

I. INTRODUCTION

JANE AUSTEN'S LIFE

Jane Austen, daughter of George Austen who was a rector in a church, was born on 16 December, 1775 as the seventh of eight children and the second daughter. Her childhood was full of ups and downs. She suffered much domestic anxiety. The Austens wandered throughout many parts of England because of financial crisis. Jane Austen was not given any formal education in any institutions. Jane and her elder sister Cassandra were sent to a boarding school but she was sent back home because of her long illness. Cassandra, too accompanied her. She continued her self-study together with Cassandra after she left the school. Despite the fact that the Austens were not so rich, they were better educated than the Hampshire people. They had a very congenial relation in their family. Her affection and warmth were reserved for her family circle. Thus, her family helped her to mould her literary personality.

Jane Austen, is one of the outstanding figures of the Romantic age of English literature. She is taken as one of the best loved English novelists who wrote with a keen sense of irony about social institutions of her time. Though Austen has comparatively written few numbers of novels, they are widely read. In each of Austen's six novels, a women meets and marries an eligible man after series of usually comic difficulties. Overcoming these obstacles helps one or both the characters gain the self knowledge required for a happy marriage. Few authors have matched Austen's sure eye for human weakness, her affectionate description of everyday life in her elegant and witty fiction.

From the early age of 12, she started to write and sketch for the family with amusing and instructive parodies and variation on eighteenth century literature from sentimental novels to histories. At the age of 14, she wrote her novel *Love and*

Friendship and *The History of England*, an unfinished novel and *Other Early Works*, *Evelyn*, *Catherine* etc. Among them some were published after her death and some were published more than a century after her death. *The love and Friendship* is Comic parody of the 18th century melodramatic fiction. In her early twenties she had written three novels *Elioner and Marrienne*, *First Impressin* and *lady Susan* which were early versions of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Mansfield Park* (1814) respectively.

When George retired from his job, the Austens moved to the town of Bath. But the young Jane didn't like the busy life of city and while staying there she missed her country and its peaceful enviroment. After some time, while she was on holiday she fell in love with a young man but her lover died in 1803. Then she never married. She wrote many popular novels and her family helped her in her writing career.

The Austens moved to many parts of England. George Austen died in 1805, leaving behind his wife and two daughters. After the death of George they suffered a lot. Mrs. Austen together with her two daughters left Bath and went of Southampton in 1806. There, they join the family of Francis Austen who was in the Navy. Again after three years they moved to the Chawton Cottage in Hamsphere. They suffered a lot of financial crisis. They had to struggle a lot for their existence. Jane continued to write novels. She published *Pride and Prejudice* in the new year of 1813, on her own expense. Similarly *Mansfield Park* was published in 1814. Her next novel *Emma* was published after a year. With the publication of *Emma*, in 1815, the first symptom of "Addition" disease appeared in her. She completed *Persuasion* in August 1816. Immediately, Jane Austen took a lodging in Winchester in order to receive medical treatment. She couldn't improve her health and ultimately passed away on July 18,

1817 in the arms of Cassandra. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral. Her novels *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were published posthumously in 1818.

JANE AUSTEN'S CONTEXT

Jane Austen is regarded as the greatest of all novelists of manner of nineteenth century or any period. In her books, she portrayed the day-to day- life of the upper middle class society, which was essentially an eighteenth century world of England. She had a keen sense of observing the human behaviour- how people behaved and interacted. The new trend in the field of fiction begins with Jane Austen. It was the trend of romantic and sensational fiction. Such novels, unlike the Augustan novels reveal the free play of imagination. In spite of her very limited range of fiction, she presents a complete world creating two or three families of a certain society. All of her novels are based on social and domestic background. For Austen human and world were most important. In her novels there is an absence of bad and evil. Her novels are full of the theme of love, marriage, money, social classes, self-deception, and misunderstanding. She has neither mentioned the Industrial Revolution nor the French Revolution in her works. She loved world around her.

