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Female Body as a site of Domination and Resistance in R.K Narayan's

The Dark Room

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Ms. Sabita Acharya has prepared this thesis entitled Female Body as a site of Domination and Resistance in R.K Narayan's *The Dark Room* under my supervision. I, therefore, forward it to research committee of Central Department of English, Kirtipur Tribhuvan University for examination.

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled “Female Body as a site of Domination and Resistance in R.K Narayan’s *The Dark Room*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Sabita Acharya has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

*This research explores and analyzes the dominating condition of women body and their resistance in Indian society due to patriarchal domination where women are portrayed as meek and fragile characters in R.K. Narayan's novel *The Dark Room*. The novel presents Savitri, a female character who despite being a wife of educated middle class husband, struggling for her position and identity in the society by portraying how women are subjugated with the weapons like religious, cultural and societal values. The study further reads the dynamics between men and women. Women face double marginalization at home and in the society via gender and class subjugation. Savitri's struggle for autonomy reflects the social boundaries of Indian society at that time. Third World Feminism is used for theoretical support to analyze the novel. It is found that position of women in the Third World nation like India is dominated like Savitri, the main character of the novel. Male dominated culture and social value of Indian society compelled Savitri, to resist by using her female sexuality. She has desired to be free from the subjugation and leave the house but she returned because she is psychologically pressured by the patriarchal socio-cultural situation of her society. The research finds that women's role in the family and society should be considered as genuine sacrifices. Socio-cultural structure of the society is important to determine the role of women in family as well as society.*

Keywords: Women, Patriarchy, Domination, Resistance Identity, Gender Equality.

The study reads R.K. Narayan's novel *The Dark Room* 1938 from the perspective of the Third World Feminism. This study analyzes how Savitri, the main female character of the

novel is subjugated in her life. The novel presents the situation of women in Indian society during 1930's when Indian society was struggling for democracy. However, Indian society followed patriarchal value system at that time. Narayan projects the family relationship between man and woman specially husband and wife. Concept of feminism uses as theoretical tool and analyzes the novel how women are subjugated in the Indian society analyzing concept of the third world feminism. The Third World Feminism is differed from the first world feminism or white feminism because the third world feminism talks about the culture and of third world like India and Nepal and analyze the role of women on the basis of culture. It is not only related to the gender concept or biological concept. Gender is culturally formed so that gender concept is different in third world and the first world.

Uma Narayan's *Dislocating Cultures* critically analyzes the concepts of nation, identity, and tradition, shedding light on how Western and Third World scholars have inaccurately portrayed Third World cultures and feminist movements. By highlighting the historical political influences that have shaped these misrepresentations since the colonial era, Narayan delves into the complexities surrounding the notion of "culture" and its impact on respecting diversity and fostering cross-cultural comprehension. Through an examination of the problematic roles ascribed to Third World individuals in multicultural settings, Narayan explores how the exchange of information across borders influences our perceptions of various issues. Ultimately, *Dislocating Cultures* offers a philosophical viewpoint on topics of enduring significance, including nationalism, post-colonial studies, and the cultural dynamics surrounding discussions on tradition and "westernization" in Third World environments.

Third world feminism talks the position of women in the third world like Indian where women are not only suppressed by gender but also patriarchy is a kind of social system that valorizes the values and neglects the issue of women. Patriarchy is defined by Sylvia Walby, "A social system in which men hold higher positions and subordinate women (214).

Patriarchy puts male in the top of social structure. Concept of patriarchy is used for analyzing the novel because the writer projects the situations of women in a patriarchal society. Sylvia Walby notes, “Patriarchy’s forces the women to confine themselves within predetermined boundaries, resembling a frog confined to the depths of a well, unable to witness the vibrant hues of the outside world” (45) . The concept shows that men and willingly subject themselves to a life of servitude within their own families, accepting these limitations as their predetermined destiny and obligation. These regulations are unquestioningly accepted as the norm. In order to break free from these constraints, women must actively oppose patriarchy. They must unite like a pack of wolves, raising their voices against the injustices perpetrated by men. Therefore, resistance becomes imperative for women who have been deprived of their inherent rights.

The postcolonial Indian writer and social reformer R.K.Narayan portrays how female main characters defy the oppression imposed on them by the patriarchal system by turning their bodies into symbols of defiance. They reclaim their autonomy by challenging the discrimination based on gender, social status, and caste. Draupadi narrates the tale of a native woman named Savitri, who resists the degradation of a gang assault by rejecting the role of a victim.

The plot of the novel presents the situation of Savitri. Before leaving home, she undergoes a transformation due to the circumstances and various changes. This transformation continues as she steps outside the house. She faces challenges and gains experiences from her life. The environment she lived in after her marriage was extremely oppressive and hostile towards her. Eventually, she decides not to visit her parents' home because she expects to face oppression from the male members there. Savitri suffers by the behavior of her husband Ramani, who has adopted the hierarchical colonial system in family.

She becomes a victim of both patriarchal and colonial influences. She is being victimized by the unfair treatment of her husband because of the patriarchal values system of Indian society.

The study explores how the women are subjugated in patriarchal society. It focuses on women characters and their struggles for existence in the protagonist of the novel that are subjugated in her life due to patriarchal social practices of her life *The Dark Room* by R.K. Narayan, bring list of women suffering. Savitri is the main character and the protagonist of the novel who is much subjugated in her life due to patriarchal social practices of her time. Savitri, a wife of an educated man, searches her position in her family but she could not find any existence in her life. She is treated as an unpaid labor of the house and husband did not share any matter with her. There is no situation of power sharing in her house. Her family is totally controlled by her husband.

