

Tribhuvan University

Female Subjection and Protest in Jaspreet Singh's *Chef*

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English**

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Female Subjugation and Protest in Jaspreet Singh’s *Chef*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Bharat Baral, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

Chef, a historical novel by Jaspreet Singh has its roots anchored in the patriarchal society. This research in *Chef* explains the prevalent domination of females and examines the uprising tone of protest and sense of resistance against of patriarchal Indian society during the time of partition violence and Kashmir conflict, especially by the female characters Rubiya and Irem. It studies the passivity and subjugation of females as well as the emerging rebellious and dominant role of conscious female characters. Rubiya and Irem have proved themselves as the rebellious figure through their radical action, which is strong challenge to the patriarchal custodians.

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I. *Chef* and Feminism

This research focuses on Jaspreet Singh's a historical novel *Chef* (2008), a story that depicts the pathetic and poignant condition of the innocent women who are victimized in the conflict between India and Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir Province. More specifically, it aims to explore the way Irem, a Muslim woman, has been exploited physically and mentally and the protest she dares to perform against the oppressive patriarchal society of the then Indian society. Drawing upon the theoretical framework developed feminist theorist in general and Uma Narayan, Ketu Katrak and Chandra Talpade Mohanty in particular, this research asserts that the marginal women characters face the critical condition of suffering and offer the dominant position to undermine the predominantly masculinist Indian society. The extreme exploitation of naive, innocent and charming young woman Irem is the outcome of hard, disrespectful and crooked male dominated Indian society during the time of Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, where oppressive patriarchy forces her to enter into the domain of vast quagmire of suffering.

The novel *Chef* was written in the historical background of the partition violence and Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan. By bringing forth the politico-historical circumstances of Kashmir, the writer has justified that how the innocent and powerless people including women have been victimized by the powerful authority. The plot of *Chef* is quite a non-linear and oblique one. Even its many detours and asides, however, cannot obscure the poignant charms of the subtle, graceful lyricism that pervades its well-crafted narration and dialogue. This novel is basically focused to explore the tragic condition of the innocent women who are obliged to face the existential crisis because of conflict

between India and Pakistan. As a diasporic writer, Singh provides the lucid picture of Kashmir state which is most debatable place in the world. This novel carries the undercurrents of the theme of female victimization and the sense of protest which is embedded within the structure of the novel.

As the novel opens its protagonist, Kirpal Singh, usually referred to as Kip, is starting out on his lengthy journey by train and bus to Kashmir. He is the son of a heroic military officer, Major Iqbal Singh, who was killed in action during a war with Pakistan when his plane crashed on the Siachen Glacier, the coldest and highest battlefield in the world. Joining the army against his mother's wishes, Kip had worked for five years in the region's capital, Srinagar, as the personal chef of General Sahib, chief of the Northern Command. Now, fourteen years later, he is returning, having been summoned back to cook the wedding meal of the General's daughter, Rubiya. He has just been diagnosed with brain cancer, and he hopes that once he prepares the perfect banquet, the General will refer him to the top specialists in the military hospital for treatment. During his train journey to Kashmir, he remembers the past events where so many Irem like women had been victimized in conflict. One of the most gripping stories of *Chef* is that of Irem, a Pakistani Kashmiri woman wrongly suspected of terrorist activity and imprisoned in India. In an ineffectual attempt to win over the woman's heart with good food, Kip tries to show her 'real Indian hospitality' with his dishes but she rejects it and demands her freedom.

Basically in the conflict, women are more victimized in comparison to men because in Hindu and Muslim tradition, women are taken as play doll, and their function is to serve sexual desire of male. So, women did not get chance to take part in the ongoing social happening, they confined themselves into the four

walls of the house. Such pitiable condition of women can be understood from the narration of Kip and we can easily pick out the condition of women during the time of partition violence and Kashmir conflict. In this connection Gyanendra Pandey in “The Prose of Otherness” (*SS VIII*) quotes from Begun Anees Qidwai’s “Azadi Ki Chhaon Mein”

After independence the government of India and Pakistan came to an agreement . . . that any abducted girl of any community who was in the possession of different community should be forcibly recovered and returned to her relatives and until such time as her relative remain untraced, to the government of her country. (189)

This statement proves that how the women had been facing gendered biasness in the light of 20th century in Indian society. It was dreadful condition of the women’s existence and pushes them in the bottom rags of the social ladder. Such pathetic and poignant condition of women provide candid picture of women’s condition during the time of partition violence and its aftermath.

This novel *Chef* clearly provides the theme of female suffering and resistance through the condition of Irem. Irem, a Pakistani Muslim woman, escapes from her home with the motif of suicide being unable to bear the extreme hardships and afflictions while leaving with her husband and jumps to the black hue of the river. But she cannot die and happens to cross the Indo-Pak border and puts her step in the land of India, where she has been arrested and abused sexually during the persecution process. As a result she becomes pregnant by General Sahib and she is forced for abortion but she resists it and says that she wants the birth of baby with the golden hope of morning breeze.

The basic objective of the research is to bring forth the feminism in order to portray the suppression of female in the Kashmir Province who are marginalized and fall victim of patriarchy. This study aims to explore the gender inequality and unequal social relationship between male and female. This study aims to highlight subjugation of female in the predominately masculinist society and it also intends to excavate the question why and how the females are subordinated and compelled to protest against it. Hence the research is targeted to explore the unequal social relationship and to give voice to the voiceless female characters in Jaspreet Singh's *Chef*.

This study seeks to make a significant contribution to excavate the woman's status in the Indian Zone as it aims to dig up the issues of woman's subjugation and their sense of resistance. This study also attains its importance in bringing female characters towards the spotlight to give them the strong voice and role by bringing them into the frame of critical analysis.

While analyzing such condition of marginalized women, the researcher has applied feminism as a theoretical framework with the reference of Third World space. The term 'feminism' originated from the French word 'Feminisme' which was coined by the utopian socialist Charles Florier. The term was first used to denote the support for women's equal legal and political rights with men. Now feminism also refers to any theory which sees the relationship between the sexes as one of inequality, subordination oppression. Thus, the aim of feminism seems to identify and remedy the sources of all kinds of oppressions and subjugations.

The history of female subjugation starts from the time immemorial. The females have been experiencing the harsh domination from their male

counterparts in the every social aspect. The role of females has undermined and they are treated as if they are secondary and thus they are othered. They are deprived of every opportunity and are alienated from the socio-economic sphere. Thus, to counter this sort of prevailing biased attitude of males towards females, feminism as a discourse evolved.

Feminism is a term that advocates for the social, political, economic, and educational and every kind of equality for women. It studies women as a suppressed and oppressed being to raise the level of awareness among females. Feminism as a movement appears as awareness about women's position in society, culture, and politics and even in literature. But it is reasonable to understand feminism as a discourse as per its function in the society rather to describe it as a theory treating it as a single and coherent way of thought.