As the early nineteenth century literature of England was mainly comprised of Romantic and Neoclassic, novel of sensibility, Gothic, sentimental and Realistic works, Austen herself tried to limit herself within these elements in more critically and balanced way. Her novel *Northanger Abbey* was published in 1818, makes a fun of the Gothic tales of romance and terror which were popular in Austen's time. The plot of Gothic novels include mysterious and supernatural events intended to frighten the reader. The stories were called gothic as most of incidents took place in a gloomy castle of the middle age, which were built in the gothic style.

Austen's society was male dominated society. She tried very hard to establish herself as a novelist in English literature even though the social structure of her time was male dominated and full of traditional values and restrictions. In her novels she created the world of women's importance, their education and moral values and individual freedom in life by giving high preference to them in her all novels. So, her novels are centred on female characters who play a vital role to establish social harmony and prosperity through their high sounding moral and mental superiority that helped her to become a successful novelist in the English literature.

Her famous novel *Mansfield Park* was written between 1811 and 1813, although it did not appear in print until 1814. It is an even more socially-aware novel than Austen's others, focusing as it does on the slave trade and the roots of the British upper- crust's wealth in corruption and exploitation. It is probably the least romantic and most pragmatic of Austen's novels, as it's abrupt and rather matters of fact ending shows.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO JANE AUSTEN'S WORKS

Jane Austen is mainly recognized by her six novels: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Persuasion* together with *Northanger Abbey* were published in the same year after her death at the end of December 1817. Austen is a prose writer. Besides novels, she has written essays, letter and stories.

Austin's first novel *Sense and Sensibility* depicts two sisters, Ellinor and Marianne Dashwood having opposite temperaments, Ellinor posses a careful self control or sense where as Marrienne permits hasty emotions or sensibility to rule her strong decisions. Ellinor, due to her good sense and right decision making, is rewarded with a happy marriage to Edward Ferrers, who is in her heart. Marrienne

couldn't get the pure love of Willoughby. So, she eventually accepts the proposal of a dull thought loyal Colonel Brandon. *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is Austen's most famous novel. This novel focuses on the Bennet daughters for suitable husbands. The heroine Elizabeth Bennet dislikes Fitz William Darcy's proud behaviour and is blinded to his good qualities only. They are forced to give up their personal pride and prejudices before they can enter into a happy relationship together. Her third novel, *Mansfield Park* (1814) is enormously complicated novel. Like other Austen's novels this is concerned with a young women trying to find her place in the social order. Fanny Price comes from a poor family but is being raised by her rich uncle and aunt. Mansfield Park, home of Bertram family is a model of patriarchal attitude, exemplifying the spirit of hierarchy and assumption of male supremacy over female. Fanny struggles to get her identity and dignity. At last, she is married with Edmund Bertram, the younger son of Sir Thomas Bertram and Lady Bertram. *Emma* (1816) is the story of self satisfied and much imaginative heroine. Emma's self delusion and the slow but progressive awareness by which she arrives at self- knowledge, give the novel a unity and perfection of form. *Persuasion* is the last completed work of Jane Austen. Anne Eliot is the main character of the novel who is older than any other Austen's heroines. Anne Eliot and Fredrick Wentworth find love that survives an earlier parting and disapproving family. *Northanger Abbey* published in 1818 makes a fun of the Gothic tales of romance and terror popular in Austen's time. The story is about Catherine Morland, a gullible and naïve girl who enjoys reading Gothic novels. It is a novel of sustained and sparking inventiveness, displaying the accurate and ironic and psychological observation that also shows up in Austen's mature fiction.

Austen is one of the best novelists of her time and occupies a peculiar position in the history of English novel. She was the contemporary of Romantic poets but

can't be described as Romantic. She works with extremely limited material but out of them she develops the themes of broader significance. Her novels show us the inner lives of her characters, and they also present the existing system of education and its role in women's life and show the evil effects of improper education. She is a moralist and a believer in right and wrong. As a novelist she becomes more portent and crucial towards the end of twentieth century. She keeps a distinguished position and popularity among the literary figures because of theme, setting, problem and their resolution as well as the representation of characters who are all unique. Mostly, her genius is reflected in her presentation of female characters. Austen's age was very critical of women socially and politically. Despite many difficulties she keeps on writing and is able to keep her separate existence in English literature.

