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Representation of Gendered Subaltern in Munshi Premchand's *Pratigya*

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the representation of gendered subaltern in Munshi Premchand's *Pratigya*. It investigates the suppression and victimization of women from subaltern class and their representation in the novel. Poorna, a widow is misbehaved by her protector Kamala. She being a female as well as a widow is doubly victimized in the society. Sumitra, Kamala's wife is suppressed by domestic violence, ill treated by her husband. She is also powerless in economic way. Prema, the daughter of Badri Prasad, is bound to live a forcible marriage life with Dannath because of her family decision and is suspected by her husband instead of her loyal behavior towards him. All these women are suppressed and victimized under the patriarchal code of conduct. After the mistreatment of Kamala, Poorna thinks herself as a sinner and does not want to disclose her identity as she thinks her a fallen and impure woman. Sumitra despite her husband's fallen character, wants to live with him because she has no any courage to live alone and is depended upon her husband. Prema, inspite of completing her family responsibilities in very good manner, is suspected by her husband Dannath, and her behavior of collecting donations from so called patriarchal society for widows shows that females have to be depended upon males. The writer presents the idealistic solution of gender problems but, he does not express the practical solution for suppression of women.

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I. Victimization of Gendered Subalterns in *Pratigya*

This research mainly depicts the major issues of “Representation of Gendered Subaltern” and aims to explore the deep rooted silence of subaltern faced in various societies on the basis of the novel *Pratigya* by Premchand. After the study of the concept of gender subaltern, it shows that most of the female characters in the novel are directly or indirectly dominated by the male ruling ideology in their life and they cannot speak for the betterment of their own. In this novel all the female characters are suppressed by the male characters. Poorna, a widow is misbehaved by Kamala Prasad and Sumitra, wife of Kamala is also bound to live a deserted life due to the immoral behavior of her husband. Another character Prema is also suppressed by the male ruling ideology. She has to marry Dannath to fulfill her duty towards parents and to maintain the norms and values of her family. After marriage, although Prema is loyal towards Dannath but he always suspects upon her. In this novel *Pratigya*, Poorna being a widow is double victimized and Sumitra and Prema are also suppressed by patriarchal male dominated society. Here, the character Amrit Rai, is shown as a representative of subalterns who provides shelters to the widows by creating Ashram Banita Bhawan.

This thesis investigates the female characters through the lenses of Subaltern Studies project and explores the causes making them silent. Especially, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s theory regarding the gendered subaltern, a figure that has long been neglected in the history and even in the Subaltern Studies project, enables to analyze the representation of gender subaltern in *Pratigya*.

Subaltern Studies, inaugurated in the early 1980s by a group of Indian historians which concerned with the historiography or the writing of history of colonial India. The group of Indian historians known as the Subaltern Studies group, began this project due to the dissatisfaction with the way of nationalist historiography interpreted the freedom movement

of India. The member of subaltern study group found it problematic that in nationalist historiography because of only independence and elite leaders were celebrated where the subalterns were paid little attention. They questioned the nationalist from a perspective that focuses more on the subaltern. The goal of the subaltern studies project is to revive nationalist historiography and recuperate the voice of the subaltern in the history.

Premchand (1880-1936), originally named Dhaapat Rai Srivastav, is the renowned person in the field of Indian literature. He is especially famous for the realistic writing. Premchand's literary career started as a freelancer in Urdu. In his initial short stories he has depicted the patriotic upsurge that was sweeping the country in the first decade of the nineteenth century. In 1914, Premchand started writing in Hindi. He was the first Hindi author to introduce realism in his writing. He pioneered the new art form of fiction with a social propose. He wrote about life around him and made his readers aware of the problem of the urban middle class and the countryside's. Besides being a great novelist, Premchand was also a social reformer and thinker. 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 writing. 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 in his writing is patriarchy, female issues, 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 writer of Indian literature to address the common issues of the common people beautifully.

Premchand has written numerous stories and novels. Some of them are *Premсутra*, *Sati*, *Godan*, *Swarga ki Devi*, *Prema*, *Roothi*, *Rani*, *Nirmala*, and *Pratigya*. In most of his writings, he places the women as the central figure through whom he attempts to convey the message of social reformation. He has given the ideal role to the female characters in the

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. The question of subalterns, especially of women is very pathetic in every male dominated society. Women are taken as an object, second sex, and subordination and fragile. In Hinduism, the status of women is directly depending upon their husband, son and father. They play their duty as a serf. In childhood female are protected as a daughter by her father, in adult by husband as a loyal wife and her sons protected in old age as a depended mother. In childhood women are supposed to remain in a custody and care of her parents. After marriage she becomes an object or property for pleasure who is supposed to take care of her needs and expectations and keep her in his custody.

He has depicted the impact of western culture upon the ruled Indian people in his novel '*Prem-Sutra*' (1926). Pashupati, husband of Prabna, being influenced by the British culture, goes on changing his sex partners. The extra marital affairs 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 women not only in the family but also in the society. The beautiful Mulia is the major figure of his novel. Though, she is chaste and loyal to her husband but he always doubts her. After his death she is attempted to be sexually misbehaved by 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), once again 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 sacrifice 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 religion one belongs to, in his novel '*Kayakalp*'.

According to Pratapnarayan Tandon, 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 achha hai jitna bure Muslim se achha Hindu" (42). He wants to say that man is great by his deed rather than the religion that he adopts. In this sense, Premchanda's contribution for communal fraternity is really admirable in his novel. "The '*Kayakalp*' on the other hand presents the subordinated position of traditional Hindu *women* who never think of opposing their husband is equal to destroy their life" (43). The novel *Gaban* (1930) depicts the problem 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* (1928) translated in English as "*The Second Wife*" 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 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, Rukhmini 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.

The novel *Pratigya*, talks about one of the major issues of the society, the problem of widow marriage. He has presented heart rendered condition of the widow in the society. He beautifully presents how widows are misbehaved and tortured in the society, how they are

compelled to live dissipated life alone in the name of culture. In 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 to challenge the outdated tradition and decides to marry a widow. In the novel *Pratigya*, Poorna a widow is shown as a subaltern who suffers a lot because of her widowhood. She was tortured and misbehaved by Kamala Prasad who was a protector of Poorna in eyes of the society. Her poor economic condition is also the cause to make her submissive. Prema, next character is compelled to live with Dannath because of her family decision. This forcible marriage make her being tied by the bond of marriage, though she was in love with Amritrai but she could not speak on the behalf of her own during her marriage. In spite of her loyalty towards her husband, Dannath suspects her that she still loves Amritrai. Such kind of behavior also presents how males are treating female.

Sumitra, Kamala's wife is also suppressed under patriarchy. Kamal's immoral behavior towards Poorna makes her sad. Though, Sumitra knows about his all bad activities. She is bound to live with him because she does not have any way to get freedom. She is depended on Kamala and guided by patriarchal psychology. So she cannot collect so much courage to live a free life. She shares her problems with Poorna but in the practical life wants to be a doll in the hand of her husband and live under his protection. Likewise the other female characters are also represented as suppressed in the novel.