Patriarchal value system of contemporary Indian society made Savitri as a subjugated character. From the beginning of the novel she silently resists the patriarchal norms of the society and tries to establish her identities. The objective of this study is to explore how a female character is treated in traditional patriarchal Indian society. The study analyzes how she one by one crosses the boundaries of her family and religion. The gender repression of women in Indian community is exhibited in a realistic way. It also reveals the position of Indian women in their community. As a narrative, it reveals the experiences of women in its crude form from which otherwise could not have been fabricated in other literary genres. It also shows how gender is constructed culturally from the childhood for a woman to comply with the parameters imposed upon them.

Narratives of the Savitri show the injustices of patriarchal society that neglects the role of women in society and family. It revolves primarily around the characters Savitri, a traditional Hindu woman, and Ramani, a modernist who rejects the tradition. Savitri is deeply devoted to her husband and adheres to Hindu beliefs and traditional values. On the other

hand, Ramani sees himself as superior and is characterized by aggressive and tyrannical behavior. He is fixated on the harsh and oppressive aspects of patriarchal tradition, while Savitri remains vulnerable and submissive.

The novel follows the story of a troubled wife who is subjected to the controlling behavior of her husband. Despite her efforts to resist, she eventually gives in to the challenges of married life in Indian society. It emphasizes the gender disparity that exists in a society dominated by men, particularly focusing on Savitri, a traditional Hindu woman, and Ramani, a modern individual who defies societal norms. Savitri holds a strong devotion to her husband and upholds Hindu beliefs and traditional values; however, Ramani views himself as superior and exhibits aggressive and tyrannical conduct. He follows rigid and oppressive values of patriarchal tradition, while Savitri continues to be vulnerable and submissive.

An in-depth analysis of the contrasts between Eastern and Western feminism and their impact on gender practices in India, including a historical exploration of feminist issues such as dowries and sati. Narayan also challenges traditional concepts of culture and identity in relation to food and marriage, urging us to reconsider our place within our social and familial contexts.

Narayan projects the social ill of Indian society through highlighting the situation of Savitri who is compelled to live as a discriminated one. There is no gender equality in contemporary Indian society. In this context, the study seeks the answers of this research question as how Savitri is being subjugated? What are the factors that play a role to subjugate Savitri in her life and why is she compelled to surrender and accept patriarchy in her life? Through analysis of the novel the study seeks the answers of the research question and fulfills the objectives of the study.

The study adopts The Third World Feminism as theoretical tool to analyze the novel. Women in third world nation are culturally homogenized and sexually marginalized. The Third world feminism is related to the identity politics of Non-Western women that are often overlooked in mainstream feminist discourse. The term Third World feminism coined in the 1990s by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, in her book *Feminism without Borders*. In her book, she describes the decolonizing theory and its' practice in the context of the third world. She projects the basic concept of feminism in the context of Indian society. She argues, "No single definition of a border, that the boundaries between nations, races, classes, sexuality, religions, and disabilities are tangible - and that feminism without borders must imagine change and social justice efforts across these dividing lines. (34)

She emphasizes that socio economic, religious and cultural context of the society determined the role of gender in a particular society. Concept of feminism also is different in different socio cultural context. There was resistance towards the concept of western feminism in response to the male dominance and female oppression that was widespread in Third-World countries. However, western powerful nations bring the concept of gender equality in the name of humanism. In the context of third world nation like India situation of women is different from the first world like Europe and America. The degradation of societal values and the decline of the institution of marriage can be primarily attributed to the subjugation of women. This is the issue of the novel.

The novel *The Dark Room* was published in 1938 in England at that time Indian society was struggling for equality between men and women, high caste to low caste, rich and poor. The novel covers the story of Indian middle class family and the relationship between wife and husband. The plot offers a feminist perspective on middle-class family life in South India. At the beginning, Savitri the main character of the novel is projected as traditional Hindu woman and later process her silent struggles that are the main philosophy

of writer. Writer projects the ill social practice of Indian society in term of gender exploitation. He projects the life of Savitri who got married at the age of fifteen and continuously living under her husband. She faces up and down in her life on the basis of the guidelines of patriarchal norms. She actively involves in the household activities but she never participates in the decision making process of her house. She plays as role of obedient wife; however, she silently resists the patriarchal values of the society.

Marital relationship between Ramani and Savitri goes between hate and love because Savitri respected her in formal life but in informal life she searches her identities in Ramani's house. Savitri diligently takes care of her husband, children, and manages all the household activities. Without her presence, the household would be in disarray. She embodies the qualities of obedience, loyalty, and responsibility, as Nagendra Nath Sharan comments, "She assumes the duties of a prominent female figure within the traditional community, shouldering numerous obligations. She dedicates herself to Ramani, taking on a role akin to that of a servant, thereby limiting her autonomy and individuality to the boundaries of their household". (34)

Ramani's adherence to patriarchal norms causes Savitri to suffer, resulting in marital discord due to their conflicting traditional and modern beliefs.

The novel depicts the challenging circumstances faced by women, which ultimately forces them to submit to the patriarchy and follow the path set by men, despite their countless efforts and desires. Savitri, despite her numerous attempts, fails to break free from the oppressive bonds of relationships and establish her own world outside of her home. She resists fiercely in her quest for freedom, but ultimately becomes a victim in a society where male ideology reigns supreme. Her resistance against Ramani's oppression and suppression extends beyond her personal struggles and encompasses the entire male community, where

women are compelled to conform to societal expectations as mothers, wives, and daughters. In Indian society, women are expected to lead self-sacrificing lives, prioritizing the happiness and well-being of their relatives and loved ones over their own. This pattern persists throughout their lives, without considering their own needs and desires.

