbach (2004) who states that;

Bride burning which is common way of killing the wife as the husband and / or in - laws has determined that the dowry, a gift given from the daughter's parents to the husband, was inadequate and therefore attempts to murder the new bride to make the husband available to remarry or to punish the bride and her family. (Sekhri and Storeygard 04)

So in this respect, husband has authority to take decisions, he treats woman as an object of pleasure or desire to be fulfilled, at the stage when those desires are fulfilled she can be thrown like tissue, her existence matters for no one her family is unable to support her she is killed and no one questioned.

In a male dominating society, man has to take decision and he plays the leading role. If the wife dies husband is allowed to remarry, but if the husband dies because of any reason, woman is not allowed to remarry, even not allowed to wear colors only white sari to wear or sent to ashram (a place for widows). He remarries for the sake of dowry and again a family of girl is targeted. In this text of Shobhan Bantwal the readers can see the planning of Megha's mother in law and her husband, they plan to kill her in a way similar to accident. Her mother in law

along with her husband in the shed has planned to kill her. Her mother in law has ordered Megha's husband to soak wood with kerosene as it can easily catch fire and there will be enough woods, which will burn her, for long time. She states, "She was here to pick up firewood with a lantern in hand; she knocked down the kerosene tin and the lantern set her sari on fire" (Bantwal 11). Although Suresh her husband considers this illegal but according to her mother in law's viewpoint 'she was worthless and useless' and according to her parent's promise they are unable to pay dowry until one year of her married span, where as legally nothing was in writing but she argues, "A spoken agreement is still a contract. When he does not pay up, he is breaking that contract, no?" (Bantwal 10). This shows the cruelty of the Indian society.

With the passage of time increase in dowry deaths, law has made to secure woman rights. In 1986, law has been made according to that woman subjected to violence and cruelty after her marriage and in seven years of her married time if she suffers from any bodily injury husband will be punished according to the crime. This law has been made but unfortunately the one who has planned to kill they organize it in such a manner that no one can justify as if it is a murder or an accident. As it can be seen through the planning of the protagonist of the text Megha's mother in law, although Megha make an attempt to escape but her mother in law kidnapped her for the second time and hire people who bring her to the funeral pyre in order to bury her alive. Megha was shocked when she was caught by the unknown people they threaten her to remain calm and keep on moving with them otherwise they would shot her with a bullet. She was trapped and abducted, she felt as if now she would not be rescued by anyone she would die soon. Megha came to know that her mother in law planned to kill her again through the conversation between the taxi driver and the hired man as the man said; "She said to take her directly to the burning ground. . . . that is where they cremated dead people!" (Bantwal p. 303) this makes Megha aware of the fact that her mother in law hired people to kill her but her fate helped her and police came there and arrested her mother in law for disobeying the law and order.

In Pragnesh Parmar article "Dowry Death and Law - Indian Scenario" (October 2014), he wrote about Prohibition Act, 1961. According to this law, there was restriction on dowry giving and taking. If in any case, a person is caught in

any of act, those who demands for dowry or any disagreement that deals with dowry had to face strict penalty such as section 304 - B is for dowry death and section 498 - A is for husband or his family's cruelty with the girl or her family. Unfortunately, in reality police never takes any step to rescue the girl, as there are no evidences against the other power structure. The girl is not allowed to give her statement as she is under hegemonic pressure and this restricts her to be quite. There should be strict laws against those men who kill their wives, as they should not be allowed to remarry as they are playing with the lives of girls, for them innocent parents and their daughters are victims (Parmar 47). This social curse has to be stopped, as this is the result of illiteracy, marriages that are arranged and other problems like poverty or joblessness that leads to the intake of dowry. Marital relationship is not successful because of certain flaws in husband such as drunkenness, disloyalty and betrayal. The girls are truly loyal to their husband but because of greediness, their life is at stake. She will not be given the place that she deserves rather she is used by her husband for the dowry in form of money and other valuable things. In the text, Suresh is a sort of man who has no interest in his wife he is not at all concerned about her. She works all day long, but she is never acknowledged or accredited by her husband. He is not shocked by the decision that his mother wants to burn her alive as for him this does not matter he will remarry another girl. For him Megha plays a role of puppet, she is worthless the importance was of the things that she brings along with her.

5.6 Dowry A factor of Social Dissatisfaction:

Dowry death in India is not a new issue for people as everyday newspaper deal with certain cases. People listens to the issues like that for-instance, Kiran talk to Megha on the bride burning issue as Megha has planned to write an article about the "helpless women who suffers horrific deaths and unimaginable abuse just because of dowry" (Bantwal 332). Moreover, Kiran entitled the subject as "*Greed and Misdeed --- Abuse and Death Stalking India's Dowry Brides*". Megha wants to bring awareness in society through her example she wants to talk about wife abuse and the horrors of bride, merely they are considered as dowry victims or dowry brides. Megha has planned to make society feel about those young girls who are victims right after their marriage. Megha suffers because of dowry and

she has almost faced death for two times. For the second time she considers as if she cannot even run anywhere, as the fat bald man holds her so tightly that she cannot escape, she was completely terrified she states her mental condition as she thought, "Her funeral pyre was ready . . . she was going to die a gruesome death. Here on this dark and lonely cremation ground she was going to die, all alone and totally helpless to save herself" (Bantwal p. 305 - 306). After such incidents psychologically and physically such girls are disturbed they face traumatic terms and conditions and they need time to recover, so is the case with the protagonist of the text, Megha.

Mostly dowry deaths and violence is because of economic reasons woman faces harassment and violent behavior of their in laws just for the sake of dowry. The bride in Indian setup entered as 'bahu' is not treated, as she should be. She left her parents house, her siblings and all her memories of childhood as now she is suppose to forget everything as now another part of her life is going to begin with unknown people in her surroundings. She should be treated gently, kindly and tenderly as she needs time to adjust in new setup but she is treated like wise. She is the targeted victim as she is abused and beaten mentally and physically in order to bring money on the name of dowry. Wife beating, abuse and domestic violence on the name of dowry threaten the life of a bride. The bride is killed in such a way, as that seems to be an accident, sometimes the girl commit suicide because she is left with no option. In certain cases, the girl is forced or pushed towards fire where she is burnt alive and this is the cruel death. The girls are the victim to many things like poisoning, injuries or strangulations. Bride burning is a major issue that prevails in the Indian society. Certain parents cannot afford heavy dowry, they are not affluent enough so ultimately they suffer a lot. Violence that a woman has to bear can take different shapes and forms as after the marriage woman is left with no choice, through cultural setup the readers can view different sort of violence such as physical, mental and psychological.

Woman who are married are doubly marginalized and Subaltern, as their voices are heard by nobody rather no one wants to listen to them as it considered to be their duty to do household chores and abused by the husband and his family. Right after marriage the girl is treated like an entity where her identity is distorted. Historically, the researcher has observed many literary evidences where woman is

treated badly and cruelly. In literature, many Indian writers like Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Leela Devi, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rajashree, Manju Kapur and so on. They tell the reader about woman sufferings and their miseries. In India, specifically dowry related deaths are significant as it came to notice in 1980's when wave of feminism was at its peak. People are aware of woman rights but some illiterate and specifically such families who have two or three daughters at the age of marriage, are left with no option. It was considered a social problem as people were taking the life a woman for granted. The bride is unaware of her future, she is happy for her wedding with some expectations but the result is devastating, as she becomes the prey. The customs and traditions provide husband and his family an authority to persecute, insult, humiliate, abuse and beaten up the bride on the dowry related stuff. As Megha, the protagonist of the text states that if she has a daughter she will never promise for the dowry stuff because her own life was in a living hell only for the sake of promised dowry. Shobhan Bantwal states that:

Megha had always abhorred the idea of dowry ---- now she hated it even more. It was a curse ---- it had brought her nothing but grief. If she ever gave birth to a daughter someday, she would never pay dowry; she would find her a kind man who cared more about integrity and family values than money, a man who would love and cherish his wife.
(Bantwal 238)

Dowry casts nothing but only burden on girl's parents and they take debt as Megha's parents are forced to pay dowry and they have three daughters, Megha is the youngest daughter. Dowry is not at all any sort of guarantee, surety or security for the girls whom parents pay a lot that they will remain happy and satisfied in their in - laws house. They can also be treated like all other girls. Therefore, it is not a solution to pay so many dowries to the girl. It depends on the man as Kiran for whom the feelings of the girl is important then the money she is bringing along with her. The other major issue is with reporting, as dowry related cases are not reported by the victims or by their family as they consider it a matter of shame. The parents think that the society will blame them and their daughters. In the text, Megha runs away but she does not go to the police station as she know that police will send her back to her in- laws house where she is not secure any more. On the second attempt of her mother - in - law, she dares to talk with the taxi driver who

calls at police station and she is rescued timely. It is the common mindset of the Indian people, they think about the society rather than thinking about their own selves.

Woman is an important figure in any house but particularly in Indian society she is not treated appropriately no one gives her any recognition in her daily routine. She is the one who makes the house by her efforts but her efforts are not recognized. Megha the protagonist of the text works hard to make things perfect she wakes up early in the morning by five to do all the domestic chores, wash dishes, prepares breakfast lunch and dinner. She works hard all day long and sleeps late after winding up all the house errands. In the institution of marriage, woman is the oppressed and marginalized figure whereas male is the dominant and ruling figure. To exploit the married woman dowry is consider being one of the elements that are significant. Socially and culturally violence on woman relating to dowry should be condemn and society should take certain steps to help the woman. Dominating power structures of the society exploit the suppressed class; the woman considers being inferior creature and giving low status in the male dominating society. Woman is taken as an object. For dowry there is no reference from religion or there holy book that says nothing regarding the intake of dowry, it turns to be a custom and tradition and people are blindly following it without any significance. It is the society who sanctions it and moves a woman to trifling and trivial position that is completely unproductive as if her existence is not necessary but the dowry she is bringing along is more important. It is the mistake of the girl's family as at the time of proposal they are ready to fulfill any demand by the groom's parents in order to get their daughter happily married.