Dr. Pratap Narayan Tondon in his book '*Premchand*', emphasizes the social problems represented in the novel and argues "life of a widow is the life of humiliation and irritation and it seems as if widows are cursed" (49 My Trans). Tondon writes about the women's issues raised by Premchand in *Pratigya* in this way:

the issues of widow's remarriage and other problems related with female domination through this novel. The writer has also said that human being should give respect to the widows because human is the only creature who has

got education and knowledge of humanity. So that they can make themselves moral especially males have to make broader vision to solve the ill-traditions which are remained in the society. This novel is important not because of the representation of social reality given in miserable way rather because of the solutions which are given in intellectual and practical way. (50 My Trans)

In this regard Similarly, about the problem faced by widows which represented in novel, the critic Indranath Madan in his book *An Interpretation* evaluating Premchand's *Pratigya* writes, "Premchand, the reformist of early days, has expressed the ruthless social system which condemns widows to the miserable life (47)". Another critic Bishwambhar Manav reviews that:

Pratigya is a social novel and it shows the problem of widow's remarriage. During the period when novel was written, the country was influenced by the Aryan society and people were conscious about widow remarriage, solution of dowry system and also for the rights of the untouchables. These all issues are somewhere presented in the novel. Premchand has presented the solution of problem of widows by creating the Ashram 'Banita Bhawan' in the novel which gives security to widows. (112 My Trans)

Amrit Rai in his book '*Premchand*' says: "life is more complex in *Pratigya*. We have a widows home; Poorna goes and lives there and Prema, on her part, like a faithful and dutiful wife, passes her days tied by the bond of her marriage to Dannath" (224).

About the raising of women's issues by Premchand Komal Kothari supporting the views of Prayagraj Mehata reviews that: "in the novel female characters have not so much courage that they could do anything for the betterment of their own. In the novel, Premchand has raised the problems of females, problems of their marriage and also about their freedom. This representation provides brightness in the novel" (54 My trans).

The word 'Subaltern' refers to those person or group who are inferior in rank and station whether because of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or power. The term 'subaltern' literally indicates the inferior rank or dominated and suppressed people by the power holders. The group of subaltern studies used this term as a 'people who are not the 'elite'-the dominant groups and who keep directly or indirectly people under their control in the name of ideology and prejudice. The term 'Subaltern' was derived from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) in his celebrated collection Selection from *The Prison Notebooks* (1971). According to Antonio Gramsci subaltern refers to those group in the society, who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes include peasant, workless, women, and marginalized group, indigenou and other groups isolated from the power center. When Gramsci discussed with the rural peasant in the Southern Italy, he categorized them into the non-hegemonic classes-the subaltern groups. In the preface to subaltern studies Ranjit Guha , one of the leader of subaltern studies writes: "it will be idle of us, of course, to hope that the range of contribution to this series may even remotely match the six point project envisaged by Antonio Gramsci"(vii). Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak also mentions in the editors note to selected subaltern studies that almost all of the works of the subaltern studies collectives is "an expansion and enrichment of Antonio Gramsci's notion of the subaltern (xii)". According to Gramsci, "subaltern always speaks according to ruler's interest as being possessive and it remains parasite even when it seems revolutionary" (81quoted in *Shakti, Srasta ra Subaltern*).

Having a general dissatisfaction with historical interpretation of the freedom movement in India, the subaltern studies group initiated serious debate about the history writing of the independence and partition of India. Led by Ranjit Guha, the subaltern studies collective at its inception in 1982 was composed of a group of Indian historians who began the project in an attempt to promote "a systematic and informed discussion of subaltern

theme in the field of South Asian studies and hence help to revise the elitist bias characteristics of much research and academic work of this particular area” (Guha, selected 7).

In “On Some Aspect of the Historiography of Colonial India” the inaugural essay of the subaltern studies series, Ranjit Guha rendered in a note a definition of the subaltern, which he used as synonymously with ‘people’. Adopted and extended the concept of the subaltern from Gramsci, Guha says the term represented the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have describe as the elite. Guha explained the term ‘elite’ referred to the dominant groups, foreign as well as indigenous. The dominant foreign groups included all the non-Indian who were in power over Indian or made profit from Indians, such as “British officials; of the colonial state foreign industrialist, merchant, financiers, planters, landlords and missionaries” (Guha On Some 7). The regional and local levels were made up of the Indians who did not act in the interests corresponding “truly to their own social being either members of the all Indians level hierarchy in social strata” (7). Guha pointed out the ambiguities between the elite classes and the subaltern classes they might be “the rural gentry’s impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper-middle class peasant” (7). How they were defined depended on the regional, social and economic condition. The best description of the term ‘subaltern’ applied by the subaltern study group might be stated as “the general attributes of subordination in South Asian society, whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (Guha Selected35).

The subaltern studies project, however, while facing some internal debates and criticism and receiving influence from new theories, had to re-orientate its goals and methodologies in reaction to its contemporary academics surrounding. According to Vinayak Chaturvedi, “By the end of Subaltern Studies IV [...] Signs of a shift were already present

(xi)” for instance, the project has been questioned about whether the western-imported theory- Marxism is sufficient to apply to India. With the impact brought by Foucauldian and post structuralism theories, the subaltern studies project has controlled the need of a re-orientation of its future development.

Among the new perspectives rethinking the subaltern studies project, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s concepts are the most important and insightful. By asking the question “Can the Subaltern Speak?” she doubts if the subaltern actually has his/her own consciousness to speak for him/her. Moreover she submits the term “gender subaltern” to underline her emphasis on the long ignored figure women. In her essay “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” (1986), Spivak points out the absence of discussion on women in the subaltern studies project. Spivak’s critical points and further discussion of “suttee”, the self-immolation of Indian women, in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” led the subaltern studies project to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of subaltern issues. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her essay “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” (1986), which serves as the introduction to *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988), has pointed out the problem of the work of the subaltern studies group. She states that what the work of the subaltern study groups offers is a “theory of change”(3), a theory that intends to rectify the general definition and theorization that colonization is a transition from feudalism to capitalism for India. In Spivak’s words the subaltern studies collective puts forward at least two approaches to revise this point of view, “first, that moments of change the pluralized and plotted as confrontation rather than transition[...] and secondly, that such change are signaled or marked by a functional change in sign system”(3). The former, which proposes to change the reading of British Colonization as a ‘transition’ in to ‘confrontation’ of India, enables the moments of change to be interpreted in relation to “history of domination and exploitation instead of “within the great modes of production narrative”(3).

The latter, which appeals to a change of sign system, enables a reinterpretation of the meaning of originally negative defined terms, such as “crime to insurgency” and “bondsmen to worker” (3). These propositions show an error within the fundamental ideas of the subaltern studies collective that Spivak contends “the agency of change is located in the insurgent or the subaltern” (3). She argues that the operation of a change entails “the force of a crisis” and space for that change in the prior function of the sign system: “the change in signification function supplements the previous function” (4). She thereby indicates the subaltern studies group mistakenly regard their project “a theory of consciousness or culture” and this is cause the effect that “the force of crisis [---] is not systematically emphasized in their work” (4).

