

I. Premchand, His Work and New Notion of Masculinity in Crisis

This research paper mainly depicts the major issue of the modern era 'Masculinity in Crisis' and aims to present the possible causes and consequences of masculinity in crisis on the basis of the novel *Nirmala* by Premchand. After the study of the concept of masculinity, femininity and gender studies, it is discovered that most of the male characters are unsuccessful to accomplish the assigned conventional masculine traits which ultimately pushes them into the state of the crisis of masculinity. These male characters have not been able to confirm the male value, practices and traits rather they have adopted and exposed the feminine traits like-emotional, irrational, timid, immature etc. The condition of reversal of traditional gender role, threat and challenge to men's previous privileged position along with the females' resistance are some of the major causes of the masculinity in crisis. This research, regarding the story of *Nirmala*, believes that men being ruled by deep rooted traditional psychology of masculinity, desire to have the masculine position in the society and family but when they can't enable themselves to have the masculine qualities within themselves, they become frustrated and adopt the easy escape like suicide or exile. Hence, these are the possible consequences after the masculinity in crisis. The male characters' exile, suicide, death and frustration rather than making themselves bold enough to tackle with the situation has been documented as the strong evidence to justify the fact that the traditional form of masculinity is under crisis in novel.

The novel clearly displays the powerless and pitiable position of the male characters. On the surface, the male characters seem dominating or powerful but this is nothing more than an attempt to hold up their traditional masculine identity. This attempt after all turns into a futile job and their position falls into problem or crisis.

Most of the male characters' masculinity is in crisis not because of strong resistance of the women but because of their own follies like -irrationality, emotionality, cowardness, immaturity etc. To some extent, females' resistance along with their developing consciousness has played the role to push the masculinity under crisis. The major figure of the novel, Totaram is the biggest victim of the crisis of masculinity. He is failure by all means to confirm the conventional masculine traits. Neither could he be a successful husband nor a father. He is the only bread earner of the family but his immaturity and irrationality makes him failure to manage his house. He gets no respect in his family. At the later part of the novel he is economically fail. He is exposed as the main cause of the doom of his family. Finally, being frustrated by all side he leaves the home pretending to search his lost son. In the same way, the next male character Udayabhan is also guided by the immaturity and irrationality. When he found no domineering role of him in the family, decides to leave the home pretending to teach a lesson to his wife but on the way he is killed by his enemy.

Similarly, the next male character, Dr. Sinha seems so coward to challenge the forthcoming problems. First being guided by the emotionality, he tries to keep extramarital sexual affair with Nirmala but when she rejects him, he commits suicide due to the fear of being insulted by his wife. In this sense, he also fails to correspond the masculine traits. To the next side, Bhalchandra Sinha also seems to be failure to catch the masculine qualities. Despite of being the head of the family, he does not think by his mind but goes on changing his decision as said by his wife. When he cannot control over her decision, he goes to get the support of his son. The other minor male characters are three sons of Totaram. His eldest son does not perform the masculine quality at all. When he was accused of having illegal relation with his stepmother by his father, he throws himself to the depression and finally to the death.

He does not have courage to face the wrong accusation over him. Jiyaram, his second son, also commits suicide in the coward way when he was caught in the case of theft. His youngest son, Siaram, leaves his home when he does not get the favorable environment to live in his house. He too adopts the easy escape rather than facing each challenge in his life. Considering upon the events happened in the life of three sons of Totaram, it also can be justified the failure figure of the father of family. He has been failed to be a protective father.

This research, with the purpose of projecting masculinity in crisis, goes with the theory of masculinity. Here, the concept of masculinity is the outcome of the feminist movement. Excessive male domination in the society gave birth to feminism and the rise of feminism gave birth of masculinity in turn. It means to say that when the woman come up with an enlightened sense of their identity, rights and freedom, masculinity is threatened and males were alarmed to hold up their patriarchal ethos about men. As a result, masculinity came as a theory just opposite of the theory of feminism. The term masculinity refers to the quality of being male means having the male character i.e. rational, protective, leading, domineering, aggressive, active, independent, competitive, factual, judgmental, self controlled etc. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines masculinity as, “a noun which means the quality of being masculine” (942). It refers to that masculinity is positive term and it is taken as having masculine quality. Both the masculinity and femininity are not innate but they are based upon social and cultural conditions.

Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhonda J.V. Montgomery in the second volume of *Encyclopedia of Sociology* say about masculinity and femininity in this way:

Femininity and masculinity, ones gender identity refers to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it

means to be a man or woman in the society. Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social (one's gender) rather than the biological (one's sex). Societal members decide what being male or female means (eg. dominant or passive, brave or emotional) all males will generally respond by defining themselves masculine while female will generally define themselves as feminine. (997)

They mean to say that the categorization of masculinity and femininity is nothing more than the social construct. In this categorization males have been given some certain features like dominant and brave and labelled with masculine. In the contrary, females have been given the features like passive and emotional and labelled as feminine.

Judith Halberstam, in the article "An Introduction of Female Masculinity", further gives the similar view to Borgatta and Montgomery about the construction of masculinity. She says: "If masculinity is not the social and cultural and indeed political expression of maleness, then what is it?" (335). Halberstam, in the form of question asserts that masculinity is nothing more than the social, cultural and political expression of maleness.

Masculinity and femininity function as the gender identity. One's gender identity is influenced by their gender roles, gender stereotypes and gender attitudes. This gender identity as masculine or feminine is based upon the meaning of individuals have internalized from their association with the role of male or female in society. A person with more masculine identity is expected to act more masculine such as behaving in a more dominant, competitive and autonomous manner. Similarly, a woman in the society is expected to act as per the stereotypical identity such as emotional, nurturing, sensitive, irrational, dominated etc. To this division of human qualities all the positive qualities are given to males and defined as masculine

but all the negative attributes are given to women and defined as feminine. Thus feminist theorists claim that masculinist mode of thought has been the root cause of oppression on female. In this regard, Anne Cranny-Francis and Wendy Waring in *Gender Studies: Terms and Debate* say: “Women are stereotyped as emotional, nurturing, sensitive whereas men are taken as rational, responsible and authoritative” (145). These lines too explicitly display the way of labeling of male and female qualities where males are labelled with something positive and women are that of negative. In the society, boys are introduced with the numerous masculine traits and girls are with the feminine traits since their childhood. In this sense, masculinity is deep rooted in the psychology of male and they always tend to perform as per the masculine standards but when they fail to confirm the masculine traits, they suffer from the crisis of masculinity.

To prove this point the statement by Roland F. Levant in *The Journals of Men's Studies* is significant. He states:

The masculinity crisis involves the collapse of basic pattern by which a man can have traditionally fulfilled the code for masculine role, behavior, namely the good provider role [. . .] The loss of the good provider role has been the central factor in the development of the masculinity crisis. (2)

This extract clarifies that the responsibility imposed upon man because of being male, should be concretized to be masculine. When the man cannot confirm his role as good provider his masculinity falls in crisis.

Tim Edward defines crisis of masculinity as, “The position of man, often perceived as being in related to institution such as the family, work, education or even

representation. On the other hand, the crisis of masculinity refers more precisely to men's experience of these shifts in position" (14). He also opines that men have been considered to carry out the certain role in terms of family, work, education and representation. When they fail to correspond with those assigned roles, their position of masculinity falls in crisis.

To this point, it can be said that the reversal of the traditional stereotypical identity of male is the main cause of the masculinity in crisis which is noteworthy for this research work regarding the failure of male characters to accomplish their assigned roles in the novel *Nirmala* by Premchand.

Premchand (1880-1936), originally named Dhanpat Rai Srivastav, is a renowned person in the field of Indian literature. He is especially famous for the realistic writing. Most of his stories and novels are based on the realistic vision of the contemporary India. The beautiful presentation of social realism is the key feature of his writings. On the other hand, the presentation of the story in the common language using the dialect of general people is another characteristic of his writing. The main issue raised by him in his writings are patriarchy, poverty, hypocrisy, corruption, religiosity, communalism etc. His stories have been able to attain the praise of the readers all over the world. In this regard, he is one of the successful writers of Indian literature to address the common issues of the common people beautifully.

Premchand has written numerous stories and novels. Some of them are *Premasutra*, *Sati*, *Godan*, *Swarga ki Devi*, *Pratigyan*, *Prema*, *Roothi Rani*, *Nirmala* etc. In most of his writing, he places the woman as the central figure through whom he attempts to convey the message to the readers. He has given the ideal role to the female characters in his novels. His novels, along with the other contemporary issues, glorify the Hindu women. He presents the unshakable noble position of the Hindu

women even they are dominated and exploited under the patriarchal social structure. He has depicted the impact of Western culture upon the ruled Indian people in his novel *Prem-Sutra* (1926). Pashupati, the husband of Prabha, being influenced by the British culture, goes on changing his sex partners. Extra marital sexual affair becomes his hobby but at the later part of the novel, he gets lots of trouble and returns back to home where his ideal wife forgives him. Similarly, his next work *Sati* (1932) depicts the agony of the woman not only in the family but also in the society. Beautiful Mulia is the major figure of this novel. Though she is chaste and loyal to her husband, he always doubts her. After his death she is attempted to be sexually misbehaved by the males in the society but keeping herself chaste and devoting her life for the sake of the soul of her dead husband, she shows the ideal position of Hindu women.