Regarding the term feminism, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines feminism as “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim” (565). It intends to say that feminism is a struggle on behalf females to attain the equal right and position as males. Similarly, *Cambridge Encyclopedia* defines the term feminism as “a socio-political movement whose objective is equality of rights, status and power for men and women” (438). This definition too viewed feminism as movement for female's emancipation. Feminism attempts to bring women into the mainstream as it studies the marginalized condition of them. To change the world by promoting gender equality is the major goal of all feminist activity, feminist theory and literary criticism. Feminism can also be regarded as a form of activism which demands for the equal status of women to men through different political activities like public demonstrations. The foundation of

feminism or feminist criticism is the set of certain assumptions that; women are oppressed by patriarchy, economically, politically, socially and psychologically. Patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which they are kept. So, the woman is othered, objectified, marginalized and defined only by her difference from male norms and values in the every domain where the patriarchy rules.

While defining the concept of feminism in third world context Ketu Katrak puts forward her view:

. . . literal or metaphoric connotations of exile, as well as the concept of internal exile of the female body from patriarchy and external exile as manifest in migration and geographical relocation necessitated by political persecution, material conditions of poverty, and forms of intellectual silencing in third world societies. Female protagonists undergo what I term 'internal exile' where the body feels disconnected from itself, as though it does not belong to it and has no agency. (378)

As a third world feminist, she has given emphasis to female body. According to her, 'female body' has to do with female desire, female identity, female dignity, land and property to claim as her own, her choices, expectations, marriage, priorities, career, education and other. In this regard she asserts female identity through her rebellious voice. In this connection, another third world feminist Uma Narayan in her book *Dislocating Cultures* writes:

Feminism has been ridiculed and stereotyped worldwide and the issues we have raised have usually not been taken seriously by the media. But, remarkably, despite this bad press feminism has continued to grow. Women's groups all over the world, but

especially in the Third World are taking up issues ranging from housing, nutrition, and poverty to militarism, sexual and reproductive freedom, and violence against women. (191)

Here, Narayan also raises the issue of female and puts forward her view along the line of Ketu Katrak. She defines that women in the third world space also raising their voice against the predominantly masculinist society.

Therefore feminism is a strong reaction against the phallogocentric thinking of the patriarchal society. It aims to dismantle the gender biased categorization of biological being. Biology determines our sex whereas culture determines our gender and categorizes as masculine and feminine. The society and culture are responsible to grant inferior position to females; it's not the biological difference to do so. So, in Foucault's term, feminism is a counter discourse as it tries to refute the patriarchal truths that women are inferior and it opposes the patriarchal formed power.

Feminist movement initiated in around 1800s, is still in its continuous development. There are different types of feminist movements such as Radical Feminism, Liberal Feminism, Marxists Feminism, Eco-Feminism, Black Feminism, Post-Colonial Feminism and Third World Feminism.

Third World Feminism is read as the group of feminist theories developed by feminists who acquired their views and took part in feminist politics in third world countries. Third World feminist criticizes the western feminism in the ground that it is ethnocentric and does not take into account the different experiences of women from third world countries or the existence of feminism indigenous in third world countries.

Chandra Talpade Mohanti criticizes western feminism on the ground that it is ethnocentric and does not take into account the unique experiences of women from Third World countries. Western Feminism has an ethnocentric bias in presenting that the solutions while women of the west have advocated incubating their operation are equal to all the women on the earth. They fail to analyze the condition of women in different spatio-temporal location.

Uma Narayan, in *Dislocating Cultures* takes aim at the related notion of nation, identity and tradition to show how Western and Third World scholars have misrepresented Third World culture and feminist genders. She says, "I am arguing that Third World Feminism is not a mindless mimicking of western agendas in one clear and simple sense that for instance, Indian Feminism is clearly a response to issues specially confronting many Indian women" (3).

Indian Marxist Feminist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on her essay "Can Subaltern Speak?" opines that the muteness or silence of the woman as subaltern is created by the fact that even when they uttered words. They were still interpreted through conceptual and methodological device that were unable in rightly decoding their voice; hence the silence of the women as Subaltern is a failure of interpretations and not a failure of articulation.

Hence, the Third World Feminism insists on the heterogeneity of lives of the Third World women. These above forms of feminist criticism have helped us to generate arguments and justify the condition of Irem's and Rubiya's quest for individual identity in male dominated Indian patriarchal society. It has collectively helped us to understand the psychology, lives, desire and feelings of women in Third World country India. So, as a theoretical tool, Third World Feminism is very apt and useful to discern the condition of women in the third

world space. So, the researcher has completed his research with the framework of third world feminists like Ketu Katrak, Uma Narayan and Chandra Talpade Mohanty.

Feminist criticism comes in many forms and feminist critics have a variety of goals. Though there is century long struggle for the recognition of women's cultural roles and achievements; and for women's social and political rights, as a distinct and concrete approach to literature. Feminist criticism was not inaugurated until early 1960s, it came out in its full shape only in late 1960s. While dealing the issue of female Ketu Katrak, Uma Narayan and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have played vital role in third world space.

Canadian resident Jaspreet Singh, who grew up in Kashmir, endows his novel with the ring of authenticity, and his descriptions and stories within the various plot lines keep the reader involved on several levels at once. Though the plot lines involving love interests sometimes become overly romantic and even melodramatic, the novel does a fine job recreating the conflicts in an area of the world and its impact over the innocent people focusing mainly upon women. The author keeps his plots relatively simple and writes with both sensitivity and clarity, and he gives the reader some credit by leaving him to draw some important conclusions on his own.

During the time of his army service in the Kashmir, Kip has become eye witness with the different sorts of unbearable events where innocent women had been played as a doll in the hand of army officer. Irem as an innocent woman having a Muslim identity faces great tortures and troubles during the time of her persecution process. She had escaped from the hand of her husband with the motto of suicide, "She has jumped into the river to end her life. To end one's life

is against religion but the life she was leading was worse than death. Her husband and his mother criticized her constantly for not being able to bear a child” (138-39).

Since the time *Chef* appeared in the literary scenario, it became able to attract the attention of many critics and scholars. With the beginning of the 21st century, this novel was read by a considerable number of critics whose interpretation is different according to their own understanding. It can be judged from different point of views. Therefore, the criticism depends on the reader how he or she interprets. In this connection, Tobin Harshaw and Editor of the *New York Times* states:

The Siachen exists . . . in a no men’s land where India, Pakistan and China each claim primacy. . . this is the world in which Kip finds himself in the two interwoven narratives of *Chef* . . . but he finds his true calling amid the redolent spices of the kitchen. . . .[An] exotic locale and savory backdrop. (99)

Tobin Harswa, here critically questions upon the futile war for land. He takes this novel as a conflict between established traditions and increasing complex diversified world. He sees Kip as a newer generation who seeks to establish peace. Here Harshaw is critically analyzing the novel from changing historical and political condition.

