

## **I. Representation of the Troubled Man-Woman Relationship in Preethi Nair's**

### *100 Shades of White*

This research explores the issue of gender trauma encountered by an Indian immigrant woman in London. With an intense expectation of getting happiness from her marriage with an Indian business man, Nalini goes to London with her husband but she is betrayed by him. Betrayal of Nalini by her husband weakens her traumatically. Anxiety attacks, evil warning of being followed by an unknown man and suicidal tendency jointly trouble Nalini's life. Increasingly, she feels that she has no control over her life. The additional burden of rearing and educating her two children further puts burden on her. Since she is mentally weakened and psychologically exhausted, she cannot concentrate on her jobs. She is, as a result, dismissed from one job to the other. In this way, the continuous dismissal, harassment of immigrant workers in the factory and extreme self hatred defeat Nalini traumatically.

Apart from these disastrous changes in her life, she has to face several other treacherous acts of male arrogance. Having seen her alone without her husband, most of the so-called helpful males of the then society come to help her. But their polite and helpful acts are the mere false acts. They try to exploit her sexually by giving the false hope of employment. In this way, one after the other Nalini goes on facing horrible situations which ultimately inflict traumatic agony in her. Low payment in her job, surprise assault by sexual predators, discriminations which she finds in London and mounting economic burden to rear and educate children collectively affects Nalini's psyche. Despite her heroic efforts to handle her damaged life, she is affected by the several cases of vulnerability, psychic disintegration and self-resigned

attitude. Largely patriarchal treachery and anti-immigrant attitude are crucial factors that put Nalini's life to the traumatic situation.

The main character Nalini happens to fall prey to several disastrous situations resulting in trauma. She has to encounter so many things that she finally feels broken hearted and paralyzed. The adverse working condition in London, a shock of betrayal, additional economic burden to rear and educate children injure her. The more she struggles to work hard to gain control of her life, the more harmful situations she would have to face. As a result she turns out to be a victim of gender trauma. Telling lie, preventing her children from going wandered, living a bold and assertive life are some of the ways developed by Nalini to survive in the hostile world governed by the cruel principles of capitalism and indifferent patriarchal system. But she fails to achieve her purpose since she is traumatized.

In London Nalini expects lots of happiness and care from her husband. But contrary to her expectation, her husband betrays her and elopes with another white woman. He leaves none of economic resources and assets for Nalini and his children. In her husband's absence, Nalini is compelled to rear and educate her children. In the strange land, Nalini feels overburdened with unnecessary tension. In the face of helplessness, economic insecurity and pain of betrayal, Nalini suffers from extreme psychological shock, and torture. How can she feel confident and strong enough to bear the parental responsibility in the face of devastation and disintegration of marital tie and family?

The major objective of this research is to identify the factors and circumstances that are responsible to make traumatic injury in a woman who is forced to achieve her daily bread and fulfill her motherly responsibility. After being betrayed by her husband, Nalini struggles to act and decide reasonably but her

choices and activities are further prevented by the attack of gender trauma. This research is concerned with how an Indian woman living with her husband in England faces betrayal in her marital life. Following her betrayal by her husband, Nalini has to face burden of family responsibility. Even the working conditions in London do not inspire and encourage her. The relation between Nalini and the working conditions created extreme pressures in her life. The more adversity and disaster overpower her, the more traumatized and tortured she feels. Only this aspect of this novel is focused. The rest of the matter is ignored intentionally.

Nair has her own place in the history of south Asian literature. She has opened a new channel to take Indian voice to the world of western metropolitan readership. *100 Shades of White* is the leading work of Nair. *The Color of Love*, a fictionalized account of the whole adventure dramatizes all the possibilities of failure of love. The greatest irony probably is that for all the double life business. *Gypsy Masala* is the brilliant fusion of Indian passion for seclusion and the western desire for self projection. Caught in the conflict between these two distinct passions, Arbindo, the gypsy, loses his strength and identity. At last he has no option other than weeping and crying pathetically. *Gypsy Malsala* is the exemplary work of Nair which displays her artistic maturity and western familiarity. Meena Mukherjee compares and contrasts Nair's literary difference with that of other leading Indian writers. She argues that there are strong female protagonists in the novels of all those writers with whom Meena compares Nair. Mukherjee briefly reveals the following insight:

Nair has, like Chitra Banerjee, Diva Karum and Bharati Mukherjee, attempted a tale of mothers and daughters, although having devoted a significant segment to the mother's lie. Maya is a much shallower, loosely sketched figure. The handling of the grandmother's life is poor,

thinly outlined and muddled. Even Maya's journey back to India for a reunion with Raul's family is more a travelogue. It highlights how alienated the western educated Maya has become in mentality and outlook to her Indian roots. (14)

The second generation of Indian immigrants is increasingly different from the first generation. Therefore, the second generation shows less respect towards their Indian cultural root. The first generation of Indian immigrants is more focused on their native culture and tradition. On the contrary, the second generation of Indian immigrants acts and decides in a different way. But to show the gap between the first and the second generation is not the issue of fundamental concern.

Atul Agnihotri is the leading critic of Preethi Nair. He focuses on the core narrative content of this novel while developing his judgmental attitude. The deliberately told lie is the central point round which the main plot of this novel moves. With this regard, Atul Agnihotri makes the following remarks:

Not knowing the truth about her father leads Maya to think in a certain way about her life, her relationships and her mother's relationships. The characters of Nalini and Maya were well-developed and the contrast between the warm, fragrant, familiar life in India and the cold, plain, foreign way of life in England was made very clear. Maya, her mother Nalini, and her brother Satchin have left a carefree life in India to come to England. When Maya's father disappears, leaving only deceit and debt behind, they are left to fend for themselves in a strange, damp land. Maya, though, doesn't know of her father's betrayal. (31)

Agnihotri argues that Nalini is determined to preserve her children's pride. That is why she goes to the extent of telling lies. She tells them that their father died in an

accident. As a consequence, their struggle to make a life begins. Whole realities are built on this lie. But even a white lie cannot remain hidden forever and when the truth resurfaces, it changes everything. The title refers to that lie — that husband/father Raul dies a hero's death rescuing a young boy from the path of an oncoming car. The truth is that Raul had a second family in America and deserted Nalini and the children in London.

According to Neera Alexandra, Preethi Nair's *100 Shades of White* had an interesting title and a charming cover suggesting the novel about the clash of Indian and European cultures and the problems of immigrants. Neera maintains that the fresh issue of cultural clash reign at the heart of this novel. She puts forward the following view:

*100 Shades of White* tells the story of Nalini, a young mother from Kerala, who moves to London with two small children, Maya and Satchin. She is urged to emigrate by her husband, Raul, who is a successful businessman in England. The first chapter, narrated by Maya, one of the central characters of the story, full of strange syntax, uninteresting and poorly written. As a result of quite improbable turn of events, Nalini is left alone without any means to survive. (26)

Alexandra says that Nalini is not dramatically convincing as the major character of this novel. She has wild sense of establishing her life. At the same time she seems to be fragile and breakable even in the face of challenge. With heroic effort and lots of good luck she becomes a successful businesswoman and a happy wife. Maya is more of a seeker, she is a bit lost, does not know what she wants from life. She is quite silly, in fact.