Society plays its role as everyone from the surrounding especially relatives plays an important role in the marriage ceremony. The marriage ceremony itself is very excessive with all terms and condition of rituals and 'rasam'. The girl has to take every necessity of life with her as if previously the people were waiting for her to come. She is forced to go back to her parents home right after marriage to bring more cash and more gifts if she brings along she is acceptable but if any case her parents cannot afford to fulfill the demand her life turns into a miserable state and she is no more welcome in her in laws. She is targeted by the mother - in - law, her sister in laws and her husband who torment her, abuse her and even she

has to bear physical violence and tortures and sometimes this leads to the disastrous end that is she is burnt alive in the home and nobody rescues her. May be the girls can save their life if certain relaxation should be there in their culture. Divorce is considered bad in Hindu culture as the boy can remarry only in case if the girl dies otherwise he is not allowed to get married again so for this sake they kill the girl for second marriage. Hindu society is enchained or bounded with the ethics, values and discipline of the caste system as throughout in the text Megha was pinpointed as a Brahmin girl who is not allowed to do this and that, she is forced to live in that contemplated environment. Divorce is considered as a stain on woman's body and no one likes that, society never accept the girls who are being divorced as it is always judged by the society that the girl has certain flaws in her character or she is not a good girl that her husband divorced her.

Social status of a girl in society is subdued after divorce, so parents most often never encourages their daughter to come back to their parent's home but they insist her to stay there and bear all pains, as people will cast bad reaction if she is back to her parent's home. It is felt that divorce is not a solution in Indian culture rather it creates so many other problems. The pathetic condition can be seen that if a woman has a child than that child has to suffer along and he is targeted to the taunts of the society that his mother has taken divorce from his father. Her identity is being questioned many times. Therefore, the complex society plays its role to make a woman an inferior creature and subordinate, as because of all these issues she is unable to raise her voice to use any of her right. Her future is doomed that affects her social and conjugal life. Her life is handed over to the destiny and fate, no human can make it better but she is told that destiny and fate will make her life better.

5.7 Gender Supremacy and Female Victimization:

Shobhan weaves fiction and reality along with the elements of suspense, curiosity and horror in the novel. She depicts the horrible facts of bride burning in Indian society where dowry is a curse. The girls have to pay the price, if the promised dowry is not given timely, then girls' future is at stake. Through the lens of Hinduism and patriarchy, we can see the suffering and contradictions in Indian society, that is, shameful exploitation of human dignity, hidden shadows of caste

system and gender discrimination. Megha is the protagonist of the text and whole story revolves around her sufferings. Megha is caught in the hands of tradition and modernity; she is caught in a world where different belief system exists and families are practicing them in traditional ways. She has been captured like a pawn for chess players who can dispose her off at any moment, for them her life does not matter. In conventional society like India, dowry bride is a victim, some has to face taunts, some has to face abuses and some girls are burnt to death. It deals with a sort of society where a girl seems to be burden for the family and they consider to get rid of them as soon as possible. She struggles hard to gain position in society. Gender discrimination is the major issue of Indian system as woman is targeted if she is unable to bring child into the world.

Megha is victim to this thought, as her mother - in - law wants to kill her, as she is unable to produce child in their one year of married life. She is called as barren entity not producing a fruitful result. She is targeted for a reason that is not her fault. So is the case with Avva, Megha's mother, she is also treated badly by her in - laws for the reason that she is unable to produce male child. Bantwal states that; "Her in - laws, Megha's paternal grandparents, had apparently been harsh about Avva's inability to produce a male child" (Bantwal 229). Her only imperfection or defect is that she has given birth to three daughters in a male - obsessed society. She is taunted and abused by the family members where as science has proved that this is not a woman's fault. Megha is forced to be married she raises question that "why marriage is so important in a woman's life that cruelty and even death would not be considered too great a sacrifice?" (Bantwal 19) So if instead of Megha there is a male child the family would treat him in different manner. Being a woman is a crime in a society where she is treated like a burden; she has no existence, no place even do not have any space to take breath at times she becomes a homeless refugees.

Males dominate the life of woman whether she is from upper class or middle class so is the case with Ajji. She is one of the characters in the novel who is also a victim of male domination. She is happily married to an executive who often travels. She has a big house and servants to help her in domestic chores. Due to her husband's business trip, she has to stay alone at home. The untouchable sweeper who comes to clean toilets, his name was Lingayya the bhangi, raped her.

Ajji is in a state where she cannot even tell this to anyone because a woman is always blamed even if it is not her fault. Similarly, Megha remembered about her father who states that:

It is not really the boys' fault, Megha. When you flaunt your beauty that is exactly what happens. The boys will leave you alone if you behave like a good Brahmin girl. It always came down to the girl; it was always her mistake. In a male dominating society it was never the man's fault. (Bantwal 281 - 282)

In case of Ajji she was left in pain, she offered him her jewellery, diamonds, earrings, money whatever he wants, but he ruined her life and left her in a miserable state. Ajji was left in agony and she suffered all her life but she did not tell this to anyone. Woman is a Subaltern and Subaltern has no right to speak so is the case with Ajji who becomes mute. When she gets too old, she tells her story of suffering to Megha and Kiran. After confessing her secret, she feels so relaxed and comfortable that she dies later after that emotional confession.

Megha married to an educated man but his education was worthless, from his behavior and mannerism he was a stupid folk. He never appreciated Megha or admired her; he listened to his mother without thinking as if it is right or wrong. On the matter of burning her alive, he did not assert his point of view. His mother, Chandramma, was a greedy woman she had greed for money and wealth she married her son for the sake of dowry; at the time when she came to know that the Shastrys could not afford dowry she was angry she said;

No dowry! Ree, are you totally mad or what? Our Suresh is a bank officer. Our family is well known in the state. We are too good for that girl with only a bachelor's degree and no career. Those Shastrys have no social standing; they should consider themselves blessed to have people like us associated with them. For giving their daughter a good home and husband, they should kiss our feet, no? (Bantwal 133)

This shows her greediness and selfish attitude. After marriage she made her daughter in law's life a living hell, always insults her, behaves very rudely and show her as if she was a small object in her house to do house hold chores, her

existence did not matter for anyone. On her marriage ceremony, people whispered about her, they considered her mother - in - law as beast and they called it a relationship like "the beauty and the beast" they talked about Suresh as "puny Ramnath boy". They thought as if the girl's parent had not chosen something good for their daughter, they considered this relationship as "a lotus growing in a swamp" (Bantwal 149). Chandramma was jealous of Megha's look so she avoids taking her along in the social ceremonies and gathering. She thought herself as a member of good Brahmin family but her looks were not like parees. From the very first day of her marriage, her mother - in - law played a role of villain and ultimately Megha had to suffer a lot. She was there to suffer; restrictions were there to be followed by her. She was not allowed to impose her willingness in any matter of her home, as the dominating person was her mother - in - law who took decision for everyone.

In the text "*The Dowry Bride*" except Kiran all other male represent the dominant class. Megha's father married her off just for the sake that he wants to get rid of her; he fulfils his responsibility by getting her married but never tried to know as if she was happy or not. Megha's husband was a senseless man according to Megha he was a 'primitive animal' he follows whatever is said by his mother ignoring the rights of his wife. Megha's father - in - law was weak man he could not react to his wife decisions, whatever is said by Megha's mother - in - law people follow it blindly. In such environment, Megha tries to survive and manages to do all household chores very efficiently. She works as a machine, wakes up early in the morning, prepares breakfast, does all the household chores and sleeps late at night. All the day she has no time to take rest but there is no one who recognizes her presence. "She had felt like an unpaid, unappreciated maid in her own house" (Bantwal 78). Megha was a girl with talent she wants to gain education but unfortunately, she became victim. She survives but at the stage when she was almost dead. When her mother in law planned to kill her, she ran away; she was unaware of the fact that where she is moving, she has no place to hide, Bantwal has portrayed her sufferings in a very apt way. She feels as if every man can misbehave with her, a drunkard man was in the street and she was afraid but she managed to run away in the dark night.

In a conservative, male dominating society, the existence of a woman raises questions, as the survival of Megha becomes a question. Man consider as if a good woman who belongs to a good family must not be alone at this late hour of night, she is suppose to be at home but Megha's tragedy forces her to step out from her home. She manages and moves to her husband's cousin home, as she is homeless now, "In fact, she had no home, anymore. She had run away from her husband and she was no longer welcome at her parents' house. She was homeless" (Bantwal 88). She is the victim and that makes it pitiful. On the other side, her mother in law is a ferocious woman who firstly has planned to kill her, and later on, she has portrayed as if Megha has an affair and she eloped with someone. She states that:

I am thinking. ... About the shame that has fallen upon us. We can't even show our faces in public anymore, no? ... Our daughter - in - law ran away. God knows whom she eloped with. It could be the sweeper, the one - eyed man who sells vegetables on the corner, the postman ... who knows? (Bantwal 94)

She feels as Megha has bad character whereas she knows very well that she is a good girl who fulfils all the duties being a good daughter in law. Chandramma is a vicious woman as Ajji has told Megha about her birth that she is not a pure Brahmin. According to Hindu beliefs, Brahmins belong to the upper class as they are entitled to perform rituals for themselves and for other people they are the most respectable people. Shudras and Chandalas are the people from lower caste they are born to facilitate the upper class in the society, no one pays them any respect and regard. They work like labor and treated like animals, they are untouchables in the society. In India, the caste system is considered significant but has no humanitarian ground, lower class become 'Subaltern' as no one is listening to them and their voice is suppressed under the hegemonic hierarchical society setup. As it is observed that Megha recognizing her position wants to write on woman issues but she is afraid in the hegemonic male circumstances to use her right name. She declares that she will write with the name of "M. Shastry" instead of her real name. She writes article with the sir - name about the miseries of woman with the issues of 'bride burning and dowry deaths'. She consider as if by using her real name will identify her whereas the name of her father will be

anonymous, even Kiran is of the view that this is a wise decision as writing with hidden name is a good idea. This shows the mindset of the male dominating society as her security can be targeted on writing on such sensitive issues.

5.8 Woman Enchained With Customs and Traditions:

In Indian culture, dowry is taken as curse previously people demand for it but in modern era people in hidden manner show their greed for money and materialistic things. This system sometimes leads to the death of woman and as the witness dies all the evidence is lost. Sometimes the brides are brutally tortured, thrown acid on their faces, badly abused, given poison or something else like that. In certain cases, women are tired of taunts, threats, tortures and harassment so they commit suicide to get rid of everything. In certain other novels these issues are discussed where women are abducted, raped and forced to die. Such as Anita Desai through her texts talk about woman psyche, that in a male dominating conservative society woman is trying to survive but certain internal and external forces are there that discourages her. Shashi Deshpande is among one of the writers who talks about woman. Through her novels, she shows the struggle and hardships of a woman and then resisting to the cruel norms and values of the society. She talked about woman struggle and hardships and about their sufferings and difficulties whatever they face in their life. Renowned authors such as Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundati Roy and others try to bring awareness in society by discussing feministic issues. In today's modern era where nothing can be hidden from public eyesight still, male are dominating and ruling the lives of the women, who are unaware of their legal rights. Their works provide an insight to the reader to change their ways of living and bring awareness in society, it provides an urge to react, to respond and to show resistance to patriarchy and the multiple ways in which women are marginalized.