Another critic Faye A. Chadwell explains the novel having the story of conflict. He says:

The story is related while Kip, who has a brain tumor, travels by train back to Kashmir. He is returning not only to prepare a wedding feast for his former General’s daughter but also to

negotiate and resolve his past. VERDICT Throughout, Kip's emotional passivity stands in opposition to his culinary abilities. Canada-based Singh adroitly blends lyrical accounts of Kip's past with sensual renderings of the cold climate and piquant cuisine. The result is another successful work of fiction from the Indian Diaspora. (45)

Here Chadwell is praising of highlighting the diasporic condition of Jaspreet Singh, critically analyzes the activities of the narrator Kips and examines the Jaspreet Singh's ability to present his experience through the charter Kip.

According to Basharat peer, “ *Chef* is a hunting evocation of the emotional and physical landscapes of war-torn Kashmir. Japreet Singh is very learned, gifted and sensitive writer” (cover page).

He has examined the novel critically from the emotional perspective. He sees *Chef* as a novel which excavates the pain and suffering of War-torn Kashmir. He is praising Jaspreet Singh for his sensitivity and talent.

Navadeep Kaur Marwah highlights the realistic representation of the beautiful war- sacred Kashmir in Jaspreet Singh's *Chef*. He opines:

Debut novelist Jaspreet Singh's first novel boasts lively characters, interconnected plot lines along with dream-like, lyrical writing. Hard hitting in some places, the author is also harsh and realistic with his descriptions in some instances in the book. . . The author's writing creates a vivid picture of the beautiful, war- scarred backdrop of Kashmir. (7)

Here, Marwah delivers his comment from the angle of war. As said by him, this novel is based on the issue of war between India and Pakistan for the possession

of Kashmir province. He has further expressed his view that this novel captures the vivid picture of beautifully crafted Kashmir and war-scarred environment. In this regard, he has approached this text through the light of war.

Though most of the critics mentioned above have analyzed the text from various perspectives but they have not explored it from feminist perspective. They have only mentioned about women's oppression but they have failed to notice the sense resistance against patriarchy among females. Thus this research intends to dig up the issue of both women oppression and their resistance in a single paradigm.

The present research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter has introduced the objective of the research including literature review, significance of topic and its hypothesis. The second chapter deals with the application of theoretical tool in textual analysis with special reference of two poles of feminism; subjugation and protest to prove the hypothesis. Finally, the last chapter is the conclusion of the research. It recapitulates the overall project of the research.

II. Female Subjugation and Protest to the Patriarchy

Female Subjugation and Suffering in *Chef*

This research epitomizes the concept of suffering and resistance of women characters in Jaspreet Singh's *Chef* which is paragon to demonstrate the realistic condition of women during the time of partition violence and Kashmir conflict. In this period, women had been used as the commodity to be consumed and they had obligatory condition to bow under the feet of patriarchal society. Females were considered as second object or other, secondary, darker, and marked as passive. They were deprived of taking active roles in the society. Females were considered intellectually inferior and were thus sidelined to margins. Females were taken as inferior/subordinate and this position is constructed through different discourses in patriarchal society. The gender identity of females was problematized. Patriarchal discourse creates the biased representation towards females and the purpose is to prove inferiority of females and naturalize it. Devaluation of females was pervasive in the patriarchal society of the 20th century as females were treated as puppets who were obliged to follow the rules, values and institutions that were established to favor men.

Chef deals with Indian patriarchal culture which was ruled by a furnace of binary codes that subordinated females to males. The grievances and tribulations of the female were unheard by the patriarchal agents of the then patriarchal society. Even women did not have right to select their life partner. While choosing their partners, they have to take permission of their father; it is outcome of the role of oppressive patriarchal society. While illustrating such condition of female, Uma Narayan as a feminist writer in her book *Dislocating Cultures* states, "There is connection between One's early experiences of oppressive

gender roles within the family” (10). The way Uma Narayan defines is the way Rubiya, daughter of General Sahib faces difficult condition when she “decides to marry with a Muslim” (6), but her father is not satisfied with her decision because he is an agent of patriarchal society. So, he is dissatisfied with his daughter’s decision which is narrated by Kip “General Sahib is not pleased with the wedding. I have read the letter twice and I sense his hands must have been shaking when he held the pen” (7). This narration of Kip is sufficient to read the mind of the General who was shaking his hand while writing a letter to Kip because he was not satisfied with his daughter’s decision. While defining such condition of women, Uma Narayan shares her experience:

I remember my mother’s anger and grief at my father’s resort to silencing ‘neutrality that refused to ‘interfere’ in the domestic tyrannies that his mother inflicted on my mother. The same mother who complained about her silencing enjoyed me to silence, doing what she had to do since my failures to conform would translate as her failings to rear me well. (7)

This event is mirror reality of Indian patriarchal society where women have no space to involve themselves in the ongoing social happening. They just have to wait for the permission of their elders. Kip also a man of having patriarchal mind set, joins his neck with General and supports him by expressing his dissatisfaction, he says “Sahib gave his youth to our nation to keep the Pakistanis away, he fought two wars, and now his own daughter is marrying one of them” (7). Such utterances of Kip justified that the male’s desire is always directed to victimize the females in one or other way.

In patriarchal society, women should follow the norms and values existing power system. They have to be submissive, innocent, passive, meek and humble in front of the patriarchal agency. They have to just follow the order of males in very critical condition too. Such situation has been clarified through the behavior of Kip and General towards Kip's old and sick mother. General Sahib, with the purpose of fulfilling his vested interest writes a letter to Kip by inviting him in the wedding ceremony of his daughter though he knows critical condition of Kip's mother. He writes;

My daughter (whom you last saw as a child) is getting married, and she is the one who forced me to write this letter. I have heard that your mother is sick, but this is a very important event in our life and we would like you to be the chef at the wedding. I do not want some new duffer to spoil it. (5)

These lines illustrate that the patriarchal feelings and interests are deeply embedded in the mind of General Sahib. He, as a patriarch, tries to fulfill his interest by ignoring the critical situation of an old woman. Patriarchs always think that the trials and tribulations of the female are minor, and they even do not show their responsibly towards the pathetic and poignant condition of the female.

Indian society as a whole is based on the notion of the male female heterosexual couples who live together in an intimate relationship. That is not to say that relations between women and men are equal within the heterosexual relationships, because it is clear that in many contexts women are abused and oppressed within these seemingly intimate relations with men. General Sahib as a patriarchal agent says to his wife "she was a bitch" (19). But in this condition too, she has to be remain silent because she has to do agreement with patriarchal

codes and conducts. While escaping from such frustrated situation General's wife desires to be alone that we know through the narration of her daughter, "Now that I think about it she too was fighting battles while my father was in Kashmir with the Pakistanis, my mother was fighting battles with herself. She stopped in the middle of the road and hugged me, then let me go. She wanted to be alone" (23).

In patriarchal society, women face different sorts of domestic violence, gendered discrimination, dowry murders, child marriages, mismatched arranged marriages, which are completely different problems and other. In patriarchal society, the position of women is relegated to the secondary position to male sex. They are identityless. In this connection, Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" states:

It is rather, that both as object of colonialist historiography and as the subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keep the male dominant. If, in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is in deep shadow. (82-82)

In the period of conflict, women's subjectivity is always denied. They are treated as if they have no significance in the community. Male is always privileged in the patriarchal Indian society. The ideology is constructed by the male that is why; it always plays the vital role to exercise the male superiority upon female.