Hazra Sudeshna is rather interested in showing the weakness of this novel. But she does not decline to call this novel as the remarkable piece of diasporic writing. Sudeshna argues that the author has not made effort to distinguish between the voice of mother and daughter who are equally affected by feminism. Sudeshna states in the following way:

The novel is much less cheerful than the cover would indicate and far less about the differences between East and West. But once readers adjust their expectations accordingly, there is still much enjoyment to be found between these pages, especially for those who enjoy reading about the immigrant experience. There is some difficulty in separating the voices of Maya and Nalini, especially in the beginning of the novel but that becomes easier as the novel progresses. Overall, this had a few problems structurally. It belongs to the category of Indian diaspora writing. (38)

Without having solid knowledge about the Indian culture and family, it would be challenging to make sense out of Nalini's struggle to survive in the metropolitan cities of the west. But the striking aspect of this novel is the bold and superior rational female characters who love to handle the suffering of their lives singlehandedly. In this regard, Sudeshna's viewpoint sounds highly contextual and identifiable. But the diasporic quality of this text carries weight.

The crucial role of family and forgiveness is projected in this novel. Atul Sen argues that depiction of family and its significance is the distinctive feature of any writer who writes about his or her country from the metropolitan location. Atul Sen puts forward the following view:

The cooking metaphor is so overused that, at times, the novel threatens to turn into a recipe-cum-therapy-book. Nair seems unable to mention any foodstuff without ascribing mystical properties to it. None the less, she writes evocatively about childhood, and there are passages of tight and lyrical immediacy. A moving description of bereavement, in which Nalini tells us Grief brings people to a place where they realize that nothing really belongs to them, packs a powerful punch in this otherwise pleasantly readable book about family, forgiveness and the nature of truth. (27)

Nalini happens to be compassionate no matter how hard her life might be. Experience taught her bitter things. Her life is full of ups and downs. Nonetheless, she overcomes all the hurdles of her life with entire confidence in her inner strength. Unlike her husband, she does her best to protect the integrity of her family. In fact she seems to be a typical figure that is on the moral path of rendering good for evil. She is the kind of lady who thinks more about the welfare of her children rather than herself. Her activities are oriented only towards her children's future.

Amrit Salwal points out how marital relationship is hindered by religious conflict. He says that Maya's maternal grandmother is not in a comfortable position to relate her with the family. Since she comes from the Hindu family, her viewpoint often clashes with that of the other family members. Salwal makes the following arguments:

The story alternates between Nalini and Maya's points of view, beginning and ending with Maya. Ironically, though, Nalini's story is more compelling. Abandoned early in life by her father, she then suffers a similar fate at the hands of her duplicitous husband, Raul.

Nalini struggles to bring her children up by doing the one thing she has always done brilliantly - cooking. Meals, though, become a battleground between mother and daughter, with Maya rejecting Nalini while rejecting her lovingly prepared Indian dishes for hamburgers and fish-fingers. (52)

The conflict over food reflects a deeper battle over the truth. When the father abandons his family, Nalini tells her children he is dead. In the foreign country where different kinds of people come to meet one another, the religious belief no longer operates actively. All the religious and cultural biases disappear in the alien land. But the grandmother is not prompt to use this benefit of living a diasporic life in England. On the contrary, the second generation or the forthcoming generation is quick to notice the advantage of the cosmopolitan situation.

Anusha Iyer views this novel in the light of a woman's struggle for self respect and survival in alien land. The woman herself is in difficult position. Circumstances put her in helpless condition. But she does not feel disheartened. Rather she continues to go to explore new possibility from the growing frustration and sterility of life. Anusha writes about this aspect of the novel. She delivers the following remarks:

The novel takes you from the beautiful, conservative Kerala to the bustling Mumbai and then to the faraway, alien land London. In the later part of the book, Maya visits Kerala and Mumbai again and finds out the Truth, thereby completing a full circle. The narration of the story is quite interesting. It starts with Maya's perspective and alternates with Nalini's. But there is a natural flow to the story. The final chapters of the novel bring out the best in the author as with these

she succeeds in leaving a lasting impression on the readers and brings out her insight into human nature. (39)

The abandonment of Nalini by Raul is an example of how vulnerable women are in the society governed by patriarchal values. Sudden loss of conjugal happiness is likely to hinder her psychic condition. Satchin and Maya enjoy a carefree life in India with their mother Nalini and father Raul who is frequently travelling on business trips. Unexpectedly, he sends for his wife and children to join him in London. However, he ruthlessly abandons them and leaves them penniless. Nalini lies to the children that their father died in an accident. Her fight to upkeep the self-respect and survival in an alien culture is the central theme of the novel.

Kiran Ghosh is interested in reflecting on the depiction of Indian immigrants in Nair's novel. After making a serious reading of this novel, Kiran Ghosh arrives at the conclusion that Nair's characters in this novel are not similar to other stereotypical immigrant characters. Her characters are creative and extraordinary. Ghosh makes the following observation:

*100 Shades of White* has a real plot and proper characters. The story is about a mother and daughter, Nalini and Maya, who take turns narrating. When Maya is a child, the family immigrates to England. Maya's father walks out, forcing the family to move to London's East End, where Maya is taunted as a 'Paki' and Nalini works in a garment factory. It's not exactly original and Nair's description of the same events from two points of view makes the story drag. But unlike the apathetic heroine of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, Nair's immigrants are creative and savvy at making the most of a bad situation, rather than wallowing in it. (47)

The immigrants go to the west with some aspirations. They struggle in the metropolitan areas. They have to face the pain of being detached from their homeland. On the other hand, they would have to encounter anti-immigrants attitude of English fellows. That is why the characters find themselves in terrible condition. Even in the midst of several obstacles, Nair's characters are creative. They work hard to make their lost dignity and dream come true.

Bhavya Roy compares Nalini's rise with the rise of a phoenix that arises from head of ashes. Phoenix is immortal bird. Its suffering is parallel to eternity. It is not clear on what ground Roy compares Nalini's rise with the eternal rise of phoenix. But it can be understood that the story of her success is no less appealing than that of a phoenix. Roy makes the following remarks about the eternally appealing story of Nalini:

The mother's life resembles a Phoenix rising from the ashes, more than once. The daughter has her own struggle to deal with and her own difficult decisions. All of it is set against the backdrop of the abundant variety of flavors found in Indian food. The food and the spices are described with a kind of passion that enables the reader to almost smell and taste them. The story is very beautifully written and the fact that it alternates between the points of view of the mother and the daughter makes it a very complete and comprehensive narrative. (61)

According to Roy, this novel shows how two different people see the same situation differently. Nair is concerned with how characters deal with the same pain differently. Tactfully Nair suggests how misunderstandings interrupt the delicate balance of human relationships. It also demonstrates the well known but sometimes ignored fact that parents are always there for their children. When the children doubt themselves

or their parents, sometimes the child's love for the parent may not be quite as unconditional.