In any caste - based society it is difficult to maintain justice, so the Subalterns like untouchables are there to suffer. Stereotypically these characters are portrayed in the text by Indian writers such as Arundhati Roy's in "*The God of Small Things*" and Aravind Adiga's "*The White Tiger*" are the depiction of caste - based society where people from lower class are treated badly and no one pays any respect towards them. Therefore, Ajji also hated the worker who came to her

house to clean the toilets and attempted rape, at the time when she was alone. These people are considered as having no moral values so people from Brahmin class avoid chatting with them even the utensils in which they eat food and drink are put on separate side. Chandamma often dislikes if Megha talks to the house cleaner in the kitchen or offers her a cup of tea as she thought that she is breaking the laws of a house. Megha is a girl with pure heart and she feels sympathy for the servants and the workers. In a Subaltern society women are marginalized and are not allowed to take decisions. This happened with Megha. She is not allowed to do whatever she wants but she is forced to do whatever was told by her parents and her mother in law. When she goes for shopping with Kiran he insists and forces her to buy some make up and cosmetics and she thinks as if she was told earlier that "make up is for prostitutes!" (Bantwal 113). Her mind is dwelling between her past and her present.

The element of Subalternity can be clearly seen through the character of Megha, she is portrayed as Spivak defines Subaltern woman. She almost dies when she runs away from her house and only then, she understands that her life only matters for herself, she has started living again. Kiran has helped Megha in gaining new life he is a good - natured man, he has consoled her and gave her a new life. The complex setup of Indian society can be seen through the text, their conservative mindset, male domination and suppression of woman, the unreasonable treatment of woman in family is presented very delicately. Through different symbols and series of event, the reader can see the conflict of woman in a particular male dominating society. Traditional laws and customs clutch the life of a woman, as they have to consider the society first and then their own self. Shobhan Bantwal very delicately and brilliantly has touched the most horrific issue of bride burning for the readers to understand their mental conditions. Consequently, the dowry system should be abolished and the social evil like this should be condemned by the society. This dowry has brought many economical, social, ethical and psychological issues in the public and poor people suffer a lot because of not fulfilling the terms and conditions of the society. A woman in a society like India are always caught between the chains of traditions, norms and values and the realities or truths are hidden or obscured in their heart.

CHAPTER 6

MUTED VOICES OF MARGINALIZED WOMAN IN MONICA ALI'S '*BRICK LANE*'

In the discourse of Subaltern Studies, Spivak specifically questions about the absence of voice of female gender. Spivak (1998) and O' Hanlon (1992) both draw attention on the historiography of Subaltern studies. In Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she deals with the thoughts of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze who focuses on "letting the Subaltern Speak". Post - colonial Feminist Chandra Mohanty (2003) asserts that the matter is quite straightforward, 'without taking into account specific contexts, all attempts to represent the Third World woman are doomed to failure. Thanks to the heterogeneous nature of these societies, there do surface economic, cultural and socio - political differences within the gender. Hence, no simple categorizations would do the job'. Mohanty's chief objection is directed on the over - simplified analytical methods that the Western feminist scholars adopt to conduct their studies. Being essentially a sub - continental, if not universal — phenomenon, the subjugation of women at the hands of their dominating male members continues in Bangladesh as well. As in case of India, Pakistan and in Bangladesh as well the patriarchy asserts itself especially in matters of marriage, divorce and the observance of certain man - made customs and traditions. Owing to continuing practice of such norms across the country, various classes experience the effects of Subalternism in a variety of ways. In Bangladesh, the Bengali women too are often forcefully silenced and this is the focus of this research.

Mohanty (1994) notices the presence of a link between violence on women and colonization. In fact, the colonial discourse tends to present women as the passive victims of male domination. The colonial processes destroy the normal family structures and place women in a disadvantageous position. Deteriorating economic conditions at home has made the poor move out to the foreign lands in search of better life. Women, when taken away from the rest of their families, even lose those close members who could traditionally support and protect them. Colonization, as pointed out above, is one of the main reasons behind women's oppression. Along the similar lines, England's Bangladeshi community is battling a colonial propaganda opposing the customs, traditions and values of their home country. The hardliners in the novel, hence, has stressed the observance of Islamic manners as well as certain national ethics by the Bengali women. This way, the women continue to suffer being thus subject to patriarchal norms.

Monica Ali is a British novelist of Bangladeshi origin. Her very first publication, titled "*Brick Lane*" (2003) brought her great fame in both the countries. Although its chief focus lies in bringing out issues concerning the Bangladeshi immigrants in London, it also presents a realistic picture of the postcolonial society. Great Britain, being a virtual home to multiculturalism, becomes vital in producing several hybridized cultural forms. Also of interest in this regard is the tense relationship between post - colonialism and realism. Monica argues that the woman immigrant suffers in two ways at the same time. On the one hand, she is seen as an alien in her new surroundings. On the other, while living in her own community, the men treat her no better than a non - living commodity. Such paradoxical situations are common when the issue of migration is dealt with at large. This text is dealing with the marginalization and suppression of female Subaltern with the set premises of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, whose chief concern is to find out the elements of gender oppression, power politics and ideology.

6.1 Displacement and Subalternity:

People from poorer countries have been visiting foreign lands since ages. The main aim behind such expeditions remains for individuals to make their families economically or financially stable. While some return to their homelands,

a good many of them decide to settle permanently on those strange soils. These people, called the immigrants, form a major part of the British population. The British society has undergone significant changes over the past five decades. As observed by critics, not only has the British identity changed dramatically, but also the British have shown unmistakable signs of gradually becoming inclusive in nature. Terming them as the 'wind - rush generation', the critics argue that the newcomers also bring along with them 'the discourse of freedom and equality'. The second half of the twentieth century had seen a great rush of immigrants who came to Britain in order to seek better employment. Although, their original intention was just to work there, but they settled there for good. The first one - and - a - half - decade of the 20th century brought all social, political and economical activity of the British Empire to London. A large number of writers were among those who left their native countries and came to live in the Britain. Once settled, they started their work afresh. They spoke of their own lands and their own people in a language not theirs. It was something new for the 'purely English' society. They gave voice to the cultures emerging from their countries of origin. Among such writers of prominence were Harindranath Chatterje, Mulk Raj Anand and Duse Mohamed Ali. This fresh wave of immigrants from Asia and Africa heralded the beginning of a new form of writing. Indian writers of value from this era included such names as Attia Hosain (Lucknow), Kamala Markandaya (Bengalore) and Furrukh Dhondy (Poona). With the passage of time, they now considered themselves the British citizens with a slightly different culture. Homi Bhabha terms the trend as the 'third space'.

In "*Brick Lane*" through the character of Nazneen we can see that at the beginning rather till first half of the text, she desires to go back to her own land she is not happy living in this modernized world but at the end only for the sake of her girls she plan to stay. Nazneen deals with the sort of Subaltern group who cannot raise their voice against their men. She is living in an environment where her opinion does not matter for anyone she recall the memories of her sister, Hasina. She wants to go back to her own land but her daughters being born in London see the dark side of Bangladesh, have a fear for going back. Nazneen tells them about their culture and traditions that they are afraid. The researcher notices the voice as Shahana says to her little sister Bibi that, "just wait until you are in Bangladesh,

you will be married off in no time. And your husband will keep you locked up in a little smelly room and make you weave carpets all day long" (Ali 395). She considers as if her identity will end and they will suffer going back home. Nazneen also considers as if now they are settled here and going back home will give them nothing except unbearable sufferings and gashes.

Ali's chief character, Nazneen, is a good personification of the typical Bangladeshi girl. In the very first chapter, it becomes quite evident that she is not as dear a child to her parents as she ought otherwise to have been. Ever since her birth in 1967, she is mainly considered a burden on the family. During, in her infant years, she fell ill, her mother has decided against taking her baby girl to a doctor. Her argument has produced out of pure ignorance, suggests as though she did not matter at all. The mother said that they should not fight with fate, whatever happens they will face it and will accept it she says, "My child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate. That way, she will be stronger" (Ali 14). We also learn that she heard the same story many a time even as a grown - up girl. On all those occasions, her mother seemed to be taking all the 'credit' herself over her 'wise' decision.

6.2 Subaltern's Identity Crisis:

Nazneen's identity in many ways resembles the notion of the double narrative of pedagogy and performance given by Homi K. Bhabha. This narrative, Bhabha argues, is responsible for constructing the 'people' of a nation. He says that for the nationalist pedagogy, people are the historical objects and for an authority, discourse is given to them. Following the same pattern, Nazneen's entire ensuing existence is driven by a single small incident. Through its unceasing repetition, her childhood tale takes full hold of her future life as well. Though it the centre of this narration, she is reduced a mere spectator who should silently seen things unfold from a distance. Hence, even in her immigration to England, she seems to be a business commodity which men — her father and husband respectively, have every right to trade or transact. Addressing the question of national and personal identity, Bhabha (1994) carries his arguments further when he defines 'people' as "the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originally presence of the nation - people". Moreover, according to him, "the scraps, patches

and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into signs of a national culture" (Bhabha 297). Seen from this perspective, Monica's central figure loses her original identity through her passage to England. Having been displaced from the rural parts of Bangladesh, she more or less comes to be part of London's urban environs.

At the age of thirty - four, Nazneen, now a mother, realizes that the time has come when she should take stand and should not wait for the time or future to predict what will happen to her but she herself will take decision about her future. The realization comes as something rather startling. At this point, we know that her past is not ample enough a reflection of her future course of action. Hence, a shocking new story soon comes to surface. She is caught between her origin and the immediate events fast forming a history. Pedagogy and performance do not ever go hand in hand.

