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Women Struggle and Emancipation: A Study of Sudha Koul's 'The Tiger Ladies' and Flora Nwapa's 'Women are Different'

Ajoy Batta¹ and Sundus Quyoom²

¹Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, Lovely Professional University, Punjab-144411. Email: ajoy.20229@lpu.co.in

²Research Scholar, Department of English, Lovely Professional University, Punjab. Email: sundusheikh1988@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Females have been suffering across the globe from ages. Feminism is one of the hottest topics prevalent in the world and many writers, philosophers and great personalities have come forward for this cause. Many laws have been formulated to better the condition of women across the globe. Big Organisations like UNO and UNICEF have passed so many bill and reports regarding the betterment of women. But still women are suffering and are regarded as a secondary sex to their male counterparts. In most of the societies, woman is considered only a bed partner or a child bearing machine. Woman regardless of their region suffer the same pain of gender discrimination. In this paper, the researcher will try to explore the struggle of women belonging to two completely different parts of the world- one is Kashmir (India) and the other Nigeria through the books *The Tiger Ladies* (2005) by Sudha Koul and *Women are Different* (1986) by Flora Nwapa. These two books touch some important aspects of women struggle which degrade them and make them a passive sex. This paper will try to bridge the gap between the women belonging to different sections of the world through their pain, struggle and emancipation.

Keywords: African Culture, Female discrimination, Female emancipation, Female struggle and Indian Culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is a topic of global concern and women all over the world are struggling to end women oppression and achieve emancipation. Women from ages have been dominated on the basis of colour, class, region and religion. The fight for women equality started late back in the 19th century and the early 20th century. Mary Wollstone Craft is still regarded as the mother of feminism and her work *A*

Vindication of the Rights of Women (1978) is still considered as the first feminist work. After that many writes, philosophers, socialist came forward to fight for the rights of women.

In this paper, the researcher is trying to explore the pain of women living in completely different parts of the world and will try to bridge their pain through their struggle and emancipation. The researcher will focus on two books i.e. *The Tiger Ladies* (2005) by Sudha Koul and *Women are Different* (1986) by Flora Nwapa.

2. THE TIGER LADIES BY SUDHA KOUL

The Tiger Ladies (2005) by Sudha Koul is a book which portrays India and its culture in a true sense. This book is basically a memoir. The writer takes the reader to a journey of three generations of women to show the plight and status of women in India. Even though, this book talks about three generations but one thing that is common in all these generations is the condition of women which is defined by the males of the society. This book beautifully shows the miserable plight of the newlywed brides and how they are prepared to cope up with the harsh conditions of the in-laws. It is book full of myths and folktales related to women belonging to different sections of the society. The setting of this book is Kashmir (India) which like most of the other Indian states is also patriarchal. This book touches various aspects of the Indian society.

2.1. Marriage

Marriage in every society is a very important part of one's life especially for the woman. This book talks about the marriage of different women across different generations. The book traces the journey of three generations and marriage as the ultimate aim of girl was the common thing in these three generations. All these generations considered girls to get married as soon as possible to have a good life. Betty Friedan in her famous book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) also talks about this notion. She criticizes the society for making a false belief that home making and child bearing are the only things for attaining fulfilment in women. She argues that women are brain washed to believe that their identity lies in the devotion to their husbands. She encourages women to work for their dreams and think outside the four walls of the house. Betty Friedan wrote about the women discrimination prevalent in the American society but it is true to the other parts of the world as well. Women all over the world face the same problem of getting married to fulfil their goal in life.

In *The Tiger Ladies* (2005), the writer's mother, Katyayani got married when she was only 14 years of age to her friend. It was an arranged marriage. She got engaged when she was only 12 years of age and then, married at 14. She didn't know the actual meaning of marriage but got attracted by the jewellery and the clothes she got in her engagement. After engagement, she was not allowed to play with her friends, and was kept all the time at home. She felt suffocated and just wanted to play, go on boat rides and picnics but nothing could be done as now she was about to get married. And finally, she was married when she hardly had any sense about the marriage. After marriage, she continued to study but when she had children, she had to devote her life to the family and forgot everything about herself. This is the real plight of women in most of the countries. Once, they get married, they hardly have any time for themselves. They are made to believe that it is their duty to look after the family and devote their entire life to their service.