Paul Sharrad is another prominent critics who has extensively speaks about the different stories and other fragmented writings of Nair. He puts forward the following views about *100 Shades of White*:

The struggles of the Indian immigrants in England are represented in *100 Shades of White*. The first generation of the Indian immigrants had to work in the low spirit. The first generation of the immigrants had to do the menial work. They worked menially so that their progenies need not do the same level of work. For the better economic prospect, they were ready to do any kind of work. The first generation of the Indian immigrants is torn between despair and hope. But the emerging first generation is excited at the wonderful world that is going to set the wonderful future to them. (27)

Sharrad concludes that the diasporic world of the Indian immigrants in England is viewed from the same angle of hope and despair. The first generation is thankful for choosing the destiny in the alien land. Though it is challenging to live in the diasporic land, at least they have become free from witnessing the conflict, religious disturbance and widespread poverty in their native homeland. But that does not mean they have forgotten about their native culture and heritage. They are sometimes haunted by the painful nostalgic memories.

The researcher makes use of the notion of gender trauma. From the common concept of trauma to the specific notion of gender trauma would be used extensively in this research. The text, *Bearing Witness: Literature of Trauma*, provides the essential ideas of gender trauma. The researcher quotes most of popular gender

trauma theorists and their ideas. The trauma of women is studied in the context of patriarchy, restriction imposed by tradition and the constraints of marital life. Helene Moglen offers a modified feminist argument about the origins, cultural function, and formal structure of the English novel. Moglen contends that the novel principally came into being in order to manage the social and psychological strains of the modern sex-gender system. She shows that the English novel has contained both realistic and fantastic narratives. Tal's exploration of arenas of trauma she has chosen would constitute a strikingly original and valuable contribution to our understanding of trauma. Tal's brilliant idea is that survivors of trauma create a literature of hurt that contributes to the dominant culture's self-understanding. Kali Tal makes us aware that personal narratives about traumatic experiences threaten the larger society because they reveal power relationships and social contradictions. *Worlds of Hurt* makes important contributions to our understanding of cultural politics. Tal's argument about the existence of a separate literature of trauma that crosses generic boundaries is convincing, provocative, and timely.

Although all these critics examined this novel from multiple angles and arrived at various interpretations, none of them dwell upon the gender trauma in *100 Shades of White*. Nalini is profoundly affected by her husband's sudden betrayal. After her husband abandons her ruthlessly, she finds herself landed in difficult circumstance. In the patriarchal society she falls prey to several hazards and pitfalls. She is in dilemma. No fresh impulse to handle her shipwrecked life guides her. She is self-resigned and feels utterly neglected. In factory, she cannot concentrate on work. As a result, she is constantly fired from one job to another. She feels traumatically crushed by the burden of responsibility to rear, feed and educate her children. In addition, she is mocked and discouraged in the different working places where she

gets a job. Having seen her lonely and shipwrecked life, every lustful man tends to harass her sexually and if possible tries to exploit her sexually. Surrounded by all those unexpected ups and downs, Nalini is mentally ruined. She could not think about following the fixed path of determination and dignity. She allows herself to be carried away by the situations that spread in her life. Her difference is not acknowledged by the then patriarchal society. Freedom for her individual choices is very difficult to find to her. In exploring economic opportunities, she is deprived and dispossessed several times.

This thesis has been divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics' views regarding the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of the text by applying the tool of gender trauma. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

## II. Gender Trauma in Nair's *100 Shades of White*

The exploration of the traumatic experience of the major female character Nalini in Preethi Nair's *100 Shades of White* is the major concern of this research. The major character Nalini suffers from several traumatic cases. The betrayal Nalini encounters in her marital life is an example of how patriarchy troubles and traumatizes woman. When Nalini comes to the professional world for the sake of earning her daily bread, she faces other hostile and traumatizing situations which hinder her efforts to impose firm order and system in her individual life. Burden of rearing and protecting children crush her. The harmful and demoralizing working atmosphere in several factories where she worked affects her traumatically. Low payment, discouraging atmosphere in factory, sexual harassment and active forms of prejudices against Indian immigrants push her to the intense condition of traumatic existence.

Nalini is married to a wealthy Indian man of Goa. He is courageous. His sole concern is to increase the financial prospect of his family. Invited by her husband, Nalini comes to London along with her children. In the beginning she was unwilling to leave India since it was her mother land that was very dear to her. But before the invitation of her husband to live with him in London along with the entire family, she finally goes there. She enters London with her children with intense expectation and latent pain. Soon her husband deserts her. She finds that her husband betrays her. He ran away with another woman to America. Once she comes to know that she is betrayed by her husband, she feels shocked and helpless. Her husband left nothing to her so that she could rear and educate her children.

After betrayed and left by her husband in the alien land, Nalini feels broken hearted and shipwrecked. She is haunted by the disastrous failure of her marriage. The

total responsibility of rearing her children comes to her. In the society dominated by patriarchy and chauvinism, women are likely to be traumatized and tormented by the corrupt and excessive sexual desire of their own husband. Being betrayed by her husband is one instance of traumatic attack. Following her husband's disappearance, she decides to take the burden of responsibility on her own shoulders. But she is constantly hindered by the traumatic agony because she loses sense of control and confidence over her changed decision.

After betrayal, Nalini never demonstrates her romantic and cheerful side of her personality. Her repressed traumatic memory compels her to behave in this way. Life taught her a golden and priceless lesson. She is morally strict and bold, often suppressing her desires and dreams for her children. But her boldness and confidence are easily broken by the pervasive effect of repressed traumatic memory. The following lines show how she is traumatized and victimized in the society governed by the selfish desires of males:

Amma picked us up from school. She had a bandage wrapped around her hand, her hair was unbraided and she was wearing a pair of trousers and a light green pullover. She never dressed like that and was always wrapped like a mummy from head to toe in a sari, even covering her head with the final piece of material that remained. So instantly we knew something was wrong. (29)

In the above cited extract, Maya, the daughter of Nalini, calls her mother as Amma. Maya is really proud to have a mother like Nalini who sacrificed many things of her life for the sake of the satisfaction and career of her son and daughter. But Nalini is unable to act the way her daughter and son intend to see their mother. They like to see their mother bold and assertive but Nalini is unable to do so because she is violently

attacked by the lingering traces of trauma. Assuming that Maya becomes shocked by the fatal news of Achan's death, Nalini herself had gone to school to fetch Maya.

What is bitter fact in Maya's life has already become a history for Nalini. The facial expression of Nalini shows how simple and sacrificial she is. She lacks the renewed impulse to start her life from the new page of a different chapter. The rosy side of her life has gone forever from her life.

The miserable and directionless life of Nalini enables the researcher to make use of the theory of gender trauma. When women are compelled to assume traditional gender role and forced to make retreat from new modernist role, conflict and crisis arise. In their search for new experiences and freedom, women have to encounter several factors which drag their progressive pace and push them ahead on the way to transformation. As a result, they are disturbed and disappointed by the conflicting attitude. Judith Herman is the leading theorist of gender trauma. She makes the following revelation about the core theoretical notion of gender trauma:

The adaptations and responses women typically develop throughout their lives as a result of chronic abuse are shaped and determined by multiple factors. These factors include gender socialization into traditional notions of femininity, sexism, racism, poverty and other social conditions of their lives. The ways in which women are socialized to internalize these experiences and women's greater social powerlessness resulting from gender inequality lead to significant gender differences in women's mental health issues and needs. (78)

The way women are brought up in society makes them fundamentally different from other men. No matter how much she struggles to be equal to men, they remain substantially different because they grow up by assimilating different sort of norms

and values. The internalized codes and conducts compel woman to act and behave in a different way. The demonstration of difference brings them in conflicting relation with society. The society is too dogmatic and rigid to make dominant practices flexible. That is why it creates traumatic suffering. These differences affect the way in which women's problems are most typically diagnosed within the mental health system.