Since the multiplication of the novel many critics have shed light on R.K Narayan as a whole and specifically on *The Dark Room*, each in their own unique way. A. Hariprasana, renowned Indian critics, says, "As a story of marital unhappiness and domestic disharmony; it examines the marriage relationship in state of crisis" (47). Narayan describes the events as like drama and analyzes the issue by using in own philosophy like humanism and equality among all race, castes and gender. He is one of the brilliant figures of raising social issue as well he is also talent on craftsmanship. Similarly, K.R.S. Lyenger rightly remarks, "Narayan is one of the few writers in India who seek their craft seriously, constantly striving to improve the instrument, pursuing with a sense of dedication what may often seem to be the mirage of technical perfection"(32).

Narayan has enjoyed international fame for his literary contribution. He is greatly admired by different writers. Likewise Graham Greene regards Narayan as, "Since the death of Evelyn Waugh, Narayan is the novelist I most admire in the English language"(22). Additionally, he has received numerous prestigious awards over the course of his career such as National Prize of the Indian Literary Academy, the Sahitya Academy Award, the Padma Bhushan, and the National Association of Independent School Award. Among them some of the awards are notable for his career. He uses typical characters in his writing that makes aliveness in writing. Focusing on the aspect of human in Savitri character Indian critic, Rampal Bhatt says:

The Dark Room is this dark, menacing novella. Narayan muses on the futility of life and the helplessness of his protagonist Savitri, filling each scene with undertones of as

many hues as there are facets to human nature. Hypocrisy, deception, kindness and despair are all present in their full glory, colored and shaded by the characters, their morality and their situations. (55)

Hence, he highlights characterization of the Narayan's novel. Narayan puts all kinds of characters in his novel. Savitri is the representative character in the novel. Narayan chooses simple and real character from the society. Narayan's uses imaginary town, Malgudi where most of his novels are set. This place is recaptured in the novel for projecting the social meaning of gender. In this regards Nagendra Nath Sharan understands it as, the physical geography of Malgudi is never dealt with as a set piece but allows revealing itself beneath and between the events; one comes to have a strong feeling for the place's identity. (68)

Narayan is one of the talents who uses imaginary world in his literary text. Narayan has beautiful created his imaginary town of Malgudi in which the action of his novels takes place. S. Krishna says:

One of the important characters of the novel is that it gives its personages, a local habitation and a name. Narayan follows the line of Hardy and achieves his localization. Faulkner is another brilliant name in America who has an excellent mastery of place in fiction. Faulkner's fictional place is Yoknapatawpa; Narayan's fictional setting is Malgudi. (27)

There found multiplicities in the Narayan's novels that he uses to show the diversities of Indian society. His fictional work ranges from tragedy to tragic-comedies to pure comedy. His fictions explore idea, and ideologies, that is simply a mirror of life drifting into fantasy and presents a slice life or to some extent romantic image. He loves to write in comedy rather than the tragedy because he is primarily an artist of comic version. According to Sisir Kumar Das, "Narayan's fictional world is world of comedy that springs from community with

markedly traditional more standards of behaviors and beliefs" (71). He has delighted his countless readers with simple languages and ironic comment. Shashi Tharoor, an Indian critic, praises Narayan's craftsmanship as, "R.K Narayan is a master of story teller whose language is simple and unpretentious, whose wit is critical yet healing, and whose characters are drawn with sharp precision and subtle irony"(24). He acknowledges the profound disharmonies and absurdities that life and the world consistently present to us, demonstrating his keen awareness. He gracefully embraces the realities of life, accepting things as they unfold before him.

Nowhere has he seemed to be writing within idea in his mind to rectify the situation or the word. His realization develops a kind of attitude that helps to balance in his writing. He wrote on the social issue of Indian life during the period of independence movement and demand for justice in Indian society. In the novel *The Dark Room* also brings the issue of gender discrimination in Indian society and shows how an innocent woman faces problems in her life due to patriarchy. Savitri tolerates her spouse's disrespectful conduct, as demonstrated by his erratic behavior towards her. Regardless of the presence of their children or the cook, he expresses himself loudly and flamboyantly. Her emotions and sense of self are completely disregarded. She is forced to conform to his ever-changing whims, no matter how unreasonable they may be. She is treated as nothing more than a robotic servant expected to cater to his every desire. The incident of going to the theater highlights his possessive and archaic views towards his wife. One evening, he takes Savitri alone to the Palace Talkies, where she stands out in her elegant blue Saree.

The novel projects the circumstances faced by the female protagonist, Savitri, in her life due to patriarchy. Savitri possesses all the qualities, which encourages her to struggles with patriarchy; however, she has no alternatives to accept the patriarchy. She plays role of obedient wife and loving mother of her children. Her husband cannot understand her silences

and behave her as an unpaid labor. Her role in family is different from western women because she follows the traditional norms and values of Hindu society.

Savitri is treated as an object because her husband does not share anything with her. She is subjugated in her family by her husband. Her husband follows the culture that encourages him to subjugate his wife without any proper reasons. She further speaks: "Do you think that I will stay in your house, breathe the air of your property, drink the water here, and eat food you buy with your money? No, I'll starve and die in the open, under the sky, a roof for which we need be obliged to no man" (87-88).

The lines note the situation of women in patriarchal society. In patriarchal society there is no right to women to share in property. They are subjugated by male without giving share on property. Female characters of the novel are subjugated through treating as ignorant creature. There is no option to involve in decision making except decision. Her situation is subjugated because she has not got opportunities to live free life.