The writer's mother knew the effects of early marriage, still she wanted the same for her daughter. Because, this is how the society works. Instead of motivating her daughter to achieve her aim in life, the

writer's mother was more concerned about her marriage as if her daughter was a burden on her family. When Sudha Koul was in the college, her mother wanted her to get married and was searching for a groom. Her mother was in a deep tension as the marriage was the ultimate dream for her daughter. "A girl must be married off, may be not to the best possible choice, but even a not-so-good-match is hundred times better than an unmarried girl" (Koul, 112). Why this thinking is prevalent in the society, especially among the mothers who have themselves suffered the consequences of early marriage themselves? When the daughter wants to achieve something big in her life, she is being taught to be quiet and pursue only one dream of being married as soon as possible. It is the high time that the mothers should support their daughters to achieve their dreams and become self-dependant before getting married. But Sudha Koul's mother was in a fear that with the growing age of her daughter, she would not get a better match for her. But, Sudha Koul was a girl of ambitions who wanted to fulfil all her dreams. She even completed her university exams but instead of getting happy, her mother got more tensed to find a match for her. But Sudha Koul didn't stop and continued towards her dreams. Initially, after the university exams, she was appointed as a teacher, but she was not happy with this profession. She got so much influenced by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the only female Prime Minister of India that she wanted to do something big like her. She believed that if a Kashmiri Pandit woman can be the Prime Minister of India, then the writer can also achieve something in her life. So, she worked hard and became the first lady IAS officer of the J&K state. After fulfilling her dream, Sudha Koul married a person who didn't come in the ways of her dreams but supported her always. Sudha Koul can be best example to motivate and encourage girls to complete their education and fulfil their dreams of being self dependant and successful.

2.2. Condition of Newly Wed Brides

The Tiger Ladies (2005) shows the condition of the newlywed girls in a true picture that is prevalent not only in Kashmir, India but in a broader sense it actually represents almost all the world. One important point which Sudha Koul focuses is how the girls are prepared to get ready for all the things which are going to happen to her after marriage. During the marriage ceremonies, the women sing the songs on the miseries of the newlyweds. But this is the real question? Why to sing such songs during such an auspicious day? The answer is that girls are made to believe that whatever is going to happen is not the new thing. Their mothers, grandmothers, aunties and all the women have faced the same thing and they also have to face it and most importantly they should not come back to their houses to complaint about it. This is how the society works. This is so shocking as if after the marriage, the girls are sold off and the parents almost break all the contact with the girl. Girls are always dependant on the male counterpart of their lives accept this as her fate and do not oppose it.

When the girl enters her in-laws house, she always dreams that they will take care of her and finally she has entered into her real house. Because from her childhood, she is being taught that the house in which she is living is not her real house and her real house is the house of her husband. But, there also she is always an outsider. This is the real picture which is true for almost all parts of the world. She is never treated equal and the worst part is that in Indian society and for most parts of the world, the newlywed is tortured not only by her husband but her mother-in-law as well who is herself a female. Her mother in-law has also suffered the same pain of ill treatment but still she takes it forward as a legacy. They are actually taking revenge from the society. This is what the women in the world should understand. They should

stop this and stand against this evil practice. Sudha Koul portrays how the newlywed is considered to be inferior in all aspects as she is considered only a child bearing machine to continue the lineage forward or else she is good for nothing. But even the child does not guarantee her place in the house.

She is an outsider who shares the son's bed, she is a suspect, and soon provides proof of her nocturnal antics in the shape of an oval belly. The belly will become her passport to the family. The fact is that even producing an offspring who is a blood relative of her in-laws does not guarantee that she will become a real member of the pack. (Koul, 20)

Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) talks about the unhappiness of the married women. She argues that after marriage, women often feel alienated and isolated as her feelings and desires are suppressed. She holds the view that women lose her identity and become a lifeless creature. She calls the women's unhappiness as the problem having no name. She asserts that women are encouraged to confine themselves within the four walls of the house which make them to have identity crises and become completely dependent on men in their lives.