Only the struggle, agony and responsibility have come in her life. The plight of Nalini in London is an outcome of her disastrous marital life. Betrayed by her husband, a new way of her life has opened but she has to pay a huge price to bring her ruined life of burdensome responsibility to the right track. Maggie's condition reflects several facts about the traumatic position of woman in alien land. Nalini says "Maggie fell pregnant at fifteen. The family covered Maggie's sin with nine months of silence, keeping her indoors doing whatever tasks needed to be done around"(104). Nalini is the victim of patriarchy. Such a process of victimization marks the beginning of traumatic experience. If she had accessed to the economic resources like her husband, she might not have lived such a life of burden, insecurity, responsibility and subordination.

The situation in which Nalini is landed puts extreme traumatic pressures in her. Since her husband's desertion, Nalini struggles to be a serious and responsible mother. But she does not become successful as she intends to be because she is annoyed and harmed in her efforts by her traumatic shock. She does not like to demonstrate her pathetic plight by telling truth about her husband. On the contrary, she tells her children a white lie. The fact that she told a lie to her children is not a very important thing. Inwardly she is weak due to the disastrous failure of her marital life. But the patriarchal society does not allow and encourage her to tell truth and live

realistically. She is compelled to tell a lie to her children because she is bound to live like males.

It is the harsh practices of society that puts an individual in a state of insanity. The patriarchal society is oppressive towards women. Women with delicate sensibility like Nalini cannot tolerate the sudden shock and injuries which the rigid structures of society generate. This sort of analytical insight is expressed by Judith Herman. To quote Herman once again:

Despite these differences, there is often little recognition or understanding in the literature on trauma treatment and theory of the actual conditions of many women's lives or of the effects of gender inequality, sexism, female socialization, class and race that influence women's psychological development. In other words, most trauma theory ignores the role of gender. Yet a failure to take these factors into account leads to a failure not only in understanding the mental health issues women face, but in providing effective therapeutic interventions.

(141)

So long as the society is harsh and exclusionary, individuals should identify the hostile factors which are harmful to them. In such a structure of society those who want to walk on the path of autonomy must be careful. It is really difficult to guess at what time hostile forces of society erupt and ruin the delicate society. That is why it is necessary to be cautious about the time in which unpredictable hazards and pitfalls occur in life.

Situation does not allow her live her life as per her individual choices. So long as she was with her husband, she too had to walk along the path dictated by her husband. Now following the desertion of her husband, she too is walking on the path

of self-sacrifice. But her journey into the external world brings misery and agony only. Nalini hardly got a chance to live a free life with a power to make independent choice. The choice of professionalism lands women in an uncomfortable condition. This condition disrupts women's search for individual identity and economic security. She would have no option other than hopelessness and misery.

To promote her children, Nalini works hard to send them to school. But her children are teased in school. She along with her children, who are immigrants in United Kingdom, has to face several discouraging activities. They are mocked, and discouraged. The learning and working atmosphere for immigrants and their children are not promising and encouraging. Such a treatment is likely to rob the peace and energies which are necessary for any person to continue their pursuits. The following lines describe how Nalini is painfully shocked at the treatment of her children in school:

The children were much nicer to me but there was still sadness, a sadness which was built into the school walls. There were no pictures or singing into the corridors and assemblies were endless prayers and hymns that none of us could identify with, nobody brought in their toys to show the other children; maybe they did not have any. You could not really sit assemblies out even if you wanted to. Fatima did, insisting her father would get angry as they were Muslims, and she was taunted regularly, but preferred this to what her father would do if she attended. I wanted to sit out with her but just got on with learning the Lord's Prayer. (41)

No favorable atmosphere is created for the immigrants in England. In every sphere of life, Nalini is mocked and given no value to her. Her worth and potentiality are hardly

recognized. Nalini and her family members are left in the difficult situation. Even the situation has not favored her and her children. But the social life is not highly promising. There is the least chance for them to cooperate with other white students. In occupational sites, immigrants are likely to suffer from unexpected manners from their colleagues and employers.

Covington contends that “the gendered male public space is the key to power, privilege, opportunities and wealth. And the ideological boundary between the private and the public spaces was designed to limit women’s access to the resources associated with the public space” (212). It is important to note that while women are generally restricted to the marginal domestic private space, men not only have free and easy access, but they are also the bosses in this space. Covington throws light on the prospect of how women can gain entry into the public space and minimize the threat of traumatic attack. His view runs as follows:

Women's access to the public space, on the other hand, is extremely limited and is controlled by men. Patriarchy uses several tools including culture, the law and religion to safeguard the public sphere as a domain of male hegemony; it will resist any attempts by women who try to make the transition to the public sphere. Setting male values and interests as the norm in the public sphere easily achieves this purpose. Hence any woman who wishes to make this transition is forced to meet the male/masculine standards required in the public world. Masculine standards operate as a delicate glass ceiling that stops many women from entering the public world. (58)

According to Covington, the female becomes the other who is constantly faced with obstacles that stop her access to and control of other resources. Because of the

marginalized nature of the physical and metaphorical space that women occupy, their legal and social status is subordinated to that of men. Their mobility is significantly reduced and their potential considerably limited. Covington strongly asserts that bringing women to the public sphere encourages them to handle their traumatic arrows.

Even the white teacher Miss Brown behaves in a rude way to the immigrant students. She speaks in a mocking tone. The name of immigrant student 'Maya' is repeated by her. Time and again Miss Brown repeats Maya's name several times in class with a view to discourage her. When immigrant children act in a notorious way in class, Miss Brown shouts at them at the top of her voice. She has a low manner towards them. She is quite forgetful of her neutral duty and responsibility as a school teacher. Immigrant children are compelled to go to sit in the last bench of school. The following lines dramatize how Miss Brown acts in an unacceptable and unjust way in class, which is highly discouraging and embarrassing to the students of immigrant parents:

My new teacher was a lady called Miss Brown; she did not have the warmth of Miss Davies and when she smiled she revealed a set of piano teeth, with a protruding e flat. This is Maya, everyone say hello, she said, introducing me to my new class. This is Maya, she repeated. Everybody talked over her. She shouted at the top of her voice and they stopped for a few seconds and looked at her apathetically. Nobody volunteered for me to sit next to them and I could feel the hostile eyes of a boy in the front row. Miss Brown pointed to the back of the class to a seat next to a small girl. (36)

Intentionally, Miss Brown does not behave affectionately towards the immigrant students. She is compelled to act in an equivalent way. But she is driven by an inclination to act and behave in rude ways. She cannot be as affectionate towards immigrant students as she is towards the native white students. Her seemingly caring and supporting nature is related to racist biases. These deep-rooted biases are harmful to the struggles of immigrants who have come to England with hope and expectation. In institutions themselves act in a biased way, what to tell about individuals. Nalini and her children, who are compelled to depend on themselves as their father deserted their mother, feel excluded and marginalized in the big and busy city of London.