Such also is the case with Chanu, Nazneen's husband. Being unable to fit himself in the English culture, he reverts to the pedagogic national culture. He hence unknowingly comes to attach a sort of sacredness to his home soil back in Bangladesh. He also renders the country a rather mythic character. Declaring Rabindranath Tagore to be 'the true father of the nation', he urges his daughters to learn Tagore's poem "Golden Bengal" to become fully aware of their glorious origins. This is the dilemma of ideology. One's 'unreal home' persistently haunts one, even living in a new society. London does not come up to his conceptions of 'goodness'. For him Bangladesh, nevertheless, is not a good place to live but his own culture, traditions and values now become his pride. The English people do not give right gestures to the Bengalis; there is only the dark side of the city that deals with flood, disaster and famine. Refusing to accept the poor picture of life in Bangladesh as presented by Hasina his sister - in - law's letters, he seeks pleasure in his own world of fantasies while talking to Dr. Azad, one of Chanu's good friends, he said:

The clash of cultures ... and our generations ... I'm talking about the clash between Western values and our own. I'm talking about the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve one's identity and heritage. I'm talking about children who don't know what their identity is ... We live in

a Western society and our children will act more and more like Westerners. (Ali 112 - 113)

This clash of cultures and struggle for identity also holds true for Nazneen's whole life as a slighted female figure. In the character of Nazneen, Ali has dealt with the issue of Subalternity at length. "*Brick Lane*" is all about a woman's struggle to establish her identity — though as a migrant. Living in Britain, Ali's characters grow nostalgic about their home nation of Bangladesh. Though this conflict exists for everybody sans sexes, women doubly become the big victims of Subalternity. They are displaced, they have left their loved ones behind and they face harsh racism in their new surroundings. Besides, they also struggle in making their own identity. In addition, they must do all that while still preserving several customs and traditions — both social and religious — belonging to their homelands. As we see that, on the other hand Chanu only says but not acts on his own traditions and values as Nazneen thought,

My husband does not say his prayers and now he is drinking alcohol. Tomorrow he may be eating pigs. Chanu said, of course, all the Saudis drink, all hypocrites. Myself, I believe that a glass every now and then is not a bad thing. It is part of the culture here. It is so ingrained in the fabric of society. Back home, if you drink you risk being an outcast. (Ali 110)

Through this dialogue, we come to know about Nazneen's approach about religion and customs. The nature and theme of her work put Monica Ali with the same class of South Asian writers as Nadim Aslam, Romesh Gunsekara, Amit Chaudhuri and Sunetra Gupta. One common element, on a personal level, between all the named writers is that they were all born in one or another of the South Asian country; but later moved out to Britain. They do not just indulge with nostalgic narrations with too much of the homeland adoration, but also deals with many issues appearing pretty ordinary or minor to their predecessors. By bringing out the real - life troubles faced by the immigrants in the society, they introduce a sort of dilemma on the British literary scene. Through their rejection of the notions held by several literary men and women in the past few decades, these writers give a new shape and dimension to the British literature; they become a mouthpiece for

those communities who are never heard in the educated circles. In simple words, they stand for 'the black British voice' — without any racist intentions.

6.3 Power Structure and Female Subaltern:

Bangladesh, South Asian country, came into being in the year 1971. Owing to its closeness to both India (geographically) and Pakistan (historically), its customs and traditions too are largely the same. Therefore, when it comes to the oppression of a woman, Bangladesh makes no exception. "*Brick Lane*," by Monica Ali, perfectly portrays the multiplicity of problems that an immigrant woman faces. Nazneen, born in Bangladesh, has moved to London after marriage. Her initial education is that of a typical Muslim female child from the countryside. A true believer in God, she seeks solution even to her small troubles from the Holy Quran. "Fate" plays an important role in her life. All unpleasant happenings of her life are indeed attributed to that same powerful force. There is also a continuous struggle to establish her identity apart from the male members of her family.

Living in Tower Hamlets, a second home to Bangladeshis settled in London. Tower Hamlets community is a mixture of various sorts of people. Among the women who have an acquaintance with Monica's women characters include Mrs. Islam (the money launderer); Jorina (the woman who independently work at a factory); Hanufa (the ordinary homemaker); Razia (mother to a drug addict); and so on. However, the woman who has impressed her was 'the tattoo lady'. She was the 'free' one; doing things at her own will. She had 'no curtains' at her home. She was mostly seen drinking, tossing the empty can out of her open window. This 'openness' of London life was perhaps the chief attraction for the village girl from Bangladesh. Things unknown, whether good or bad, always inspire curiosity in novices. Nazneen had no idea such a world existed on the very earth she too was a citizen of. Her husband rightly calls the woman with tattoos as a 'Hell's Angel'. Our rural girl, however, finds it hard to get this ridiculously ugly figure out of her mind.

Nazneen appears to be a typical rural Muslim girl. With little or no worldly knowledge, bits of Islamic teachings were all she could read. The Holy Quran became her sole source of solace on the foreign soils. Though unlearned, she still

believed the Holy Book could remove all her ailments that no physician would ever heal. Interestingly, she only knew a few small 'Surahs' by heart that she remembered to have read at school. Monica also brings out the tragedy of a quasi - religiousness that seems to have taken firm roots in our society. Her protagonist, hence, keeps the original Arabic scripture wrapped up in a cloth for something sacred; she reads just the Bengali translation of the heavenly revelation. Her 'village - lass - self', comes to surface when she takes great pleasure in small walks 'all by herself'. On one such occasion, she forgot her way. To have found her way back home was supposed quite a feat. Visiting a 'pub', using a 'toilet', going inside a restaurant and demanding Bengali food, asking directions and seeing the whole of London were the things she could confidently pride in herself. She would have loved shouting it to her husband I can do whatever I want. The very 'freedom' of being able to go out alone makes her feel empowered. After all, it was a pure negation of the long - held notion that she — a girl — could not do anything by herself. No, she could. Despite having a comfortable home and a husband who has never beaten her, and a little boy, Nazneen is not entirely satisfied with the kind of life she lives. There always was something missing, she even did not recognize, How to name it? She, herself was unable to know. To quote Monica's own words:

And there was this shapeless, nameless thing that crawled across her shoulders and nested in her hair and poisoned her lungs that made her both restless and listless. What do you want? It hissed back. She asked it to leave her alone but it would not. She pretended not to hear, but it got louder. She made bargains with it. No more eating in the middle of the night. No more dreaming of ice, of blades, and spangles. No more missed prayers. No more gossip. No more disrespect to my husband. She offered all these things for it to leave her. It listened quietly, and then burrowed deeper into her internal organs. (Ali 102)

Well, women's suffering never ends up. She too was quite fed up with her caged - bird existence. She wanted freedom, she wanted the authority to flap her wings at her own sweet will and fly to places she liked best. Her life lacked the sense of newness. An adventurous spirit inside her was eager to break all barriers that were put in place merely owing to her female gender. TV was a good escape. She would watch the girls doing the ice skating and enter a world of fantasies

where she was the lone queen with nobody from the opposite sex to direct or dictate her doings.

Shahana, the elder daughter of Nazneen was a rebel, she was not submissive Subaltern female and she raised her voice against her father's voice. Chanu very bitterly snubs his daughter he said to the younger daughter, bibi, "tell the little memsahib that I am going to break every bone in her body. ... I'll dip her head in boiling fat and throw her out of that window" (Ali 180). Shahana, Nazneen's daughter, wanted to live her life, she would like to wear jeans and to live a modern life but Chanu was a man carrying older traditions, he felt that living in Western atmosphere did not mean that people from East should adopt it. Their own culture, traditions, norms and values are of utmost importance. Chanu planned to go back to their homeland but his daughter Shahana wanted to stay in London, she heard rumors about her own society that is of conservative mindset. She says to her father that 'if he keep on insisting her to go to Bangladesh and get her onto the plane, then she will bite his hands and will run away' (Ali 363). Chanu mostly talked to his daughter in harsh tone, he told her on different occasions that he would beat her, whenever she resisted and to her father he reacted in ruthless and cruel tone. In an incident Shahana talking about certain political matters and Chanu said to the little girl Bibi, "tell the little memsahib that she is going to get beaten to a bloody pulp. Body parts will not be identifiable" (Ali 348). This shows that in a society where everyone carries his or her own voice 'Subaltern' is the one who cannot speak because if she speaks then the ego of the counter gender (male) is hurt. Shahana planned to escape because she felt unfit for the society about which she is fearful. Once talking to her mother, Nazneen she asked a question if she loved her husband (Chanu)? Nazneen gave the answer by saying that 'she is lucky in her marriage'. In response, Shahana said that if a husband did not beat his wife then he is supposed to be a good man, Nazneen states, "When you are older, you will understand all these things, about a husband and wife" (Ali 303). Nazneen never speaks out in front of Chanu, she was there to facilitate him and to do domestic chores more like a servant. She believed in not raising for giving voice, to give her opinion in any matter but to say yes always to Chanu's decision. Nazneen thought about her suffering and Monica Ali affirms that;

When you were a little girl, you used to ask me, "Amma, why do you cry?" My baby, do you know now? She began to weep, and blew her nose on the end of her sari. 'That is what women have to bear. Once, when you were a little girl, you could hardly wait to find out'. She set up a keening that tore Nazneen's ears. (Ali 322)

Though the women characters abound in Monica Ali's "Brick Lane," two of them seem of some significance, as they affect the central or leading character (Nazneen) in peculiar ways. Since the family's arrival at the Tower Hamlets, Mrs. Islam was the woman who first visited her. A rich woman, she lends people money. It is only discovered later that the debts she gave to the locals that were offered on 'interest' or 'riba'. The community fears her sons since they force people to pay the 'extra money'. Nazneen, nonetheless, condemns this sinful act and declares she will not give them anything more than the original amount. This offends Mrs. Islam and the two soon become strangers to each other. Razia, on the other hand, is quite a bold character. She was the one who disclosed the other woman's secret to Nazneen. Thus warned wisely, she becomes a more watchful person so as not to be entrapped by people's appearance alone.

6.4 Class Distinction As Reflected in *Brick Lane*:

The curse of class distinction does not exempt the immigrants even. Coming from varying social backgrounds from their country, they fail to unite under the changed settings. The educated and affluent ones think high of themselves. Chanu, Nazneen's husband, is especially careful in pointing out the differences between 'them' and 'us' to her wife. The readers are told that most of these poor fellows were the original residents of Sylhet area. They come to West to give their families better life style, but, in this process, they are forced to do menial jobs to make both ends meet. Due to their lowly position, they are even taunted as ignorant, illiterate, close - minded, conservative and ambitionless. Among the immigrants, every class is a sufferer in its own capacity. Some suffer from inferiority complex, while the rest are at the receiving end of a sort of superiority complex. Chanu narrates the story of a man who came from Bangladesh he was in a much better condition there, he sold everything to come to London and being here, unluckily he did not get much. He tried to fulfill his needs; he wanted to

acquire a good position but the circumstance led him to get menial job. In a foreign land, Razia's attitude perhaps is the most rational one. Hearing the tales of racism and discrimination at workplace, she flares up: "Is it better than our own country or is it worse? If it is worse, then why is he [Chanu] here? If it is better, why does he complain?" (Ali 72) To her, goodness and badness cannot be attributed to every member of a particular society. Razia told her to learn English as this is important for her to know what other people are talking about specially their children. Language is a medium to communicate in order to get one's children brought up in Western society the parents must be aware of their talk, for this sake Razia suggested Nazneen to learn the language so that she can move in their society.