In Spivak’s view the subaltern study group considers that “the entire socius” is “a continuous sign chain” and the possibility of subverting the position of the subaltern “lies in the dynamics the disruption of this object, the breaking and rethinking of the chain” (5). The members of the subaltern study group attempt to locate a consciousness in the subaltern by affirming the political nature of the subaltern group insurgencies. The subaltern concept of the subaltern study group, thus his/her consciousness asserted the meaning re-signified, would escape the subordinate position of the binary position in the sign system. This approach, which Spivak calls “discursive displacement” adopted by the subaltern studies group, is regarded as problematic. Spivak writes:

The line of argument does not set consciousness over against the socius, but sees it as itself also constituted as and on a semiotic chain. It is thus an instrument of the study which participates in the nature of the object of study. To see consciousness thus is to place the historian in a position of irreducible compromise. (5)

According to Spivak, the search for a subaltern consciousness by the subaltern studies group seems positive at first. However, this consciousness, which makes all the theories of the subaltern studies collective possible, is actually the consciousness “not of the being of subaltern, but of the oppressor” (11). Since the subaltern cannot be mentioned without reference to the elite, the subaltern’s effect serves as the model that offers the desire for the elite to produce the image of self. The so-called subaltern consciousness can be found, if possible, only in a negative sense. On this ground, the themetization of the subaltern consciousness as the subaltern studies group’s methodological presupposition is by definition incomplete and Spivak asserts “non-originary” (11-12). Spivak by virtue of disavowal of the origin of the subaltern consciousness notes the subaltern studies collective’s failure “to find a consciousness of the subaltern [---] in a positive and pure state” (5).

To talk about the gendered subaltern, when subaltern studies group emerged in India in 1982, it was set to undertake empirical study on various aspects of subaltern people irrespective of caste, gender, color, profession, space and class. Therefore, subaltern study did not take up the women issues distinctly up to the first three volumes of subaltern studies with the inclusion of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in subaltern studies iv, subaltern studies entered a new domain : feminism. While pointing out the vulnerable points of subaltern studies, Spivak made it clear that subaltern studies, as a discourse to speak on behalf of marginalized groups has not paid as much attention to women as it should have.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in the last part of the “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” (1986), advocates an emphasis on noticing and investigating the ‘gendered subaltern’-women. Spivak puts forward the problems of the absence the history of women’s involvement in insurgency in the elite historiography and the neglect of attention to the female subaltern in the subaltern study project. This observation has uncovered the particularly serious marginalization of women, as Spivak writes: “within the effaced itinerary

of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual deference is doubly effaced [--], if in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (83). Spivak, specifies the predicament of women as victimized by the double oppression of not only the class system but also by the patriarchy. Spivak says: “male subaltern and historians are here united in the common assumption that the procreative sex is a species apart, scarcely, if at all to be considered a part of civil society” (28).

In “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” Spivak, expresses her surprise to find the discussion of “women” as subject scarcely appears in the Subaltern Study project. Spivak observes that the members of the Subaltern Study collective “overlook how important the concept –metaphor-women are to the functioning of their discourse” (26). Spivak describe that women, who signify only “exchange- value” in the men-centered power structure for example in the aspect of territoriality or the communal mode of power, are represented as “instrument”. In this power structure that is based on kinship or clanship, “notion of kinship or clanship are anchored and consolidated by the exchange of women” (28). Women are instrument in patriarchal narrative. Spivak hence declares: the continuity of community or history, for subaltern and historian alike is produced on [---] the repeated emptying of her meaning as instrument” (31). In the fourth section of ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, through a critical analysis of the Hindu practice “suttee” or “sati” was the sacrifice of Hindu widow who immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. This practice, which was considered or sacred by the Indian society, regarded as savage and later outlawed by the British in 1928. This action brought about a conflict between two foreign and indigenous groups. The British took their outlawing of “suttee” as a case of “white men saving brown women from brown men” where as the Indian men claimed that “the women actually wanted to die” (93).

Kamala Visweswaran in her essay 'Nationalist Ideology and Its Historiography' writes:

the question of subaltern women must be framed first by the recovery of a non-originary or 'dependent' subject in the understanding of subaltern autonomy as relational. Exposing strategies of containment (points at which the subaltern are contained by dominant ideology) thus reveals both the relational aspect of power and the assertion of subaltern autonomy. The question of subaltern women, however, requires that we understand how such subjects are rendered dependent by the gendering of nationalist ideology and its counter historiography. Unmarried women, lower-class women or women who could not otherwise establish respectability-that their lives were 'no better than other women attending to household duties themselves without assistance of servant 'might have the levels 'prostitute' or 'paramour' attached to them and their political motives were suspect. (88-89)

Hence many critics, writers as well as other scholars have advocating different interpretation and analysis but no one has tried to analyze the problems of marginalized people through the prism of gender subaltern. So, the researcher will analyze the issues of marginalized groups like gender issues with the help of gender subaltern theories. This research is divided into the three chapters.

The first chapter is the introductory outlook of entire thesis. The second section of this research focuses on the theoretical discussion of representation of subaltern groups from the perspective of gender subaltern view. The last section is the concluding chapters of thesis. It is a sum up of entire thesis.

II. Representation of Gendered Subaltern in *Pratigya*

Munshi Premchand, in *Pratigya* represents the subaltern characters through a widow Poorna, Sumitra and Prema. There are some subaltern characters that are suffered by economic, gender and domestic violence. This chapter particularly investigates the representation of those female characters that belongs to subaltern class. In the novel, there are many female characters like Poorna, Sumitra, Prema, Devki, Prema's mother-in-law but this thesis investigates only those characters who are from the subaltern class whose voices always have dominated and remained silent. Along with the thesis raising the small issue mentioned in the novel has tried to present that bitter reality and problems of subaltern women is not raised effectively rather in symbolic way. Particularly Poorna, a widow who is victimized by male violence and Sumitra suppressed by her husband and Prema are the characters of the investigation of this thesis. This thesis presents these female characters as the gendered subaltern.

Premchanda's *Pratigya* presents the story of the social realism of 1927. In the novel *Pratigya*, many females are suffered from the suppression caused by male characters. Female are dominated directly or indirectly by patriarchal system. Premchand's novel *Pratigya* presents such characters that are suppressed and dominated by males.

Poorna, a widow doubly marginalized, Sumitra, suppressed by her husband Kamala Prasad and Prema bound to live a forcible marriage life are presented as subaltern characters in the novel. The novel presents how subaltern women were suffered.

Poorna is a widow and female character of the novel, *Pratigya*. Munshi Premchand presents Poorna from the subaltern class as main character of the novel and the story moves around her. Poorna is very beautiful and cultured women. After the death of her husband Vasant Kumar she remains alone. Lala Badri Prasad a well known person of the society decides to give her shelter in his house as Poorna is also the friend of his daughter Prema.