His novel *Swarga Ki Devi* (1925), also depicts the patience, sacrifice and forgiveness of Hindu women through the character Leela. She is tortured by her drunkard husband, dominating mother-in-law and the death of her children but having the highest degree of patience, she sacrifices herself for the sake of her family which ultimately turns into meaningful attempt. She could be able to cure her drunkard husband by her gradual love and service. At last, she gets the honorable position in the family. Premchand, regarding the communal riots that often break in India in the name of religion like Hindu Vs Muslim, tries to raise the sense of fraternity on the basis of good deeds rather than the religion one belongs to, in his novel *Kayakalp*. He delivers his opinion in order to achieve the sense of fraternity among all Indians through his character Chakradhar in this way, “Mai to neeti ko hi dharm samajhta hun, aur sabhi sampradayon ki neeti ek si hai [. . .] bure Hindu se achha Muslim utna hi achhha hai, jitna bure Muslim se achha Hindu” (42). He means to say that man is great by his deed rather than the religion that he adopts. In this sense, Premchand’s

contribution for communal fraternity is really admirable in his novel. *Kayakalp* on the other hand, presents the subordinated position of traditional Hindu women who never think to oppose their husband. They consider to oppose their husband is equal to destroy *their* life.

His novel *Pratigya* (1906), talks about one of the major issue of the society. That is the problem of widow marriage. He has presented heart rendered condition of the widow in the society. It beautifully presents how widows are misbehaved and tortured in the society and how they are compelled to live deserted life alone in the name of culture. To the next side, he has tried to offer a new angle to look at the widows through the character Amrit Rai who having the enough courage challenges the outdated tradition and decides to marry a widow. The novel *Gaban* (1930), depicts the problems of the middle class people. It presents how the middle class people face the economic crisis in the name of tradition and culture and how they are compelled to become corrupt to overcome such economic crisis.

Nirmala, translated in English as *The Second Wife*, is one of the finest pieces of writing which is based on the realistic ground. He has been quite successful to use the life like characters, dialogues and events along with the contemporary issues in *Nirmala*. Suffering of the women under the patriarchal social structure is heart touching. Some of the general issues depicted in the novel are poverty, dowry system, child marriage, patriarchy etc. *Nirmala* is the greatest victim of the patriarchy. Sudha, Kalyani, Rukmini are also equally tortured by patriarchal system in the novel. The fate they have been compelled to bear is resulted from the male dominated society. Along with all these issues, this research aims to explore the issue of masculinity in crisis in the novel.

Nirmala has drawn the concentration of numerous scholars and critics since its production in 1928. It is highly prosperous for achieving the scholarly criticism from multiple perspectives. Indarnath Madan, a distinguished critic regarding the evaluation of Premchand's *Nirmala*, notices the social evil of dowry system which destroys the life of many Nirmalas in India because of being unable to offer enough dowry in their marriage. So, he thinks that dowry is the root cause of all tragic situations in *Nirmala* and says, "Premchand has exposed the merciless orthodox system of dowry which is the root cause of the tragedy in *Nirmala*" (50).

Dr. Pratap Narayan Tondon, in his book *Premchand*, emphasizes the social reality represented in the novel and argues: " *Nirmala* has secured the best position in all social tragic novels by Premchand. It has represented the true reality of the society where the daughters are forced for mismatched marriage due the lack of dowry" (My translation 44).

One of the renowned critics Bishwambhar Manav reviews the psychological tension growing inside the major character Nirmala and says, "*Nirmala* is the heart touching story of the woman life. It is a short great tragedy which depicts the female character Nirmala whose whole life is destroyed due to the psychological conflict caused by child, mismatched marriage" (My translation 101).

Amrit Rai, in his book *Premchand, His Life and Times*, gives his opinion:

There can be no question that the agony of the suffering of a woman's life is epitomized in this work in a way that Premchand wasn't able to achieve in any other work of his either before or after. The cruel hypocrisy of society, the evils of dowry , the utter helplessness, loneliness of a widow and the complications upon complications

resulting from an incompatible match, all come vividly to life and found a voice in this book, *Nirmala*. (228)

In this way, Rai focuses on not only a single cause of women's suffering in the novel but he also focuses on the various causes of their sufferings such as hypocrisy, dowry, incompatible/child marriage etc. He also focuses on the pitiable condition of widow. He admires Premchand for being successful to capture the most tragic events in the novel that has never been his other works.

Dr. Nagaendra studies the socio-economic condition of the women in *Nirmala* and says: "In *Nirmala*, there is the blocks of social prejudices get linked up with socio-economic motivation and political set-up controlling the value system of that period" (104).

Along with the issue of female subordination, the critic Charu Gupta studies the novel through the perspective of the contradiction between haves and have nots. He opines:

This is not to say that these writers consider colonialism to be the chief and may be the only enemy in Indian society. Premchand realized that language of transformation of society and complete articulation of it required the dismantling of the colonial economy within and without. It is precisely for this reason that Premchand attacked the semi-feudal system equally and strongly depicted the contradiction between the landlords and the peasantry. (9)

He means to say that Indian society is suffered not only because of the colonial rule but also by the native feudal like Bhalchandra Sinha who mistreats his workers. In this respect, this novel depicts the struggle between haves and have nots.

The famous Hindi literary critic Dr. Ganga Prasad Vimal studies the realistic aspect of the novel and says, "The realistic dramatization of the family events is peculiarly Indian but based on universal human experience, transcending geographical boundaries and barriers of culture [. . .] a story of Indian ethos and cultural impact" (4).

Sara Rai regarding the marvelous use of fantasy in the novel *Nirmala* by Premchand says:

The novel makes the progress of literary revolution entered by Premchand whereby realism and social relevance replaced the fantasy genre as central theme in Hindi literature [. . .] human jealousy, regret, anger and insecurity interplay with each other to give the novel its own ruthless logic, which carries it forward to the ultimate tragedy. (33)

These lines too, praise the perfect skill of Premchand to use the fantasy which displays the life like tragic events that may happen in human life because of their emotions.

Through the quick survey upon the issue discussed by the various critics, it can be said that *Nirmala*, doubtlessly, has been able to achieve the multiple perspective within the single novel. This research paper has attempted to add one more issue depicted in the novel which is no more noticed by anyone. Though, this project does not ignore the patriarchal domination in the society, it also minutely examines the struggle of the male characters after the crisis of their traditional identity of masculinity. In short, this research paper, studying the masculinity in crisis, its causes and consequences, claims that it is different and absolutely a new kind of research.

This project work especially based on the theory of masculinity along with the gender studies pays the deep concentration upon masculinity in crisis in Premchand's *Nirmala*. In order to make this research convenient and to expose the theme of masculinity in crisis effectively, this research work has been divided into three main sections. The first section of this research paper presents an introduction which gives the overall outlines of the research work. It begins with the hypothesis, statement of the problem, general introduction of the theory of masculinity, thematic introduction of the author and his works, literary review upon his novel *Nirmala*, point of departure and the thesis sketch. Similarly, the second chapter contains the textual analysis with the application of the methodology. It depicts the sufficient evidences from the text and presents how masculinity is in crisis. The third chapter concludes the whole project work in short and aims to offer a new parameter to look upon the position of male and female within the society as well as it aims to give the sense of urgency of redefining the traditional notion of masculinity.

II. Masculinity in crisis in Premchand's *Nirmala*

This section, along with the critical conceptual tools named 'masculinity', analyzes the novel *Nirmala* by Premchand in order to expose the issue of 'masculinity in crisis'. Almost all the male characters in *Nirmala* fail to correspond the masculine standard as marked by the conventional masculinity. This research mainly focuses the failure of four male characters including the protagonist Munshi Totaram to perform the masculine role especially within their family. Their failure has been tried to study especially on the basis of family management, emotion, husband-wife relation etc. Those male characters in spite of being the head of the family not only lose their rationality, responsibility and functionality but also fail to have dominant role over their wives. The expositions of cowardice figure of husbands are really pathetic in the novel. The female characters of the novel are more rational than males. The strong resistance of female is not the major cause of the crisis of masculinity throughout the whole novel rather the utter failure of their own masculine qualities because of their irrationality is the main cause of their masculinity in crisis. In most of the cases, male characters' personal loopholes have pushed their masculine identity in crisis. Hence, this section mainly depicts those causes of crisis of masculinity in details.