The process of marginalizing women merely on an account of their sex is an institutionalized one. From small to large, they are subject to oppression at every level. Their marginalization begins right from within the four walls of their own homes. Pre - marriage, a girl must strictly follow the code of conduct designed by her father and brothers. Post - marriage, the situation worsens as her reigns are taken over by a husband. At her in - laws', she is second to a servant. She will do all kinds of chores indoors like a tireless animal. Cooking and cleaning is her chief responsibility that she cannot shun under whatever circumstances. Nazneen, in a private thought, imagines telling her husband, "Don't ask me about the untidy home and unprepared food as it was fate, not I who decided it". Then, considering the impossibility of such a scenario ever taking place for real, she gives a helpless smile. One common issue being faced by most of the rural uneducated lot of women is that of the domestic violence. Monica's protagonist also fears being punished as she has failed to prepare food for her husband. Rather, she has no doubt in her mind that a "wife could reasonably be beaten for a lesser offense" (Ali 22). Nazneen's mother is of the view that a woman is there to suffer always and fate is playing its role, there is nothing in the hands of a woman. Whenever Nazneen wants to make changes in her life she is pushed back by her husband as she thought of learning English language but he said, 'there is no need to learn it, it comes with time' (Ali 37). On another occasion when Chanu is talking about some matters, she wants to comment but it seems useless, as Chanu is one of those men who want to be heard rather than hearing to the other's opinion. Nazneen sees the reflection in the mirror "following her husband, head bowed, hair covered, . . . She

walked with her face turned down to her feet and she felt her head pushing through a density of wings" (Ali 254 - 255).

After tying the marital knot with Chanu, Nazneen's loses her own self completely. She sees herself through the eyes of her husband. When told that she was a 'plain girl' with ordinary features, she comes to believe it. She moves to the mirror, examines herself and seems to agree with the view by being inwardly grateful to him for having accepting her in marriage. This also inspires her sacrificing instincts. We also learn that she had her own desires in connection with their relationship. Yet, being a woman, she knew she had just to obey. Love did not matter at all. She was sure he did not marry her out of her. She heard Chanu talking on phone that;

She is an unspoilt girl from village . . . Not beautiful, but not so ugly either. The face is broad, big forehead. Eyes are bit too close . . . Not tall. Not short. Hips are a bit narrow but wide enough to carry children . . . She is a good worker. Cleaning and cooking and all that. (Ali 22 - 23)

On the other side, she imagines as if he loves her and he must be grateful as if a beautiful, young and graceful girl of eighteen has accepted him. Chanu was a man who never let a woman to dominate, he never helps her to learn English and rather he considers her a woman to do domestic chores nothing else. Another character Nazneen's mother is the true reflection of Bangladeshi women. She was the submissive sort who never complained of anything. Whenever asked, she would say she was happy. Nevertheless, was she happy? Having discovered her husband's disloyalty with her, she put an end to her own life by committing suicide. She was right when she repeatedly told her daughter that their gender was doomed to suffer, she said; "What can I do? I have been put on this earth to suffer in silence" (Ali 398). Being women, they are the submissive characters only to obey never to ask any question on an occasion, Nazneen asked something from Amma and she replied; "If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men" (Ali 80).

6.5 Gender Role and the Institution of Marriage:

Women have to suffer more than males in the alien land. Razia's husband works extra hours with the sole aim to earn more and more money. What for? To send it back home to build a mosque. A noble act, no doubt. Yet, under this obsession, he forgets that he has a wife and small children to look after as well. The poor wife then endures the most of this wave of virtue. She complains by saying that he never allows her to work in order to meet the needs of the children whom he locked her inside all day. She (Razia) says; "If I get a job, he will kill me. He will kill me, kindly, just one slit across here. That's a sort of man he is" (Ali 123).

Women miseries do not end here. The doors to education remain closed on them. Even if forced by circumstances, they are not allowed to earn their own livelihood. Men believe it is a matter of "shame" if their wife is doing a job. Jorina is the first girl who went out and found herself an employment. What's worse, nobody in the entire community approved of this move of hers. She was forced to get a job in order to make both ends meet but no one understand as Mrs. Islam tells Nazneen that Jorina has brought shame on all by working. At one time when Nazneen wants to work, Chanu says; "Some of these educated ones, they say that if the wife is working it is only because the husband cannot feed them. Lucky for you I am an educated man" (Ali 184).

Monica also throws light on another important aspect of the female marginalization in the immigrant setting. While the male children are sent to prominent institutions to receive education, the girls are sent back to their native countries to get married as soon as they grow up. The supposition, somewhat justifiable, is that the 'open' society of the West is quite unsafe for young Muslim girls. These girls, mostly in their teens, are forced to marry as per the desires of their parents. Some cannot sustain this oppressive attitude and rebel. Shahana, Nazneen's daughter is one such girl. She gets so scared after hearing her father's plan to send her back that she ultimately finds herself with no other choice than to run away from home. Jorina's daughter, on the contrary, is sent back to marry at the age of sixteen. When learnt that, "She begged them to let her stay and take her

exams... [Nonetheless,] they wanted to save the daughter. So there it is. Now she can't run off for a love marriage" (Ali 49).

In Monica's views, the patriarchal Bangladeshi society wants 'goodness' in women alone. Men, on the contrary, may do whatever they like without ever being questioned as to their conduct. When it comes to marriage, the foremost quality a man desires in a prospective bride is 'an un - spoiled girl'. This actually has made Chanu accept the plain - looking Nazneen, from the village, as his wife. In Karim's case, she also have high opinions of him. She believes that the old notions of 'woman's purity' did not matter in his eyes. Yet the shock comes with his 'the real thing' remark about her. She concluded that they (men) were all alike. However, his charms and his attractions did not dazzle her eyes anymore. Before reaching the moment to part finally ways with Karim, she thought of her girls and consider as if she will stay in London with her girls but she will not marry Karim. Through Karim's address to Nazneen, Monica sums up how Bangladeshi men could choose a wife. He reflects that there are 'two types' to choose. On the one side there are girls like Shahana, complete westernized, wants to do whatever she likes, wears jeans and make up, disobedient and always arguing and on the other side girls like Bibi who are obedient, submissive, wears burkha (veil) and do whatever is instructed to them. Therefore, Karim, however, has some doubts for the later sort even as he considers they do not make 'good wife material'. So at this point Nazneen considers as if there is no difference in Karim and Chanu both are from the same lot of society who want to acquire the trends of modern world but they want their wives 'ignorant - type' and 'submissive'. Instead of regarding her as an equal human being, he considered her as "a real thing". This way, thanks to her newly gained strength and self - confidence, Nazneen parts her ways with Karim and establishes herself as an independent woman.

Razia helps her in becoming a financially independent woman by beginning the trade of garments. With nobody to check her movements any more, we finally see her about to go ice - skating. Both her daughters as well as her previously mentioned friend accompany her on the adventure she once used to admire more than anything on TV does. Bangladesh chained her. England liberated her. Razia is perhaps right when she makes this concluding remark: "This is England... You can do whatever you like" (Ali 492).

6.6 Political Upheaval and Subaltern:

The unpleasant secular - religious rows are also common in the Tower Hamlets community. Most members of each group are extremists in their views. While those belonging to the religious school of thought just stress on the observation of a few forms of worship, those waving secular flags waste all their energies in talking uselessly about the benefits that secularism, liberalism, socialism or nationalism is capable of bringing. Karim's ideal of a universal brotherhood of Muslims is probably the right path to walk on if they have to prosper in a hostile world. Headed by Karim, "Bengal Tigers" would call frequent meetings of the community to discuss all sorts of problem. He has extended an invitation to Nazneen (alongside her husband) too, saying 'older women' had no representation in the meeting. We hear the female members of the committee shouting such slogans as 'women's rights' and coming up with bold suggestions like 'sex education for girls'. (Ali 240) Addressing the gathering, Karim clearly outlines the organization's manifesto in the following words: "We are here to protect our religion, they don't say race, and they say culture, religion. ... We are against any group that opposes us" (Ali 241).

Even Nazneen gives in under the rising financial home conditions. Poverty knocked at their door as well. It had such an adverse effect that the family had to borrow money from Mrs. Islam. At this time, when the protagonist of the "*Brick Lane*" attempts to help her husband to make enough money to repay their debt, she has an 'affair' with Karim, a representative of the second - generation Bangladeshi migrants in England. His attraction existed in his personality. He was everything that her husband was not. Wearing tight jeans with his shirtsleeves rolled up to the elbow and having close - cut hair, he had an air of sheer confidence about him. Knowing very little of Bengali, he spoke English as fluently as if it was his mother tongue. Always sure, of himself, he was quite unlike the frequently faltering dear old Chanu. The way he walked about with his mobile phone hung around his waist, the way he made or answered calls and conversed and his impressive worldly knowledge were the things that endeared him in Nazneen's eyes. He would come over, have tea, and spoke to her how Muslims fared the world. It was from him that she first came to know of the plight of her religious brothers and sisters in

Bosnia, Chechnya, and Palestine. His figure 'excited her'; his excessive learning 'shamed her'. Meanwhile, Nazneen's secret fondness for Karim keeps increasing. Karim keeps cool and preaches others the same. He is broadminded man and does not limit his thoughts to a single country and culture. This universal aspect of him is brought to light when he tells Nazneen, that being Bangladeshi it seems to be impossible to remain calm and cool for the sake one must be White, Black, or something else. As Chanu talking to Nazneen tells her about richness of their culture he says; "Because our culture is so strong. In addition, what is their culture? Television, pub, throwing darts, kicking a ball. That is the white working - class culture" (Ali 254).