Badri's son Kamala does not want Poorna to let her come to live in his house. Because he wants to get rid of her, so that he could save his money. Such condition of Poorna shows that female becomes helpless and orphan after the death of their husband. The economic condition of Poorna is not good because she depends upon her husband and after his death she becomes helpless. Her uncle also does not turn back to look her situation after her marriage. According to Hindu culture, after the marriage of daughter she becomes property of her husband, she cannot say her problems to her parents and have to remain silent. Here, it is presented that how male dominated society makes a female's life as a submissive creature in the shadow of her husband.

Kamala Prasad goes to Poorna by making the idea of somehow managing to make her leave the place and go away to her uncle's house. But he is attracted by Poorna's beauty. Lust awakens in his mind and he finally speaks, "It will be very difficult for you to stay here alone, and at home Prema is also very lonely, so why don't you come to our house and stay with us. Is it a problem?" (25). This dialogue/expression of Kamala clarifies that he is attracted by her beauty. He is not accepting Poorna's arrival in his home but when he is lured by her beauty his attention changed. It is easy to know that what is playing in his mind. He also tries to gain Poorna's sympathy at the very time by telling that he is the unluckiest man and cannot get love from her wife Sumitra.

Poorna cannot refuse the proposal because she is totally alone and has no any way to survive. For a drowning person a twigs support is enough so how could she refuse a boat. But little does she know that her savior is no boat but a strange animal that would devour her very soul.

Many times Poorna had gone to that house but after the difference situation of her life, she felt a tongue of guilt in her mind to enter the house. Earlier she came as a friend but she was there as a refugee after the death of her husband.

All the family members hurriedly come to welcome her. But Poorna heart was torn apart. This was not a sign of welcome but pity. (28)

Aforementioned narration shows Poorna's miserable and economically weak situation in the novel. She is financially poor and widowhood is also as a curse upon her. So she is compelled to live a life of refugee at others house. To understand the representation of Poorna as subaltern women in the novel, we need to know the notion of the "gendered subaltern" and the idea of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?"(1988) underline the silencing of the Hindu widow in the outlawing of the ritual 'suttee' the self immolation by British. By outlawing Sutti, the British marked themselves as the protector of Hindu women and the establisher of the good society" (95). Where as by espousing Suttee the male Indians showed their conformity to traditional Hindu law. Without taking account of her voice consciousness, however, the Hindu widow was sacrificed silenced in the two male group's ideological conflict. Spivak states: "the dubious place of the free will of the constituted sexed subaltern subject as female was successfully effaced (98). In Spivak's narrative, the Hindu widow agency was denied, first by the legal displacement of her subject in the patriarchal religious system, and second by the imperialist construction of her as a victim of the patriarchal barbarism. Spivak writes, "Between patriarchy and imperialism the figure of women disappear not in to a pristine nothingness, but in to a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third world women' caught between tradition and modernization" (102). By discussing the silencing of the Hindu widow, Spivak highlights the limit of representing the gendered subaltern caught between patriarchy and imperialism.

Being represented as a sexual object by Kamala Prasad, who is lured by her beauty, Poorna has become the victim of multiple oppressions. As Spivak would say, her meaning in

emptied to signify the domination of patriarchy, class and nation her body serves as the site where these discursive powers concise.

Poorna's simplicity and helplessness awakened the evil in kamala. That's why he started making trap for Poorna to fulfill his lusty desire. Going to prostitutes was an expensive entertainment. To spend money and suffer the fear of being caught was not something that a person like Kamala would do.

(50)

Above given narration reflects the male ideology and shows that the trap of patriarchal society is so powerful and pervasive that it does not let any subaltern to get out of it. Kamala Prasad brought two silk sarees and said to Sumitra "I got these two silk sarees. Got them cheap. You take one and give the others to Poorna" (51). Kamala's behavior shows that he is doing all the effort to attract Poorna at any cost. Just for not being suspected by his wife he brings two sarees. But knowing Kamala's intention towards Poorna, Sumitra does not accept the sarees and Poorna also fears to take. Poorna says –"Babuji! Im not permitted to wear silk sarees. What will I do with it? A simple cotton one will do for me" (54). Poorna's expression shows that the widows are not even allowed to live a good life. They have restriction in wearing good clothes, eating good foods and many other opportunities are grabbed for them.

Sumitra's suspicion towards Kamala creates more distance between husband and wife. And Poorna is also aware about the situation. She thinks that widowhood is the other name of blemish. She is not in an easy condition. Under the lusty eyes of Kamala and suspected eyes of Sumitra, Poorna is living a miserable life.

Thinking about all situation, Poorna doubts, did Kamala Prasad bring the sarees for her and just so that Sumitra does not suspect brought a saree for her as well? Her whole consciousness, her awareness, her soul turned dark, as if a huge mansion has fallen on her head. Was this doubt on Sumitra's mind from

the first day? Did she doubt my intention? Did she think I came here or was brought here for romance? Oh god! Is widowhood the other name of blemish?

(56)

Poorna's situation shows that how easy it is to blame a widow. People do not mind forming the lowest opinions about a widow, as though lust is the only natural behavior, as if becoming a widow awakens all the lust and weakness in a woman. Being a female, Poorna is suppressed by patriarchal society and widowhood is the situation for her double victimization. Because of her poor condition she has to suffer a lot. She is being hit from both sides.

Poorna tries to placate Sumitra by talking about different things but Sumitra would frown and say:

Don't say anything to me right now Poorna. I'm not in a mood. I'm cursed from birth. Otherwise why would I eat all? When you came I thought if nothing else at least I can unburden myself by sharing my miseries with you, but it was not meant to be. Please leave and let me cry alone. (55)

Here, though Sumitra is also not cared by her husband, but Poorna, is much more subaltern than Sumitra. She is also victimized by female as well as male because of her widowhood.

Poorna making herself responsible for Kamala's indifferent behavior toward Sumitra, thinks of counseling Kamala and setting things right. Sympathy towards Sumitra leads her to Kamala's room. Poorna talks to Kamala standing outside. Kamala pretends not to hear about Sumitra and says: "How long will you keep standing outside? Come in, I have to tell you something" (61). Here Kamala not hearing about his wife Sumitra shows his bad intention towards Poorna. He presents himself as if he is normal but calling Poorna in the room expresses his inner desire to fulfill his lust.

Saying this he caught hold of Poorna's wrist and pulled her inside and bolted the door. His keen eyes were fixed on Poorna's pale face. The fire of lust overtook him. All his efforts, his awareness; his entire nature took the shape of strange animalism. The way an animal's eyes shine at the sight of its prey, the same look came into Kamala's eyes. Seeing Kamala advance towards her she raised her head and looked at him with fiery eyes. Seeing the fire in her eyes her closed fists and straight neck, Kamala hesitated. He became aware and cautious. (61)

Above mentioned narration shows how female are taken as a sexual object and are looked by lusty eyes by males. Here, Poorna is helpless and much more suppressed because of her poor situation. She becomes an easy target for Kamala's immoral behavior. We can see how poor subaltern women are living in a miserable condition as if they have no any self respect.