INTRODUCTION TO *MANSFIELD PARK*

Mansfield Park is Austen's third published but fourth novel which was published in 1814. It is an enormously complicated novel, even by the standards of Jane Austen, who creates characters and situation of unusual complexity in all her novels. Like other Austen's novels this is concerned with a young woman trying to find her place in the social order. Fanny comes from a poor family but is raised by her rich aunt and uncle, she prefigures the orphans of later Victorian novels in her separation from her parents, who will not be the primary determinants of her eventual status. Like other Austen's heroines, Fanny will, in part, determine her status by marrying. Since women could not enter the professions, marriage was the only way, in the nineteenth century, to ascend or descend the social ladder. Fanny's mother has fallen downwards quite a bit through her own marriage to a sailor who turns out to be a drunk, her aunt lady Bertram and her Cousin Maria, on the other hand, do fairly well by marrying rich men. While the marriages of other's have been formulated based on

beauty and family connections. Fanny is to “earn” a marriage partner based on her character.

Fanny’s family is quite poor, her mother, unlike her sister lady Bertram, married beneath her and Fanny’s father, a disabled sailor, drinks heavily. Fanny is abused by her another aunt Mrs. Norris, a busybody who runs things at Mansfield Park. Maria and Julia are shallow, rather cruel but fashionable girls who are intent on marrying well. The elder son, Tom is a drunk. Fanny finds solace only in the friendship of the younger son Edmund. As Fanny receives education at Mansfield Park, she rises in her mental and personal status that is not acknowledged by the society earlier without knowing her personal judgment and mental superiority. The Bertram family forces her to accept a marriage proposal of Henry Crawford from fashionable class in order to raise her economic status. It creates the conflict in the Mansfield Park. Then she is sent back to her parents’ house in Portsmouth with a purpose to make her understand the material value in life and change her mind as well. On the other hand Maria is married with Rushworth, a wealthy landowner and her sister Julia is seeking a young, handsome and wealthy mate for her. Another female character, Mary Crawford is also interested in Edmund Bertram, the younger son of Sir Thomas Bertram whose status is good in the society. Finally, Fanny is called Back to Mansfield Park with her sister Susan. Here, she finds completely different and homely environment and happy life after getting married with Edmund whom she loved secretly from the very beginning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mansfield Park is one of the famous novels by Jane Austen. It is stories of women whose statuses are determined by whom they marry. Since women couldn’t enter the professions, marriage was the only way in the nineteenth century; to ascend

or descend the social ladder. Various critics have analyzed the novel from different perspectives.

Austen, however, did not go outside her social circle, and could not receive the outer world; she used the available materials and experiences and used them perfectly in her novels. A critic, Juliet MC Master, in her essay “ Class”, talks about the plot and ending of Austen’s novels. She says:

Austen is often happy to follow the Cinderella Plot, and to make a happy ending out of marrying her heroine to a man notably above her income and social prestige. The land owning country gentleman is as close, to a prince as her heroines approach. (155)

Mary Lascelles, a critique, in her book *Jane Austen and Her Art*, appreciates Austen as well as her work *Mansfield Park*, She says:

Mansfield Park is a comedy, with a great implications of human interdependence humbly unrealized or wilfully ignored until too late. And as lady Bertram is unreflective response to events serves to register their pressure, so the perverse reaction on of each of the family to the thrust and strains of human relationship is used in making us understand their force. (164)

Austin, in her novels, depicts a vivid picture of the contemporary society where we never come across an evil and a villainous character. The characters bear love, virtue, self-deceptions, snobbery etc. which are the essential features of an ideal society. She portrays the society in its original form. Arnold Kettle writes:

The limitations of class society and the one important criticism of Jane Austen is that her vision is limited by the unquestioning acceptance of class society. That she didn’t write about the French Revolution is as

irrelevant as that she didn't write about the Holy Roman Empire. They were not her subjects. (107-8)

If we take into account the theme of Austen's novels, she can't be treated as a social novelist. She was neither influenced by the contemporary politics nor any other happening of the world. R. Simpson takes her as a judge of society and makes the following remark: "Of organized society, she manifests no idea. She had no interest for the great political and social problems, which were being debated, with so much blood in her day" (147).