This concept of Spivak is totally applicable in the life of women in third world space. Rubiya, as a daughter of General cannot get freedom of choice. She is obliged to live under the oppressive order of her father. So, she tries to end her life through suicide, "she is in her room with the ayah. 'papa, I am trying to

commit suicide. 'she shouted from her room (50). But “General Sahib laughs” (50). This very situation is sufficient to understand the position of the women in Indian patriarchy during the time of Post colonial era. General as a patriarch, turns his back towards the grievances of his daughter, he does not try to read her mind that's why she is trying to commit suicide. In this connection, Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* opines, "Woman as a slave or vassal is integrated within families dominated by fathers and brothers, and she has always been given in marriage by certain males to other males" (446).

This statement of Beauvoir is justifiable while comparing the condition of women characters in this novel *Chef*, where they are obliged to bear the jumble of frustration due to the patriarchal codes and conduces. They even do not have freedom to live freely within the sphere of their own home. Irem as an innocent Pakistani woman having a Muslim identity faces great tortures and trouble from the hand of his own husband, and being unable to bear such hardships and afflictions. She has been escaped from her home with the purpose of suicide, “She has jumped into the river to end her life. To end one’s life is against religion but the life she was leading was worse than death. Her husband and his mother criticized her constantly for not being able to bear a child” (138-39). Though the child bearing capacity is not limited in the responsibility of female, males are also equally responsible for it but in patriarchal society, only women are blamed for any guilt. So, she is blamed as infertile woman. Hence, in patriarchal mode of social structure, women are pressed down from every angles; relatives, family, society and husband, in this condition, they do not have any alternative except suicide.

Though Irem has jumped over the river with the motto of suicide but unfortunately she cannot die and crosses the border and steps in the Indian land where she is charged as a Muslim detective and asked many question in trivial way:

Name?

Nav?

Irem.

Father's name?

Moul Sund Nav?

Maqbool Butt.

Citizenship?

Shehriyat?

Kashmiri. (129)

These questions asked to the innocent woman were interpreted by Kim provides candid panorama of Irem's victimization. As a woman she has been played as a doll in the hand of patriarchal agents. There is no one to listen her grievances, because the ears of patriarchal agents are deaf to listen the pathetic roar of the innocent women. As helpless women is asked unnecessarily with the purpose of torturing her because patriarchs think victory when they get opportunity to victimize any woman. At the time of persecution process, he was together with the colonel and obeyed the order to interpret, Irem is further asked:

Colonel: Ask again,

Citizenship?

Shehriyat?

Kashmiri.

Married?

Khander Karith?

Awaa.

Yes.

Huaband's name?

Khandaraas Nav?

Raja Nomani. (129-30)

This act of questioning to an innocent woman by blaming her as detective is outcome of male's biased nature over the female. Male just take the women as identityless creatures and want to play with their sentiments. They also create myth as to limit women within their framework. While defining such condition, Simon De Beauvoir in her essay "The Second Sex" asserts:

Myths are very differently orchestrated by our authors. The *Other* is particularly defined according to the particular manner in which the One chooses to set himself up. Every man asserts his freedom and transcendence but they do not all give these words the same sense. For Montherlat transcendence is a situation: he is the transcendent, he soars in the sky of heroes; women crouches on earth, beneath his feet; it amuses him to measure the distance that separates him from her, from time to time he raises her up to him, takes her and then throws her back. (994)

These lines uttered by Beauvoir are illustrating the position of women in the society where males are soaring in the sky and females are crouching on the earth. The distance between sky and earth is distance between male and female. This sort of myth is created to dominate the female existence. She has further

says that patriarchal custodians create such myth to hold the superior position in the society.

The trap of patriarchal society is so powerful and pervasive that it does not let any women to get out of it. It always entraps women economically. It also sometimes raises the voice in the favor of women for life, liberty and pursuit of happiness but it is totally false promise. In such model of patriarchal exploitation, subaltern women are more victimized in every sphere of social happenings. The women in the patriarchal society are sexually abused and raped in one and another pretension. In this context Spivak, in “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi’s *Standayini*” (*SS V*) says, “if to identify women with her copulative or reproductive body can be seen as minimizing and reductive, women’s orgasmic pleasure, talking place in access of copulation or reproduction can be seen as a way out of such reductive identifications”(118). She further elaborates that as chestnuts are eaten or consumes by children, women are consumed sexually in the patriarchal society. Such expression of Spivak is applicable in the life of Irem who has been sexually abused by General Sahib and carried a child at her belly. This event is narrated by Kip:

It was only then I realized she was heavy with child.

God, I said.

I was at the loss of words.

So . . . you are . . . not infertile!

I did not know what else to say.

Who? I almost whispered. Who did it? (208)

This event shows how women in patriarchal society suffer and oblige to remain silent though they have to face horrendous situation. This sort of pathetic and poignant condition of women illustrates that Indian society even in 20th century is biased towards the females. There is not neutral bond between male and female because Indian society treats woman as a play doll. While supporting this situation, Ketu Katrak in her book *Politics of Female Body* states, “female body is in state of exile including self-exile and self-censorship, outsideness, and unbelonging to itself within indigenous patriarchy” (378). She further says that the patriarchy uses women’s body according to will of them. “The General touches her naked arm, then he laughs and she too, giggles and squeezes his hand. The colonel chews his lips. 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.' He says after a long pause” (52).

During the time of conflict between India and Pakistan, so many women were seduced in the name of the investigation and even women did not have freedom to choose their counterparts and they merely become object to be consumed or possessed according to the will of male’s desire. In this connection, Kip remembers the event where a woman had been sexually exploited. He narrates:

The girl was very fair. Kashmir girls are always very fair. But there were marks under her eyes. She was giving him a blowjob. After sometime he spread his semen on her fair skin and milk-white breasts. She had huge aureoles. Her hair was wild. But she did not seem to like it. When he was done he opened the door. As she followed him, he said, I will live up to my promise, you whore, I always live up to my promise. I did not do this to you for nothing,

he said and I hid behind a crate, unable to follow them scared because I knew the whole area under heavy surveillance and there were loaded guns. (190)

This act was done by son of the powerful governor. He had kept sexual relation with the promise of marriage but after fulfilling his vested interest he kicks her as the bee kicks the flower after finishing its nectar. The girl said “please, please” (190), but “he went back to his room and swallowed two more mouthfuls of rum” (190). In this way, women in patriarchal society are sabotaged in the corner of the society, neither they have agency to speak nor their voice is heard by the ear of patriarchal sexual predators so, they cannot go against the authority. In this regard, they do not get any space in the society.