Seeing fire in Poorna's eyes Kamala says:

Don't look at me like that Poorna. I know you cannot get love by being cunning or forceful, and I had no intentions of doing that. I only want a favorable disposition between us. Since the day I saw your beautiful image, I have been worshipping you. Stone idols are worshipped with flowers and leaves, but I have been doing that for you with tears. I have brought you here only with the desire to be able to cry at your feet. Just remember, my life is dependent on your benevolence. If you remain indifference towards me then I warn you one day you will either find Kamala Prasad's dead body in this room or on the shores of the Ganges. That is certain. (61-62)

He tries to convince Poorna by saying he has been worshipping her and his life is depend on her benevolence. He also shows fear that if she will be indifference then he will kill himself.

Kamala's word shows that how males pretend to be a moral character to persuade the

women. Kamala tries to threaten and convince Poorna to satisfy his sexuality by saying all these fake things. He has no any respect towards Poorna. Just to use her sexuality he wants to trap her in his sweet words.

In 'Can The Subaltern Speak?' Spivak extends the definition of the subaltern by including these females of the urban sub-proletariats into category. She advocates an emphasis on both the economic and sexual aspects of the oppression of the gendered subaltern. Spivak's theory helps to note the oppression from both patriarchy and class on the gendered subaltern.

When Kamala praises Poorna's beauty she feels better and for a moment thinks that he is not that type of person she thinks. But suddenly she realizes that this is not the right path for her. She goes close to the door and said:

Please let me go Babuji why do you want to ruin my life? You are a man, everything is okay for me. I' m a women where will I go? Think, if there is even the slightest talk about this; can you imagine what my position will be? There will be no other option for me except to drown myself why do you want to get banished on my account? Is such a life worth living? No Babuji, please have a mercy on me. As far as I am concerned, if I die today it want make any difference to anybody. Only the earth will become lighter. But your life is precious. Why do you want to put it in trouble? Whenever you will get the opportunity you will just wash your hands off me. What will become of me, you will not be bothered then! (65-66)

Regarding this point, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her witty commentary "A Literary Representation Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi's Standayini" (SSV) states that:

Subjectivity and voices of women are ignored. She is reduced to the object of male desire. Women are treated as playmate for pleasure and entertainment of male. Male rarely treat them as human beings. Whether women are looked 'from above 'merely as sexual object or 'from below' as goddess. Moreover,

she has pointed the parallelism between Joshoda (the central female character of 'Stanadayini') and the subaltern divine. At one aspect, she has been turned in to an object of the male's desire. On the other, she has been worshipped as she feeds the children with her breast. By presenting as goddess, the patriarchal society has tried to hide the injustice and oppression upon females.

It is just the patriarchal politics to use women for their benefits. (129)

Thus Spivak entered a new domain of feminism in Subaltern Studies IV and gave gender subaltern a separate position in subaltern studies as subaltern studies had not taken the women's issue distinctly. Till then subaltern studies had undertaken empirical study on various aspects of subaltern people irrespective of caste, gender, class, color, space and economy. The way Spivak defines is the way Poorna is victimized. As a subaltern woman she is sexually objectified. To seduce her, Kamala is ready to worship and cry at her feet also. This shows how male can perform in front of female to quench their sexual thirst.

Gender subaltern specially raises the issues of those female who are ignored, forgotten, backward in position whose voices remain silent, who are docile in front of male and who are in suffocation. It strengthens the voices of such marginalized female. In this context, Spivak's 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' is the manifesto for gender subaltern. While pointing out the vulnerable point of subaltern studies, Spivak made it clear that subaltern studies, as a discourse to speak on behalf of marginalized groups, has not paid as much attention to women as it should have. Among the subaltern groups, women's position is very poor and miserable, their subjectivity and identity is erased from the history. Actually they have not history. Women have doubly subalternized. On the one hand, like their male counterparts they are suppressed as colonized subject and on the other hand, their own male counterparts dominate them.

In the colonial atmosphere, women's position is very poor than male. Here his specific focus is upon the gendered subjects. In the course of rewriting subaltern subjectivity, women identity is erased. According to Spivak "if in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (274). She opines that plight of subaltern is more serious in comparison to their male counterparts. Spivak also argues in the same essay that subaltern people cannot represent themselves. Instead, they have to be represented by others. The problem with representation however, is that the subaltern's voice get overshadowed by the very chance of investigators. The elite intellectual can be representing the subaltern voice through an elite perspective and subaltern people's reality cannot be represented.

When Sumitra talks about the misbehavior of Kamala with Poorna, Poorna says that she is also doing stubborn behavior with her husband. Sumitra angrily says: "you must be feeling happy that I had to hear all this" (102). This behavior of Sumitra hits Poorna like an arrow. She speaks very cautiously and states:

"sister whatever you have in your mind please tell me, what will you gain by being contemptuous towards orphan like me? If you do not like my saying here then I will leave today itself. There are lakhs of women nothing here; do all of them have someone to protect them? They are also surviving somehow. I will also like that. And if there is no place the mother Ganga will accept her daughter. (102)

Sumitra's behavior towards Poorna shows that how the widows are doubly marginalized in the society. Being a widow, Poorna has to listen such words from Sumitra as she is also a female.

Poorna as a subaltern woman always becomes passive, docile, submissive and meek. From the very beginning of the human civilization, there is the trend to dominate the lower

class people by the upper class. Those who are subaltern and marginalized are exploited mentally and physically. As the Nepali proverb refers “the big fish always eats small fish” in the same way have-nots are exploited by haves. In such deep level of exploitation female are more exploited than male because they are doubly marginalized in the patriarchal society. Spivak in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” says “the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (88). Spivak’s words are very contextual in the case of Poorna. Poorna as a gendered subaltern is tantalized by Kamala.

When Poorna goes to bid farewell with Kamala, he summons Poorna, but she does not agree to enter the room. Standing outside she talks to him that she wants to say good bye because she wants to go from that house. But Kamala pulls her inside and starts talking about his love towards her. He is enticing Poorna by his luring talks but he does not have any good intentions towards her. He threatens Poorna that if she will not live in the house he will kill himself.

Here, Kamala by threatening her and showing his sweet words tries to attract Poorna towards him. But all these activities he was doing for his own pleasure and Poorna was unknown about the reality. She just thinks that Kamala loves her and was being trapped in his words. Sumitra comes to Poorna and says:

I have seen everything Poorna. Meeting secretly like this will ruin your present life, as well as the life after. It will be a test for him. If he agrees to marry you that would mean his love is sincere. Otherwise you will know that he is doing all this to satisfy his lust and he wants to play with your honor. If he says no, then do not meet him again; do not even look at his face again.

(115)

And the same thing was in the mind of Kamala. He was doing such activities just for the fulfillment of his lusty desire.

Regarding this point, Indrani Chatterjee in the *Colouring Subalternity: Slaves, Concubines and Social orphans in Early Colonial India*, Chatterje says,

Males gender society tend to use the women as for the sexual pleasure. Males have the strong desire to keep sexual intercourse with females. Bur they do not like to marry them. Claims of marries were the exception rather than the norms; later historiographical glosses turned co-habitational slaves into wives.