Though the scholarly attempts have been launched recently to define the masculinity through the new angle, at this moment, this research goes with the hegemonic masculinity which is internalized by most of the male characters in *Nirmala*. This form of hegemonic masculinity is implanted in most of the Indian's psychology by British when they were ruling there. Approving this point, R.W. Connel in his essay, "The History of Masculinity" says, "The British in India constructed different images of masculinity for different peoples under their rule" (254). In this sense, the characters of this novel have also been influenced by British

model of gentry masculinity. Being heavily influenced by such notion of masculinity, the male characters in the novel tend to rule upon their wives in the family. They consider that they are the ruler of the family. They must be obeyed and supported in each task they do. They always think that they are superior to their wives in each field. Hence, they should not take any suggestion given by them (their wives). They think doing according to their wives' suggestion is nothing more than being a puppet in their hands. Udayabhan, one of the representative male characters of hegemonic masculinity in a debate with his wife, expresses, "Such men will be different who dance to their wife's wishes" (9). This line explicitly shows the psychological build up of the men. They think that doing something as suggested by their wife means being inferior to them which is not acceptable for them (males).

Males, just because of having so called masculinity, divide the works in two spheres. They are domestic sphere and economic, socio-political sphere. In this division, they offer the domestic affairs to the women and adopt the socio-political, economic responsibilities themselves. In this respect, R. W. Connel in his essay "The History of Masculinity" says, "gentry masculinity had been part of the historical dynamic that led to a key institution of bourgeois culture, the ideology and practice of "separate spheres" . This defined a domestic sphere of action for women, contrasted with a sphere of economic and political action for men" (252). Connel, through these lines, criticizes gentry masculinity as the institution of bourgeois culture that creates hierarchy between males and females. Being influenced by this culture, gentry masculinity tries to keep the gap by centralizing women in the domestic affairs and males to the socio-political and economic affairs.

The novel also carries the agents of gentry masculinity. Udayabhan is the most suitable character who fits best in the Connel's analysis of the division of two spheres.

Udayabhan gives no space to his wife to interfere in his work and says, "I earn the money and have a right to spend it the way I wish. No one has a right to say anything" (9). His attitude towards his wife clearly displays that how his concept is framed by the hegemonic masculinity. This example shows that the women are limited within the domestic affairs like cooking, washing, cleaning, taking care of children etc but they are not offered any role to pay their arguments in economic and socio-political affairs either in the family or in the society.

Masculinity is the product of patriarchy to great extent. It usually undermines women's empowerment. It always looks the women through the eyes of patriarchy which gives no respect and values to women. Patriarchy commodifies women. Males are considered as the agents of patriarchy who, with the belief of having masculine power, subordinate and marginalize the women. In this patriarchal system, women are treated not as a being but as an object. She has no better position than a servant in a family. This kind of patriarchal internalization could be seen in the novel *Nirmala*. The way of behave upon the female characters like Kalyani, Rukmini and *Nirmala* can be documented as the strong evidence to prove the devalorization of female in patriarchy. They are conducted in the way of maid or an object. Kalyani, with high reasoning power, suggests her husband about the less expense in their daughter's marriage but Udayabhan offers no any respect to her advice. He wants to confine her only in the service of family. Kalyani understands the way she is behaved. She also realizes her position in the family and says. "I am only a servant and my opinion holds no value" (9). In this context, it can be analyzed the subjugation of women in patriarchal social structure.

The next female character Rukmini's position is pathetic in the novel. She is also the major victim of patriarchy. She is living a widow life in her brother,

Totaram's house. Here, the question arises, Totaram being a wizard easily marries a young girl but why is she compelled to remain a widow whole over her life? This is an unjust system constructed by patriarchy. On the other hand, Rukmini is frequently reminded that the house where she is living is not hers. She has been kindly given a narrow space there where she has to spend her days in the service of her brother and his sons. Totaram, in the mid of conversation with his wife, says, "I will see to it today itself. I will tell her clearly that she has to keep her remarks herself if she wants to stay here, or else she can leave. She is here only to help you [. . .] The boys needed a woman to look after them, so I brought her" (40). These lines doubtlessly demonstrate the authority of a male over female. Rukmini, just because of being female, is treated in this way. His expression to her, sounds as if she is not her sister but a cheap servant kept to look after his house.

Similarly, Nirmala is the wretched woman who is most suffered by patriarchy. She has been treated just as an animal since her childhood. She has no right over her body. She is compelled to marry with an aged person without asking her once. Totaram, the aged father of three sons, married Nirmala not because of necessity but just to roll over her body for sexual satisfaction.

His expectation after marrying Nirmala comes out in a conversation with his friend Nayansukh Ram in this way, "I had thought I would enjoy the pleasure of life for a few more year" (45). This piece of dialogue exposes the inner motif of Totaram for marrying Nirmala. His friend, Nayansukh Ram who tends to behave with the female like the clothes that he goes on changing. He says, "There is no better way to feel young again than to marry and get a new partner. Here my life is like hell. My wife sticks to me and never leaves me. I wish marry again" (45). Through these lines, he expresses the males' will to commodify the women. Remarriage is absolutely

impossible for women but for men, it is very simple like changing the clothes. This cruel hypocritic tendency is the product of patriarchy in their own favor. Furthermore, Nirmala is victimized because of her husband's jealous nature. He suspects her illegal relation with his elder son Mahsaram. The later part of the novel revolves around the outcomes of jealous nature of Totaram.

The brief observation over the treatment upon the women by patriarchy shows that it is intolerable. The excessive domination of the women ultimately reminds them their identity and arise the sense of rebellion which at last pushes the masculine power into crisis. This sense of identification of selfhood breaks all hierarchy between male and female constructed by patriarchy. This sense of rebellion came out with the movement in the history of women liberation known as feminism. In this regard, it can be said that feminism is the result of intolerable domination of males upon them. It came into existence with the purpose to challenge the male made social structure. As a result males were compelled to think seriously to save their power in the society and they gave birth to the concept of masculinity. It means to say that when the women came up with an awareness that they have been falsely programmed to consider themselves as the servants, toys, sex objects, nourishers etc, they started to revolt and males were alarmed to hold up their patriarchal ethos in the society.

This concept of masculinity is also the product of male psychology. They listed a kind of human qualities like rational, protective, leading, domineering, aggressive, active, independent, competitive, factual, judgmental, self controlled, courageous etc, in one group and gave it the name 'masculinity'. Similarly, they listed the other kind of qualities like emotional, irrational, dominated, passive, dependent, coward etc. in another group and named it femininity. After dividing the human qualities into two group, males started to exercise with the masculine qualities but in

some of the cases, because of women's revolt and in other cases, because of being failure to adopt the self-constructed masculine qualities, their masculine identify fell into crisis. Hence, the idea of masculinity in crisis came into existence. This issue masculinity in crisis is considered to be the problem of whole male society now. So, being centralized upon the theory of masculinity, this research explores the masculinity in crisis in the novel *Nirmala*.

On the basis of the division of human qualities such as masculine and feminine, a man to be called masculine should have all those masculine qualities like rational, brave, protective, action oriented, domineering etc. In this regard, Carrigan, Connel and Lee in their joint essay "Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity" say, "What does it mean to be masculine? It means, obviously, holding norms [. . .] Male norms stress values such as courage, mastery, technological skill, group solidarity, adventure and a considerable amount of toughness in mind and body" (104). These lines mark the boundary capturing the certain masculine qualities within to be a masculine.

In terms of courage and considerable amount of toughness in mind and body, most of the male characters in *Nirmala* are far away. They are unsuccessful to have enough bravery and toughness in their mind and body. They have exposed the irrationality, emotionality and cowardiceness which are marked as the feminine qualities. For instance, one of the male characters Udayabhan is less rational than his wife Kalyani. It can be well observed in the dialogue between them,

Kalyani, "I think that you should not spend more than five thousand rupees. There are no savings, we are dependent on borrowed money, so why should we borrow so much that we spend our whole life repaying it. I have other children also; we have to think about them too."

Udaybhan, "I earn the money and have a right to spend it the way I wish. No one has a right to say anything." (9)

This conversation between Kalyani and Udaybhan, gives the strong proof that Kalyani, a female, has better rational power than her husband, a male. She is foresighted and suggests him not to spend much in their daughter's marriage but Udaybhan an irrational figure makes the useless comment over her suggestion. In this sense, it can be said that Udaybhan, being a male, lacks the considerable amount of toughness in mind as said by Carrigan, Connell and Lee. In this same conversation, we can observe one more weakness of Udaybhan that undermines his masculinity. He is no more successful to earn enough money to manage his family and to spend in his daughter's marriage. He is dependent on others to do so. In this sense, he loses the masculine quality of independency.