Kali Tal has enumerated some of the chronic factors that make an assault on the delicate psychology of women. The patriarchal society always acts as threat to the integrity of woman's psyche. In brief, Kali Tal makes the following view with respect to the harmful factors that ruin the delicate fabric of an individual psyche:

Experiences of sexual violence and abuse in women's lives instill lessons in, and reinforce, what it means to be female in this society - that is, being relatively disempowered and with compromised or non-existent rights to autonomy and bodily integrity. The pervasive problem of men's violence in our society, combined with experiences of gender inequality, often reinforce the earlier incidents of threat and danger inherent in the experiences of childhood abuse. (55)

According to Kali Tal, early experiences of sexual violation teach female abuse survivors lessons about betrayal, physical and emotional danger and what it is to be dominated. The gender framework and women's compulsion to enter into it are ascribable factors which causes the birth of traumatic agony. Even women who have not been sexually abused share the reality of living in a society where there is gender

inequality and potential for male sexual and physical violence. Indeed, this is an element of gender inequality itself. In other words it can be said that in a society where there is gender equality lies, there is less chance of the inception of gender trauma.

When Nalini reflects on the plight of immigrants in London and the treatment of their children in school, she could not help getting tormented and tortured traumatically. In school, Indian students of their immigrant parents were treated harshly. Even for a small error, physical punishment was given to them. Cane was used frequently to torture students sometimes feel uncomfortable occasionally. Children in school were subjected to the extreme forms of discrimination. Even for a slip of tongue during prayer, students were mercilessly punished. Extreme compulsion was created for them. It appears that students were not learning there. Rather they were dragging the burden of unnecessary responsibility. The following lines illustrate how immigrant kids were tortured, humiliated and embarrassed:

Assembly was Mr Mauldy's time for imposing his authority with threats of caning for misbehaviour. He held the cane firmly in his hand as he spoke from the stage and lashed it against the podium, but nobody took any notice. What was another beating in the scheme of things? Then came the occasional morale-boosting song, introduced more as an afterthought that maybe this was the way to go. I love the sun; it shines on me, God made the sun and God made me. I love the rain; it splashes on me, God made the rain and God made me. (42)

It really pains mothers to see their children treated so harshly in school where they are sent to learn new things. It is the genuine expectation of every mother that their kids could learn comfortably and creatively in school. But the kids of immigrant

parents are instructed in a discouraging manner. In the name of prayer to god, children are discouraged. Even to impose any harsh rule on children with delicate minds is to torture them. Not to create an encouraging and inspiring atmosphere for learning is to play with the future and fantasy of children. Not to create favorable atmosphere to learn is to demonstrate a kind of marginalizing behavior. To be more specific, it tortures mothers who work hard to uplift and educate their children but know that their children are subjected to deficiency, and discouragement.

Henry Covington traces gender differences in the projections of serious mental illness of women. He traces the proximity and intersection between the psychic condition of women and their ways of using means to deal with such agony. The means that women use indicates what sort of suffering exists in their minds and what level of suffering they are likely to get. Without having knowledge of such division of the mental and the physiological, it would be tough to handle the actual reasons of woman's traumatic condition. Covington makes the following remarks:

Gender differences exist in the behavioral manifestations of mental illness, with men generally turning their anger outward, while women turn it inward. Men tend to be more physically and sexually threatening and assaultive, while women tend to be more depressed, self-abusive, and suicidal. Women engage more often in self-mutilating behaviors, such as cutting, as well as verbally abusive and disruptive behaviors. Female offenders are also more likely to have used serious drugs, to have used them intravenously, and to have used them more frequently prior to arrest. They are also more likely to have a coexisting psychiatric disorder and to have lower self-esteem. (74)

There is a chain of pain and agony in which women are being involved. When they are unable to deal with one traumatic jolt, they rather turn to another dreadful means to cope with the pain. They can even turn to drug addiction in order to get relief from the agony. One agony and their ignorance to cope with it lead to another problem which ultimately lands women in a difficult state. The level of freedom which they enjoy in society and their interpersonal relation are also key factors in guiding them rightly. Since such things are lacking in patriarchal society, they have no option other than lamenting over their tragic and traumatic fate.

The area in which Indian immigrants are bound to live is not healthy. This area is not favorable to the workers. Only the alienated and traumatic immigrants can live. Workers with limited income have been living in this place. Poverty, frustration, inadequacy and unworthiness prevail in this area. Since there is no provision to improve such unhealthy conditions, people with the lowest income have been living with extreme difficulties. The sons and daughters of immigrants like Nalini have been acutely aware of injustice and poverty. The growing awareness of poverty, frustration and inadequacy robs their peace and happiness. Awareness of poverty and inadequacy has weakened the confidence and courage of small children who want to go ahead in their lives. Such living and working conditions are really bad to the mothers of those kids whose lives are affected by the painful awareness. The following lines exemplify how the harsh and inadequate living condition affected traumatically the delicate psyche of school children:

We were acutely aware that all around us, on the streets, a battle was raging. Poverty is a hideous thing, it fills people with a sense of injustice, frustration, inadequacy, even unworthiness, and from then on, a secret war begins inside them. The battle is to be become

someone, to prove something, and it never ends. Surrounded by derelict buildings crumbling like dreams, burnt-out cars and pavements stained with venomous spit, people fought themselves and each other. More often it was each other. Maggie's simple home was a sanctuary from everything that lurked outside her battered blue door. (44)

The deteriorating living conditions and harsh surrounding have produced adverse effect in the psyche of children. In the school also learning environment is discouraging and torturous. In the living surrounding, several degrading and harmful things have happened. Children need healthy place to live and learn. They need constant encouragement and inspiration. In their delicate age they should not be painfully aware of poverty, inadequacy, frustration and other harmful effects. If children are awareness of the degrading condition, they do not feel integrated to the society and other members belonging to the upper class of society. Such a process leads to the traumatization of not only immigrants but their children as well.

According to Kali Tal, "Even after an abuse experience ends, experiences of violation and fear are often present for women throughout their lives, by virtue of living in a society in which violence against women and children is pervasive"(175). In her book *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman describes "coercive control as a major cause of complex post-traumatic stress. She asserts that prolonged, repeated trauma typically occurs in families and in other relationships in which the woman is unable to flee because she is under the control of the perpetrator"(176). Total escape from the traumatizing experiences is a difficult task for women. It is impossible for women to come out from such situations.

The legacy of patriarchal domination continues to affect the incoming generation in a traumatic way. However advanced and reformed the society might be,

the legacy of patriarchal domination and control of women continue to operate beneath the surface of outward politeness and modesty. Women are affected traumatically by the lingering legacy. In the novel, Nalini narrates how her father treated her mother in an inhuman way. Her father had threatened to kill her mother. Her mother was also almost sure that her father would kill her at any time. Therefore she herself tried to commit suicide.