The husband, who is considered to be the protector of the wife as he takes so many vows during the marriage to protect her, turns out to be the hunter. The husband from ages has been considered to treat his wife like a savage and it is prevalent even today. And the worst part is that even the educated person is doing the same thing. His lifelong education fails in front of his ill treatment to the wife. And the shocking part is that in Indian society, the husband is often under control of his mother and treats his wife like his mother dictates him to do. The mother in fear of losing her son makes the situation for the wife very miserable. Sudha Koul recalls one such incident where a husband was under the control of his mother and used to do whatever her mother asked him to do. He used to treat his wife as if he does not know her from the morning till evening and at night used to rip her to satisfy his sexual desire. But the irony was that when he would go the room at night, he used to draw all the curtains and close all the windows and doors as if he was doing something sinful and shameful. This is so shocking and it reflects the hypocrisy of the husband and the society as well. And again in the morning, he used to treat her like a stranger only. "In silence he makes love to his wife, one hand on her mouth and he consumes her with hunger" (Koul, 34). Why is wife just given a status of a bed partner or child bearing machine only? Is this the only thing God created women for? Even if we go to the religious scriptures, we can find that religion gave a high status to a woman especially to a wife.

If we look at the Hindu mythology, then, the trinity in Hinduism i.e. Bharama, Vishnu and Mahesh who form the basis of Hinduism had their female consorts i.e. Laxmi, Durga and Saraswati. Even if we talk about Hinduism than, Durga represents the goddess of Power and if power itself is feminine than how can a female be weak?

In a book entitled *Facet of Feminism: Studies on the Concept of Woman in Indian Tradition* (2005), Raghunath Ghosh explains the importance of a wife according to the Hindu tradition. He argues that according to Hindu mythology, woman is an important part for all the Hindu practices and traditions. He gives one example of woman's importance for the sacrificial rites performed in Hindu mythology. He gives a reference from Ramayana in which Lord Rama had to build an artificial golden image of Sita to perform the sacrifice. He latter in his book states that the Vedic Literature holds the view of the equality of men and women and considers them as identical as they both are the manifestation of Sat, Chit and Anand (truth, consciousness and bliss).

This clearly shows how high a woman is regarded as a wife in Hindu mythology but the society considers them no less than a weak sex and regards them as submissive.

2.3. Plight of Widows

Sudha Koul in *The Tiger Ladies* (2005) has touched another very sensitive issue regarding the plight of the widows. She explains in the book that the condition of these women is very bad. The life of widow in India has always been pathetic. She explains the plight of the widows in Kashmir, how they were excluded from the society. They were kept in the bungalows secluded and left on their own without involving themselves with the society. They were forced to stay alone and had to lead their life only in the way of God excluding from all the activities of this world. This is so pathetic. Sudha Koul explains in this book that if these women ever tried to protest against this tradition, they were told that she should not say anything against it because their condition was still better than the widows living in other parts of the country as the tradition of Sati Pratha was prevalent in the society. So, in a fear of being burnt alive, they used to keep quiet and take all the sufferings.

The question is that why can't a widow marry again? Why does she suffer after the death of her husband? She is not responsible for her husband's death and more over, if a wife dies, a husband marries in no time. Then, why is this thing kept so evil for women? And the worst part is that she is not only denied to marry again but she is forced to live a life which is full of sufferings; a life of no colour. Why is this harsh treatment given to a woman?

Mandakranta Bose in her book entitled *Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval and the Modern India* (2005) explains that the widow according to Hindu mythology is allowed to re-marry. She gives a reference of verse from Dharamsastra Literature as quoted by her, viz. 'Naste mrte pravrajite kliveca patite patau/ pancasu apatsu nariman patiranyo vidniyate//' from parasarasmriti, which according to her ordain the re-marriage of the women. She later in the book states that a woman is allowed to remarry on the basis of five predicaments which are- if a husband dies, disappears or is impotent or abandons her or is from a low status.

This book not only talks about the women degradation but also woman's struggle for emancipation. Sudha Koul talks about the women college of Kashmir which was once this bungalow for the widows. But Sudha Koul felt the pain and sufferings of these widows when she was in the college. Even though college is the source of emancipation for women as education is the most important thing for empowerment, but still this college which was once a place for widows, makes Sudha Koul feel uncomfortable. "It is as if they still live there; it is as if I can actually see them" (Koul, 95). But whatever, with the changing society, things for women is also changing and this college is one fine example of the women emancipation. "The widows palace, which is how the college is still referred to, has become a beehive of women's emancipation, abuzz with studies, classes, books, songs, dance, fashion, and debates" (Koul 98).

3. WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT BY FLORA NWAPA

Women are Different by Flora Nwapa depicts the lives of three friends and other women associated to them. This book portrays the struggle and emancipation of these three friends viz. Agnes, Dora and Rose, living in Nigeria. All these friends have different natures and aspirations and this book shows how their lives make

them so strong that they at last come out to be very strong ladies in their own ways. Flora Nwapa has also touched some basic points related to women in this book which are prevalent across the globe.

3.1. Education, Job and Self Dependence

Education has always been an important part of one's life as it helps to make an individual stand on its own. Education makes women realise about their rights and encourage them to dream and at the same time achieve those dreams. It really makes them self dependant and develop in them the confidence to cope up with the life. But sadly this education has always been a barrier for almost all the girls across the globe. Girls are made to believe that education is not for them, as the only thing which God made for them is marriage. So, they are prepared from the childhood for marriage which is considered as their ultimate destiny.

Mary Wollstone Craft in her work entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Structures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792) is basically a book which talks about the importance of education in women's life. She argues that women are considered weak and secondary and are prepared only for marriage right from their childhood. She believes that men and women are equal and women should not be barred from education as women help to build the nation. She argues that the education of women is very helpful for the family as she passes her knowledge to the future generations. She explains in her book that women do not perform only the role of wives but they are actually the companions to their husbands.

In an article entitled *Women, Education and Work in Nigeria* (2009), Edlyne E. Anugwom focuses on the education barrier on women in Nigeria. "One clear area of noted imbalance against women has been in the area of education" (Anugwom, 127). He states that certain measures have been taken to improve the situation of women education in Nigeria but still women lag behind males. He argues that even if women are educated, still it hardly matters to anybody because after marriage she has to do the household chores only.

Actually, it is no longer out of the place to see a woman with the enviable academic qualifications end up in the kitchen because she marries a businessman or trader who does not see any reason why his wife should exert herself in the work place when she has enough resources to keep the whole family comfortable. (Nwapa, 132)

This is just the monopoly of the males to make women realise that her husband cares for her. So, women knowing that they have to end up in the kitchen only hardly give any importance to education and give more importance to learn the household chores. But, Edlyne E. Anugwom tries to explain that education is important not only to make women self dependant but also help to broaden their horizon.

In *Women are Different* (1986), Flora Nwapa points out the importance of education in one's life especially the women and views of the main protagonists and other women regarding this education. The three main protagonists i.e. Agnes, Dora and Rose and other girls get admitted to a missionary school and education at initial stage hardly proves to be any hindrance for the girls.

3.1.1. Agnes

Agnes was a very quiet kind of girl who hardly revealed anything related to her life to her friends. She was always in a sense of tension and nervousness. She wanted to study as much she can. She like her other friends

also had a relationship but she was hardly serious about that. Later, it was revealed that the reason of her tension was that she was already engaged and that too to a person who was double her age. And the irony was that he was paying for her education so she can't even run away from that marriage. The question arise that why was she engaged at such a tender age? The answer was that her mother was dead and her father married another woman. Her stepmother just wanted to get rid of her, so she got her engaged and wanted to get her married as soon as possible. After completing her secondary school examination, she wanted to go to the university, but even before her secondary school examination result was declared, she was married off. Rose attended her marriage and was amazed to see how people were gossiping regarding the marriage. She heard that Agnes was married as she was pregnant. Others even said that she was being married to her step mother's boyfriend which was indeed true and revealed later. One shocking thing that happened in the marriage was the discussion regarding the girls' education. Flora Nwapa created two characters for the discussion on this topic-one who was in favour of education and the other who was against it. One of the two women said that education is all waste of time and most importantly money. This was the same woman who advised Agnes' step mother to get her married as soon as possible. "Marry her off as soon as possible, so she will be busy with her own family and won't bother you with yours"(Nwapa, 52). A woman is another woman's enemy is a well known myth all over the world. The woman in the marriage ceremony has no personal issue with Agnes, but still provoked her stepmother to get her married and now she was debating that all her parent's money got wasted in educating her just to get a piece of paper. This is the thinking of most of the women present in the society. They have accepted that women are meant only to get married, so no money should be wasted on their education and instead the girls should be trained for the household chores only. But Flora Nwapa created another character also who argued with this lady and tried to realise the importance of education not only to her but the readers as well.