According to the criteria that have been marked by the traditional masculinity, a male have dominant role in the family. He must be able to rule over the females. Referring to the views of Locke and Filmer about the foundational nature of wife's subjugation, Carole Patesman in his essay "The Fraternal Social Contract" says, "The husband is naturally abler and the stronger, so he must rule upon his wife" (123). He means to say that both Locke and Filmer believe that a wife's subjugation has foundation in nature. Naturally, the males are more superior to the females because of their ability and strength. Just because of having these qualities, a husband must rule upon the woman. The husband who cannot rule upon his wife is no more masculine.

On the basis of this view of masculinity, we can observe the role of Udayabhan in his family. He is no longer able to rule upon his wife. He wanted his wife to do the things as he wishes but because of the identification of her self-value in

the family, his wife does not agree to bear her husband's domination. She shows her rebellious nature in the dialogues with her husband in this way:

Kalyani, "If I say anything you get angry as if I am only a servant and my opinion holds no value. The more I keep quiet the more you push me to the corner.

Udayabhan, "Then am I your slave?"

Kalyani, "Am I your mistress?"

Udaybhan, "Such man will be different who dance to their wife's wishes."

Kalyani, "And such women will be different who keep tolerating humiliation."

Udaybhan, "I earn the money and have a right to spend it the way I wish. No one has a right to say anything."

Kalyani, "Then manage your household yourself. I will not live in a house where my opinion has no value. I have as much as right on this household as you do. If you are the king unto yourself, I am the queen unto myself. Keep your house I will earn enough to feed myself." (9)

This debate between Kalyani and Udaybhan shows that Udaybhan being a husband of the family has no domineering role. He is completely failure to rule upon his wife.

Rather than having the feminine qualities such as submissive and dominated, his wife has got the powerful voice. She is not ready to serve her husband as the servant. She wants the equal position to her husband in the family. She is ready to leave the house rather than tolerating the humiliation.

Males always want their wives in the position as servant. They, through the process of socialization, internalize the roles of women and men as if it is natural.

They do so just to get advantages on their behalf. They don't care about the women's self-esteem but only think about themselves. Appropriating this view, Carrigan, Connell and Lee say that ". . . the overwhelmingly important reason is that most men benefit from the subordination of women, and hegemonic masculinity is centrally connected with the institutionalization of men's dominance over women" (113). The essayists believe that males in the society always want the benefit by subordinating the women. They prefer women always being engaged in their service. Through the construction as gender role, they penetrate the sense in women's consciousness that they are for the service of their husband and it is usual. Udaybhan, being a representative character of such hegemonic masculinity, also prefers his wife in the position of servant but the consciousness about her self-identification forced her to revolt against the domination. Her revolt at last threatened the masculine identity of Udaybhan.

The notion of masculinity believes that a man should behave in male like way. Having courage is one of the essential conditions of masculinity. The greatest thing that undermines masculinity is cowardiceness. To be a masculine one should have adequate amount of courage. He must be ready to face each challenges that may appear in his life. The person who tries to escape from the problems, no longer remains a masculine. Martin Mills and Bob Lingard say, "Masculinity has changed and been subject to crisis during the last two hundred years. As a result, some men are passive in their acceptance and some of them try to escape from their family" (204). These essayists have well observed the condition of masculinity since last two hundred years. They claim that masculinity, since then, is in crisis and one of the result because of the crisis of masculinity is the adoption of escapist mentality by the

males. When they feel that their self-esteem is injured, they decide to leave their home in a cowardice way. This process of escaping undermines masculinity.

Udaybhan is one of the male characters who has adopted this easy escape when he becomes unable to rule over his wife. Here are the lines that represent his escapist mentality:

I am surprised, how she spoke so rudely with me. It seems as if she has no love for me, or maybe she feels I am so attached that she will treat me whatever she wants and I will still not leave the house. To hell with such a house, such terrible creatures live here. Is this home or hell?"

(12)

These lines prove that now Udaybhan being a male fails to confirm the masculine values. He decides to leave the home rather than making him bold enough to make his control over his wife. He is alarmed because of the conduct of his wife to him. His irresponsible and immature decision of running away from his family is the strong evidence of his cowardiceness that pushes his masculinity into crisis.

Udaybhan fails to make his dominant role not only with in the domestic arena but also out of it. In terms of physical strength or potentiality, his masculinity is in crisis. Regarding the physical strength or potentiality that a man should have to get his identity as masculine, R.W. Connell in his essay "The History of Masculinity" says, "Willingness to face an opponent in a potentially lethal one-to-one combat is a key test of gentry masculinity" (249). In this way, Connell emphasizes one of the key features for one to be called masculine. He believes that a man who has no willingness and potentiality to fight with his opponent in a fight loses his masculinity. At this point, Udaybhan fails to combat with his enemy. His failure can be represented in these lines. "As soon as three was uttered Babu Sahib was hit on the head with the

stick with a strong and calculated stroke. He just could utter, Oh! He has killed me”(14). These lines display that Udaybhan could do nothing to save himself from his enemy. Because of his physical weakness, he could not fight with his enemy and his enemy, Matai, killed him. According to Connell's definition of gentry masculinity, Udaybhan could not correspond the masculine quality. Hence, he is no more masculine.

To sum up, Udaybhan can be introduced as one of the major male character in the novel whose masculinity is in crisis to great extent. The masculine qualities such as domineering, rational, responsible, mature, courageous etc. do not contain within him. He is not successful to hold up this masculine ethos rather he has shown irrational, irresponsible, immature and cowardice manner in the novel.

Bhalchandra Sinha is the next male character whose masculinity is also in crisis. He does not have domineering role in his family. He is the head of the family but he does not think by his mind. He is a hypocrite who speaks one thing but keeps something different in his heart. He is one of the greedy fellows who want a lot of dowry in the marriage of his son. With the greed of earning lots of dowry, he confirms his son's marriage with Nirmala, the daughter of Udaybhan but just after the death of Udaybhan, he rejects the marriage. At this point, the inconsistency in his decision undermines his masculinity. He depends on his wife for making the decision. Most of the time, he does as his wife says him to do. He cannot impose his decision upon her. His disability to keep his wife under his control can be well observed in this dialogue spoken by him, “It's not good to go back to on your word, nobody may say anything directly but we will become unpopular. But I am helpless because of your decision” (21). This dialogue shows that Bhalchandra does everything as per the decision of his wife.

He further says, "You had been telling me repeatedly that I will not have relations with that family and now that I have convinced him you want me to change the decision and make me go back on my word" (22). Poor Bhalchandra helplessly asserts how he has been asked to change the decision frequently by his wife. He, rather than being firm in his decision, goes on changing as said by his wife. He does not seem consistent in his decision, both of these inconsistencies and dependency upon his wife for the decision can be documented as the evidence to prove his masculinity in crisis.

Munshi Totaram is the major figure of the novel who does not have masculine qualities at all. Though he is the only bread winner of the family, he is unsuccessful by all sides. His failure can be observed in various aspects like family management, sexual satisfaction to his wife, protecting his family etc. His irresponsibility, immaturity and jealousy are the root cause of the problem in the family. Neither could he be a successful father nor a husband. He gets no any respect in his family.

Traditional concept of masculinity assumes that the husband is the head of the family. He is expected to support, protect, control, convince and provide all necessities in the family. Appropriating this idea, Roland F. Levant in *The Journals of Men's Studies* says, "The masculinity crisis involves the collapse of the basic pattern by which men have traditionally fulfilled the code for masculine role [. . .] The loss of good provider role has been the central factor in the development of the masculinity in crisis" (2). The essayist claims that a man is the responsible person of the family. He has given the role of good provider. He should be able to establish himself to this role by providing good environment to the family members. The moment when he cannot perform his assigned role properly, his masculinity falls in crisis.

Taking this point as the major premise, it can be said that Totaram is no more successful to fulfill the code for masculine role. He is failure to assign the role of good provider to his family. To get enjoyment for few years more he marries a girl of fifteen though he is thirty five. After the marriage, he could not manage his family. His second marriage brings the chaos and disorder in the family. The family members begin to quarrel with each-other but Totaram can do nothing to settle this worse situation. He does not have good relation with his wife, sister and his sons. He always engages him to make his wife happy but does not care his own sons. Therefore, he himself becomes the cause of quarrel and disintegration in the family

Oxford Paperback Thesaurus defines masculinity as "virile, macho, manly, all-male, muscular, muscle, strong, strapping, well built, rugged, robust, brawny, powerful, red blooded, vigorous" (520). This very definition of masculinity shows some determining qualities to be a masculine. The person must be well built, powerful and strong to be masculine.