(58)

She means to say that in the patriarchal societies females are used as the object of sexual pleasure. Females are just for male enjoyment. They are compelled to have sexual relations with males and after that they are left alone to be mother without father. The norms made by males do not work on the women's behalf except the exceptional case.

Poorna after deciding to leave the house again thinks where should she go? Where could she go? If she left in a hurry won't it make the reason stronger? How easy it is to blame a widow? People do not mind forming the lowest opinions about a widow, as though lust is the only natural behavior. As if becoming a widow awakes all the lust and weakness in a woman. (56)

According to above given narration Poorna's condition is helpless; she does not have any capacity to challenge the situation. Neither she has her own voice nor does she have an agency to speak in favor of her. So, merely she says, "where can I go?" This is how Poorna is gendered subaltern.

Spivak, in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" says "there is no space from which sexed subaltern speaks" (103). She further says that sexed subalterns do not get self esteem and ownership in the patriarchal model of social structure, where women's identity is deeply in shadow. They suffer from identity crisis and their identity is like that of jelly fish. As said

by the Spivak, Poorna as gendered subaltern cannot get fixed identity, her identity always goes on fluctuation.

Kamala Prasad takes Poorna outside the house saying Prema has called her. When Poorna saw that the horse's leash was not in the hands of the coachman but Kamala herself her heart began pounding with unknown fears. After one turn Poorna felt that it was not the correct route. Poorna said nervously, "Where are you taking me?" "Just to my garden. We will take a walk there for some time and then go to Prema's. Kamala convinces Poorna by saying that everything happening in their life is God's will. Saying this Kamala takes Poorna's hands and put them around his neck. Poorna does not hesitate, but there are no signs of joy on her face because she is wondering if such love was forever. When she was deep in thought Kamala put her on the couch and proceeded towards the door to close it. Kamala's eyes were oozing fire. This was no signs of true love, instead it is the in eye of a wild animal carving for blood. This was not a desire for pure but violent heat. Poorna jumped of the couch, pulled her hand away and opening the door, she goes out to the Verandah: she is hurrying to go but Kamala was saying that he will not let her go. When Poorna frightens Kamala saying that she will shout and scream, Kamala smiled and said "But who is there to listen to your screaming? You are now in my control. You cannot escape from here. Both the gardeners are my servants. They will never come back. And there is no third man here for at least a mile" (118-122).

Given narration shows Kamala's dominating behavior and Poorna's pitiable situation where she cannot do anything for her freedom. She is frightened. She has to bow her head under the patriarchal code of conduct. She does not have freedom. Rahal Gairola in *Burning with Shame: Desire and South Asian Patriarchy* from Gayatri Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* To Deepa Meheta's *Fire* writes:

We may thus say that for the use woman identity has great use value in the schema of gendered society but little exchange value, since gender can never fully be exchanged or reach a point where it establishes as equivalence with another facet of identity as rooted so deeply within both the self and society (subjectivity and agency). Any exchange at all occurs within the gender subject, who scrambles to promise her own identity, bartering of gender roles and other facets of identity. This is an individual, eternal, symbolic act never uniformed by the surrounding society. For subaltern women this means subordination to the patriarchal codes that constitutes her subjectivity for she must be to a certain extent validated by those in power. (308)

Kamala comes closer to Poorna to hold her hand. But suddenly, Poorna picks up a chair and throws it at Kamala's face. It hits Kamala's nose and started bleeding. She leaves him and runs out. She quickly goes down the road and hides inside the road.

Here, it shows the resistance of subalterns. Poorna becomes conscious for her prestige. She resists against Kamala but again she hides herself and also regrets for her action. She thinks that had she been a little patient Kamala would not have done all that. Mentality of Poorna is not confident but contradictory. Taking this point Partha Chatterjee her essay "Caste and subaltern consciousness" writes:

Gramsci's comments suggest to us a methodological approach in which we are subaltern consciousness as contradictory, consisting of two opposed elements one autonomous and the other borrowed. Similarly, we see the history of religion too as constituted by two opposed tendencies- one the attempt to articulate a universal code for society as a whole, and the other the struggle by the subordinated to resist the dominating implications of this code. (174)

Poorna's behavior shows that though subalterns try to raise the voice against the oppressor but their voice remains unheard and they themselves become parasite under the power holder's hegemony.

Again she thinks where could she go? On one hand it was the unbearable pain of staying in jail and on the other side it was nothing to survive on. Death is the only option for such a person, she thought. She thinks- there was nothing left in life except insults, shame and sorrow. Why did she not die with her husband? Why did she not commit sati? It would have been better than this life. There was no other way for her but death. (125)

This thinking of Poorna shows that how miserable condition of subaltern women's position in society. They have the inferior mentality within them because of the patriarchal code of conduct. Hindu women are under such norms and values that they think that after the death of their husband they should go to sati for can go to the heaven. Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" argues that subaltern female cannot be heard and read. Subaltern classes cannot represent themselves and in different types of mythical construction of society and culture, female are in subordination position. They are misrepresented. According to Spivak: "As long as the women [as wife: stri] does not burn herself in fire on the death of her husband, she is never released [Mucyate] from her female body [stri] i.e. in the cycle of birth" (299). Many writers with the help of myth here attempted to depict women as subaltern and they generalize that they cannot speak because of such reasons, writers can speak on its own. Poorna by throwing chair on Kamala's face shows her resist but after that also she has no way to get freedom. She thinks that final destination is only death for her.

As Ranjit Guha argues that subaltern people have no approach over the things that are necessary to their minimum existence, the same thing happens in Poorna's life. She ever has no hope to live and thinks that her last way is only the death.

Subaltern people are sabotaged in the corner of the society, neither they have agency to speak over their voice is heard by the ear of elitist people. So, they cannot go against the authority in this regard they do not get any space in the society.

When Poorna asks an old man for the way to Ganga River, he suggests her to go to Banita Vawan, a home for orphan women made by Amritrai. But Poorna's heart sank. The trouble she fears that she will be known as a characterless women if everyone will know the reality. She is making herself sinner.

But she only agrees to go there in one case that she will not disclose her identity. Had Poorna be heading towards the Gangas to end her life she would not have felt as miserable.

Poorna herself cannot decide where to go but an old man who is a male, suggests her the way to Ashram. She blames herself for all the bad events happened upon her. So, she refers to disclose her identity to anyone.