In India where Nalini is born and brought up, her mother is affected by severe condition. She is forced by circumstances to think about suicide. Several threats were issued by Nalini's father to her mother. The marital relation between her mother and her father was not fine, and harmonious. When Nalini married and came to live in England with her husband, she too had to fall prey to the same kind of patriarchal so called supremacy and horror. She too is betrayed her husband exactly as her father had betrayed her mother. The suffering and control of women remain unchanged no matter where they go and where they live. It is the aggressive behavior of man which has become the root cause of the misery and traumatization of women. The following lines depict this kind of condition:

My father was always trying to kill my mother or she was threatening to kill herself by jumping into one of the many wells. The sound of screaming voices invaded the first eight years of my life but the screaming stopped suddenly with the death of my baby brother. My father had already left the day before the baby was born: one day he was there and the next, he was gone. The shame of what she would tell the other villagers meant there we had to leave the village. We walked twenty- seven kilometer barefoot, carrying out scant possessions on

our heads, and settled in the village of Collenauta on the border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. (54)

The change of place and location does not put an end to the suffering and bondage of women. In India, Nalini's mother had to bear plenty of indescribable suffering and tortures given by Nalini's father. Back in England, Nalini too had to suffer a lot when her husband left her leaving each and every burden of rearing and educating her children. Even in England where life is supposed to be comfortable, women are still victimized and traumatized. The alien atmosphere is itself threatening and traumatic to Nalini. Moreover, she gets insult and betrayal from the one for whom she had sacrificed many things of her life.

From her educated self-made husband, Nalini got shock of betrayal. In her homeland, India, her mother had also fallen victims to several difficult situations. She too was under the burden of dowry system. Due to the lack of proper care, nutrition and psychological harassment, she had to miscarry several times. All these hazardous events ruined her and then inflicted traumatic agony. Mentally and physically, she became very weak. Nalini's mother was living her life in India under the yoke of dowry, threat from her husband and frequent miscarriage. But in England where Nalini is struggling for survival, she has to face anti-immigration activities and racist arrogance of the white. Wherever women go, live and struggle for betterment in life, they have to face alienation, betrayal, harassment and sudden dangers and difficulties. The following lines hint at this kind of situation:

My mother had a series of miscarriages before giving birth to me. She had not really care if I was a girl and she would have to find a dowry for me to marry. I think my mother was happy to prove to her in-laws and everyone else that she could bear children. She was elated when

she found out she was carrying me and did not hide her bump like all the other women in the village did. (54)

Direct and indirect traumatization of women by men occurs even in seemingly happy domestic life. In the sphere of domestic life, various forms of dominations occur. These events and happenings produce ruinous effect in women. In addition, women have to face similar marginalizing incidents in the outer spheres too. In the professional spheres and occupational sites, women continue to encounter various kinds of unexpected types of discriminations. Since most of employers are males, they can practice strategies of sexual harassment. If the employers are white, they can adopt racist mentality while dealing with the immigrants. In the case of a single mother family, males are likely to have strong desire to possess the single woman. In the groups of alienated and marginalized immigrants in England, there is a hierarchical ordering. Those with the weak prospect are likely to be neglected and discouraged.

According to Robertson Hansen, “many women and children who are abused may be trapped and rendered powerless in physical, economic and psychological ways. The responses to coercive control are numerous, including accepting the perpetrator’s world view”(89). Such a world view legitimates “the abuse, feeling dissociated; losing faith or hope; withdrawing socially or becoming isolated; and feeling self-hatred”(59). On the strength of Robertson’s view on gender trauma, the researcher proceeds ahead in her analytical task.

The dowry system has given tough pressure on Nalini’s mother because she was left by her husband. Moreover, Nalini’s mother had had only one concern in her life. She wanted to get her daughter married to a wealthy man with good education and cultural background. So she saved money without spending. She had the desire to

buy a plot of land. But she did not do so. She saved in order that she could use that money in her daughter, Nalini's marriage. A mother is rather struggling hard to secure the economic prospect of her daughter. Due to the lack of access to economic or productive resources, women are handicapped to depend on their own or to rear and educate their children if the cases of betraying husband. The following lines reveal facts in this regard:

We gained much respect for the work we produced in the village and although my mother had made enough money to buy her own plot of land, she decided not to, saving the money instead for my dowry. She hoped that the money would attract a good suitor for me. When I was about sixteen, many young men and their families began to come and enquire if I was eligible for marriage. First, the tree climber and his family came. His job was to collect all the different fruit from the trees but my mother looked at the state of his feet and his fingernails and turned him away. The doctors' family arrived, they were not doctors as such but were twins. (59)

In the existential struggles of a woman who is betrayed by her husband and tortured by the patriarchal structure of society, several other things hinder her efforts to achieve good standard and dignity in society. So long as women get affection and trustworthy love from their husbands, they continue to rely on their husband. They are hardly motivated to achieve economic independence. Rather they continue to depend on their husbands. When their husbands betray them and leave them in the difficult situation, they learn the actualities and bitterness of life. They have to shoulder several other responsibilities. They have to feed themselves and their children. The questions of their children's future and education trouble them. In this situation, they

are further harmed and harassed by superstitions and wrongful practices of society. The dominant viewpoint in a patriarchal society is another hurdle which a woman struggling towards the path of independence has to face.

The victims of trauma demonstrate classic symptoms. They are miserably haunted by depressive inclination, identity problem, guilt and shame. Their existences are insecure and exposed to unpredictable forces. Kathleen Mirian argues about the traumatic disaster:

A traumatic event is an event which threatens injury, death, or the physical body of a child or adolescent while also causing shock, terror or helplessness. Trauma refers to both the experience of being harmed by an external agent as well as the response to that experience. Youth who experience trauma may also experience emotional harm or psychic trauma which, if left untreated, can have a significant impact. Trauma typically exists along a spectrum which ranges from global, when an event may affect many individuals, to individual, when the trauma impacts only that individual. (13)

The depthless trauma is characterized by repeated traumatic events occurring over a period of time. Simple trauma usually refers to a single event, such as a rape or a shooting. But gender trauma is caused by other forces which are quite noticeable in society. Simple trauma is more likely to lead to posttraumatic stress disorder. Post traumatic stress disorder refers to the occasional outburst of hidden traumatic sign. Complex trauma leads to a deeper and wider set of changes. Those changes involve emotional deregulation, distorted thinking, and behavioral dysfunction. It also consists of patterns of dysfunctional interpersonal relationships.

The patriarchal society doesn't like to see a woman struggling for economic independence. It always mocks and denounces a woman's efforts towards independence. It does not promote and then endure a woman's assertive and independent skill of mind. Only submissive, subdued and shy women are praised. Women have an independent mentality are seldom encouraged. That is why many women feel discouraged. Their pace of success is dragged so that they would not reach their intended destination. These biases produce effect in Nalini. That is why she fails in her endeavor towards stability and settlement. Nalina and her mother both had to face similar kind of problem. In India, Nalini's mother had to work hard to secure Nalini's future. In England, Nalini has to suffer to secure her son and daughter's future.

Nalini faces the deceiving and dishonest behavior of her husband. When she married Raul and came to live in England with him, she counted herself as the luckiest woman of the world. The affectionate, attentive, lovely and caring manners of her husband touched her, impressed her and encouraged her to explore the unknown joy of life. In the initial phase of her married life Nalini's husband was extremely caring and loving. In her own words "Raul was all that I could have hoped for. Attentive and caring, he made me feel like the center of everything. I never believed I was worthy of such a man. He would rush back from work at five o'clock just to spend time with me" (71). The husband having too much affection towards his wife is shocked when his wife says that she is pregnant. He feels horrified to know that his wife is pregnant.