Third world feminism advocates for rights of women of middle and working-class backgrounds and places great emphasis on women's solidarity. They address a wide range of concerns such as rape, domestic violence, dowry systems, and other gender biases, encompassing women from various backgrounds. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, a renowned third world feminist says:

The homogeneity of women as a group is produced not on the basis of biological essentials but rather on the basis of secondary social and anthropological universal. This for instance in any given piece of feminism analysis women are characterized as a singular group on the basis of shared oppression. What binds women together is a social sameness of their oppression. (22)

Mohanty argues that women face oppression not only due to biological differences, but also cultural values of the societies. In Non-Western world society is run on the basis of patriarchal culture. Women are often treated as secondary subjects, lacking priority and forced to live under male dominance. The biased notion is perpetuated by patriarchy that Mohanty notes to advocate for women's unity in the third world. Women of third world are doubly marginalized. Women of the third world have experienced similar issues such as rape, harassment, domestic abuse, and limited access to education. In order to confront these common obstacles, women from developing nations should come together to challenge the dominance of patriarchy and guarantee security and fairness within their households, professional environments, and societies. Mohanty underscores the significance of women's unity in combating the oppressive nature of patriarchal systems.

Moreover, Mohanty in *Feminism without Borders* states, "Male violence must be theorized and interpreted within specific societies in order both to understand it better and to organize effectively to change it" (23). Mohanty raises her voice against male violence and she demands the right direction to establish different theories on women's violence in society. She believes that through the theories regarding women's issues, society can be aware of the different injustices of patriarchy and this eventually will be fruitful to make people understand about the genuine problems of women and assists them to bring some kind of positive change among the people in a society. It takes violence against women within theoretical frameworks can serve as a valuable resource for instigating societal transformations. Patriarchal social norms and values of the society subjugate women in *The Dark Room* because male characters of the novel are treated as secondary one and used them like their own property. The story of the novel revolves around the main characters Ramani and Savitri. Ramani thinks of himself as a man full of everything. Ramani does not want to bear responsibility in a family. Savitri looks after not only her husband and children, but also

whole household activities, which will turn into a mess without her presence. Ketu H. Katrak, in her books *Politics of the Female Body*, presents the nature of patriarchy that creates huddles in the life of women. In her book, she further notes:

Traditions are often to control the female body are mystified as being faithful to tradition . . . Both within the family and outside, tradition designates female roles within patriarchal frames and parameters: a woman as wife and mother is valorized . . . women's subordination is supported by family and perpetuated both in the private and public realms whether it is unequal wages or gender discrimination in the family and the workplace. (157)

Above lines show the traditional concept of patriarchy which creates problem in the life of women. Patriarchal value system of society brings huddles in the life of Savitri because her husband treats her as meek and support members of family. Savitri, as Indian women possess an inherent trait of immense tolerance, love, and loyalty towards their families. This remarkable quality drives them to willingly sacrifice their own freedom and happiness.

In the novel, Savitri's husband treats her as meek supporter. He relaxes in his home. He feels pride on his property. He has big house and he is the owner however, his wife look after the house after she got married at the age of fifteen. The situation Ramani notes:

The situation he describes, "He was pacing the front veranda; he had changed his coat and was wearing a blue blazer. He looked fixedly at her as she came up from the gate and said, "You have made me wait for half an hour." He added, "A Fellow comes home from the office, dog-tired, and he has only the doors and windows to receive him. Where is everybody gone? Anyone could walk in and walk out the things in the house.(20)

Above lines highlight the traditional gender role that performs by Ramani . He enjoys his house without hesitation because he is master of the house. His wife Savitri could not enjoy like Ramani because she has no rights to share her husband property. She is treated as unpaid labor.

Traditional gender roles confined women in certain sociocultural limitation that is made by patriarchal value. Women are forced to live their lives within a certain social boundary. If they dare to cross that boundary they should have to face great humiliation throughout their lives. Patriarchy punishes a woman who refuses to follow patriarchy. Ramani, a senior executive at Engladia Insurance Company maintains constant vigilance in his work throughout the day and night. He refrains from allowing any room for emotions or sentiments. Savitri, is an Indian housewife, who is married to Ramani, of the Engladia insurance company. Savitri is typical house wife of the Indian society of the contemporary time, who is severely dominated and neglected by her husband. Savitri, submissive and sacrificing Indian wife passes her life. Savitri is disturbed but goes on suffering silently. They have three children Kamala, Sumati and Babu. The kids are filled with fear whenever they encounter their father, but they feel a sense of closeness to their mother, who devotes ample attention to them. Ramani refrains from allowing emotions and feelings to flourish, instead focusing solely on profit, benefits, and reason. In contrast, Savitri actively cultivates emotional qualities like love, affection, and devotion within herself. The situation Savitri indicates, “Ramani is a stubborn fellow; he does not tolerate any advice from anyone. He does not try to listen the advice of his wife because for him his wife is a play thing. He says, what’s the matter with you, my pet?” (85).

For him his wife is just a pet and treated her as a puppet. He is unaware of his children's health, education etc. Ramani performs his task in his own decision. He wants to go cinema with his wife but wants to leave to children behind. He says, "The children can go some other

day. Not a fly extra now" (20). Savitri wants to share enjoy of the house but she could not because she is treated as unpaid labor rather than a better half. She knows the fact well but she could not liberate due to the bonds of culture. Her husband Ramani only focuses his personal desire rather to share the common desire of family. He wants to be isolated even from his children. He wants to enjoy his life in his own way even neglecting everyone. Though his daughter, Sumati, pleads with him, he is indifferent towards her appeal. He threatened her saying, "If I hear you, sequel, I will thrash you, remember" (21). It clearly displays that he does not pay any attention towards the emotion and feelings of his children, rather he emphasizes on his freedom and thus he seem irresponsible towards his wife and children.