Woman in patriarchal society are always becomes passive, submissive, meek and humble. They are also hypnotized by patriarchal agents so; they cannot speak against the authority. In this connection, Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" says “there is no space from which sexed subaltern speak” (103). She further says that sexed subalterns do not get self-esteem and ownership in the patriarchal medal of social structure, where women’s identity is deeply in shadow. In the patriarchal society males are dominant; they are superior and known as the breadwinner. She says that the ideological construction has obliged the female to be submissive and humble in front of the male authority. The way Spivak defines is the way Kip’s mother has been victimized. When Kip receives General Sahib’s letter, at that time his mother was seriously ill but Kip decides to follow the General’s invitation. At this moment his mother tries to stop him but he raises his voice against his mother.

He narrates this event, “I urged her to take the yellow tablets and capsules. She agreed only after I raised my voice” (6).

So, male domination in woman’s life is a natural phenomenon in patriarchal society and the consequent relegation of woman to a secondary position. In patriarchal society, the tradition of making man feel superior and the woman reducing herself almost to an instrument of man’s pleasure as well as other is embedded in their culture, indeed in male psyche. The mind of patriarchal agents is fully replete with sexual desires. They express their erotic desires by directing their eagle eyes towards the sexual organs of the female. Kip as a patriarch observes a woman with his erotic sense:

One day, standing by the banks of the river I noticed a young woman washing apples. No sari, but loose drawstring pants and a loose knee-length robe, a pheran. Her breasts jiggled inside. The pheran was wet around her belly, the salwar was rolled up to the knees. Both feet inside the water and the channel was clear and cold and transparent and very quiet. Now and then she stirred the quietness with the apples and her delicate feet. I observed her standing on the rock. (35)

The sexual gaze of Kip is outcome of biased and inferior mentality of male towards female. Kip as a male, observes her sexually because males in patriarchal society are sexist. They take female as instrument of sexual pleasure according to the will of them. So, women, in patriarchal social system are constantly subject to gender discrimination and differentiated as secondary object, they are just object to fulfill the erotic desire of the male. Kip further repeats such event and says, “I had opened the door thinking the bathroom was

empty, but she was inside, washing herself. She was very beautiful, my cousin, a married woman, and later that day, at college, I could not forget her dark nipples. Drops of water moving” (22).

Women in patriarchal society are looked from above merely as a sexual object or from below as a goddess, they reduced into the object of the male’s desire. The males refuse to perceive women what they desire the letter to be. On the one hand males go for insult and on the other they praise, both kinds of activities of male are to evaluate women as per the will of them. They want to objectify the women. The male wants to see the woman as a sacrificial being that can be a receptacle of various desires. However may be she perceived, she often gets reduced down to an object of the male’s desire. The gaze from below is only the male’s strategy to dissimulate the oppression he inflicts on his female counterpart though his gaze from above. Spivak says, “through a programmed confounding of the two kinds of gaze, the goddesses can be used to dissimulate women’s oppression” (129). Kip also as a patriarch throws two sorts of gaze he praises the women and narrates, “The woman returns to the room and bent low and left the tea tray on a small table. This time she made a somewhat prolonged eye contact with me. Her face was very fair. Eyes could blue, lips, the colour of apples.” (37).

This historical novel *Chef* provides vivid imageries of the conflict between India and Pakistan and its impact over the innocent women. The conflict in Kashmir dates to the partition of India in 1947. The State of Jammu and Kashmir was at this time majority Muslim but with a Hindu ruler, and it was unclear whether it would accede to Pakistan or India. Its eventual accession to India became a matter of dispute between the two countries, with both India and

Pakistan claiming ownership of Kashmir. After a brief war in 1947-48, Kashmir was divided between Pakistan and India administered territories. Around one third of the territory has since been administered by Pakistan, with the remainder administered by India, including Kashmir Valley, which has a strong Muslim majority.

Siachen has witnessed sporadic armed clashes between India and Pakistani forces since April, 1 1984 when the Indian army carried out a clandestine operation and established permanent posts at the Siachen glacier, since then the Indian tricolor has flown over Siachen. An upset and agitated Pakistani force launched a fierce attack to dislodge the Indian troops. The longest running armed conflict between the regular armies in the present century, the Siachen conflict has resulted in thousands of casualties from both sides.

Perhaps it symbolizes distrust between India and Pakistan. Since Siachen is in Kashmir, it also symbolizes Indo-Pak battle over the valley. For India control of Siachen is of key strategic importance allowing the Indian army to dominate the heights and over look the Pakistan-China highway. Pakistan believing that Siachen should be part of its territory is also keen to control the heights for the very same reason, besides of course linking it to the overall dispute over Kashmir. Whatever may be the reality, the bottom line is that the human and economic costs of sustaining more than two decade long bloody conflict over the possession of the geographically remote and climatically inhospitable glacier continues to bleed both Pakistan and India dry.

This novel was written in this historical background, in any conflict women are more victimized than male and they are obliged to live by collection different sorts of bruised experiences. In this ground reality, the writer has

directed his eye to pick out the condition of innocent women who had faced the victim of conflict during the time of partition violence and its aftermath. Irem is representative figure victimization in the conflict of Kashmir. She has been arrested by the Indian military force and taken to the custody with the charge of the Pakistani detective. But she was innocent woman who had been escaped from her home to commit suicide. She says:

It was sunny October morning, she told us and there was taste of bitter almonds in my mouth and suddenly I knew what I was going to do. I walked to the high rock by the river, and jumped in. before I jumped I saw a vision of angles and prayed to Khuda to please kill me. Now I am being punished by him for wanting to commit khud-qushi. (139)

These lines uttered by Irem show that she had jumped over the river with the purpose of suicide but she has been saved by Indian military force. She narrates, "I did not drown. Instead I floated down the river to the Indian side, where I was fished out by a border guard. I told the guard that I was from border-cross and that I was not a rebel. "Where is your passport and visa?" He asked me, (139). This event provides clear picture of the condition of the women during the time of conflict. Irem as an innocent woman has been asked about passport and visa. These derogative questions are asked to humiliate her as a female.

Irem as a woman has been played as a doll in the hand of predominantly masculinist society. In the camp, she curses her fate by drinking her own tear, the cruel behave done upon her is illustrated through the narration of Kip:

Then I heard the forced, convulsive laughter. I raised my eyes and observed: they had shaved off her hair. She broke out laughing

before she wept. Like a child. Why did they shave off her hair? I asked myself. Why did we shave her head? My eyes, too, welled up. Me, wearing very long hair, and this woman mourning the loss of her hair. (155)

Such animalistic behavior done upon an innocent woman is sufficient to understand the pathetic and poignant condition of the women who are victimized by the hand of the patriarchal custodians. Irem cannot endure hardship and distress and loses her sense so, sometimes laughs and weeps. This condition of Irem is just representative events, there are myriad of such events where women have lost their husband and obliged to bear the helpless life and they are also exploited sexually.