'I don't blame her,' she answered her question. 'A lot is changing. Our children will have to get that important piece of paper before they get married. I have told my daughter, she must have it. I don't have it and that is why Papa Emeka behaves in such an atrocious manner to me. He seems to tell me during some of our quarrels: "If you can't take it, go." Then I think- where will I go with seven children? So I stay. But if I had that piece of paper which Agnes now has, I could have left him and gone to study.' (Nwapa, 53)

This woman kept a valid point regarding education which makes a woman self dependent and she can stand on her own. Every girl should understand this and should demand for education as it is her right.

After marriage, Agnes desire of education didn't stop. She applied for a course after her marriage without telling her husband. She qualified that and wanted to apply for another two subjects but for that she had to tell her husband as the classes for that course was at night. Her husband straight away rejected to her desire. But this time Agnes was very firm in her decision and so she resisted by not cooking for her husband. Her husband got so angry that he called her father. The amazing thing was that her father for the first time supported her and forced her husband to allow her to study. This kind of support was what Agnes expected during her marriage but nevertheless, she was happy to see her father supporting her which proved to be very fruitful and finally she got admitted to the college. After that, there was no stopping for Agnes. She struggled a lot, got so many heartaches in her married and love life, but still she fulfilled her aim and finally was appointed as the Women Education Officer in the Ministry of Education and lived a comfortable life.

3.1.2. Dora

Dora on the other hand, was never interested in studies and always dreamt to marry and have a beautiful life. Dora was the perfect example of the society. But this does not mean that she was aimless. Dora was a very intelligent woman. After marriage, she worked as a nurse but later she decided to be a baker. She proved to be a very good baker and her business became very successful. She got famous in a very short span of time. Initially, her husband was happy and when she asked him to join her business, as he had problems with his jobs, he denied. It was simple, how can a husband work under his wife. She even tried to make him realise that she will do all the hard work and he only has to manage the accounts. But his 'male ego' didn't allow him to work for his wife and instead went to foreign to study and after sometimes Dora realised that her husband had left her and had even sold their house which was made from Dora's money. She was dejected but was a strong woman and gathered strength and started her business again and in no time, got famous and lived a comfortable life.

3.1.3. Rose

Rose out of the three friends was the most ambitious and was always interested in the politics of the country. She had a boyfriend in the school named Ernest who always supported her to study and join the university. After the completion of her secondary school, she gave exam for the Queen's College but failed for the first attempt. Then, she joined as a teacher and study well and again took the exam for the college and finally cracked it. But her love, Ernest had already gone to London to study further. She qualified her college and went to abroad for the Diploma course in Education and tried searching for Ernest but could not find him. She came back and was appointed as the Women's Education Officer in the Queen's College. Rose was leading a good and comfortable life.

3.2. Marriage, love and Self Emancipation

Marriage is very important in almost all the societies of the world. It is considered to be one of the most pious things in one's life especially for women. Marriage is a beautiful thing which gives security, love, financial help and especially care to a woman's life but, sadly, marriage has now become no less than a business. Girls are brain washed from their childhood that they should dream of only one thing and that is to get married as soon as possible.

John Stuart Mill in her famous book entitled *The Subjection of Women* (1896) talks about the importance of education in women's lives. He holds the view that women education is beneficial for men as well. He asserts that initially, marriage would happen at a domestic level and there would hardly be anything common between husbands and wives. He strongly believes that educated women can be a companion to their husbands at an intellectual level which will help to make their marriage stronger. For him, education was a building step in women emancipation.

In an article entitled *Promiscuous Girls, Good Wives, and Cheating Husbands: Gender Inequality, Transition to Marriage, and Infidelity in South eastern Nigeria* (2010), Daniel Jordon Smith touches a very important aspect of how women are fed to believe that marriage is the only option for the girls to have respectful lives. He argues that women are restricted after marriage to many things which they could do freely before marriage. He argues that it is only the woman who has to do certain adjustments to make her marriage as success but in most of the cases, even after so many adjustments, men cheat to their wives. He states that the real

cause of the broken marriages is the forced marriage and the girls at last get ready to marry because they have somehow accepted that marriage is their only destiny no matter how successful they get. He explains that how majority of women feel that their ambition is fulfilled after getting married.