Nazneen finds it impossible to resist the young fellow's charms and ends up having extra - marital relations with Karim. Somewhere deep in her heart, she knew that they were wrong — morally, socially and religiously. It was a crime grave enough to be carrying a sentence of death. The submissive instincts of a woman become apparent in this case as well. Monica writes:

If ever her life was out of her hands, it was now. She had submitted to her father and married her husband; she had submitted to her husband. And now she gave herself up to a power greater than these two, and she felt herself helpless before it." ... she thought, "How could such a weak woman unleash a force so strong? She gave in to fate and not to herself. (Ali 299 - 300)

Out of this illicit relationship was born a power that even stunned Monica's main character herself. She felt a strange sort of strength. When Chanu, her husband, insists on returning to Bangladesh, she for the first time in her life says "no". When "Bengal Tigers" had its internal elections, it was her vote that became the deciding factor in making Karim the president of the organization. This gives her a sense of power. She too had an individuality that counted. The realization that her presence is noticed by someone and her vote is this much important that it gives victory to Karim so she praised and adored herself. Her guilty conscience was soon soothed. The hitherto ever - bothering question of 'what if Chanu finds her secret out?' now leaves her mind. At a later stage, as Chanu deludes to accompany her to the meeting, a thought came to her mind if Chanu comes to

know about her relationship, is he going to insult her or to stone her for the crime she committed. Humiliation at the hands of her husband is a gripping fear for every married woman belonging to the conventional societies like South Asia.

6.7 Subjugation of Woman:

Hasina is Nazneen's younger sister who still lives in her native country Bangladesh. Through her letters written to her sister in London, we get a full picture of the kind of life women are subjected to lead in that part of the world. First thing one learns is that the literacy rate is pathetically low in the rural areas. Being illiterate or uneducated, however, does not make those poor girls less idealistic. They too dream about their own home having all the modern life facilities. They also want freedom from the clutches of centuries old traditions. In matters of marriages, they wish for a right to make their independent choices. When disallowed the choice, Hasina made hers by running away from home with a boy named Malek. For a woman to survive, the accompaniment of a man is necessary. The society does not seem to consider unmarried women as 'good' or 'pious'.

Seeking a job is next to impossible. It is deemed unnecessary by tradition. They say it is a man's responsibility to earn for the family — never a woman's. Women in Bangladeshi villages, hence, are rarely allowed to go out of their homes. Those who dare to brave all sorts of pressures to step out are labeled 'corrupt'. Rather than seeing the contributions they make to improve the family's income, the working people are constantly taunted as the ones 'desperate to mix with men'. On another occasion, Razia tells Nazneen that 'If I get a job my husband will slaughter me like a lamb' (Ali 123).

Of the countless complexes faced by the South Asian societies is their obsession of the English language. Its status as an international means of communication is an attraction for the local population that everybody grows crazy after it. Instead of learning it properly at the places of knowledge, people from all occupations would make ridiculously poor attempts at using the language. To give a realistic as well as comic flavor to the novel, Hasina makes use of Pidgin English. The use of English also conveys the sense of slavery the Bangladeshi

citizens find themselves under even after the end of the British colonial rule in this part of the world. Even Chanu's English is not that good talking on an occasion he said, "What is the wrong with you" and Shahana her girl says "not the wrong" (Ali 201). He does not allow Nazneen to learn English when she wants to learn in order to know what people are talking he says it is not important for her to know. This shows that he does not want her to stand by his side rather he wants her to be silent and ignorant.

6.8 Portrayal of Bangladeshi Society from Hasina's Letters:

Bangladesh, like its other South Asian neighbors, is a country where illiteracy, corruption, hunger and death walk in the streets. Women are subject to worse circumstances. Aside from sharing the miseries of the entire household, they must also be at the mercy of their violent husbands in every matter. A wife's subordinate role comes to surface in the figure of Hasina herself. Malek, the man she eloped with and settled in Dhaka, does not hesitate from beating his wife physically. If a girl is to avoid regular beatings, it is required for her to be wholly submissive to her husband. Her mother - in - law was not happy so she prays as to forgive her and accept her as her daughter - in - law. Later, finding it impossible to carry on with her nightmarish married life, she runs away again — this time from her husband's home in the country's capital city. She now finds a small employment in a garments factory. Terming the profession of a "machinist" as a "real woman job" seems fully satisfied. In order to earn a little extra money, she offers her services to cook meals for the men working with her. The daily routine at the factory, for real, is not as smooth though. She tells her the routine and about her colleagues and friends and about the landowner Mr. Chowdhury. All her life she wants to run away from miseries and curse. Apart from the poor payment the women receive from their employers at the factory, there is the added problem of the religious interpretation of their jobs. The large portion of society also shares the local clerics' perceptions regarding these issues. Hasina states that the religious people consider as if it is quite sinful if men and women work together. Regarding her relations with Mr. Chowdhury, her immediate boss at the factory, Hasina appears before the reader in the form of a naive person. From his repeated shows of special kindness, she gathers that he treats her like his own daughter. Even he

directs her to call him father. He issues her warnings and very wisely, so, to be extra careful of the young men who would not lose the slightest opportunity of taking advantage of a lonely woman. Their closeness gives rise to certain rumors among their colleagues. Believing her to be a woman having a loose character, they gradually begin avoiding her. The employer makes it clear to her that she can only come to his home on two conditions: either as a servant or as a wife.

In the meantime, yet another tragedy befalls Hasina. It seems her utter ignorance of the ways of the world is chiefly to be blamed for most of her miseries. She runs away from her husband's home in Dhaka; but she has no idea whether he had divorced her or not. About the same time, a coworker at the garment factory, called Abdul, came close to her. Misled by his kindness and nicety, she sees him as a brother. Yet, that fellow suddenly declares his 'love' for the woman and extends her a marriage proposal. Not in a position to say yes, she says no and pays the price rather heavily. The South Asian societies have such a low regard for the women that they would readily believe in whatever falsities men may fabricate for their own benefit. A woman, on the contrary, would always be declared a liar even if what she says were but truth. The refusal to marriage made Abdul so infuriated that he fell to the level of spreading baseless nasty rumors about the woman. When the higher-ups of the factory get to hear the tale, they make no inquiries whatever and — outright labeling her as a 'prostitute' — shamelessly sack her from her position. In addition, if the disrespect shown her was not enough, Mr. Chowdhury — the very man who once claimed to be her father, protector and guardian — bares his savage instincts. Hasina shared the incident that ruined her life as she says that on an evening he came and did whatever he wanted she says; "I say nothing and I do nothing, . . . He asks me to rub feet and I do it. He tells me not to cry and I stop. He asks if it is he who is taking care of me and I say yes it is him" (Ali 166). She was a woman — homeless, powerless, defenseless. She is raped. She could neither scream nor protest. A Subaltern woman has no right to protest that, rather she cannot even raise her voice to be heard. This way, she becomes what she earlier was baselessly blamed to be a prostitute. The rest of her life is miserable and cursed. In a typical poor - people mindset, she ponders it is God who makes her fate and who spreads darkness in the surrounding instead of light and hope, she considers as if whatever happens is all that is planned by God. She now 'sells'

herself to make money. Hussain becomes her 'pimp'. Among her 'customers' are the people who belong to the society's 'elite class'. Speaking of her sorry state, she tells the government offices and big hotels are her new 'workplaces' that 'pay rich sums'.

Hasina's circumstances take a new turn when she decides to marry a man (a 'good customer') named Ahmed. This fellow stresses 'an order in everything'. All he demands of his wife is that the house should be in good shape no one beats his wife if she obeys so she keeps everything at right place clean the house on daily bases so that there should not be stickiness. Gradually, small domestic clashes start. He constantly complains of 'disorderliness' in the house. Though her inability to produce children does not bother him much, he fears his family would reject such a 'lowly' marriage. In addition, very soon he is fed up with her. He would repeatedly tell her that her complexion had changed for the worse. The consequence of this wedding was not different. She 'runs away' yet again; and starts working as a house cleaner at the Dhaka mansion of the great business tycoon Jamshed Rashid. Here, Hasina gets a closer view of the life of a rich woman. Lovely, as the businessperson's wife is called, is fond of watching 'fashion shows' on TV.

Through Lovely's character, Monica Ali discloses the hollowness of life and real picture of 'social' and 'charity' organizations that have suddenly sprung up at a rampant rate. Sadly, these entities do nothing but make them claims and talk loudly whenever the opportunity occurs. Their greatest shortcoming is this: they have absolutely no idea as to what the real problems are that the people they seemingly 'represent' normally face. Lovely would love to 'eradicate' poverty and 'give justice' to the acid victims within her society. Firstly, she has 'high ideas' that she never discloses to the reader. The reason of the rising levels of poverty, she says, is presence of a 'low self - esteem' in those classes who suffer from the evil. Secondly, she is simply non - serious. She keeps muttering some scratchy utopian ideas regarding the issue while she roams about her room changing clothes every now and then. The fact is, she has neither experienced nor witnessed the real sufferings of a woman coming from the lower social class. Therefore, her model of improving their lives is doomed to fail miserably. In the end, we hear that she 'runs away' with Zaid, the cook at the Rashid household. Not sharing her mother's view

that women are there just to suffer, she never gives up. She always fights with her fate.

Amongst her colleagues are such women as Shahnaz, Aleya and Renu. Instead of being mere individuals, these women figures represent the whole generation of the poor and oppressed women belonging to Bangladesh. Each of them has her own troubles. None appears perfectly happy with their existence. Circumstances snatch their calm and push them to the centre of an earthly hell where they burn their bodies every day; only to be reborn the next day for the repetition of the same torment. Shahnaz is unmarried still. A 'free woman' from her appearance, she is constantly perturbed about her future. As her independence is to be taken when she gets married, she wonders whether she would wed in the first place without any dowry. She says; "Why should we give dowry? I am not a burden. I make money. I am the dowry" (Ali 150). In South Asian society, dowry is another curse for which women are victimized.

Aleya is another married woman with kids. She is a sign of hope. Even in such surroundings as her, she dreams about giving good education to her children. That is why, ignoring her husband's antagonism, she chooses to work in the factory. The man's protecting instinct still shows itself when we are told that he makes her wrap herself in a veil and then accompanies her to the workplace every day. He waits for her at the evening time (Ali 150). That man lacks trust and is full of doubt when it comes to his wife. When the factory gives her a new sari because she was an excellent worker she gets bonus, her husband has doubt in his mind that the woman must have received the dress in gift from some 'lover'. She has to pay a heavy price for the crime she never committed. He is a suspicious man, he beats her like anything and breaks her finger; and, when she bends, a pang of pain erupts in her stomach. The husband says, "He will beat twice each day until she tells name of the man" (Ali 157).