Totaram, in this regard, is far away to hold up these masculine values. Introducing Totaram to the reader, the narrator says, "Though he has not crossed forty years, his hair was graying due to the hard work he had to put in as a lawyer. He had no time to exercise, as a result of which his tummy was protruding. Though he was heftily built he constantly some health problems" (37). These lines show the poor physical built of Totaram. To be a masculine he should have well built, strong, powerful and muscular body but he has very ugly look and poor health because of which he cannot impraise his wife. He does many futile attempts to make his wife happy. Here are few lines that depict his numerous attempts to win her heart, "Totaram was worldly wise. He knew his weaknesses and tried to compensate by giving gift and keeping her happy" (37). These lines clearly state that Totaram has

some weaknesses to be a masculine figure. He, being a learned man, understands that the young girls like his wife can be made happy by giving gifts. So, he buys some gifts for her, takes her to the theatres, movie halls and circus shows. But Nirmala does not feel easy to be sitting, talking and laughing with him. She does not show any sign of happiness for his all these attempts. It is said, "She normally tried to avoid him, and as soon as she was with him, her natural happiness disappeared" (30). In this sense, Nirmala indirectly rejects those offerings of Totaram.

Totaram goes on experimenting various tricks to make her happy one after another. When he finds his gifts and taking her to the theatres, movies and circus not working on his behalf, he starts to show a lot of affection to her. The way he tried to approach his purpose is justified through these lines, "Vakil Sahib had inferred, based on his knowledge as happy married life that one must show a lot of affection to the young girl. To put one's heart at her feet was the way to control her completely" (30). These lines expose the miserable condition of Totaram who is busy to win the heart of his wife through various attempts. The way he adopts to make her happy does not come under the masculine attempt. A masculist does nothing to make his wife happy but his well built personality, rationality and responsibility towards her is enough to do so. Poor Totaram applies the numerous formulas to win her heart but fails to achieve his mission.

In this regard, Roger Lancaster says, "Cats that fail to catch mice, dogs that fail to bark, boys who fail to fight and men who fail in their pursuit of a woman: all are reproached with the term" (40). He means to say that all the cats, dogs, boys and men should have their respective qualities. Just as there is no meaning of being cats, dogs and boys losing their respective qualities, in the same way there is no meaning of being men without having male like quality. He argues that a man must be able to

pursuit his wife otherwise he will be labeled with a term feminine. At this point, Totaram holds no more masculine values. He does several attempt in childish was to make his wife happy. But all his attempts give no positive result.

Nirmala, in one way, was completely frustrated because of being trapped into the cruel hypocrisy of patriarchy. She was compelled to marry with a man of her father's age. In such condition, how she could be happy but poor Totaram thinks that women can be made happy by love, affection and material luxuries. This kind of concept is internalized by most of the males and females in the society. Indicating to this kind of belief, Marry Wollstonecraft in her essay "A Vindication of Rights of Woman" says:

Women were subjected by ignorance to their sensation, and only taught to look for happiness in love, refine on sensual feelings and adopt metaphysical notions respecting that passion, which lead them shamefully to neglect the duties of life and frequently in the midst of their sublime refinements they plump into actual voice." (390)

Wollstonecraft, through these lines, means to say that women are taught to ignore their personal feelings and are taught to be satisfied with the love and affection. Internalizing this ethos, male also try to rule over them through the love.

In this regard, Totaram being a representative male character of patriarchy tends to rule over his young and beautiful wife through the attemption of constant love. The narrator, indicating to this belief of Totaram, says, "With that in mind Vakil Sahib would constantly keep pouring his affection of Nirmala" (30). His attempts which are made to make her happy seem so immature and childish. He does a lot to accomplish his purpose but ultimately it turns into useless attempts. At this point, he becomes like a cat that cannot catch the mice, like a dog that cannot bark, like a boy

who cannot fight and like a man who cannot pursue his wife. His continuous failure to satisfy her heart is quoted in these lines:

The same words, if spoken by some young man would have filled her heart with love and passion. But they felt like arrows piercing her heart when they come out from Vakil Sahib's mouth [. . .] But what she did not like at all was Totaram's company. She felt that he did not deserve her beauty and charm. (30)

These lines show Totaram's failure to woo his wife. The words of love spoken by him to persuade her, turns into arrows that give her pain rather than pleasure. She does not think that the poor, old and ugly man deserves her beauty and charm. So, she does not like his company at all. In this context Totaram's masculinity constantly fail to accomplish his mission.

Totaram, with a dying hope, runs after many ideas that may please his wife. After being failure to overcome her heart with the affection, he thinks to try once with the money. He makes her lady of the house and gives her the money to handle but Nirmala understands all those things. She also realizes how she has been compelled to live her life with the pity offered by her husband in such hypocrite, cruel patriarchal society. Michael kennel in his essay "The Birth of Self- Made Man" gives the strong remarks that portrait the condition of Nirmala very well. He says, "The man who, under pretensions of marriage can plant thorns in the bosom of an innocent, unsuspecting girl is more detestable than a common robber" (136). These lines illustrate that how the poor and innocent girls are trapped in the network of hypocrite patriarchal society and how they, in the name of marriage and rescue, are exploited. For the essayist, such male partners are more dangerous than the common robber.

Regarding the story of *Nirmala*, Totaram is the representative male agent of same hypocrite society. He marrying Nirmala, gives the feeling to all as if he has rescued her from the problem of dowry. Nirmala understands well that she is going to be exploited in the name of marriage but she could do nothing because she had no hope to destroy the powerful network of patriarchy. After marriage, her rebellious thought goes on getting the shape. The more she thinks the more she becomes rebellious. Her surging rebellious nature that comes in her thought can be seen in these lines, "She felt a burning flame inside her and wished to set the whole house on fire"(39). Nirmala finds herself as the prey on the hand of patriarchy. Her fury against this society does not allow her to love Totaram. So, she never shows any sign of happiness to the attempts made by him.

Though there is no sign of success to please his wife, poor Totaram goes on changing the tricks with a faint hope. He goes with his friend Nayansukh Ram and pours his emotions as if he is someone who can solve his problem. Some of the humorous tips given by his friend to please her can be seen in these lines:

Nayansukh Ram, "What are you saying? It is not difficult to please and control young girls. Take them for a few outings, Praise their beauty and they will be under your thumb."

Totaram, "I have tried it and have failed."

Nayansukh, "Then pretend to be young, get rid of this loose feeting coat, wear a fitting achakan and palatal pyzama, wear surma in your eyes and apply Hina oil to your hair [. . .] Learn good number of ghazals and recite the poetic shers at appropriate time." (46-47)

Totaram gets impraised by the suggestion given by his friend and gradually he starts changing. First he dyes his hair, then he gets the surma for the eyes and in two

months his whole appearance changed. He starts to recite shers of ghazals and poetic lines. At this time he has great hope to get victory over his mission but all this moves to the wrong direction. Nirmala gets worried that he might be suffering from a disease or some sort of madness.

Once again going back to *Oxford Paperback Thesaurus* and Carrigan, Connell and Lee, we can analyze Totaram's masculinity in crisis. *Oxford Paperback Thesaurus* emphasizes 'well built' of a man and Carrigan, Connell and Lee emphasize 'toughness in body' to be masculine. Both of these merits the man should possess to make his identity as masculine do not belong to Totaram. The narrator depicts his physical ugliness in this way, "Despite having healthy food, the wrinkles on his cheeks were clearly visible. Stomach, though tightly wrapped by the waistband was protruding like a stubborn horse's face [. . .] How different they were from each-other. One was like a diamond studded palace and the other, the ruins of a house" (51). These lines state that when Totaram looks at the mirror, he finds his ugliness. He is like a ruined house in front of enchanting beauty of his wife. After this evaluation, it is stated, "He moved away from the mirror and felt hatred towards himself" (52). At this moment, he seems quite hopeless. Because of not having well built personality or toughness in body, he fails to impress his wife and ultimately to the state of hopelessness.

Regarding this review, we can make two major arguments that undermine the masculinity of Totaram. One, the way which he goes on for making his wife happy is humorous, childish and immature. The next, the ultimate failure and hopelessness along with his poor physical build. Through both of these angles Totaram is unsuccessful to maintain his masculine position.

Roger Lancaster, in his essay "Subject Honor, Object Shame", regarding the position of a man in the relation between men and women, says, "If a man fails to maintain the upper hand in his relations with women, his demeanor might well be judged passive, and he may be stigmatized [. . .] Whoever fails to maintain and aggressively masculine front will be teased, ridiculed and, ultimately stigmatized" (48). Lancaster means to say that a man must be able to ensure his position at the top in the relation with his wife. The man who can't rule over his wife using his masculine power his masculinity becomes the part of laughter. It will be teased, ridiculed and stigmatized.

On the basis of this view of Lancaster, it can be said that Totaram is such a male character who is no more successful to maintain the upper hand in the relation with his wife. He spends most of the time running to and fro of his wife. Considering the activities he does to please his wife, it can be said that he had no more masculine power to rule over his wife. Hence, his masculinity is teased, ridiculed and stigmatized. When his sister Rukmini realizes that he is dancing on the thumb of his wife, she teases him in this way, "This girl is making you dance on her fingers. You did not ask anything, she just said something and you like wooden toy soldiers are ready with your sword" (41). Through these lines, Rukmini flashes out the miserable condition of Totaram's masculinity. Being a male, he has not been able to control his wife but he is doing everything as per the command of his wife. She compares him with an inanimate object like wooden toy soldier who does nothing using his mind. This remark made to Totaram, teases and ridicules his masculinity. Thus, his masculinity is ultimately stigmatized.