Burden created by the patriarchy compelled Savitri to leave house and she flee from the male dominated society that is about to erase her existence by confining her within four walls of the house. So, she decides to leave the house with strong determination.

Ramani enjoys his time outside house but his wife Savitri is confined within the four walls of the house. She hardly gets time for outing with her husband. She mostly spends her time in the house with her children. Savitri seeks solace in a dimly lit chamber within their residence whenever her husband's unkindness becomes too much for her to bear. Savitri is a typical housewife of the Indian society of the contemporary time who is severely dominated and neglected by her husband. Savitri, upon realizing that she was merely a puppet in the hands of her husband, undergoes a transformation and becomes a rebel against the traditional role assigned to women in Indian society. She defies the mythical connotations associated with her name and takes a stand, voicing her protest, "I'm a human being," she said, through her heavy breathing. You men will never grant that. For you we are play things when you feel like hugging and slaves at other times. Don't think that you can when you like and kick us when you choose" (85). She is only familiar with basic household chores like gardening,

cooking, and sewing. These tasks are often undervalued because women are expected to perform them as part of their domestic responsibilities without compensation.

Early established values and norms play role to dominate the females in the traditional patriarchal society. Patriarchal notion of the male reflects in the society as form of morality and control the habit of women. The conventional patriarchal society plays a part in oppressing women under the guise of upholding civilization. Savitri is tired as an object. Sometime she is being punished by her husband. After feeling humiliation, she decides to leave the home. She can't bear her husband's behavior. The situation she explains, "Do you think that I will stay in your house, breathe the air of your property, drink the water here, and eat food you buy with your money? No, I'll starve and die in open, Sky, are of for which we needs be obliged to no man" (87-88).

The role of women in a conventional patriarchal community is examined by delving into the characters of Savitri and Shanta Bai. The conventional patriarchal system molded women into obedient, dutiful, and accountable individuals within their families. Savitri also projected as devoted and dutiful wife. She is submissive, and responsible for her family. That's why; she is not willing to sacrifice her domestic harmony at any cost. She endures any kind of trouble or injustice her husband may cause, considering him as a god, and she never opposes his behavior, even though it is not proved.

Pressure of patriarchal domination Savitri leave home and go to charity. In charity certain food offers her but she denies taking any sort of food. She wants to eat of her own and doesn't want to live on charity. She wants to work for her food. Savitri finds herself untrained for any career. At last Savitri gets job in a local temple for menial task. She has to sweep and clean the temple premises for a measure of rice and a pinch of salt. She finally believes that she has the strength to live all by herself and make sense of her life. But she is soon overcome by her desire for her children. She says, "I must see them; I must see Babu, I must see Sumati

and I must Kamala.Oh "(146).She ultimately decides to return home.Because of her love for children she grew homesick, that forced her to come back to her house.

Sometimes Ramani seems to be liberal and puts desire to go cinema with his wife but wants to leave the children behind. He says, "The children can go some other day. Not a fly extra now" (20). Savitri is a devoted mother wants to support her children but the situation is not suitable to share the happiness. Desire of her husband creates problems in her life. The lines of the novel highlight the situation, "She said unhappily. She knew it would be useless to plead. All the same she could not restrain herself. "The poor things, let them come, they will enjoy it."Kamala was already making some indistinct impatient noises" (20).

However he wants to enjoy with his life in his own way by forgetting everyone. Though his daughter, Sumati, pleads with him, he is insensitive towards her appeal. It also clearly indicates that he has no any feelings, emotions towards his children by overwhelming on his own freedom.

Savitri leaves the house in search of her emancipation as she appears to be indecisive to Ramani. Savitri tries to drown herself in SarrayuRiver to get liberation from the oppressive husband and patriarchal norms. But she could not do that. After diving into the river black smith saves her life and takes her to his home.

Savitri is fallen to the crisis of double marginalized. She leaves home and reached into the house of blacksmith. She could not take food given by blacksmith. Culture value denies her to take food from the hand of untouchable person. When Savitri denies taking anything from them, Ponni rightly comments, "I see you are a Brahmin and won't stay with us. I will ask someone of your own caste to receive you" (106). Savitri is double suppressed in her family and society because she is religiously and culturally oppressed and compelled to follow the culture and also oppressed by gender concept. Consequently, she embodies

the essence of tradition and feels apprehensive about visiting her neighbors without her husband's consent. Whenever her husband returns home just as she is about to leave, she becomes anxious, as depicted below:

Savitri's throat went dry at the sight of her husband. He was pacing the front veranda; he had changed his coat and was wearing a blue blazer. He looked fixedly at her as she came up from the gate and said, "You have made me wait for half an hour." He added, "A Fellow comes home from the office, dog-tired, and he has only the doors and windows to receive him. Where is everybody gone? Anyone could walk in and walk out with all the things in the house. (20)"

Situation of women is not so different from domestic animal like dog because women have behaved like dog and order to do work. Patriarchal society takes woman as creature that born to follow man.

Likewise Shanta Bai another female character is also confined within the four walls of the house and she is also subjugated her role in her family where she is compelled to endure patriarchal values and norms of the society. Shanta Bai also resists patriarchal value of the society like Savitri. She leaves her house as well as her parents to get freedom and liberation from patriarchal society. She is well treated in terms of not having patriarchal values and norms although she has been taken as plaything, especially by Ramani. Hence, both females remain in the grip of males but they have different experiences.