Another critic, John Wiltshire, in his essay "*Mansfield Park, Emma and Persuasion*," comments on the novel as "A voice with a range of sympathy beyond the social commonwealth of rich families that is the milieu of Mansfield Park" (58).

The post colonial critics also have drawn their attention on Sir Thomas Bertram and his property in Antigua that would have been worked by black slaves. One of the post colonial critics, George Kelly, says that:

Sir Thomas Bertram owns property in Antigua that would have been worked by black slaves. Significantly, Sir Thomas's forced absence attending to his West Indian interests allows ambition and insubordinate elements at home to introduce the subvert vice text of lovers' vows, suppressed only with his sudden return, though the insidious effects may be seen in the later misconduct of his daughters. (158)

For Austen, the human world was most important. In her novels there is an absence of bad and evil. Her novels are full of the theme of love, marriage, money, social classes, self-deception and misunderstanding. To a common reader, her novels are full of idealism, social and moral values. She knew very well how to create art

out of the interactions of common people. Her view of life was cool, unsentimental and ironically amused. She believed in moral values but she did not like an absolute moral judge. She was amused spectator of the social scene. One of the female writer and critic, Charlotte Bronte, criticizes her for her habit of showing only the bright sides of life. Writing to George Henry Lewes, she says:

Why do you like Miss Austen so very much? I am puzzled on that point. She has done not more than showing the lives of gentle English people. She ignored their passion. She never cared about the dark side of their lives. She is an unromantic novelist. (6)

Bronte takes Austen as an author of the surface only who fails to address the interest of reader for social realism.

Austen is appreciated by many people for her way of writing novels. For them her works are the social documents, which reflect the society and people's lives, but on the other hand she is also criticized. Regarding *Mansfield Park*, one of the critic John Wiltshire in his book *Recreating Jane Austen*, Criticizes her claiming that her book *Mansfield Park* contains the critique of modernity he says:

Mansfield Park remains disturbing because it contains the critique of modernity. The central character of the novel, Fanny is a difficult figure because her psychological struggles precede not actions, but acquiescence, not movement but stability, not progress but continuity, not exogamy but endogamy are what the novels honors. The energetic, whip swinging, tear away, Fanny Price who replaces Austen's heroine, image erasing script, vitality substituting for goodness, is a figure who reflects back to contemporary audiences, the traits most acceptable to and encouraged in, late capitalistic society. (137)

On the other hand, Post modernist Critics regard the *Mansfield Park* as an artistic self awareness in a text and its consequent recognition of its own fictive status. Austen has successfully incorporated the degree of self reflexivity and inter textual reference in this novel. In the introduction chapters of *New Case Books*, one of the Post Modernist thinkers, Weiss Man says:

Despite claims to the contrary, most insistently coming from feminist critics who see Austen as the first major woman writer fully attained first feminist politics, the novels continue to resist attempts at critical appropriation and remain invigorating subject for the diversity of reading practices current today. (17)

As a women writer, she explored about women and their experiences as individuals in their homes, in society and particularly in their relationship with men. At a time, while there were no developed feminist critics, Austen provided a forum for women contributors. George Henry Lewes says, “she was one of the greatest artists [...] That ever lived” (4) Indeed, Austen is a great and courageous writer of her time. In spite of many social restrictions and economic problems she continued writing novels. Through her novels, she challenged the male hegemony in the society. Regarding Jane Austen, Gilbert Keith writes “No woman later has captured the complete common sense of Jane Austen. She could keep her head, while all the other women went about looking for their brains (105).

Austen has a large number of admirers. Alfred Lord Tennyson was one of them. In the memoir of Alfred Lord Tennyson, his own son writes:

He would read and re-read Miss Austen’s novels [...] The realism and life likeness of Miss Austen’s dramatic personae come nearest to those

of Shakespeare. Shakespeare, however is a sun to which Jane Austen, a bright and true little world. (15)

Like Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Whately, Archbishop, Lewes and Macaulay are also her admirers. They also have compared her skill with that of Shakespeare in the following versions: “Shakespeare has had neither equal nor second. But among the writers who have approached nearest to manner of the great Master; we have no hesitation in placing Jane Austen, a woman of whom England is justly Proud” (42).