The oldest of these women belongs to the Hindu faith. Renu's husband is long dead. When she got married, she was only fifteen. A widow, she moved to her father's home for protection. He, however, threw his own girl out of the mansion over petty reasons. The factory hence becomes her refuge. She is a picture of dejection. She cannot think of ever remarrying. Her life, she discloses to Hasina,

was well over at the age of fifteen. Too depressed with the unfavorable conditions about her, she even resents not to have embraced death alongside her husband. She says, "Who will marry these bones? ... My life! My life! Over at fifteen. Might as well be Hindu. His grave was big enough for two. Why I did not jump in" (Ali 151).

There is no crime graver than poverty in this part of the planet perhaps. Even parents would readily sell their own children in exchange for a few pennies to appease their hunger. Being the weaker gender, the researcher again sees women fighting a still tougher battle. On the one hand, survival of the family is as much their priority as their husband. Yet, on the other hand, they are mothers too. How could a woman who gave birth to a healthy child agree to sell the unlucky little thing? So did not Manju, a close friend of Hasina's. In her, we see the self-sacrificing spirit of a mother who should do all in her power to save her kid. Her husband wants to sell the baby of seven days when she resisted he did the inhumanely act, she is in miserable state. She showed great strength and courage in standing up to her husband and clearly saying 'no' to his plan of selling the small baby. This irritates him to such an extent that he most cruelly and inhumanely throws acid on the seven - days old boy. This tragic catastrophe virtually cuts the poor woman's heart. Nevertheless, she mustered all her energies and made it the sole mission of her life to save the unfortunate kid. In order to regain normalcy, he had to undergo two costly operations at the hospital. In the meantime, the mean husband, along with his sister, tried to forbid her from spending large amount on the little son. Another refusal was deemed too much of a 'bad conduct'. Ultimately, the savage siblings 'acid her to death' as well. In a tearful description of her best friend's condition at the hospital, Hasina writes:

It is her husband who has done this with his brother and sister. Brother and sister hold tight and husband pour acid over head face and body. All over is infection on body and smell making it difficult for people to go near? (Ali 270)

She died at end, no one can rescue her from her suffering, she passes from a stage where no one can help her out and until the death that rescue her life and give her peace and calamity.

Fate plays a very vital role in shaping the live of Bangladeshi immigrant women. In fact, they attribute all their miseries to that hidden hand. Even receiving regular beatings at the hands of their husbands or others are borne with patience for the very same reason. A male's protection is considered a must. That is probably why some even do not mind the physical violence. As Hasina quoted the sayings of her friend Renu, she talks about her loneliness and says to another friend that 'you are not alone; you have a husband and his good beating' (Ali 124). Persistent victimization ties women in an unseen bond of sisterhood where they feel each other's pain. Hasina visits Monju at the hospital to inquire after her health after her husband threw acid on her. This sense of unity within the ranks of the oppressed is a positive sign. It gives them the much - needed courage to try fighting their oppressors back.

6.9 Resistance of the Subaltern:

Subalternity, that is the process of silencing a woman's voice, is the theme that runs through every page of Monica Ali's novel "*Brick Lane*". We see it, we sense it, we feel it as much as her characters undergo it all their lives. The male oppression, however, does not show it equally on every woman. Depending on their social and economic circumstances, they all experience it varyingly. Nazneen, the leading character of the book, never had her own voice. Firstly, her father made all her decisions. Once married, her husband became her new master. Living in London, she can be called a woman coming from the privileged class. Despite that, she suffers in her own way. She thought of so many things, yet they all remained merely within her mind. She was too weak and too afraid of men to say openly to them. She speaks and knows her powers only after Karim enters her life. In the end, she resisted and become to take a decision all by herself.

Hasina, on the contrary, is an example of the true conditions of women in a society like Bangladesh. Being a woman, she is not allowed to be on equal footing with men. She was just a play - thing in the hands of the opposite sex. They could use it (that is, 'her') the way they liked. She too is well aware of her disadvantageous position. The harsh realization is ever - present in her mind that she would not survive until a man protects her. Unsatisfied and unhappy, she keeps 'running away from home' to find a man who could give her honor and respect.

Womanhood is another name of slavery and total dependence on the opposite sex. Writers try to attempt to define a woman and if they do so the society treat her as the 'social other'. Nobody sees her as an individual human figure. Rather, comparisons are drawn between her and men. Since, she is not a man and is different from him; the society comes to call her as such. When it comes to Asian women based in Britain, they, under the influence of the culture back in their home country, mostly prefer such small employment where they can work still staying at home. Muslim women find their movement restricted by religion as well as the powerful patriarchal culture. As a result, London - based Bangladeshi, women are largely excluded from the mainstream of the British life and workforce. In the "*Brick Lane*", Nazneen feels not only the pressure from a hostile racist society, but she is also oppressed by the male members of her own community who would not let her out for their honor's sake. In search of a voice of her own, she feels both external and internal factors combine to make her a silent woman. Nonetheless, she does not give in and continues her struggle until she wins what she wished so badly and gets complete freedom.

Monica was interested in presenting to the outside world a picture that had hitherto been hidden for the most part. Through her book, she attempted something new. In spite of limitations, she devoted all her energies in bringing out the actual issues of these Subaltern women. Women's oppression in the novel stems not alone from their culture or religion; instead, it can also be seen in the perspective of a power struggle that defines every society. The characters of Monica Ali offered ceaseless resistance to the patriarchal norms that see them in subordinated roles. It is the control over power within their own communities, which makes the elite fundamentalists devise and spread false notions regarding the place of women in society. Muslim men, hence, wish to constrain the women folk well within the four walls of their home. Another issue of debate is that of covering their body and face with a veil. Some stress on it most vehemently. Others seem to have softened the rules. As Mrs. Islam says, wearing purda (veil) is not enough, the important thing is that one keeps it in mind. Later Chanu says in a meeting that 'I am Muslim and my Islam is in my heart' this shows that religion is something personal; one should not give it any political color to it.

Another aspect of Monica's writing is rather a controversial one. Her book got her more adversaries than admirers. Those who were more critical of her were her own compatriots — both living in Bangladesh and Britain. Back home, they argued Ali's novel was not the true depiction of life in their country. Calling her a 'foreigner', they rejected her views altogether. Moreover, the Islamists criticized her for documenting such 'sinful' stuff. On the other hand, the community living in Tower Hamlets thought the publication of the novel did more harm than good to their immigrant existence. By raising the issue of racism in the Great Britain and addressing problems faced by the oppressed groups like women, it was believed that she has made them both more vulnerable to atrocious attacks. Nonetheless, Monica is confident that since she has seen life very closely in both the countries, her depiction of the ground realities is above suspicion. The issues concerning gender, class and race have hence been brought to the centre of focus.

The elements of Subalternity are observable in the letters written by Hasina in an English language unmindful of grammatical rules. Under the colonized situations, language too is a tool available to the colonizers that they use to silence the majority of the local population. As the locals do not much understand the tongue of their oppressors, they would virtually be rendered voiceless. Nazneen's sister, nonetheless, attempts to express her firsthand observations in a language foreign to her. An unfamiliar language, capable of silencing this Subaltern woman from the rural parts of Bangladesh, loses its worth as she gets the ability to convey her intended meaning fairly. Similarly, Nazneen's silence is also broken when she realizes that she can communicate with a total stranger in a London street in English. At home, Chanu silenced her voice in the beginning. By refusing to help Hasina back in Bangladesh, he too assumed the role of a colonizer who would oppress the subjects irrespective of the nature of their demands. She rebelled against him by skipping her homely chores and at last made him bow before her. Economic prosperity is doubtless the cornerstone of the woman's freedom. When they are no longer dependent on their men in the matters of money, they can better establish themselves as individuals. If they can only attain modern education, there will be no stopping them. Patriarchy is powerful at present, to defeat it; every society needs bold, courageous and daring women like Nazneen.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this research, the theory of Subaltern by Gayatri Spivak was employed to analyze the texts of South Asia. South Asian literature primarily from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh is selected for this research. Through this research, new ways are provided to view feminist elements in the contemporary literature. Gayatri Spivak's notion of 'Subalternity' deals with a kind of woman who cannot raise her voice against the dominant segment of her society. Her resistance is the element that assists her in raising her voice against the set norms and values that forced her to remain silent. The Woman of the 'Third World' represents the miseries and sufferings of the girls belonging to their society; the writers take the position of the Subaltern woman and describe the situation through their perspective. According to Guha (1997) the resistance is the particular element that helps the Subaltern woman to speak out; through resistance the Subaltern attain their place; they are the victims, an object according to the critic's analysis and their silence makes them Subaltern (Chandra's 165). Spivak "gendered Subaltern" is the theory selected as research paradigm for the analysis of the text has taken place. The researcher has analyzed the selected South Asian texts in order to know the suppressed feelings of the Subaltern woman. The researcher has taken the method of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the working of power, gender roles and ideology playing its part on the Subaltern woman.

The research is conducted in a systematic order such as an introduction is formulated as first chapter of the research in which the theory of Gayatri Spivak is explained. As foreword of the research is prepared and put together to form a

proper beginning. Then, in the second chapter, literary background is developed from the initial phase until the phase where the researcher finds the gaps. It starts with the Gramsci school of thought and reaches Guha, Chatterjee, Mohantay, Edward Said; finally it leads to the main theorist of this research 'Gayatri Spivak'. Later on method is taken to analyze the data as it is an essential element of the research because of this the connection between theory and method is developed. The core elements of FCDA are gender, power and ideology; therefore, they are connected to Subaltern perspective to analyze the literary texts. Finally, the selected literary texts are analyzed in the light of theory chosen and the method selected. All the three texts are selected from the South Asian region and taken from the perspective that deals with woman as a suppressed and marginalized object. All the three texts that are analyzed by the researcher deal with the female Subaltern; the writers raise the voice for the rights of female as Subaltern.

7.1 Research Findings:

The researcher has analyzed the first text in the research "*The Holy Woman*" by Qaisra Shahraz, a Pakistani novelist. In this chapter, entitled "Representation of Woman as the Oppressed 'Other' in '*The Holy Woman*'" the researcher has applied the theory of Subaltern according to the Spivak notion of Subalternity. In this chapter, the research questions that deals with the suppression of woman is addressed by the researcher. The protagonist of the story Zarri Bano is a Subaltern woman, she is an educated girl, but due to feudal system just because of one reason, she is pushed towards darkness. In feudal system, for securing the land, the elder daughter of the family is made the heir of the land and property. The brother of Zarri Bano died in an accident, she was happily engaged with a handsome suitor, but after the death of her brother, she was forced to abandon all the worldly relationship and make a relationship with Quran. According to the Islamic Teachings, we cannot find any stance of making a relationship with the Holy Book Quran but because of illiteracy and unawareness among people, they force their daughter to be in such sort of relationship. This is the weird behavior of the society as they consider that by this process they can hold their property within family. If they allow their daughters to be married then they feel as if all the property goes to their son - in - law. For the sake of keeping land and property

within the family, they never allow their daughters to get married, rather they are known as "Shahzadi Iba'adat" as their only purpose in life is to read and understand the teaching of Islam and Quran. A woman is an object that is always used by the male dominating structure of society for their needs and desire. The women are on the disposal of patriarchal setup as their voice is considered to be meaningless and insignificant.