In Hindu society male is treated as god of female and female is treated as slave of male. The concept plays role to determine the position of women in family and society. The lines show the situations, "Men are impetuous. One moment they will be all temper and the next all kindness. Men have to bear many worries and burdens, and you must overlook it if they

are sometimes unreasonable" (46). Patriarchal society encourages man as breadwinner and projected as protector of the family and neglects the role of women.

In the novel, writer projects the female as meek and male is superior at the begging but later male is shown weak and female is projected as bold than the male. Savitri also performs same role in her family. Woman in practical life is judged by man's law as though she was not a woman but a man. The male-dominated society constructs and categorizes the identities of women from the perspective of male gaze. Culture and religion are used to paralyze the women mentally.

Savitri spends her time at home working and caring the house and the family members but she was not allowed to go outside the household. Being the member of the family and working for the house and family however she even had no right on property. So, for the house hold and for her once use she had to ask a bagger to her husband." I have finished all the change. I shall have to buy some vegetables for the evening "will a rupee do?"(3).Patriarchal values of the society deny working women outside the house because women duty is determined as workers work inside the house.

Women are marginalized from the right of property. A large part of women's work is not consider as economic activity, although women work for more hours than men and take the major responsibility for maintaining the family. Most women's work is unpaid. Her husband goes outside to work and she is not given permission to enter in the public area even though she cares the house and the family but receives inequality as a gift. Shanta Bai also keeps the double relation with him whom she says, "Oh no. Nothing can hurt me. In the office you are the chief and now" (63). "She develops such a close bond with Ramani that she constantly seeks his company and expresses her wish to accompany him to the cinema. The situation she expresses, Shall we go to a picture tonight?" (69).

Savitri expresses her desire but her desire is not independent desire because she shows loyalty to her husband and supports him to fulfill his desire.

Shanta Bai's love for Ramani has consumed her to the point where she has lost her own sense of identity. She relies on Ramani for support and guidance, leaving her unable to establish herself as an individual. Despite being physically distant from her husband and the patriarchal society, Shanta Bai remains under the control of another man, Ramani. As a result, she is unable to find her own separate identity. Similarly, the other female character Shanta Bai in the novel also struggle to assert their individuality and are dominated by men. Despite their efforts to challenge the traditional beliefs and norms of a society dominated by men, they face challenges in breaking free because these values are deeply ingrained in their communities. Furthermore, women have become accustomed to enduring this oppression rather than fighting against the patriarchal system.

The patriarchal system highlights the significant role of men in terms of empowering them and establishing their superiority over women. Despite women having equal rights to exist in this world, they are oppressed and marginalized. Men disregard women's basic needs while enjoying favorable privileges that set them apart from females. Similarly, women are considered subservient to men, who leads to their roles and participation being determined based on patriarchal values and norms. However, these values and norms consistently hinder women from attaining freedom, equality, and justice, denying them access to knowledge. Consequently, women remain unaware of their own existence, resulting in their suffering under the oppression of a male-dominated society. Likewise, in *The Dark Room*, Savitri confines within household activities. She does not have any idea about other external activities outside the house. She becomes ignorant and innocent to do work outside the house. Ramani notes the situation as, "You have to learn a lot yet. You are still a child, perhaps a precocious child, but a child all the same"(12). Ramani perceives Savitri as an inexperienced

individual who has lacks knowledge to work outside the house. Despite shouldering all the family responsibilities, Ramani continues to view her as a child. Consequently, he belittles her to assert his own superiority, causing her distress. Additionally, Ramani occasionally exploits her lack of knowledge for his own benefit.

Like Savitri, Shanta Bai, another female character also suffers from the suppression patriarchy. Patriarchal values and norms treated her as supporting creature of her family. In the beginning, she is dominated by the hands of her husband. She is deprived of access to freedom, equality, and women's rights in a patriarchal society, which is why she decides to leave her home to escape the oppressive environment of her traditional family. She breathes the fresh air of absolutely freedom only for short time before Ramani exploits her physically. Although Shanta Bai becomes rebellious to patriarchal values and norms, she has been taken as a plaything in the hands of the male and becomes victimized, "Ramani rushed at her, locked her in his arms, and implored her to be courageous"(69). Savitri becomes more victimized than other female characters due to her submissive, vulnerable nature. The lines of the novel highlights the situation as, "Savitri saw herself in the mirror in the evening. Her eyes were swollen, her nose was red. The girls came home from school. Kamala cried, "Mother, your eyes are very red. Have you been crying?"(79)

After learning about Ramani's romantic involvement with Shanta Bai, she feels even more victimized and seeks comfort in tears instead of confronting her husband. It is natural for a married woman to find it difficult to accept another woman entering her husband's life.

Savitri experiences heightened sorrow as she carries the burden of all responsibilities, given that Ramani frequently vanishes, neglecting the family to revel in the company of Shanta Bai. Ramani has relocated Savitri's beloved furniture to the office for Shanta Bai, further inflicting emotional pain upon her, yet she remains powerless to take any action. As time goes by, Raman's bond with Shanta Bai grows stronger each day. They become

incredibly close, to the point where Raman spends the majority of his time with Shanta Bai, neglecting his own family. Shanta Bai, too, more interested to get his company and desires to spend much time with him: "To the river, to the river, you have a mad woman beside you tonight." After about an hour at the river she suggested going back to her room. I can't sleep tonight, she said as soon as she got down at Race-Course Road. Would you care to step in? Shall we sit up and chat till dawn?" (71).

Shanta Bai articulates her deep emotions that constantly yearn for Ramani's affection. She also desires to share the majority of her time in the delightful company of Ramani. After spending numerous nights with Shanta Bai, Ramani departs for his home the following morning. However, his wife Savitri cannot find peace until he returns.