Women in patriarchal society do not get justice because they do not have agency to speak, they are just sabotaged in the bottom rungs of the social ladder. They are tied in the shackles of patriarchal norms and values. They do not get any option except bowing in the feet of oppressive patriarchy. Irem as a female creature has been raped by General Sahib and she bears a child but at the same time she is forced to abort the child. She is frequently given pressure for the abortion. In this helpless condition she also cannot be accepted by her family so, she wants to quit her life, "I am damaged, she said. Khuda is punishing me, she said, for my sins. Why did I not die? I should have died. It should have solved all troubles. I am not going to commit any more sins" (210). These utterances of Irem are brushed after being unable to bear the further tortures. Though General has made her pregnant but she is obliged to realize that it was her sin. It is the patriarchy that gave her that sort of heart breaking tortures.

In this situation, she loses her social respect and charged from everywhere that she is not good woman. Patriarchal agents regard her as a demon, they do not pay:

Any attention to the people like Irem. People like her do not matter. Damaged people like her do not matter at all. Even when they leave the hospitals, they remain sick. Even when they leave prisons, they remain trapped. Their sickness is being alive. There is crime is that they continue to exist. (216)

As it clear from the lines above that the patriarchal agents are victimizing to the innocent woman. They impose their authority and vend their anger upon her because she has no agency of her own to free herself from the shackles of chronological linear time. She is treated as if she is an animal. It is patriarchal society that treats woman as a creature of having immanent position. Though Irem has been victimized by sexual predators but there is no one to speak for her. It is obligation of the female that they have to bear any discrimination by remaining silent.

In the Kashmir conflict, females were facing dreadful condition because they were doubly marginalized, once they are marginalized that they could assert their identity on the other they had faced the situation of aloneness. Rubiya as a daughter of General feels aloneness; she does not get freedom of choice and obliged to remain within the four walls of the house. In this condition, she says, “papa, I am trying to commit suicide, she shout from her room” (51). Her mother also had done suicide because she could not get any space in male dominated society, she had just become a servant of her husband. Her act of suicide is narrated by her daughter Rubiya, “she told the ayah that her mother actually

committed suicide” (51). In this connection, Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her book *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* writes, “being female we all are oppressed” (112).

In patriarchal society, women are pressed down and they are pushed towards the corner of the society. They are taken as creature of beautifying and coquetting so as to win the heart of males. The patriarchal agents count them as emotional being and define them according to the will of them, Kip as a man of carrying patriarchal ideologies valorizes the women’s beauty:

The beauty of Kashmiri women, sir, overrated. Real beauty belongs to Indian women, especially from the coastal regions, as you very rightly said. Coastal women are real. They have real features. They get crowned Miss World and Miss Universe also. Our Aishwarya Rai, sir! Kashmiri women here, have delicate beauty, the kind of beauty hard for Indian women to match. (51)

These above lines illustrate the function of males in patriarchal society who just ponder on evaluating women on the basis of outer structure; they do not evaluate them on the basis of inner talent. Because they think that women do not have brain so, they just judge them externally. It is biased nature of patriarchal agents towards female as Mary Wollstonecraft in her essay “A Vindication of the Rights of Women” states:

Everything they see or hear serves to fix impressions, calls forth emotions, and associates, ideas that give a sexual character to their mind. False notions of beauty and delicacy stop the growth of their limbs and produce a sickly soreness, rather than delicacy of organs

. . . this cruel association of the ideas, which everything conspires to twists into all their habits of thinking. (395-6)

Wollstonecraft, in these lines, claims that women in patriarchy are undermined by the sexual looks of the male. All males are directing their eyes towards the delicacy of the female organs that view women as a sexual object according to the will of them. The mind of patriarch is fully replete with sexual desires so, they reduce women as sexual object.

In patriarchal society women are presented as if they believe in superstitious beliefs like, witchcraft, caste, magic and incantation etc. In this novel too, the grandmother of Kichen has been presented derogatively as if she believes in traditional caste system:

Grandfather is married to an old woman who was a bad cook and she believed in caste. She made it very clear that she would die if a low-caste ever cooked for her. One day the old woman was unwell and a low-caste woman cooked in the kitchen, and the moment grandfather revealed the identity of the cook, the old woman died.
(76)

Here, grandmother is presented as an orthodox woman believing in traditional caste system. This act of presenting her as a superstitious woman is tactful way of dehumanizing the innocent women.

Hence, in patriarchal society women are victimized in one or another way, they cannot assert their identity in the vast horizon of patriarchal domination. They have become victim in the hands of patriarchal custodians. This suppression, oppression and domination on females suggest that Indian society during the time of Kashmir conflict was so much cruel towards the women. The

sexual predators were rampant to play on the feelings of innocent women who just wanted to quench their sexual thirst; they had been played as a doll in the hands of patriarchs. In this regard, one can excavate that during the time of partition violence and Kashmir conflict, women were sabotaged from the mainstream social politics; they were marginalized from every angles of their lives having downtrodden and subaltern position.

Female Resistance in *Chef*

The textual evidences analyzed above clarify the fact that the novel *Chef* by Jaspreet Singh carries the tone of women's oppression of patriarchal society during the time of partition violence and Kashmir conflict. But, the research does not only intend to dramatize the issue of female subjugation, along with this it aims to bring forth the tone of protest and sense of resistance among the females against the dominant patriarchy. The then Indian society has created binary between males and females as it believed that female are full of lacunas. Females were merely taken as a pleasing creature, coquette, with no other intellectual skills except caring and praising for their own beauty and wondering how to win male's heart. Patriarchal society had gripped females to chains. Males enjoyed freedom and supremacy whereas females were obliged to remain indoors under physical and psychological exploitation. Females had no language to express their pain, agonies and sufferings. The melancholy and indeterminacy faced by females arises immense pity. Indian patriarchal society had annihilated the existence, identity, position and self-respect of females. Males dominated every part of social sphere. They created certain truths about women as men were in power. When a person or organization holds power, he creates certain type of discourse as Foucault argues, "Ideology and discourse is the product of power"

(1). Gradually, those truths are assimilated in the culture and become a part of their life. In addition, the females who are under power internalize such truths as knowledge. This type of silent domination by the consent of the ruled is what Gramsci calls hegemony; “a culture of endurance, the consent of the ruled to be ruled: ruled themselves agree to be ruled in hegemony” (32). This is the basic way through which patriarchy holds a tight grip on the society.

Similarly, patriarchal society due to its contradictory expectations had devastating effects on female psyche. Females were seen as a parasite that could do nothing on their own. Devaluation of female prevailed in this society. They do not get the freedom of choice to make their life free from the shackles of patriarchal agents.

Despite the then existing strong patriarchal doctrine, Jaspreet Singh wrote this novel *Chef* by breaking the Indian patriarchal conventions of writing coherent fiction full of harmony by showing the superiority of male. Writing against the grain, Jaspreet Singh in this play has constructed a story with incoherent plot structure giving more emphasis to the female voice. In this play we find the sense of women resistance. Structurally the play does not fit into the parameter of Indian trend of writing rather tends to go against of it. Hence, the tone of female protest is buried under the text and the primary objective of my research is to excavate the undercurrents of the tone of protest and to foreground it in my research. Ultimately Jaspreet Singh's endeavor to represent 'truth' rather than 'reality', challenges the patriarchal expectations of women and different vision of womanhood.