In *Women are Different* (1986), Flora Nwapa shows how the lives of these friends change after marriage and she has shown the real picture of marriage which is true not only to Nigeria but across the globe. All of the three friends have a very hard life which was full of sufferings which mostly started after their marriage and the amazing part is that marriage like in other societies is also considered a vital aspect of a girl's life. Without marriage she is considered nothing no matter how successful or beautiful she is. In an article entitled *Representation of Post-Colonial Nigerian Society as Entrapped between the Old and the New in Flora Nwapa's Women are Different* (2013), Dr. N. Sibel Guzel explains how the society has played such an important role in moulding the mindset of women to make them feel that they are born inferior. She argues how women are channelized to believe that marriage is their ultimate aim. She gives the reference of Flora Nwapa who when asked about the marriage was very critical about that. She states that Flora Nwapa's view about her culture is very realistic especially regarding the marriage. She explains that Flora Nwapa states that it is very difficult for a girl to survive if she is single. Nwapa argues that girls from their childhood are told that they have to get married no matter what. Dr. Sibel in this article explains this notion with reference to Nwapa's book *Women are Different*.

The most obvious dilemma of Nigerian women presented in 'Women are Different' is sustained through the conflict between economic independence and perception of marriage. Even though these main protagonists of the novel are self-supportive, they still feel the need of getting married and starting a family. (Sibel, 9)

So basically in a way, Dr. Sibel in this article argues that the society has made such norms which make women to believe that they are nothing if they would not get married.

In *Women are Different* (1986), all the three girls suffer differently in their married lives.

3.2.1. Agnes

Agnes was married to man who was double her age and the rumors were that he was the boy-friend of her step mother. She never wanted to get married at an early age but she had to because of the pressure from her step mother and moreover the fee of her school was also paid by her fiancé. Rose attended her marriage and was very disappointed on hearing different things at the marriage. But the thing which made her the most disgusted was when she saw Agnes who was so upset and sad on her marriage day and as soon as Agnes saw Rose, she cried a lot as if only Rose in the whole hall can understand her pain. Anyhow, Agnes proved to be a very good wife and did all the household chores for her husband. She did what is expected from a good wife. Initially, her husband showed affection to her but later when she wanted to study, all the chaos started in her life. But anyhow, she was admitted to the college where she found the love of her life, Mr. Dele. She had never loved her husband. It was just a responsibility which was imposed on her by her parents and the society. Mr. Dele was that kind of person who supported her a lot for her studies and motivated her to achieve her dream. But, she was always 'guilt conscious' to have an extra-marital affair with Mr. Dele. One day, when she came back early to her house from her college where she found her husband and her step mother in a very compromising situation.

She already knew about their affair but had never seen it with her own eyes. She didn't say anything and became quiet for few days and after some days, when Mr. Dele proposed her to stay with him, she agreed to his proposal. She took her children and went to stay with him. Mr. Dele was already married, so they didn't marry. He took good care of her and her children. Staying with him was very fruitful for him. She even got admitted to the university. Finally, all her dreams were coming true, but destiny again played a twist in her life. Mr. Dele died an untimely death. She was shocked and didn't know what to do with her life. She was left all alone and she didn't know how to live without him. The worst part was that the honour of his last rites was saved for his wife and once she came, she kicked Agnes and her children out of the home. Somehow, she managed her life well as Mr. Dele had made her strong and independent and she got a very good job.

She came back to Lagos and visited her husband. There she realised that it was a mistake to meet her husband again as he treated her very badly and called her 'wayward wife'. It was not only the fault of Agnes, but her husband was equally responsible for their broken marriage. He could not see Agnes happy and contended with her life as his life was nothing more than a life full of sufferings and loneliness as Agnes' stepmother has also left him.

3.2.2. Dora

Dora always dreamt of getting married to her childhood boyfriend Chris. In an article entitled *Representation of Post Colonial Nigerian Society as Entrapped between the Old and the New in Flora Nwapa's Women are Different* (2013), Dr. N. Sibel states how the protagonists in this novel dreams of getting married without much focussing on their career. "Dora dreams about her future in the boarding school demonstrates how Nigerian girls desire to work but at the same time become a good wife as the society expects from them. . . Dora was going to be a good wife to Chris. Nothing would cause a quarrel between her and Chris" (Sibel, 28).