Savitri is the reprehensive characters she represents the women of contemporary Indian society. She struggles herself but she could not change the society because the society was exclusively masculine society with laws framed by patriarchal culture. The lines of the novel highlight the situation as;

How important she was, she thought; she had not the slightest power to do anything at home, and that after fifteen years of married life. Babu did look very ill and she was powerless to keep him in bed; she felt she ought to have asserted herself a little more at beginning of her married life and then all would have been well. (5)

Savitri symbolizes the plight of women in Third World society, where they are marginalized and oppressed by men, rendering them powerless and vulnerable. Her outward appearance of boldness and courage changes into the vulnerability and helplessness before the cruelty of her husband. She suffered from the male dominated society and attempt to take apart the patriarchal values and norms as a reaction of their rebellion campaign. But she could not dissolve these rules and laws due to their strong establishment in the society. Furthermore,

they are habituated by increasing their endurable power of domination. Patriarchal values and norms, contrast with women's aspirations for freedom and equality with men. This dichotomy leads to a conflict between the two genders. However, women often bear the brunt of this struggle due to the existing power dynamics and laws that predominantly favor men, disregarding women's desires and inherent rights.

All female characters are made victims in the hands of male, and they try to escape from the suppression. They resist by leave the society for the short time. But they are unable to remove the inequality and injustice in any rate, and they return in same society without any resolution. Hence, the female always becomes victims in the hands of male as they are forced to regard the patriarchal values and norms which are formulated by men. So, men never think better position for female in terms of becoming superior and valuable than female. However, in the novel writer presents t Savitri as character who resists patriarchal values of her family and society since her marriage day. Ultimate search for identity remains in question as she is not able to break the conventions of the patriarchal system, and returns home with more vulnerable conscience.

The female characters depicted in this novel rely entirely on their husbands and families for support. All female characters in the novel, despite their self-reliance, exhibit a sense of ignorance as they depend on their husbands for survival. Moreover, they are bound to conform to the societal norms and values dictated by a male-dominated society. Lack of female identities they are treated as subordinate. Female characters try to use their sexuality but cultural and religious domination could not allow to them to use their female sexuality. They could not use sexuality because they are not suppressed by gender but also oppressed by caste system, exploitation of women, untouchability system, male dominated society, and rural poverty life can provide a true depiction of the consciousness of Indian people and

society. In this context, women are often expected to be completely devoted to their husbands and adhere to patriarchal values and norms..

Women are instructed in the principles of male ideology and conditioned to believe that they must adhere to societal standards of beauty before venturing outside their homes. This expectation is rarely fulfilled, yet they are still expected to present themselves as attractive in the presence of men, in order to be deemed civilized. Men criticize women for spending too much time on beautification, accusing them of prioritizing their appearance over more meaningful pursuits. As a result, they believe that women are constantly engaging in unproductive activities. This is the conflicting nature of the male ideology in patriarchy. In this regard Narayan says:

"Be a good girl Ramani shouted a moment later", Savitri, I will count sixty. You must dress and come out before that Women are exasperating. Only a fool would have anything to do with them. Hours and hours for dressing! Why cannot they put on decent clothes and look presentable at home instead of starting their make-up just when you are in hurry to be off? Stacks of costly *sarees*, all folded and kept inside, to be worn when going out. Only silly looking rags to gladden our sight at home. Our business stops with paying the bill. It is only the outsider who has the privilege of seeing a pretty dress. (21-22)

Above lines indicate the role of women that determined by patriarchal society in the context of Indian society. In third world women are treated as matter of beauty not skill and productivity. There is no separate identities of women in Indian society because their identities is linked with male relative basically with father before marriage and adjust with husband after marriage.

Even after the death of the husband their identities with associates son and other male relatives like brother in law and father in law. Savitri also lives in the same fate that highlights in the novel as, "I can't keep away from my children and home"(147). Her identity is lined with her children and husband. She feels happy with them. The lines portray her situation as:

Savitri felt very happy. She saw a new life opening before her. What more fitting life, she thought, could one choose than serving a god in his shrine? A half measure of rice was more than what she deserved, she felt. She could manage very well with it. She would dedicate her life to the service of God, numb her senses and memory, forget the world, and spend the rest of her years thus and die. (132)

Above lines shows the situation of Savitri who invest her time for the happiness of family. Her happiness turns into unpleasant moment later. She feels herself helpless and attachment of their home and children. In this way, she feels herself helpless in the absence of her children and home. She has no option to escape from male domination because culture and religion tied her and made subjugated. Helpless situation of Savitri projects in the novel through analyzing her narratives. The narratives of Savitri proved her as subjugate women. The lines of the novel show the situation as, "Why have you neglected us?" I was doing my lessons. Lessons! You are great women. Didn't you hear your father come home?"(13). Traditional patriarchal society perpetually views women as inferior to men, relegating them to a secondary or other category. Men possess the power to establish regulations and laws that favor their own gender, while simultaneously exercising dominance over women.

In initial phase Savitri and Shanta Bai initially adopt a passive stance and endure the behavior of men. Later they become more informed and experience about the mistreatment of patriarchy, they transform into bold individuals who assert their rights and fight for their

survival. Consequently, they grow in courage and actively challenge patriarchal norms in their quest to dismantle them.

Savitri, tired of the mistreatment from men, challenges the male-dominated society by departing her family home in rebellion against patriarchal conventions. In this regard she writes, "She glanced at the children, at him, turned around, and walked out, gently closing the door behind her" (88). Savitri resists the patriarchy and tries to establish her identities but she is suppressed by gender discriminating once at a time along with culture and religion. Savitri struggles for her identities. Savitri protests against her husband's disrespectful behavior, which treats her as an object.