When Raul comes to know that his wife is pregnant, changes his former character of attentive and caring manner. Increasingly he behaves in a cold way. He holds back from releasing his attentive manners. Nalini feels alienated and sad at this

sort of behavior of her husband. Slowly and gradually, she feels insecure and fragile in the face of her husband's shifting attitude towards her. The following lines describe how Nalini feels insecure, alienated and marginalized even in her marital bond with Raul:

Then I felt pregnant and it changed. Raul, I am pregnant, I said, throwing my arms around him. He looked at me, horrified. Is there something wrong? Are not you happy? What is it? Of course I am happy, just a little shocked. Maybe it could have come later, I wanted you to myself for a little while longer, but yes, yes, I am happy, he said, stroking my hair. Are you sure? Of course, he replied. As I grew bigger, so did my insecurities. I felt that somehow, by marrying him, I had exchanged much more than a ring and a garland. Moving into a big having servants leading a life of shopping and gossiping made me feel completely useless. (72)

Nalini feels deeply disillusioned. There is deep gloom in her heart. She feels ignored by her husband. Feelings of insecurities and the evil warning that something disastrous is going to happen weakened her gradually. Her expectations from her married life and the existing conditions of her present life widened surprising. She tried to understand why and how her husband is behaving inattentively towards her. His increasing detachment from her puts her in more despair. The more her husband turns away from her the more she becomes desperate and despondent. Ultimately she feels marginalized within the space of marital life. Everywhere women are marginalized. From family to martial life and from marital life to the professional life in the outer world, women are always subjected to the severe forms of suppression

and oppression. Nalini's private life and her shipwrecked marital life exemplify this fact.

Factors that play certain role in making women powerless can undoubtedly be called the factors that contribute to trauma. The powerlessness of women is the root cause of their vulnerability. Capturing this notion of causality, Hansen makes the following suggestions:

Gender inequality, racism and poverty render many women less powerful, less valued and with fewer resources available to them – as well as at the mercy of others – throughout their lives. These broader structures of social disempowerment typically shape and intensify a woman's reaction to being abused, exacerbating feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability. One of the often-unrecognized long-term effects of sexual abuse and violence in women's lives is the harmful effect on their sexuality. (217)

Hansen says that one of the long-term effects of sexual abuse in childhood is that their adult sexuality was developed in a distorted way. When abused as children, many little girls are given special attention, privileges and even affection from their abusers. This is obviously confusing – being sexually abused while also being treated as special, being favored, and being rewarded for being sex objects that exist for the gratification of adult male sexual perpetrators. This dynamic sends deeply distorted messages about sexuality and leads to what is often a life-long and conflicted relationship to a woman's own sense of her sexuality. Some women who were sexually abused as girls have learned that sexual behavior is an extremely effective way to receive male attention.

Nalini finds it hard to get adapted to the social circle of England. Unlike her husband, she is not fully accustomed to the social circle of England. She feels lonely. She herself says in her interior monologue “England was a lonely, lonely place. Even if I was, I did not fit into the social circle and blunders I made were all too evident. This solitude ate into me and made me ache, a nagging pain in my chest that would not go away”(80). The newness of England, her limitation in house, and her husband’s professional occupation are all the source of uneasiness and discomforts to Nalini.

Once she finds the photo of a blonde woman around whose shoulders Nalini’s husband has thrown his arms. She found that photo in Raul’s suit. She is surprised and shocked. Now she began to understand why her husband has gone away from her. She knew the root cause of his detachment from her. She has had high opinion of her husband. She had never thought that her husband would lower himself to the low level of extramarital betrayal. Nalini is so shocked that she began to feel that the ground on which she is standing is moving and going to sink. Out of desperation and suffocation, she sought for support to stand in the room. The psychological shock and absolute helplessness resulting from the revelation of her husband’s extramarital affair is crystal clear in the following citation:

As the door closed behind him, my hands began to tremble, tears streamed down my face and then I screamed and screamed until there was no breath left in me. Ma... where are you? Help me; I lay on the ground like some animal, pulling at my hair, choking on the tears. I looked up and saw his pictures on his table. I crawled onto my knees and threw them to the floor, smashing them with my fists and cutting my hand on the pieces. Why? Why did he bring us to this place only

to leave us? Why? Did not he know what it would do? If he were planning to leave, why did not he prepare us? Did he? Had I missed the signs? Did he mean to leave us money and air tickets to get back home? (85)

Cruelty and insensitivity of Nalini's husband are clearly reflected in the above-mentioned citation. When Nalini comes to know that her husband has left her completely without leaving any chance of reunion, she is broken hearted. She found herself left in an utterly helpless condition. In London there is nobody to assist her. She does not have even sufficient money to buy tickets and return to India along with her daughter and son. In such a helpless condition, she is left by her husband. He is now freely enjoying with another woman in American. But his wife and children are in an insecure condition. For some time she had tolerated the rude and cold manners of her husband. She had begun to take his cold manner as the effect of his uncomfortable professional life. But she had never expected that her husband would stab the knife of betrayal to her heart. Such an unexpected act of betrayal lands her in the vulnerable place. In an extreme moment of shock, she screams and remembers her mother. She has no option other than taking the name of her mother.

Joseph Pearlman recommends for the modified and upgraded version of all the traditional means to handle the traumatic injuries of women. He points out those new challenges towards women have appeared dramatically in the contemporary society. Although old troubles and obstacles have disappeared; new challenges have equally appeared threatening women to give up their hard-earned freedom and privilege. Pearlman maintains that even the insulting remarks and the fear of sexual abuse impose injury which can take the form of trauma. Pearlman makes the following view:

Sensitivity to anti-woman issue is a necessary part of the landscape for providing effective therapeutic support to women abuse survivors with post-traumatic stress. Many traditional psychiatric and psychological categories and approaches are not gender sensitive and do not account for or address the ways in which abuse and trauma factor into women's lives and shape women's mental health issues. Many trauma survivors who have sought mental health services have been given multiple diagnoses such as bipolar disorder; schizophrenia, paranoid type; and borderline personality disorder. (61)

Pearlman does not directly hold the rigid social structure and harsh social practices as the responsible factors for the beginning of traumatic injury. He is in favor of taking proper cautionary measures to check the outbreak of dreadful symptoms of gender trauma. In addition he asserts that any psychic torture and trauma undergone by women reveals its harmful effects in their bodies. By nature women are not inclined to share their innermost agony. Except repression they do not have other means to cope with such traumatic shock. That is why it is necessary to heal their traumatic wound in the early phase.