But this was all a fairytale and it all ended soon. Chris worked in the High Court but he was a very corrupt official as he used to take bribes which he never discussed with Dora. Dora was also working as a nurse but after her fifth child, she decided to bake and start her own bakery. Initially she started selling in the hospital and she got very famous in no time. She started getting profits and Chris was very happy with that. They even started building their house at Chris' native palace. But Chris didn't stop taking bribes and he got threatened to stop it. When he realised that he was in a problem, he discussed it with Dora and Dora got shocked. She advised him to resign from the job and start working for him as she already needs a manager for her business. Initially he thought it was a good idea but he didn't approve it. The answer was simple, how could a husband work under her wife. Dora had realised that Chris was not going to join her as it was a matter of 'Male Ego', so she tried so many tricks to convince him. She tried to tell him that he will be the real master and the all the donkey work would be done by her. But Chris was not ready for that. He decided to go abroad for 3 years to study law and then come back. He didn't even ask Dora about it. She was so confused. Her life was tearing in pieces and she could do nothing about it. She cried a lot but her tears had no effect on him and he went to abroad. Initially, he wrote her and later he stopped writing to her. She was alone to cope up with the life especially when it was the peak of civil war. She went to see her new house and there she realised that Chris has sold that house without even letting her know. This house had her savings and she was so dejected with Chris and her life. "She believed so much in Chris and now he had betrayed her" (Nwapa, 73).

But, somehow she managed to come out of that depression and bought a small land in her village and built a small bungalow there and shifted there. During the war, she didn't die of hunger as she was baking in her village and was even sending breads to the people involved in the war. She was living a comfortable life. All she wanted was to make a comfortable life for her children and was still waiting for Chris. Later, her daughter, Chinwe wanted to start her business and she supported that. Chinwe got married to a business man and went to London to find her father but there she came to know that there was no such person named Chris in the address which Chris had provided. She narrated the story to Dora who went restless and started searching for Chris. Soon she came to know that Chris has cheated her and was in Germany living with a lady whom she discovered on going there. Chris made her realise that it was a mistake of her coming there to find her and he returned her back. She was in a state of shock. She didn't know what to do. She remained in the room for a week and after that she realised that it was not her fault that Chris left her. Her life was comfortable and she was happy and contented without Chris. So, she started her life again and soon, a man named Tunde came in her life. She was not happy with Tunde. She was waiting for Chris to come back and perform his duties of a father to their children.

Rose came to meet Dora and wanted to meet Agnes as well. There Dora and Rose discussed about their lives. Dora told her that she was not happy with Tunde. She was still waiting for Chris to come. Dora was very upset with her broken marriage. She was always very good to Chris but what she got in return was betrayal and still she was craving for her love Chris to return.

And I have to submerge my personality to be able to cope, because I believe that in Nigeria today if a woman marries a difficult husband, and if she wants the marriage to last, she has to be prepared to take a lot. She has to be prepared to receive insults from all and sundry. She has to ignore all her husband's shortcomings. She has to give and continue to give. For you see, our men are very touchy these days. They lord it over their wives, and they laugh at the ideal husband who listens and respects his wife. (Nwapa, 102)

This particular statement of Dora is true not only for the men of Nigeria but most of the men across the globe. This is what is mostly happening to the society which is degrading women.

Dora even explained how her daughter's (Chinwe's) life was also ruining. She was afraid that people might think like the mother, daughter also could not cope up with the marriage. Her daughter was suffering from a broken marriage as her husband got a 17 years old girl in the house. Dora wanted that Chinwe should compromise with the situation but Rose asked her to let Chinwe decide her ways in her life. Chinwe decided to go for divorce. This is a new generation, a generation which is different from her mother's generation.

Her generation was telling men, that there are different ways of living one's life fully and fruitfully. They are saying that women have options. Their lives cannot be ruined because of a bad marriage. They have choice to marry and have children, a choice to marry or divorce their husbands. Marriage is not THE only way. (Nwapa, 119)

This statement by Chinwe is very important. Women need to understand that marriage is not their only hope and especially if it is a bad marriage. Women need to understand their worth and should stand for the right thing.

Somehow, Dora was trying to live her life peacefully, but again Dora's life had a twist when Chris came back to her life. He realised that all the chaos in the civil war had not affected Dora and she was

living a comfortable life. He came back to her without any guilt of his previous affair and leaving Dora all alone. Dora also accepted him without any question. This is how the society works. She accepted him for her children and had no feelings left for him.