The Victorian critics including Leonie Villiard, on the one hand, take her fictions as the old fashioned, simply periodical comedies irrelevant to the realities of life and lacking a moral concern. Villiard interprets her fiction, as merely an amused and alternative spectator. He says, “Jane Austen doesn’t speak to interpret life, she is content to observe it but her mind and her sentiments are always in union with the subject of her observations” (191).

From the above-mentioned criticisms and views on Jane Austen and her works, we come to know that she is one of the female writers who advocates for female rights. In her works, there is the plight for women’s freedom and equality. She without caring her personal difficulties and problems talked about the inferiority of women in the society. *Mansfield Park* is one of her most unique novels that has very powerfully advocated women’s rights for marriage, education, social equality, individual freedom and moreover for the social harmony.

Austen is a feminist writer who advocated for female rights through her books. She became very popular because of her works. *Mansfield Park* has remained one of the most critically acclaimed novels in English literature. Different critics have analyzed this novel from different perspective. But “Marriage as the Determinant of Female Class” is still an unexplored area. Being interested in how marriage determined female’s class during Austen’s time and how she treated it, I have selected this project related with *Mansfield Park*.

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE FEMINIST LITERARY THEORY

WHY FEMINISM?

Feminism is related to the feminist social movement that seeks to provide equal rights, equal status and freedom to choose their own careers and life patterns. Concern for women's rights dates from the Enlightenment, when the liberal, egalitarian, and reformist ideals of that period began to be extended from the bourgeoisie, peasants, and urban labourers to women as well. Feminism is concerned with marginalization of all women: that is, with their being relegated to a secondary position. The term "Feminism" is defined in Cheri Kramaras and Paula A Treicheer's *Feminist Dictionary* as:

A movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of sex equality in all human relation; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom. (50)

Feminism represents one of the most important social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of modern times. Feminists examine the experience of women from feminist's perspective. It represents one of the most important social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of modern times. Feminists examine the experience of women from all races and classes and cultures, including, African American, Asian, American, American Indian, lesbian handicapped and the third world subject. Despite their diverse opinions, feminist critics generally agree that their goals are to expose patriarchal premises and resulting prejudices, to promote discovery and revaluation of literature of women and to examine social, cultural and psycho sexual contexts of

literature and literary criticism. Feminist critics therefore study sexual, social and political issues once thought to be “outside” the study of literature.

The growing feminist movement sought to change society’s prevailing stereotype thinking about women that they are relatively weak, passive, and dependent on men. They are also considered to be less rational and more emotional than men. Feminism seeks to achieve greater freedom for women to work and to remain economically and psychologically independent with men if they choose. Feminists criticize society’s prevailing emphasis on women as objects of sexual desire and sought to broaden both women’s self-awareness and their opportunities to the point of equality with men.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMAN

Patriarchal society takes women as inferior, dishonest, irrational and emotional creature. Misogyny is an integral part of masculinity and patriarchy which used to veil the female roles through chivalry or a mythic masking. It, nonetheless, is a potent force in the relations of men and women. Misogyny includes the beliefs that women are dishonest, silly, gossipy, irrational, incompetent, undependable, narcissistic, castrating, dirty, over emotional, unable to make altruistic or moral judgments, oversexed, and a host of other ugly things. According to misogyny ideology, women are inferior, bad, evil, sinful, dangerous, harmful, and dirty women are inferior in competence-physically, intellectually and spiritually.

How women are treated in the male dominated society and what myths are made to prove them inferior and evil can be proved by these lines:

Woman is a pitfall- a pitfall, a hole, a ditch.

Woman is an iron dragger that cuts a man’s throat.