Nalini comes to perceive that "it was a fight for survival and this eliminates the luxury of emotions: if you stop and contemplate you lose the battle and so I was grateful for the fact that there was no time" (90). This realization enables her to get a job in a factory. The factory is extremely unpleasant place. It is difficult to work in this factory. But she decides that she has faced this fate since circumstances have compelled her to do so. The working condition in factory shows how difficult it was for her to get adapted to the new professional life:

The factory was situated on a run-down industrial estate a twenty-minute bus ride away. These twenty minutes were filled preparing myself mentally for the day ahead and then observing the actions of the workers who clambered on at the various stops. Some of them were Irish or Polish most were Pakistani women dressed in salwar kamise and shawls. A scattering were Indian women in saris, socks and sandals who glared at me in my western clothes. All managed to find their respective countrywomen and huddled together chatting. The Irish made the most noise and livened up the dead journey with their laughter. (90)

Different women came to work in this factory. They came from different countries and cultures. They were chosen from different countries, culture and languages so that they would not waste even a single minute to gossiping and chatting. From the description above, it becomes clear that it is a garment factory. Women were employed so that they can work efficiently in weaving and knitting clothes. Workers were constantly told to speed up their works. They were kept constantly under strict supervision. In case a worker is found gossiping or delaying work, she would be fired instantly. Under such working condition, Nalini had to adapt and accustomed. This shows how women are treated in a same degrading way in the outer world of profession.

Arthur Briar contends that strong identity is essential to face and then handle aggressive forces. In the society dictated and driven by patriarchal ideology, women seldom get a chance to shape strong identity. They are affected by plenty of forces which alienate them from thinking about hostile forces and prejudice. Their identities remain vulnerable and fragile. In the face of harsh aggressive forces, it is really

difficult for them to encounter confidently. Except falling prey to such antagonistic and adverse situations they rarely have options. as a result, they are compelled to pass through traumatic agony. The following lines illustrate Briar's view:

Identity refers to a stable sense of self and a consistent internal locus of conscious awareness (an ongoing conscious awareness of self). A strong sense of identity allows an individual to face adversity from a secure internal sense of self. People with a less stable identity may fragment when they most need to have an awareness of their own needs, perspective and entitlement. Domesticity as an ideology is historically and culturally constructed and is closely linked to patriarchy, gender/power relations and the artificial private/public distinction.(55)

The way patriarchy defines women is problematical. Such a process of definition creates troubles. Women are portrayed as though their full and wholesome existence depends on getting married, producing children and caring for their family. While patriarchy defines women in terms of domesticity, it simultaneously draws an artificial line to separate the domestic arena from the public one. Consequently, they will have to tolerate the shock of trauma.

In the factory Nalini faces several troubles and horrors. The pressures of supervisor were harassing and psychologically torturing. The schedule based life, routine based work and a fixed time for rest and snack produced extreme exhaustion. But Nalini. had to endure it. She has no option to seek other good job. Moreover she did not have various skills and trainings whereby she could seek different kinds of jobs. The following lines show how exhausting and torturing the job was in the factory:

The monotony of the noise would take me far away, with my children back to India, to a beautiful home with a veranda surrounded by mango trees. Then the supervisor, a rake-shaped woman called Veronica, would stab me in the shoulder with her pen. Spitting some words at me that I did not understand, her face said it all and so I would speed up. The noise would bore through the memories, but I would stitch them together with a fabric of sunshine and laughter. At ten o'clock the noise would stop for five minutes as the women drank from their flasks, and then it continued, the women fuelled by the tea or coffee inside them until lunchtime. (91)

Nalini's economic struggle is really pathetic. The working condition is really exhausting. There is no sufficient time for relaxation and freshness during work time. But there is no possibility for asking for sufficient rest and relaxation. She has to feed two children. Throughout the day she has to work in garment factory. Back at home her children are left alone. There is no one to look after her children. When she returns to her house after completing her work in the factory in the evening, she finds that her children are already asleep. This is the routine life and work of Nalini who is determined to run her life and her children though she is abandoned by her husband.

When Nalini decides to quit this job, she goes to the factory owner. The factory owner is Mr. Humphries who is insensitive fool devoid of any concern for human suffering. The following lines show how harsh he was when Nalini tells him that she is going to quit the job:

I went into see Mr Humphries, who shouted at me for coming into his office without knocking. I told him I was leaving. You are doing what? Do not come running to me when you are desperate. You will not have

a job here, he added, furious. I said nothing. This irritated him further so he said he would have to dock my wages for giving him no notice and leaving him short of a worker. Fine, I replied confidently, rolling up my tatty blue overall and handing it to him. I took my last brown envelope and left. (96)

The rude and harsh treatment of workers in the garment factory shows how difficult it was for women particularly helpless women to work in factory and earn daily bread. Single handedly Nalini managed to provide bread and butter to her children. Her struggles show that she is also capable of working in the outer world. She sacrifices her desires for building the secure future of their children. She is an exemplary figure in this context.

### III. Effects of Trauma in Nalini's Psyche

The core finding of this research is that the main female protagonist of *100 Shades of White* is traumatized. In a single moment of betrayal in marriage, she has to encounter countless numbers of burdens and challenges. When her husband betrays her and elopes with another woman, she awakes to the terrifying realities of her life. So long as Nalini is beautiful and charming, he remains with her. The moment her beauty begins to fade, he rashly turns to another girl and finally betrays her. Her desertion by her husband mounts traumatic onslaught.

Nalini is forced to live in a state of extreme poverty. She does not have sufficient money to feed herself and her children. As a result, she seeks a job in garment factory. Since she is just a housewife whose marital life is shipwrecked, she lacks skill which enables her to earn abundantly. She gets a job in a garment factory. She encounters several causes of prejudices and hostilities. She is at a loss in her single handed struggle because she is on the path of being crushed by trauma. The dry, discouraging and monotonous working condition add traumatic sting in Nalini. While she works in the garment factory, there is nobody to look after her children at home. She lacks concentration on her job. The supervisor fires her from the job. She is compelled to seek another job. Since she is an Indian immigrant struggling in London, she has to face several hostile situations. She faces discriminations and exclusion everywhere. From sexual harassment and unexpected dismissal from job to the bad treatment of immigrant, Nalini faces each and every danger and difficulty.

Nalini's traumatic life partly results from her own weakness to handle her inner faults. Because the social structure does not favor and inspire her to struggle against acts of injustice against her, she is always in the state of despair and desperation. It also results from the restrictive measures imposed by society on her.

Only the search for freedom is not going to solve the problems. She is fully prepared for this also. One has to be tactful and careful as well to manage all the challenges that come on the way to freedom. While societal and financial stability, it is necessary to accept by certain normative principle. That is why she behaves the way she is expected to behave. She is not rash and reckless in her single handed battle against injustices leveled against her by the patriarchal society. It is not totally bad if desire for taking family responsibility comes in one's mind. But the most painful moment is the disastrous betrayal she faces.

The society laughs at the chronic failure of her marriage and interpersonal relation. The society prides not on her success but on her self-destructive and humiliating failure. For how long could she stand up to such social treatment? All these responses begin to inflict embarrassment and inferiority in her mind. Therefore she cannot come to the mainstream of society. Nalini does not feel defeated in fulfilling her responsibility towards her children. But she feels marginalized and excluded in front of society since she lacks the safe settlement of her life.

Thus it can be said that Nalini is the most pathetic and miserable character in Nair's *100 Shades of White*. She struggles hard to come as the most committed and responsible woman. Her efforts are prevented and diverted by the discouraging and backbiting trends of patriarchal society. That is why she is forced to remain in the low traumatic profile.

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