We can excavate the undercurrents of the sense of protest through the observation of women characters like, Irem, Rubiya, colonel's wife and others.

These characters go for resistance somewhere in subtle and manifest level. According to Nicole Loraux in her book *The Rope and the Sword* “the only one to take flight are those who are too feminine, but those who go against the males are menlike, and rebellious females” (242). She further states that those women who go against the existing patriarchal norms of patriarchy by tearing the veil of illusion, they are rebellious women. The way Nichole defines is the way colonel’s wife does. She breaks the veil of patriarchy and resists against by sleeping with other men, Kip narrates, colonel’s “wife was interested in other men and she was going to sleep with them despite the marriage” (47). As a woman of having courageous mentality, she challenged the patriarchal norms that women only have to sleep with their husband.

In patriarchal society, women face various sorts of discrimination, they have to bow under the feet of patriarchy, and this is general assumption of patriarchs. But on the contrary of this assumption, the women characters in this novel go for breaking the hierarchy between male and female. They have claimed their own agency to assert independent identity of their own. Rubiya, daughter of General Sahib decides to marry with Muslim boy though she is Hindu. According to rule of Hindu orthodox patriarch, women have not right to choose their life partner. But Rubiya has not only chosen her life partner, she also has gone one step ahead and “decided to marry with a Muslim. Not just a Muslim but one from the other side of the border” (6). This radical action of Rubiya shows that she has torn the veil to patriarchal norms while choosing her life partner.

The radical feminists think that texts values, norms, laws etc. are already obsessed by patriarchy so; feminist critics should establish feminine elements

which subvert the patriarchy. Ruthven K.K. in her book *Feminist literary Studies: An Introduction* says, “Women are not inferior by nature but made inferior by culture, they are articulated into inferiority” (45). They argue that men benefit from women’s location in the home in several ways. Men have monopoly on the valued activities in the society and they are granted extra power. They complain that gender is socially constructed and that its construction has enforced unequal relations of power. She further defines that the words feminist or feminism are political labels indicating support for the aim of the new movement which emerged in the late 1900. She claims that women are not inferior as said by patriarchs; they can perform their radical action by analyzing the situation.

The way radical feminists claim is the way Irem as a revolutionary women performs her radical action. She does not follow the order of patriarchs. When she is raped and made pregnant by General and she is given pressure to abort the child. In this serious condition too, she takes bold decision to give birth of her child. This action of Irem is narrated by Kip:

Next day at the same time, I knocked on the door and asked her the same-to-same question. But, she said no, I urged her to change her mind. The nurse would do it without telling anyone. The nurse will make you normal again. But, she said no. she wanted to keep the child. She told me something women normally tell only their husbands. She told me the baby was kicking inside her belly. The baby was crying and asking her to give her a name. (209)

The above lines are sufficient to read the mind of Irem who has done protest against the patriarchal domination. She has turned her back to the pressure of Kip

to abort and firmly took her stand to give birth of her child naming with “Naseem, which means the morning breeze” (232).

It is worldly accepted claim that the extreme domination invites resistance. The feminist theorists also claim that females should go for resistance if patriarchy imposes its authoritative power upon them. In this connection, Chandra Talpade Mohanty asserts for “a unity of women” (25). so as to challenge the patriarchal domination. She further says that the resistance is a necessary phenomena for women to assert their identity in the vast horizon of patriarchal domination. The way she defines is the way Irem goes for protest against the masculinist domination. She tries to kill General because he had raped her and made her pregnant. Such revenge motif action of Irem is narrated by Kip:

The thing in her hand look like a vegetable, but it was not a vegetable, as I discovered later. It was a grenade made in Pakistan. But she did not throw the grenade. She changed her mind. I saw her struggle. Her hand touched her heart and she turned back as if she was looking at the house for one last time and disappeared behind the plane trees. (242)

This action performed by Irem is her revenge motif attitude towards patriarchal system where women are merely taken as object to be possessed or consumed as per the will of patriarchal agents. When they play in the holy river of women they kick them as the bee kicks the flower after finishing its nectar. But the assumption of patriarch is challenged by Irem through her resisting attitude. Irem could blast the grenade but she thought the future of Rubiya who was going to be

orphan if she kills General Sahib, “she could not imagine making that child an orphan” (243).

Simone de Beauvoir holds, "Though the term masculine and feminine are merely artificial, the relation of two sexes is quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and neutral as indicated by the common use of man to designate only the negative" (123).

Beauvoir opines that there is no difference between male and female. This binary is created by society for its own benefit. It's merely an artificial distinction created by males in order to have a privileged position in the society. But society comprises of males and females. Both of them carry their own significance. Such artificial distinction is subverted by the action of Irem and Rubiya. Patriarchy always assumes that women should follow the order of the male and they should be immanent towards patriarchs but such assumption is subverted by Irem. She becomes indifference towards the male, when patriarchs ask her question, at this moment, instead of replying them she “raises to her feet, and without paying attention to us walks slowly towards the wall and stands before the big black-and-white photo” (137).

Irem as a woman of having resisting mentality penetrates her protest through her silent activity. She remains silent when army officers ask her unnecessary question at this moment she does, “no response” (137), “she remains silence” (138). In this situation they try to make her laugh but she says “the enemy doesn’t laugh” (137). It means she is evaluating them as her enemy. The action to take patriarchal agents as an enemy is also a sort of protest that is performed by Irem. While defining the resisting concept of oppressed female, Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her book *Feminism without Borders* again says:

The homogeneity of women as a group is, in turn, predicted on a definition of the experiences of oppression where difference can only be understood as male/female. The analytic elision between the experience of oppression and the opposition to it illustrates an aspect of feminist osmosis thesis: being female and feminist are one and the same; we are all oppressed and hence we all resist. Politics and ideology as self conscious struggles, and choices necessarily get written of such an analysis. (112)

The above lines illustrate female bonding on the ground of their struggle against the exploitation and the experience of victimization in the predominantly masculinist society. It further clarifies that when women are oppressed, they perform the action for resistance to break the patriarchal base.

All the systematic orders of patriarchal society are challenge by the action of the Irem. She does everything opposite that patriarchy assumes. Such actions of Irem are said by Kip:

Irem would not sit on the sofa or in the chair, she sat on the carpet. So, I spread a white calico sheet on the carpet and transferred the dishes there, and that is how it all began. She closed her eyes and lifted her palms and said a small prayer to Allah and started eating slowly, then picked up speed. Suddenly she remembered she was not alone in the room and slowed down again. She used her left hand to eat, and once or twice licked her fingers. (138)

Irem as a woman of having resisting mentality does not sit on the chair and sofa eats through her left hand, such activities prove that she is silently protesting against the predominantly masculinist society. She also wants to die rather than

to be puppet in the hands of patriarchal agents. Such thinking of death is also a sort of challenge to the patriarchy. So, she prays to “Khuda to kill” (139) her. During the time of persecution process too, she gives opposite answer. She is asked, “there are many varieties of Muslims? Shia, the Sunni and the Sufi, what kind of Muslim are you?” (140). In the reaction of this question, she replied “homeless” (140). This action also can be taken as a protest over the patriarchal domination.