- Mesopotamian poem

Most of the feminists have accepted femaleness as a natural biological division of human beings, but femininity is a cultural construct and feminism is a courageous and conscious politics of a woman. To be a feminist in Austen's age was a comparatively greater problem than it is today because sincerity, sacrifice and devotion were considered natural virtues of a woman. Men used to treat a feminist as an enemy because the feminist obviously opposed the patriarchal rules. One of the feminist writer, Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* writes:

No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society, it is a civilization as a whole that produces this creation, intermediate between male and eunuch who is described as female. (295)

In the same book de Beauvoir says "one is not born but rather become as woman" (297). She has always insisted that she herself has never suffered because of her sex.

All religions and mythologies of the world believe that women are inferior and created for the assistance of men. According to *The Old Testament*, woman is created out of man's rib. In the tradition, women are conspicuously absent from power, from participation in theology or policy, from full human status, Aquinas pointed out that women's souls were not fully developed and a Jewish male begins his morning prayers with thanks given for not having been born a woman. In both Judaism and Christianity the ideal woman is a fecund animal who tends to her young, to her husband's home and service, who "humbly" accepts the domination of her husband and the male hegemony. Docile, quite, passive, obedient, and meek, she neither questions nor challenges. The Christian ideal, Mary, perfect in submission and sexual purity, took no active part in the drama of Christ. Receptacle only of God's seed, she

nurtured her young male god; she herself neither directed nor taught, nor hazarded an instruction into the march of events. She is the female model. According to the tradition, woman's progenitor was Eve, mother of evil, precipitator of the fall.

From infancy onward, women's lives are suffused with the affective aspects of living. Consideration of beauty, tenderness, warmth, compassion, and love-have been prescribed to be the special province of women. No doubt society's motivation was not to make women especially humane, but to make them excellent servants. Nonetheless, their intimate relationship with the non warrior virtues, their inculcated avoidance of domination together with their intact intellectual capacities may indeed render women especially insightful in matters of human value.

Women particularly feminist women, hold a key to new perspectives on society. If new goals, values, and visions are to be infused into the society, they must win for women's access to all the centres of power and policy, from science and industry to art and communication. This is a major goal of women's studies.

FEMINISM AS A MOVEMENT

Feminism is a part of women's movement. It is an aggressive conscious feeling of women who begin to reject their own passivity. The main aim of the feminist movement was to show women as people who were either oppressed or suppressed or rejected the freedom of personal expression. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy to contain their womanhood were generally considered feminists. Men may also be feminists, but they cannot be pure feminist because of lack of femininity. That's why, unlike ancient women, today feminists are proud of their femaleness and have made a vital tool to femininity to perceive their existence. A female writer Mary Astell says:

Men and women are equally capable of reason, and that therefore they should be equally educated in its use: Since God has given to women as well as men intelligent souls, why should they be forbidden to use them? (188)

The development of feminist thought has not only been uneven but it has also always involved deep theoretical disagreements. These partly reflect the various needs and perceptions of women in different societies and situations, but also stem from feminism's mixed origins in both the liberal and the socialist traditions of 'male-stream' political thought as well as in women's own experiences. Rather than talking of feminism as a unified body of thought many modern commentators therefore identify a number of distinct feminist positions of which the most commonly identified are those of liberal, Marxist and radical feminism. The term socialist feminism, rather confusing, is also used to describe both theories that see socialist and feminist goals as related and the modern attempts to synthesize the ideas of Marxist and radical feminisms.

According to such classifications, liberal feminism essentially claims that because women are rational beings like men, they are entitled to the same legal and political rights; liberal feminists have therefore argued and campaigned over the last three hundred years for women's right to education, employment, political participation and full legal equality. Liberal feminism concentrates on rights of women in the public sphere and does not analyze power relationship that exists between man and woman; it assumes that the justice of its cause will ensure its success and that man will have no reason to oppose it. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita write in introduction part of *women writing in India*:

Though the early work of the Marxist feminist and the critic Cora Kalpana are exceptions, British feminist criticism, which is broadly speaking, more Marxist and more theoretical in inclination than its American it was difficult to reconcile with the prevailing of women's voice, which underwrote the early initiatives, with the idea, which several British theories have explored, of female subjectivity or self hood as also ideologically constructed (12).