Tulsi Ram Poudel, in his book *Models of Society*, categorizes the qualities that a male and female should have. He says:

Active , aggressive, rational, strong, independent, hard, high sexuality, mechanical, competitive, factual, messy, judgmental are terms which are related with male and passive, tolerate, emotional , weak, dependent, soft, low sexuality, artsy, co-operative, subordinate, intuitive, neat and clean and then supportive with female. (146)

On the basis of the categorization of these qualities, it can be said that the man, along with various masculine traits, is considered to be judgmental. The moment when a man loses his power of judgment, he also loses his masculinity. In our society, the man is considered as the head of the family. He is expected to behave equally with everyone. He must have the ability to make sensible decision. He must be able to stand himself on the position of 'Judgment of Solomon'.

In this respect, Totaram lacks the power of judgment. The way he behaves with his sister does not seem sensible. His only purpose is to please his wife at any cost. Hence, he does not listen anyone and goes on scolding his sister frequently. Rukmini addresses him with a word 'blind' because of losing his power of sensible decision. She says, "It is truly said - A man becomes blind when he gets a new wife" (42). This remark criticizes the wrong-doing of Totaram. Being the head of the family, he does not care for others' opinion and only listens to his wife. Therefore, he loses the respect from his sister and is ridiculed as the blind man.

Courage is one of the defining features of a man. A person who is coward is labelled with the term feminine. M.H. Abrams divides masculine and feminine traits in this way, "The masculine in our culture has come to be identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative; the feminine by systematic oppositions to such traits has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional" (235). Taking the adventure or courage as one of the most important

defining feature of masculinity, we can say that Totaram is not a masculine figure. He is so timid or coward. The story which he creates to show his bravery is quite humorous. According to his story, he could get victory over three robbers who were with swords. He had only a stick but using his bravery he could easily defeat them. It was his self-created story to show his masculine power with the purpose of his wife. But his timid figure comes out when there comes a real snake in his house. The narrator narrates his cowardiceness in this way, “Munshiji left the room but again stopped in the verandah. He found it difficult to raise even a step as fear gripped him and his heart beat increased. He thought, snakes are anger prone, if it bites, I may lose my life” (49). These lines show that Totaram who longs for bravery, in fact, is coward. When he goes to his neighbors to fetch a spear to kill a snake, his elder son Manasram has already killed a snake with a stick.

The narrator further exposes his cowardice figure in this way, “The minute he saw Marsaram with the snake he screamed in fear. But he quickly controlled himself” (50). These lines prove that his elder son is more courageous than him. Totaram is timid character but he boasts for having enough courage. He pretends of being courageous and says, “I have killed several snakes. So many I have crushed with my hand” (50). This saying of him is very humorous. The person who was just trembling with fear listening about a snake is boasting about killing of such several snakes with his bare hands is laughter provoking. Listening to this false story of Totaram, his sister Rukmini teases him saying, “Forget it we have seen your bravery” (50). At this point, Totaram feels ashamed because of not having masculine traits. His cowardiceness teases himself. In this sense, Totaram's masculinity is under crisis because of not having enough courage that a man should have.

The real (masculine) man is believed to be guided by the reason/rationality. When he loses his reasoning power and goes with the emotionality, he himself becomes the barrier of his masculinity. He must think a lot using his reason about the matter and finally, he should go to the conclusion. The hasty generalization without the good reasoning seems immature which is no more the masculine quality. In this regard, Totaram does not possess the masculine trait. He does not have the good reasoning power. Being influenced by his emotions he becomes jealous to his own sons. His immaturity comes out when he suspects his son Mansaram having an illegal relationship with his stepmother, Nirmala. He gets jealous when he knows that Mansaram teaches her English. His nature of jealousy can be seen in these lines:

He felt angry with himself, as to why did he not arrange for this son of his to live outside the house. He could realize now why madam looked so happy these days. Previously the room was never so decorated, she was also indifferent to her appearances, but now things had changed completely. (57)

These lines expose the immature and jealous nature of Totaram. He, without thinking properly, starts to suspect his wife.

Roger Lancaster believes that a man always tries to keep himself on the upper level in comparison to other males. When he fails to do so, his masculinity comes in crisis. Indicating to this belief he says, "If he is seen as being emotionally vulnerable to another man- his own masculinity would be undermined" (48). He means to say that the man should be emotionally stronger vis-a-vis other males. If a man finds himself emotionally weaker than others, his masculinity is undermined. Totaram, in this respect, finds himself emotionally vulnerable in comparison to his son Mansaram. Because of having vulnerable psychology, his emotion leads him to the state of

suspicion and jealousy. The moment when he was suffering for being unable to please his wife by all means, he finds Mansaram being succeeded to do so in a single attempt. Hence, he feels himself weaker than his son and his jealousy along with his anger against his son comes out. The question he makes to his wife about the presence of Mansaram to teach her is full of suspicion and jealousy. He asks, "Does he teach you only once in a day or several times?" (58). This question seems so simple on the surface but it has been asked with double intentions. In deeper level it is full of suspicion about the illegal relationship between his son and his wife. This jealousy becomes the major cause that makes him immature and irresponsible father and the doom of his family.

Because of excessive jealousy, Totaram loses his reasoning power. The father who should be protective to their children turns into an enemy of them. He decides to turn his son out of the family. He tries to settle him in the hostel. He talks to the headmaster and a clerk but because of not having space in hostel, they could not help him. He decides to give the bribe to arrange the seat for his son but the clerk laughs at him and says, "Munshiji, this is not your court, if the headmaster even suspects such a suggestion you would be in trouble" (59). At this moment, he feels losing all respects in front of the clerk. He feels being insulted and returns back. The narrator shows his failure in this way, "Poor Munshiji came home without completing his mission. He felt upset and irritated" (59). These lines prove the failure of Totaram not only within the family but also in the society. He feels like a defeated soldier in the battle and his main opponent was his son. The narrator further says, "As he entered Mansarama was leaving for school. He looked at him, his eyes red with anger as if he was an enemy and walked into the house" (59). These lines show that how Totaram being a father

behaves with his son without having enough evidence to prove the illegal relationship between the mother and the son.

The concept of masculinity believes that the father being the breadwinner of the family should have the father-like qualities such as responsible and protective to his children. He is regarded as the caretaker of the family. The father, who cannot fulfill the necessities of the children and protect them from difficulties, remains no longer the masculine. In most of the cases, the father sacrifice his personal wills for the betterment of the children. He works hard day and night just to establish himself on the position of good provider. When the father loses the father-like qualities he gets no any respect in the family. He has to suffer whole life from the misbehavior from his children.

Tim Edward in the text *Culture and Masculinity* defines non-masculine father as, “Men after remain reluctant father and resistant to change and taking their domestic responsibilities and commitments seriously” (11). He means to say that the masculine father does his level best to act his role of father in the family. He never ignores his responsibilities and commitments. The person who cannot perform his domestic responsibilities and commitments seriously becomes the reluctant father. He does not belong to the masculine father.

Regarding this point, Totaram is utterly unsuccessful to be a good father. His jealousy and low reasoning power becomes the main cause for being unable to get the honor as the good father in the family. He remains no more protective father. His failure to take care of his son can be seen in these lines, “Today as he looked at him he was taken aback. He looked like a skeleton. Though the face glowed due to celibacy there was not flesh on his body” (60). These lines show the poor physical condition of Mansaram. Because of being tortured by jealousy and false suspicion of

his father, he gets no interest in his food. Hence, day by day his attractive body turns into skeleton. There are numerous evidences that can prove Totaram as the irresponsible and destructive father. The statement spoken by Rukmini also indicates to this poor condition of children. She says, “Your sons have always been pampered, now they are not happy, living like orphans” (61). She means to say that when their mother was alive, they got lots of care and love but after her death they are like the orphans. They have the father just by the name. He does not take care of them.

Mansaram is the greatest victim of his father's jealousy because of which he feels his life deserted. He does not suppose that he is living in a family and he has a father. He remembers his loving mother and says:

Oh God! Why do you give birth to such children who are destined to suffer the sorrow of losing their mothers? Will there be anyone as unfortunate as me in this whole world? Who is bothered if I eat or not. Whether I am dead or alive? Even if I die today, whose heart will feel the hurt? Father likes to see me crying, he does not even like to look at me. Arrangements are being made turn me out of the house. (62)

This statement spoken by Mansaram is the biggest proof to document the irresponsibility of Totaram to his children. The masculine father should try to satisfy all the needs of his children by all means. His best attempt goes to keep his children happy. But Totaram does not seem to masculine father by any angle. Mansram's pitiable condition does not concern to him. Mansaram feels that his presence and absence in the family does not make any meaning. He does not care whether his son eat or not and is dead or alive. This complete negligence to his son shows the irresponsibility of Totaram which after all undermines his masculinity.