In the patriarchal society, women get no space to speak against the authority because the patriarchal norms are forcefully imposed over them. In such kinds of society, women are treated as second class people and their duty is to fulfill the male's desire. In this connection Spivak in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" says "subaltern women will be as mute as ever" (90). She further defines, in the history of male dominated authority; women are always treated as the commodity. When they try to raise their voice against the authority that vanishes as the way the voice of lamb vanishes in the mouth of tiger. Poorna as a subaltern widow woman also lives in Banita Vawan without her identity and have no courage in her own and have to live in a shelter of others. One of the critics Bishwambhar Manav in his book *Premchand* writes:

Lala Badri Prasad gives protection to Poorna in his house when he knows about the death of her husband but he trust upon his son Kamala very much that he never cares that Poorna is in a good condition or not. If he would have

take care of her by himself than Poorna would not have to go out from his house. (111)

This activity shows that there is no any strong solution presented in the novel for widow problems. Widows are just taken as submissive, weak character and they themselves cannot change their fate by their own effort. He further says:

On the one hand it seems good that persons like Amritrai can help widows by creating Ashram and providing them food and shelter but what about their feelings? Poorna sacrifices her life on the feet of lord Krishna in the Ashram. But can the statue made by soil provide them the true happiness in life? The writer cannot collect so much courage to show the marriage of widow as it is represented in the first chapter of the novel. Amritrai takes an oath to marry a widow but at last he remains single. (113)

This criticism reflects that there is no any courageous step shown in the novel for the betterment of gender subalterns.

As the novel, *Pratigya* deals with the issues of social reality, *Pratigya* represents those female characters from subaltern class who were suffered and suppressed from the different types of violence such as, religious, communal and domestic. The novel, *Pratigya*, not only tells the story of Poorna, the protagonist and a subaltern female character, who was marginalized because of her widowhood, but also presents the other female subaltern. Sumitra and Prema are those subaltern female characters who were suffered and suppressed from different types of domination. Munshi Premchand represents those female characters from subaltern class who were victimized by patriarchal ideology. In this chapter, this research investigates the representation of these female characters as gendered subaltern.

Sumitra, is one of the subaltern female characters of the novel, *Pratigya*, she appears in the third chapter of the novel. She is also suppressed under patriarchal norms and values.

Sumitra is wife of Kamala Prasad and daughter in law of Badri Prasad. Kamala Prasad don't care for her, he's very heartless and selfish. He makes her busy by watching movies and don't spend time with Sumitra. Sumitra answers:

Not yet. It is only twelve. Why would he come so early? Neither one nor two nor three O'clock. I have married the walls of this house. I am the daughter-in-law of the great Lala Badri Prasad - What more could one ask for. I don't know why God has brought me to this earth. There is no one in this house whom I can call my own. By force I'm living here. No one is bothered whether I'm alive or dead. Please be kind to me I beg you. Broken strings don't make sweet music. I don't know that all I'm going to say to you. Please don't tell anybody otherwise I'll be in even more trouble. We are both cursed. At least you have some sweet memories to live on, I don't have those either. I have never seen happiness nor do I have any hopes of ever seeing it when Poorna asked has brother returned or not. (31)

Her expression shows the mistreatment of her family towards her. She is compelled to live an unhappy married life with Kamala Prasad for he does not pay attention towards her happiness. She talks about her feelings with Poorna but also afraid of other family members whether they will know all these things. Having husband also she compares her life with the widow, Poorna saying that she have not even sweet memories as Poorna to live on. Spivak, expresses her view regarding females silence in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" she discusses about the history writing process of colonist where women are neglected she writes:

Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern project, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced. The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of sexual division of the labor, for both of which there is "evidences". It is rather, that both as object of colonialist

historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keep the male dominant. If in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. (274)

Sumitra's husband often shouts at her for money. Although she doesn't do wasteful spending but she have to listen to his lecture on how to economies. Kamala's behaviors towards Sumitra shows that how a male dominates a female economically. Female who is dependent upon her husband have to remain as a slave. Sumitra says: "My father sends me fifty rupees. I won't get a penny from this house. I do what I want with that but he has reservations about that also" (92). It shows that under the patriarchy female are not allowed to live life as their wish. Sumitra cannot spend her own money as her own way because Kamala does not like that. She suffers from economic marginalization.

When we turn out the pages of history, women are depicted as being dependent upon their husband's agency .They have no any single agency. Women are domesticated, which makes women triangle in the society. Kamala Vishwesworan expresses same sort view in her essay "Nationalist ideology and its historiography" according to her: "Colonial attributes towards nationalist women depicted them as beings dependent upon their husband's agency and this idea of the 'dependent subject' was replied in the way nationalist ideology rendered women as domestic (ated) and not political subjects" (86).

The arrival of Poorna in the house becomes blessing for Sumitra because she has no friend. She chats with Poorna for hours and unburden her heart with the tales of her misfortune till late in the night. The heartlessness of her husband pains her to no end; she has desire to with her husband, so she has become obsessed with makeup and dressing up.

Such behavior of Sumitra shows how wives are bound with duty towards their husband. Despite of the worse behavior of husband, wives have to please them because they think that there is no happiness in their life when their husband is angry.

Kamala Prasad has evil manner towards Poorna. To spend money and suffer the fear of being caught, he does not go to prostitutes. Poorna appears to him an easy target. By bringing her home he has solved many problems. But, Sumitra is the only hindrance in his otherwise perfect plan. To fulfill his lusty desire with Poorna he shouts at Sumitra "Why do you always stay with Poorna? You must be getting on the nerves. She must be laughing at your foolish chatter" (50).

This dialogue of Kamala shows that how he behaves with his wife. Having wife in her home he is seeking for others for his sexual pleasure. This is a sign of power of male authority. Males are allowed to do everything they like but females have to spend their life being loyal towards them.

When Kamala doesn't get opportunity to come near of Poorna he also makes distance from Sumitra. Kamala starts sleeping separate from Sumitra. Though Sumitra says to Poorna that she will not go to please her husband she can't stay on her words. She goes to her husband's room when she hears Kamala coughing, she darts back running straight into her room. Her heart is invincible; she cannot behave like her husband. This show how weak is the female that she cannot live alone without her husband. Sumitra answers Poorna: "A women is nothing but a slipper in a man's feet. A man can afford to be a thief, a swindler, a womanizer or a drunkard. But yet a woman is supposed to wash his feet and drink that water. What crime have I committed that I have to go pleasing him? Tell me?" (58). When Poorna says that it is wife's duty to please if the husband gets annoyed for some reason.

Sumitra's expression shows her revolutionary character, she just said these words to make herself cool. But when Kamala does not come to her for many days she gradually forget all his follies. All the complaints fade in her memory.

After many days Sumitra herself goes towards Kamala's room, but again she could not call him. This shows how her love starved heart has become the slave of her ego. She herself cannot remain constant on her own words. She is living in a dilemma whether to talk Kamala or not.

Sumitra says to Poorna "Why should I keep awake? If he wants he will come. When he was happy even then it was not heaven for me. Then he teased me ever more. My misfortune had given one nothing but to cry at my own fate when Poorna asked her were you awake all night?"(93)

Though she goes to Kamala's room but to maintain her ego she lies with Poorna. Her every voice was just her excited ego. Regarding Sumitra's nature, Kamal Kothari in his book *Pratigya ke Patra* writes:

Sumitra wants to live in a shadow of her husband as a doll. Her words are not related with her behavior. She has not so moral courage that she could apply her notions in her activities. Her personality is dwelling between ego and libido. She thoughts Kamala a heartless, lusty but she have no courage to live a free life avoiding her husband. (52-53)

Her behavior shows that Sumitra is a subaltern character who has no any daring capacity to challenge the patriarchal society but she herself is guided by patriarchal norms and values. So, she desires to live in a shelter of her husband. Sumitra talks with Poorna "Because poor women cannot earn that are why she suffers. But I feel if a man can feed his whole family with his earning, can a women not earn even so much as to take care of her?" (96).