In the text, Zarri Bano is the victim of chauvinistic feudal setup; her feelings are suppressed by the dominant structure. Her identity is shattered by the male characters; gender power plays its role and forces her to do what they want whereas her desires and her standing matters to no one. The father of Zarri Bano and her grandfather compels her to become Holy Woman. Other women like Firdous, Chaudhrani Kaniz, Shahzada and Fatima are the exact depiction of Subaltern female. Fatima is a house cleaner in Shahzada's house; she works there to earn the living for her daughters and husband who is paralyzed. She is worried for her daughter's marriage and a suitable proposal but due to the egoistic society structure for long period, she has to wait. The power structures of society divides the society into two parts lower class and upper class; those who belong to upper class consider the people of lower class their servants; they can never digest the intermingling of any kind taking place between these two classes. Shahzada mother of Zarri Bano is another example of the Subaltern female; when she protests her husband's decision of making their daughter a 'Bibi, her husband Habib threatens to divorce her. In a conservative society, divorce is considered to be a shameful act; mostly men threaten their wives with 'triple talaqs' to coerce them into doing whatever is said by their husbands. So is the case with Shahzada she is not happy for her daughter but is compelled by her husband to convince her daughter to become Holy Woman.

In the fifth chapter of this research, the researcher deals with the Indian society, this chapter is entitled as "Woman as Victim of Domination in *The Dowry Bride*". Here, the researcher explores the notion of domination, maltreatment of man and subjugation of woman. In the Indian society, the issue of dowry is a significant problem as most of the girls in the society are victim to this curse. The society treats them like a subject. The parents of the girls are over-burdened and the parents of the boys are greedy, materialistic and selfish. Megha is the

protagonist of the story, she is the targeted victim, she is married for the sake of dowry and her parents promise some dowry in the form of cash and some expensive gifts. To some extent, they fulfill the demands but at the time of marriage, they promise to give some dowry later on. After almost a year of marriage, the parents of Megha unfortunately are in the position to fulfill their commitment regarding the dowry. Therefore, after waiting for a year, her husband and mother-in-law plans to burn her alive in the wood place. She is unable to raise her voice and resist openly; but the resistance is shown through her step of running away; she runs as fast as she could and ultimately she reaches the place where she feels herself secure. The girl starts living in the house of her husband's cousin again this is a question on the modesty of the girl as in a conservative society women are not allowed to stay at a place except her parents or husband's home. Megha's husband is a selfish and senseless man; for him, the life of his wife has no meaning but the decision made by his greedy mother is significant as Megha's mother - in - law along with her son plans to kill her for the sake of dowry. Her mother-in-law says that parents of Megha have failed to fulfill their promise of giving extra dowry. She also brands Megha infertile, as Megha is unable to become pregnant one year after her marriage. She feels that being barren Megha's right to life ceases to exist. Ajji is another woman that is abducted and raped by a man of lower class; her virginity is lost just because of the lust of a male. From the female characters, the researcher has investigated the extent of hegemony on them, the domestic violence and the influence of patriarchy on them. The women are treated like 'Other'. Megha's mother is another Subaltern as she is suppressed for the reason that she only gives birth to daughters. Giving birth to daughter is a crime in a male-dominated society, this makes the position of such women weaker and inferior; on the other hand, if she gives birth to a son her status is raised in society. Thus, the researcher has highlighted the elements of Subalternity through the examples of women represented in the text, the way they are suppressed and dominated by the dominant structure of the society.

The sixth chapter of the research deals with the Bangladeshi woman, it is entitled as "Muted Voices of Marginalized Woman in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*". Monica Ali the author of *Brick Lane* describes the miseries and suffering of the woman who is marginalized rather doubly marginalized by the family and the

society. In this chapter, the researcher examines the repression and exclusion of the Subaltern woman in a particular society where she is surviving. It also focuses on the point that the silence of the Subaltern woman is associated with the resistance to oppression. In the discussion, the problem lies with the woman who is always treated like an object by the male; that male can be her father or husband as Nazneen the protagonist of the text suffers throughout her life. She is taken for granted by her father and her husband. She is married to an aged man; she tries to assimilate herself into the new phase of her life but her husband treats her unfairly. She is considered to be an inferior object whose task is to do household chores and maintain all other things; she is not permitted to take things in her hand or exercise her will independently. Her sister Haseena wants to acquire a prominent position in the society, but unfortunately, she is always exploited by the society. Monica Ali endeavors to accord a certain level of standing to the female Subaltern; she tries to create a room where these women can be represented and empowered. Representing from a feminist perspective increases their oppression whereas the author wants to bring change in the society's behavior and attitude. The female body is taken as a source of pleasure; her feelings matters to no one. For the sake of seeking pleasure, the female body is used as an object. Manju's husband throws acid on her face because she is not ready to sell her son. Shahana and Bibi talking about the life in Bangladesh consider the Bangladeshi men cruel, brutal, nasty, rude and unkind. Their discussion shows their mindset that people living in the West are unable to adjust in a conservative environment. All minor female characters of the text like Razia (mother to a drug addict); Mrs. Islam (the money launderer); Hanufa (the ordinary house wife); Jorina (the woman who independently works at a factory) are the Subaltern female they are living in the West but treated by their men in the same way as in the East. Chanu representing the male dominant class always suppresses Nazneen and restrains her from relishing the true standards of life. He takes her illiterate and never encourages her to learn the English language. At times, she desires to learn English but he refuses to help her to achieve this goal; he fears that it might help her attain a position in the society. Shahana often corrects him when he makes a few mistakes while speaking English; at this very point, he decides to return to his country, thinking that his daughter might adapt to the Western norms and values. In a bid to counter men's hegemony, women in Monica's novel employ certain strategies. As much as

their immediate society contributes to their knowledge of the true power that belongs to their gender, they also seek guidance from their own faith — a supposed restricting factor though. Therefore, Nazneen feels that it is useless fearing men under any kind of circumstances.

In all these texts, the resistance of the characters can be seen through the female Subaltern. The narrative on the part of the selected women writers supports the position of the marginalized subject. The women characters reject the notion of patriarchy; they refuse to entertain the enfranchised rights enjoyed by the male characters. Besides this, they also renounce various restrictions imposed on them by their husbands, fathers and brothers. These texts provide an opportunity to the women to establish a platform for raising their voice against certain set norms and values. Moreover, this way they can also reflect their resistance to the traditions, which undermine their standing and position in society.

The Subaltern woman highlights the issue of representation as at certain stages that representation creates some problems for her; she needs to resist but society forces her to be under the hegemonic control. Sometimes representation causes her silence that may lead to the double oppression of the Subaltern woman. In particular, her identity is distorted and deformed by the power structures of her specific society. The researcher deals with Pakistan, India and Bangladesh---three particular regions of South Asian society. The harm of silencing the oppressed is that it makes them further weaker objects and monolithic subjects. The Third World woman is always a subject for the school of thought that investigates the issue of feminism.

According to Spivak's notion, the Subaltern class is subjugated, dominated and marginalized; the Subaltern women are not represented by any dominant group. However, they can show case their resistance by raising their voice at different forums; they should adopt every fair and possible means to present their vantage point individually as well as collectively. Almost all the women characters highlighted in the selected texts are the victims of the dominant power structures of their societies. These Subaltern women are meted out unjust treatment. They resist the influence of their husbands, fathers and brothers when they realize these individuals are determining their lives and fates against their will. The selected

writers take an objective position to expose the ills of a patriarchal society. For instance, Qaisera Shahraz brings to light the sufferings of the women trying to survive in a patriarchal set up. Similarly, Shobhan Bantwal deals with the issue that explores women's existence and Monica Ali too talks about the marginalization of woman by highlighting the predicament of immigrant women. Writers raise their voice to make the woman strong; they want them to raise their voice instead of being silent. It is in the hand of the subaltern to bear the pain or to raise the voice sometimes they have to face harsh realities of the world but at times, they attain position like the characters in the selected texts. The postcolonial critics and scholars like; Guha, Mohanty, Pandey, Chaturvedi, Arnold, Gramsci, Bhabha, Kant, Said, Chakrabarty and many other talk about the representation of the Subaltern women to urge them to speak for themselves.

7.2 Key Research Gaps:

Spivak views the Subaltern woman as a living being who can take a stand for herself, as she possesses a brain to make decisions. The purpose of this research relies on the investigation of the power structures that ruin the life of the Subaltern woman. As for Spivak female is taken as the Subaltern subject; in this research, the researcher's focus is mainly on woman and her plight. The hegemonic and dominant gender influences the opposite gender. In the selected works, the female characters exhibit their resistance by dint of their acts. Zarri Bano is happily married at the end of the novel. Megha manages to escape and rescues her life and she attains what she desires for in her life. Moreover, Nazneen acquires the place she deserves. Although their sufferings are painful, the authors show the heroic struggles of these women to reach their respective positions in their societies. Being a woman is not a crime but not raising voice against injustice and violence is not an admirable deed. The research is related to the power structures, gender relations and ideology in terms of power and gender. Therefore, woman is a Subaltern figure as she is suppressed by the power-wielding structures of society. Her existence is meaningless; she plays the role of puppet and stooge and her strings are pulled by the male section of society. She is not given any significant place in society. If she raises her voice, it goes unheard.

7.3 Recommendations:

Future research can focus on various new aspects such as the resistance on the part of oppressor and his silence in this regard. An in-depth study can be conducted to discover the representation of woman as an object and the way she is cornered by society. Other theories and methods may also be adopted to comprehend the silenced discourse of the Subaltern from a different angle. It is evident that this research serves as a means to highlight the issues faced by woman whereas the future research can be conducted from a male perspective. The researcher can fill the gap between the existing representation of Subaltern and the circumstances of the existing Subaltern. Other perspectives like hybridity, cultural aspects, assimilation, diaspora and exoticism can also be dealt with in postcolonial South Asian fiction.

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