In Katrak’s opinion, female body is not only the site of oppression but the weapon for resistance as well. They always tend to seek to have an autonomous connection with their bodies and communities, for which they have to resist against domination and they forcibly assert their own identity. Katrak in her *Politics of Female Body* writes, “in resisting they often use their female bodies via speech, silence, starvation or illness. At times, resistances result in murder or suicide” (378), the price they pay to relocate their mind and self. She further defines that women go for resistance in the condition that patriarchy imposes its order forcefully. The way Katrak defines is the way Irem has resisted over the patriarchal domination. Time and again she has taken bold decision to give birth of her child. She also resists through her silent activity and demand her death. As a protest over the patriarchal domination, “she had jumped into river to end her life” (139). Suicide is also a symbol of female protest, Katrak claims that suicide is also an alternative way to be free from the shackles of patriarchal domination, Irem does the same thing as Katrak says, she wants to “commit khud-qushi” (139).

As a Third World Feminist, Chandra Talpade Mohanty claims “Different kinds of collectivities in order to organize against repressive systems of rule” (4).

She further says that the courageous action should be performed to dismantle the hierarchy between male and female and that action should be directed to break the veil of illusion that women are immanent to the men. She says “the first project is one of deconstructing and dismantling; the second is one of building and constructing” (17). As said by Monathy, Rubiya as a rebellious female turns her back to her father’s order and moves to Pakistan for her marriage to a Muslim boy, Kripal narrates, “several times my hand tried to reach out of her, but her bus kept moving further and further, receding into that forbidden land, until it became a little black dot” (246). This action performed by Rubia bears the undercurrent of the sense of protest somewhere in subtle and manifest level. As a Hindu woman, she is going to marry with Muslim boy by crossing the border is her radical action to challenge the predominantly masculinist society. It is a process of freedom of choice.

In patriarchal society, there is biased thinking that women should be immanent, they are breadbaker and should be humble, meek, docile, submissive and passive towards the patriarchal authority. But such assumption of patriarchal custodians has been blurred by the progressive action of Rubiya and Irem. It is great jolt to the patriarchal society. It shows that the action performed by Rubia and Irem is progressive leap breaking through the veil of status-quo mentality of patriarchal agents. In this connection, Judith Lorber in her book *Paradoxes of Gender* asserts; "Resistance and rebellion are the forces that manage to alter gender norms and push the limits of established gender roles" (115).

Feminism is not only endeavored to pick out the issue of female exploitation, it also tend to focus on resistance and protest over the patriarchal domination. They assert that female should seek their independent identity

through the radical action. In this connection Beauvoir writes “ONE is not born, rather becomes a woman” (295). A sociologist Judith Lorber asserts:

It is not a fixed category but an ever-evolving product of culture and society. Gender is something everyone “does” without thinking about it or being conscious about its implications; it is such a naturalized part of everyday life that unless someone or something breaks our expectations unnoticed (113)

The above lines provide the hints that the gender role is created by patriarchal social structure, so, it should be reconfigured. The reconfiguration of gender role is possible through the radical action of the female. The way Lorber defines is the way Irem asserts her identity through her radical action and finally became able to establish her own identity. She becomes able to return to her homeland. Kip narrates about her, “I am really here to tell you about Irem. Irem and her daughter are back in Pakistan now. After many years the Pakistani authorities allowed them to return home” (239). Irem’s return to her homeland from the eagle palm of Indian patriarchal society is her victory over patriarchal domination through the means of resistance.

To wrap up, the novel *Chef* by Jaspreet Singh continues Indian tendency of depicting females as the subjugated beings during the time of partition violence and Kashmir conflict that fall victim at the hands of patriarchy. Furthermore, the novel also carries the underlying sense of resistance and the undercurrents of the tone of protest of females against of the reign of the patriarchy in the then society. Thus, by bringing forth the sense of resistance and the voice of protest of females against of sexist society, this research intends to create their own space, establish their own existence, and relocate their own self in order to move towards the centre from margin to be an essential part of the mainstream.

II. Quest for Women's Space

This research on Jaspreet Singh's *Chef*, the conventional patriarchal notion of males being superior, active and strong has been put under assault in order to assert the female identity. The structure of sexual discrimination created by males for the subjugation of females has been questioned by bringing the strong voice of the marginalized females to the mainstream. The contemporary social reality of women's situation and men's point of view towards them in the Indian society at the time of Partition violence and Kashmir Conflict is highlighted in this research as well as the tone of protest for the misbehavior of males towards females has also been foregrounded.

The novel gives a glimpse of how females were perceived and treated by the males in the Indian society during the time of conflict and how females dared to fight back the discriminatory practices against them. The novel also highlighted the various modes of women subjugation and the underlying tone of protest of females against of this subjugation. We can broadly see the different forms of images of females in the text. Sometimes ideal and submissive and sometimes protesting. At first as a submissive, meek and docile nature, Rubiya and Irem are hegemonized in front of the patriarchal custodians but later they have expressed their forceful protest against the patriarchal norms by challenging the prevalent sense of patriarchal domination. Although most of the events in the novel have been presented to sideline the women towards the margins by depicting them as honest, submissive and the follower of traditional social norms, yet there are the places where females have been offensive towards masculinity. This sense of periodical resistance suggests the gradual progress of women towards searching their identity in order to assert their own space in the

society. The ideal of womanhood in Indian society was considered to be the combination of sacrifice, care, devotion and purity. However, the female characters in the novel *Chef* have made their daring attempts to counter such patriarchal notion of ideal womanhood somewhere in subtle and manifest level.

Actually, there is the high degree of socio-cultural inequality prevalent in the society regarding the females. The novel too reveals this fact. Nevertheless, this research intends to dismantle this kind of pre-existing binaries created between males and females. The research nourishes the subordinated female characters in order to make them assertive and strong willed who struggle hard to stand up in the gender-segregated environment with their head held high. The research has empowered the voice of the voiceless female characters to bring them to the mainstream that are sabotaged to the margins due to the dominant patriarchy. The inaudible voice of females is made audible in this project for to counter the prevailing patriarchal attitudes.

Firstly, this project foregrounds the issues of female subjugation and subordination due to patriarchal domination in the novel *Chef*. And secondly, it excavates and brings forth the undercurrents of the tone of protest and the sense of resistance against of their oppression and marginalization. Thus, by bringing forth the sense of resistance and the voice of protest of females against of sexist society, this research intends to create their own space, establish their own existence, and relocate their own self in order to move towards the centre from margins to be an essential part of the mainstream.

So, in the novel *Chef* by Jespreet Singh female characters especially Irem and Rubiya have been subjugated by the crooked patriarchal society. But because of their strong domination, they are ready to protest to the patriarchal society or

male dominated society of the then Indian society. During the conflict between two states, especially female are in the shadow and they are used for the different purpose and fulfillment for the males. Irem and Rubiya have proved that strong suffering needs protest and they have protested from the different ways to challenge the patriarchal society.

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