Savitri is projected as a subjugated one because she is compelled to live in the boundary of patriarchal culture of Indian society during the time of the 1930s. The subjugated situation of Savitri is reflected in her narratives. Her husband treated her as a servant of the house so that she wants to go far from her house as, "Do not lay a hand on me!" she exclaimed, shifting away from him" (87). Hence, she wants to escape from her house but she could not because she is subjugated. She could not exist without her family support because she returned back to her husband's house without any interest. She wants to live freely outside her husband's house but she is doubly colonized because Hindu religion and culture restricts her from going to live alone without husbands. Due to social and cultural force she returned back to the house and silently accepted the male domination, Indian society is not favorable for the freedom of women because Savitri met the same fate in her life. The following lines of the novel highlight the situation as; "Her own grandmother who served cheerfully for her husband who had three concubines at home; her aunt who was beaten every day by her husband and had never uttered a word of protest for fifty years; another friend of her mother's who was prepared to jump into a well if her husband so directed her; and so on," (47).

It demonstrates steadfast loyalty to her husband, viewing him as a divine figure and refraining from questioning his choices. She maintains that she has never contradicted or debated with her husband over the course of her life, although she may have occasionally proposed alternatives. Her own grandmother happily served her husband, despite him having three mistresses at home. Her aunt endured daily beatings from her husband for fifty years without uttering a single word of protest. Another friend of her mother's was even willing to jump into a well if her husband commanded her to do so. These instances further highlight the unwavering dedication of wives towards their husbands, even in the face of challenging circumstances. She appears to be more inclined towards modernity rather than traditional religious views. Initially, she was devoted to her husband, but his behavior caused a shift in her attitude. Therefore, Shanta Bai's perspective on her husband and men, in general, may differ slightly from that of other female characters.

Babu, the son of Savitri also behaves her like her father because he is also one of the male members of patriarchal society. He exist in this world easily than other characters that still follow traditional values. In opposition to it, Savitri, the female protagonist of this novel, remains far from the access of modern world. She might have been so ignorant about such modern things confining only within household activities. She confined within four walls of house by regarding traditional values and norms and lives as subjugated life.

Patriarchal situation of the society made Savitri as subjugated character so it becomes impossible for her physically and emotionally to be away from children. Nostalgia for children seizes her and she says, "I must see them; I must see Sumati and I must see Kamala. Oh . . ." (146). Love for the children hunted her so, she decides to return home. But Savitri who comes back home is not the same who ventured out. She realizes that a part of her is dead, when she says "A part of me is dead," (160) . It symbolizes her emotional death. She ultimately realizes that she does not possess anything and has no right to call anything her

own, that her own free will and individuality does not exist before the authority of her husband. She plays a role like a traditional woman, who is inclined towards spiritualism, does not prioritize materialistic possessions. She views the contemporary society as deficient in moral principles, spiritual contemplation, and compassion, resulting in its inferiority and absence of worth. Consequently, these traditional women are not enticed by modern products, as they consider their traditional perspective to be superior to the ideals of modernity. Traditional women reside follows the norms fixed by religious and cultural beliefs. The values support male to captivate women in their home. Savitri also bears the same fate in the name of morality and being subjugated.

Savitri faces various problems in her life. She is wife of an educated husband and family member of a middle class family. She is both physically and psychologically tried in her life because her husband treated her as a slave of the house. She is double marginalized at home and lives as a subjugated character. She is treated as a working woman behaved as a poor creature and she is a woman and society makes certain guidelines for. She is economically and socially marginalized in her society. The concept of mother and goddess hardly projects in the novel because the writer shows the harsh reality of Indian society where women are exploited by the men through exercising the primary concept of patriarchy. Patriarchal morality and male dominated family relationship creates an important role to subjugate Savitri in her life.

Savitri, the main female character of the novel faced problems in her life due to oppression patriarchy. Women are dominated in the society dominated by men, highlighting the inter-gender conflicts where women are reduced to insignificant roles and treated as mere objects controlled by men. Women are marginalized, oppressed, and restricted to domestic duties, reflecting the harsh reality of a traditional male-dominated society. Savitri consequently, remains a victim then Indian society disputed her attempts to separate herself from the web of patriarchy.

In conclusion, women are subjugated in the novel due to practice of patriarchal value system of the family and society . It is found that patriarchal value system of the society makes female as subjugated character. Savitri also becomes the victim of patriarchal value system of the society, however, she resists for the establishment of her identities. Ideological dichotomy between male and female, the male's patriarchal stance, creates problems in the life of characters. The immorality and irresponsibility of Ramani make a female, Savitri as a victim. She becomes more aggressive toward him and a kind of conflict occurs between them. Savitri tries to search her own identity by ignoring patriarchal values and norms. She attempts to get salvation from the grip of male. Likewise, Shanta Bai, another female character, also oppressed by her husband. She has been subjected to victimization at the hands of her husband and society, decides to break free and embark on a journey to find her own freedom and establish her identity. Nevertheless, Ramani, a male colleague, takes advantage of her vulnerability due to her recent employment at the Insurance Company, subjecting her the title of the novel *The Dark Room* suggest of female space, a dark kitchen, when Savitri gives frequently to free up her tension and worries. The male-dominated culture perceives women as the 'other' and denies them their inherent rights and creative abilities. Furthermore, women are expected to obey the orders of men due to the belief in male superiority. As a result, women are forced to endure a life of servitude within their families and face subjugation in society. This oppressive environment makes it challenging for women to establish their own identity and assert their independence in a patriarchal society.

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