This word of Sumitra, seems revolutionary but these are only the words she utters. She spends her life depending upon her husband and family. All her words are only the burning smoke of her heart, nothing more than that. She is under the domination of her husband. According to Michel Foucault, representation is matter of power. The powerful people hold the authority enough to manipulate representation the way they like. The representation of Sumitra and Kamala Prasad shows how the powerful people dominate the powerless.

She fights with her husband but when Kamala says to leave her, she does not resist. "She says-This is my home. I cannot go anywhere else"(100). But, these words seem ironical towards her. Because, she is depended upon her husband and father-in-law in that house. She cannot answer when Kamala says-"I can marry a hundred times" (100). This shows how a female is defeated under the patriarchy. She cannot say that she can marry hundred times because she herself live a depended life in the shelter of her husband but males are superior for they earn and feed the family.

When Poorna leaves the house, Sumitra becomes happy. In spite of Kamala's lusty behavior and immorality she is happy to live with him. She tells with Prema "Now it's all right. It doesn't matter that his prestige is lost. At least I don't have the fear that what is mine is been taken away by others. In future also I will never have this fear" (141).

After the incident happen in Kamalas life his father orders him to leave the house. But Sumitra also decides to go with him. Her decision clarifies that a female herself wants the suppression of her husband. They feel happy under the shelter of the males. In the novel, Sumitra in spite of her speaking the big words of principle, her last destination is only to get her husband's attachment.

Prema is another female character of the novel *Pratigya*. She is the daughter of Lala Badri Prasad and wife of Daannath. She loves Amritrai but when he takes an oath to do

widow remarriage, she suffers in pain. Amritrai on the one hand by taking an oath for widow marriage does a better decision for the happiness of widow but on the other hand he leaves Prema to suffer in his love he at last does not marry with any widow but creates Ashram Banita Vawan and remains single. Prema has to marry with Daannth, friend of Amritrai, but she has just a dream of Amritrai in her life. Without her desire of marriage she marries Daannath because of her family decision. Like an ideal Hindu girl, she accepts her husband with grace.

It shows her forcible marriage to Dannath in an indirect way. She is suppressed under the norms and values of patriarchal society that's why in spite of the decision for remaining single after an oath of her lover; she is compelled to live a marriage life by listening her family orders. Regarding Prema's situation, Bishwambhar Manav in his book Premchand writes: "Prema has to marry with Dannath because of her duty towards her parents and prestige of her family. After marriage she fulfills her marital duty in very good manner" (110). As written by the critic Prema is loyal towards her husband but he cannot trust her. He suspects Prema that she loves Amritrai. For no apparent reason, he starts envying Amritrai. In spite of Amritrai's good effort for widows Dannath and Kamala Prasad spread obstacles in his path. Dannath says "they want to become Krishna. Collect some ten or twenty widows around him and dance around! Who knows what happens inside the four walls?" (72). Dannath does not think of Amritrai lowly, he enacts this only to tease Prema. Kamala and Dannath's intention to create violence during the collection of donation for widow makes Prema serious. She does not want any battle between Dannath and Amritrai. Almost a big fight has been going to be created when all of a sudden Prema appears on the stage and says:

Gentlemen your sister, your daughter is standing in front of and begging.
Don't disappoint her. This meeting is called today to ask you for help for constructing a place for our helpless sisters. Do you not feel any pity for them?

I can say with confidence that even if these women get dry bread and thick clothes to wear, they will protect their womanhood till the end. Do you have no responsibilities toward them? (89_90)

Prema, spreading her saree collects the donations from everyone but her expression shows that she although speaks in favor of widows but her words are still accepting the norms of patriarchy. She tries to gain pity from the male dominated society and asks to take responsibility of the poor widows to them. Here it is clear that females are not in such condition that they can think of their upliftment without the help of males.

III. *Pratigya* as a Representative of Subaltern Voice

After the complete reading of Munsii Premchand's *Pratigya* intensively, the present dissertation has investigated the representation of gendered subaltern during the period of nineteenth century of India. *Pratigya* depicts the picture of the subaltern women. Women remained as the center of being victim of various oppressions. The subaltern women of the novel are taken as instruments by male characters, but in some cases they are victimized and suppressed by the women as well. This novel, *Pratigya*, shows the suppression and dominations of the subaltern women which is clearly depicted by the characters: Poorna, Sumitra and Prema. Poorna, a widow who lives under the shelter of Badri Prasad is misbehaved and taken as a sexual object by Kamala Prasad. Without her any mistake, she hesitates in front of society and wants to remain silent about the misbehavior of Kamala, she fears that the society will blame her as a characterless woman. She as being a widow as well as a female is doubly marginalized and do not have any confident to live a single life on her own. She has depended on the protection of Badri Prasad. But after Kamala's immoral behavior she again goes to hide herself in the Ashram Banita Vawan.

Similarly, Sumitra is also an example of domestic and gender violence. She was dominated inside her own family. Though she shouts at her husband she cannot revolt and live a free life. Despite of the lusty, immoral and mean behavior of Kamala Prasad she is compelled to choose a life with him because she is not so courageous that she could earn herself and live a dependent life. She as a subaltern character cannot imagine a happy life without her husband.

Likewise, Prema, is also the next female character who is compelled to marry with Dannath and always suspected by him after the marriage. In this way the novel, by providing some examples, clearly shows the situation faced by the subaltern women. Their voice is never raised because they are often represented by elite people as shown in the novel

Pratigya. Amritrai is shown as a mouthpiece of the gendered subaltern. He has provided shelter to the widows by creating Ashram called BanitaVawan in the novel.

In the Indian culture, dominance of religion is prevailed much more and such religion makes female more submissive. Widows in the society think that they are cursed by birth. They cannot dare to lead their life in a proper way. Religion is constructed in favor of males as the society is male dominated. That's why in this novel there is no any revolutionary steps shown by writer because he himself is a product of same patriarchal ghetto. As a result such problems and bitter reality of the subaltern women are always locked inside which, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak says, requires effective agencies to raise them as great issues to be solved. Regarding this, the novel has become itself one of the effective agencies to represent the depressed voice of the subaltern women. But the events presented in the novel are just few cases and hence, many agencies should be established to explore all problems faced by the subaltern women from different societies. In this sense, the present dissertation, by raising the small issue mentioned in the novel, has tried to explore the deep rooted silence of gendered subaltern faced in many societies. As a result, this research will remain as a mile stone to depict the depressed voice of the women in many societies, and further more it will encourage all the people who are interested to help in such problems and make the concerned authorities aware about the situation.

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