When Mansaram gets no better environment to live, he decides to leave the house. Somehow, he manages his settlement in the hostel of his school. His self-esteem was hurt by the false accusation of his father. Even in the hostel, the hostile figure of his father haunts him frequently. He thinks by all sides but finds him the faultless character who has been praised by all in the society. He is abashed for being accused of such heinous act. He cannot control himself and shouts aloud, “Oh! Mother where are you? Your son, whom you loved so much and could not live without is in great trouble. His own father is murdering him with such cheap accusation. Oh Mother, what can I do?” (81). At this point, Totaram rather than being a protective father of his child is going to be a murderer. Mansaram does not feel that he is going to live longer having such degrading accusation. In reality too, the cheap accusation over him compels him to live in depression. He neither eats properly nor conducts well with others in the hostel. He does not like to return back to home. After having the longtime depression, he becomes seriously ill. The headmaster suggests Totaram to take him back to home for few days. But Mansaram disagrees to go back to his home as if there remains his enemy. He insisted to take him to the hospital or elsewhere but not to the home.

The narrator at this moment exposes Totaram's reluctancy towards his son. He says, “The carriage moved towards the hospital. What Munshiji wanted was done. Even in his son's sickness he was feeling satisfied” (91). These lines show that how irresponsible father Totaram is. He wants the absence of his son in the family. His heart finds the great solace in the sickness of his son and perhaps he would be happy even at his death. He takes his son to the hospital instead of calling the doctor at home. Mansaram does not get any improvement. In fact, he was not getting any disease. He says to the doctor, “I have the disease of life. Do you have medicine for

it?” (84). These sentences show that Mansaram is suffering from the depression. He has no wish to live the life being accused of such heinous act. The doctor and the medicine cannot work to the disease of Mansaram. Finally, he remains no longer in the earth.

The death (indirectly murder) of Mansaram shows that Totaram is not a masculine father because he could not perform the role of protective father. He himself killed his son in a way. His thought that comes in his mind after the death of his son showed that he himself is responsible for the death of his son. The lines say, “But how could he be patient knowing well that all this was the result of his own doing. Can any father be so stone hearted? He was ashamed of himself. He wondered why this ill feeling started. Why did I imagine such a terrible thing without any proof?” (96). Totaram through these lines confesses that he blamed his son for an illegal relationship with Nirmala without any proof. At this point, Totaram does not seem factual which is also one of the masculine traits. He regrets for his wrong judgment. He feels ashamed of himself. He becomes restless because of the feeling that comes in his mind. He finds himself very difficult to adjust with guilt psyche. In this context, we can conclude Totaram as non- masculine character in two aspects. One, he is no more factual and the next, he laments for his wrong doing. The masculine person neither does such immature behave nor laments in future. In this sense, Totaram's masculinity is in crisis.

Totaram loses all the respect in his family. Especially, his son Jiamam does not respect him. Jiamam thinks that his father is the murderer of his brother, Mansaram and he suspects that his father will kill both of next two brothers when he gets chance. So, Jiamam hates his father. He gets regular argument and fight with his father. The statement spoken by Jiamam to Rukmini about his father proves the position of respect

of Totaram in the family. Jiyaram says, "He is my father, that is only reason he is safe till today, otherwise I have friends who could beat him up in the market" (142). These lines illustrate the poor condition of Totaram in the family. There is one more evidence to show the disrespect of Totaram in the family. When he gets an argument with his son Jiamam, he tried to slap his son but Jiamam catches his hand and pushes him back saying, "Speak from a distance, why are you getting yourself insulted. I am not hitting you because mother is present" (150). These lines also expose that his son Jiamam does have no respect to his father.

Totaram fails to be an authoritative father. His authority does not work even upon his son. It is because of the improper rearing of the children. Totaram being a father could not create the suitable environment to build up the good manners within his sons. He himself becomes the cause of such ill manners of his sons.

After the argument with his son, Jiamam, his self-esteem is not at ease. His anger against his son goes on growing. The more he thinks the more he sees his son as his enemy. He, grinding his teeth with anger, says, "I am going to turn him out of the house. He may become a beggar or a thief; it does not matter to me" (150). Once again Totaram tries to show his irresponsible figure of fatherhood in the case of Jiamam. Though the statement is spoken in anger, it indicates that Totaram has no more masculine power to settle the problem. When Jiamam hears about to turn him out of the house, he becomes more negative to his father. Ultimately, he tries to steal the jewels of his mother and runs away but when the police knows about the thief, he commits suicide due to the fear of being arrested and punished. In this regard, this research claims that Totaram has once again failed to be a protective father. His misdeed with Mansaram is the cause of all these series of catastrophe that befalls on his family.

His failure to be a protective and responsible father reaches to the top when his last son Siyaram also leaves the house. Siyaram does not too get the favorable environment to live in the house. Neither he gets proper food in time nor love and care from his father. He feels that he is deserted and has no one to care of him. He says, "If my mother were alive, she would never let me go like this. I have no one in this house" (171). These lines show that Siyaram feels that he is neglected by everyone in the family. He remembers his dead mother and leaves the house in search of a saint who assured him to make it possible to talk with his dead mother's soul. Slowly, the day goes to end and the night begins. He thinks, "Even at this time of the night no one would be bothered about me. Father would be in bed after his meal" (173). These lines show the feelings of Siyaram who is ignored by his father and other family members. He does not think that anyone in the family is getting trouble due to his absence at night. He becomes so desperate and goes on searching the saint. In fact, this saint is a fraud and kidnaps the children. Poor Siyaram becomes his prey. The saint takes him to the unknown place

Totaram can do nothing to save his children when they were with him but laments after their absence. Such a feminine father can do nothing more than this. The narrator says, "Lying in the dark room he was blaming himself for having neglected his son" (176). In this regard, Totaram himself confesses his guilt time and again but does nothing to take care of his children. He just watches the sufferings of his children and seems as if he is getting lots of enjoy but after their absence he cries and laments. This non-protective figure of the father has no right to deserve any respect.

Totaram is not only failure physically and psychologically but also economically. According to the principle of hegemonic masculinity, the husband or the father as the head of the family must be able to overcome the economic crisis. He

should manage the fooding, lodging, education for the children and so on. Totaram, in this respect, cannot perform his role. There are several references that prove the economic failure of Totaram. For instance, “There was no money in the house to make such a big payment. In this short period Munshiji’s name and reputation has also suffered and he was not able to arrange for money from outside and hence the house was auctioned” (112). These lines prove the economic failure of Totaram. Despite of being the head of the family he could not save his house from being auctioned. Along with his auctioned house, his name and fame also come to the street. He feels ashamed for being unable to pay the debt. The narrator further exposes his poor condition in this way, “From that day onwards Munshiji became a worried man. The money which was to give happiness to him and his wife was now a distant dream. He was ashamed that he could not look Nirmala in the eyes” (112). These lines demonstrate the pitiable condition of Totaram. His ego as the head of the family teases himself for his failure. He has no more courage to hold his head high in front of his wife.

Totaram becomes desperate after losing his house. He goes to rent house where he has to spend his life in a narrow space. He becomes so hopeless. He gives no interest in his work. Karl Bendarik in the text *Male in Crisis* says, “Alienation of work, bureaucracy in politics and war and the commercialization of sexuality all undermine masculinity” (104). He means to say that ‘alienation to work’ is one of the factors that undermine masculinity. In this regard, Totaram feels alienation in his work. His constant failure over his cases can be seen in the conversation between Totaram and his wife:

She asked, “Did you get any case today?”

Munshiji, “The whole day I ran around, but did not get anything.”

Nirmala, "What happened to the 'Fauzdar's case'?"

Munshiji, "The case was lost. My client will get the punishment."

Nirmala, "And what about the 'Pandit's case'?"

Munshiji, "Panditji also got the sentence."

Nirmala, "The 'Serawala case'?"

Munshiji, "We lost that case too." (174-175)

This conversation shows the continuous failure of Totaram in his profession. Once he was recognized as the best lawyer but now he cannot win any cases. Hence, his alienation in his work goes on increasing.