‘Exactly like that. I didn’t force him to return. He alone knows the reason for his return. As I said what is left now is commonsense. I have built these businesses with my sweat and all the resources. I could command. Should I have a brand new man to preside over them or my husband who is the father of my children no matter how badly he has treated me in the past, to preside over it? So there is nothing sentimental about having Chris back. I am facing reality. I am looking at my problem cold-bloodedly, and having arrived at my decision, every other consideration pales into insignificance.’ (Nwapa, 133-34)

This statement of Dora to Rose shows that now she was an independent woman and she accepted Chris only for the sake of her children and he wanted a legal guardian to take care of her children and money after her. So, she trusted Chris as he was the father of her children and had feelings for them and accepted back in her life.

2.2.3. Rose

Rose had always loved Ernest who was her childhood boyfriend and she loved him because he was the one who encouraged her to study and achieve her dreams. Ernest went to London to study further but never returned. This left Rose shocked. She didn’t know why he was not contacting her. They had a beautiful relationship and this left Rose lonely and sad. She was having everything in her life- good job, reputation and, money but the only thing which was missing in her life was love. Rose was living in a society which had very low regards for a single woman no matter how brilliant she was in her profession. This was developing a kind of depression in her life. She attended parties alone just to pass her time and finally one day she met Mark. Mark impressed her a lot and he was a man who would do all the household chores and was very loyal and caring towards Rose. Rose started depending on him. Mark had passed his course of Bachelors in Mathematics and, aimed to study Economics in London. He encouraged her to come along with him to study her doctorate. He even proposed for marriage and married in a simple way and advised her not change her name as she was an official which will create a lot of confusion for her career. She agreed to it. But he was a cheater and he took all her money and never came back. She was so dejected with her life. She could not understand why was this happening to her? First Ernest and now Mark had left her.

Rose kept in touch with Dora by writing to her. Dora supported her like a true friend and always gave her confidence that a good man will come in her life who will truly love her. And finally Olu came in her life. “He won Rose’s admiration immediately, but she had to be careful, after Mark” (Nwapa, 86). He was married but his wife lived in New York. Olu was very good to her and was giving her all those things which she expected from Mark. They went for vacations and finally Rose was happy as she was not alone anymore. After coming from the vacation, she realised that she was pregnant. She wanted to tell Olu but he had gone to New York for some work. She called at his house number but his wife received the call and she dropped the call. She was waiting for Olu to come. One day, her secretary Tinu came and asked her to hide in the bathroom as the wife of Olu had come. She remained in the bathroom and his wife abused her a lot and threatened Tinu to advise Rose to stay away from Olu. Rose was in such a shock that her menstruation came after 5 months and after that Olu never came back in her life. She had realised that

she had enough of men in her life. She focussed on her work and all of a sudden, Ernest came back to meet her. He narrated his story how he was trapped by an Iris girl and got married to him but finally, she ran off with somebody else. He made marriage proposal to Rose but Rose didn't reply to his proposal in a positive way and asked time for it.

Rose realised that all her life she was alone. She was left with nothing. Men betrayed her and that was not her fault. She loved them dearly and was always loyal to them but was always left alone. In an article entitled *Representation of Post Colonial Nigerian Society as Entrapped between the Old and the New in Flora Nwapa's Women are Different* (2013), Dr. N. Sibel explains the plight of Rose. "Rose has successful career as she remains free from male oppression throughout the novel. However, she feels the necessity to get married as it is imposed on women by the society, she develops the idea that she is deficient since she cannot meet social norms" (Dr. Sibel 99). Dr. Sibel argues that hoe society has made women to believe that they are the secondary sex and no matter how successful they get, they still need a man in their life.

All of these 3 friends suffered in their lives and their plight is not restricted to their pain but to the pain of most of the ladies.

4. CONCLUSION

The researcher through this paper explored that woman suffer the same pain across the world. The paper focussed on two different parts of the world-one India and the other Nigeria. But in both these countries, women are suffering with almost the same problems like: women education, early marriage, domestic violence, dependence of the female on the male counterpart, women as other another women's enemy, love and betrayal and so on. In the journey of life, women no matter of what region she belongs to, suffers a lot which results in the lost identity or no identity of their own. But, these books also motivate and encourage women to study and become self-dependant so that they can cope up with the life with all their might and strength to achieve their emancipation.

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