Along with the failure of the cases he handles, his economic condition becomes worse. He cannot manage the money to buy firewood in the house. It can be observed in this conversation between his wife and himself, Munshiji, "So you have not cooked food?" Nirmala, "When there is no firewood how would I cook, obviously; no one can cook without fire" (175). This conversation shows the miserable economic condition of Totaram's family. Because of the economic crisis, the family cannot buy firewood to cook food. After getting economic crisis in the family Totaram loses his authoritative position in the family. He remains no longer a bread winner of the family. The narrator making the comment over his condition says, "Munshiji had left everything on Nirmala. He did not interfere anything, what she did or said. He seems to be a hen-pecked husband with no voice of his own" (164). Totaram after losing his authority over the family becomes powerless. He depends on his wife for running the house smoothly. He becomes a hen-pecked husband. At this point Totaram loses all the masculine qualities that a masculine man should have.

Once again regarding the consequences after the masculinity in crisis as opined by Martin Mills and Bob Lingard, We can analyze Totaram's condition. They

believe that when the masculinity falls in crisis, most of the men becomes passive and escape from their family. They do so because they have no more courage or masculine power to face and settle the problems. Totaram being the head of the family cannot perform his role as the masculine father and husband. He becomes fail physically, psychologically, economically and so on. He loses all the masculine qualities such as protective, responsible, authoritative, factual, judgmental, mature, rational etc. When he could not protect any of his sons and settle the economic crisis, he becomes so passive and leaves the home pretending to search his youngest son. In fact being a coward and timid to face the problems he leaves the home. Considering all these aspects this research claims that Totaram's masculinity is in crisis.

Dr. Sinha is the next male character in the novel that too does not belong to the masculine character. The masculine character always think by his mind, becomes self confident and shows the strong determination to his decision. When he does not have his own decision and goes on changing it, he does not become the masculine and his masculinity is questioned. Dr. Sinha is such a person who listens his foolish father, Bhalchandra Sinha, who himself depends on his wife for making the decision. He by listening his father, cancels the engagement with Nirmala. Later, when his wife Sudha knows about this she scolds him in this way, "It is the duty of the son to show his self confidence and strength of character. If he does not, then in my opinion he is not only greedy but also a coward. Unfortunately, my husband is such a man and I do not know what words I should use to insult him for his deeds" (107). At this moment, Dr. Sinha becomes speechless. He feels ashamed in front of his wife. His masculinity is shattered within a second.

Dr. Sinha's masculinity falls in crisis to great extent when he commits suicide in a coward's way. The proposed course *Gender and Sexuality* for M. Phill

programme in Tribhuvan University regarding the opinion of George Mosse in his book, *The Image of Man* emphasizes the moral superiority and inner strength of character as the sign of masculinity in this way, “At the center of this ideal lay a renewed emphasis upon the perfectibility of the male body, which becomes an outward sign of man’s moral superiority and inner strength of character” (qtd. in *Gender and Sexuality*, 59). Regarding these lines, we can say that a man always worries about his moral superiority and inner strength of character. When he loses these qualities he remains no more masculine. When his masculinity falls in crisis, he becomes restless and desperate. Ultimately, he cannot face the family and society and chooses the easy escape.

Dr. Sinha is such a person who has earned name and fame in the society. Once, he tries to make extra-marital sexual relationship with Nirmala, wife of his friend Totaram. Nirmala rejects his propose and runs away to her house. Sudha wonders when she sees her running in such a way. She walks to Nirmala’s house to find out the fact. Here, Dr. Sinha frightens too much. He becomes restless. Now he laments for his immoral activity. His moral superiority and inner strength of character starts to tease him. Due to fear of being insulted by his wife and society, he commits suicide in a coward’s way before his wife returns back. In this sense, it can be said that Dr. Sinha is also the immoral and coward person. He has no more masculine qualities.

Roger Lancaster defines masculine and feminine qualities in this way, “To take by force, to seize, or to grab hold off (coger, sometimes tomar) is to be masculine, where as to surrender, to yield or to give up (rendirsse, sometimes dar) is to be feminine” (46). Regarding his view about the masculinity and feminity, we can say that ‘to surrender’ is the biggest stigma of masculinity. The masculine figure

should have enough courage to face with the challenges in his life. He should not yield or surrender in any case. But the most of the male characters adopting the easy escape like suicide and exile show the attitude of surrender. One of the major figure of the novel, Totaram speaks the statement that shows his surrender of his life in this way, “I feel tired of life [. . .] I am just counting the days and waiting for life to end” (140). Totaram does have no enough courage to tackle with the problems. He is so hopeless of his life and surrenders before his death. Similarly, Dr. Sinha, Udahaybhan, Mansram, Jiaram, Siaram all these male characters surrender before the difficult situation. None of them have the masculine qualities. Hence, their masculine identity is in crisis.

Thus, Premchand’s *Nirmala* has depicted the conventional form of hegemonic masculinity in crisis. This research, along with the various causes and consequences, has attempted to present the way of masculinity in crisis. It believes that the major cause of the masculinity in crisis is the shift in men’s privileged position in the family and society. Being guided by the psychology of the hegemonic masculinity, males always try to maintain their position at the top of the family when they cannot perform their role because of the several circumstances, their masculinity falls in crisis. And the crisis of masculinity leads them to the consequences like depression, hopelessness, suicide, exile etc.

III. Urgency of Redefining of Conventional Masculinity

Premchand's novel, *Nirmala* depicts the conventional form of hegemonic masculinity in crisis due to the failure of male character to perform as per the masculine codes. The protagonist Totaram, along with the most of the male characters in the novel, fails to confirm the masculine traits. Their powerlessness, irrationality, immaturity, irresponsibility etc. are the major causes which ultimately push their masculine identity in crisis. Their timidity to face the upcoming challenges in their life is also one of the factors that resist them to attain the masculine identity.

The major male characters like Totaram, Udaybhan, Bhalchandra, Dr. Sinha etc. are heavily influenced by the British model of gentry masculinity. Being guided by this hegemonic masculinity, they long for the authoritative position of them in the family. They want to rule over their wives but their wives are not mere passive reacceptances of their domination. They resist their domination directly or indirectly. Though they have been tried to dominate and exploit in the system of patriarchy, their rising consciousness awakes them to go against all these domination and exploitation. They have exposed better rational power and courage than their male partners in the family. This shift of privileged position of women is also the crucial element to push the so called masculinity in crisis.

This research primarily focuses the condition of the protagonist, Totaram in the novel. He is exposed as the most pathetic male character who has lost all his masculine qualities. The way which he adopts to please his wife is so humorous. Later on, his irrationality and jealousy invite the series of difficulties in the family which he cannot settle by his strength. He has got the badge of irresponsible father because of his negligence towards his son. He becomes the cause of their death and exile. He cannot become the protective father. At the later part of the novel, he becomes

hopeless and desperate. He cannot get the job and earn money. He becomes unable to manage even the firewood to cook food. His house is auctioned. He loses his identity as the breadwinner of the family. He leaves everything upon his wife. It means he loses the quality of independency that a masculine man should have. At last, being so timid he leaves his home.

Regarding all these drawbacks like irrationality, irresponsibility, immaturity, poverty etc, Totaram is not able to earn his masculine identity. His masculinity falls in crisis because of his own follies. The other male characters like Udaybhan, Bhalchandra and Dr. Sinha have also lost their masculine identity. Udaybhan and Bhalchandra do not have any authority over their wives in the family. When Udaybhan becomes unable to rule upon his wife, he leaves the home in the way of coward. Bhalchandra does not seem consistent to his decision because he depends on his wife for making the decision. Dr. Sinha is an immoral character who commits suicide when he frightens of being insulted in the society and family. These male characters are also far away to correspond the masculine traits.

According to the traditional assumption of masculinity, a female should be dominated, emotional, irrational, coward etc. but quite opposite to these feminine traits, they are strong, powerful, courageous, rational, responsible etc. Kalyani, Rukmini, Sudha and Nirmala are the female characters who have exposed the better rational power than their male partners throughout the whole novel. They do not accept the male domination being passive. Kalyani directly opposes to her husband's domination. Rukmini teases Totaram's masculinity several times. Sudha scolds her husband by the term 'coward' and Nirmala indirectly opposes her husband to make her a puppet in his hand. He wants to use her just for sexual pleasure but Nirmala never shows her satisfaction when he tries to please her by his all means. All these

female characters except Nirmala, live in a state of widowhood. Nirmala too lives alone when her husband leaves the home. But all these female characters, having lots of courage, tackle with all the problems in their life. They never become hopeless and desperate. Their bravery is the mark to show their female masculinity.

Regarding all these evidences in the novel, this research makes the claim that the hegemonic masculinity is in crisis in the novel. The major cause of the crisis of masculinity is nothing else but the hegemonic masculine psychology of males itself. At this moment, the conventional hegemonic masculinity gets difficulties to function but the males being heavily influenced by the same form of masculinity, want to exercise over the females. The rising consciousness of the females does not let the males to rule upon them. Hence, on the one hand females' opposition and the other hand, males' self disability to adopt the masculine qualities are the major causes of hegemonic masculinity in crisis. This sort of crisis remains in the society unless the males convince themselves to redefine the boundary of conventional masculinity through the new parameter.

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