Marxist feminists however argue that in a society based on class structure, only a few middle-class women will benefit. Most women, like most men, will remain oppressed until the capitalist economic system is replaced by communism. From this perspective, the key to women's liberation is their entry into the paid labour market and their participation in the class struggle; it is only in communist society that the economic dependency that is the basis of women's oppression will disappear, communal child care and housekeeping free them from domestic drudgery and allow them to participate fully in productive life.

French model of feminism is based on psychological and deconstructive theories. According to radical feminists, both these theories ignore the radical nature and obliquity of male power. Radical feminism was first fully articulated in the late 1960s, and it argues that men's patriarchal power over women is the primary power relationship in human society. It further argues that this power is not confined to the public worlds of economic and political activity, but that it characterizes all relationships between the sexes, including the most intimate. Some radical feminists argue further that differences in behaviour and attributes between men and women are biologically determined rather than socially acquired, and that women embody superior qualities, for some, this means that all men are to be considered the enemy.

This group of critics gives importance to femaleness and celebrate the feminine values and traits. Helen Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva are highly influenced by Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis and Jaques Derrida's deconstructive theories.

Kristeva challenges the rigidity of the symbolic order and suggests that women can work in a different and more fluid open space. She challenges the Lacanian symbolic order of language and culture based upon phallogocentric idea. She claims that a kind of symbolic view of phallus, as the center is an inappropriate idea. Helen Cixous attempts to establish female superiority over males with the influence of Derridian philosophy. In an essay "The Laugh of Medusa" (1976), she celebrated manifesto to women's writing which calls for women to put their bodies into their writing.

Kate Millet is another radical feminist writer. In her view, the relationship between the sexes has been based on power. She argues that in all known societies the relationship between the sexes has been based on power and that sexes are therefore political. This power takes the form of male domination over women in all areas of life. She says:

Sexual domination over women is so universal, so ubiquitous and so complete that it appears natural and hence becomes invisible, so that it is perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides it most fundamental concept of power. (25)

Some modern socialist feminists claim to combine the best of both Marxist and radical feminism. They agree with radical feminist's insistence on the ubiquity of male power and its insistence that all areas of life be seen as political. They seek however to give patriarchal power a history and to understand its relationship with

other forms of domination: in particular they try to explore the ways, in which class and sex oppression interact in capitalist society.

Feminism is a recent political ideology. If we look back many female writers were found conscious of their sexes and they all had echoed the same view that women should also secure the chance of human rights. Liberty, right of literacy and different kinds of books are necessary to increase knowledge in several fields. Before feminism many women writers were related to feminist concern. They were Madame de Steil, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Margaret Hiller, Rebecca West, Sarah Stickney Ellis, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir and Mary Astell among others.

We can find in Astell some of the central ideas of modern radical feminism. The idea that man is the natural enemy of female; the idea that women must be liberated from the need to please men; the believe that this can be achieved only if women are enabled to live separately from men are related to the ideas of radical feminists.

Women have a very sorrowful background to be identified themselves as a writer. They had to face with several criticisms and calamities whose aims were mainly to fail them. Male writers were confused upon woman's humanity and they had a question for women "Are they really a human?" Such questions made some women more curious about their existence and made other feel inferior.

Virginia Woolf, a British feminist, has explored the situation of women writers. She insists that a patriarchal society has prevented women from realizing their creative possibilities. She wrote a good deal about women's writing. Her ultimate belief was that woman could freely develop their artistic talents if they had social and economic equality with men. According to her, women are supposed to be

very calm generally women feel just as men feel. She appeals to consider the limitation of women. In her book, *A Room of One's own*, Woolf says, “lock up your libraries if you like, but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind” (70).

Woolf dislikes the pure masculine and feminine and considers them fatal for creation. So, she has taken the support from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's view of two heads on one body or the fusion of masculine and feminine which is useful for the art of creation. Most of the great writes do have these qualities; it is like negative capability of T.S Eliot.

DIFFERENT PHASES OF FEMINISM

Elaine Showalter examines British women novelist since Victorian period from the point of women's experience. In *A literature of their own (1986)*, She has said that female psyche is influenced by general subculture, but within it there is their own subculture, which forms a collective experience of women of every where. According to her though there is a profound difference between women's writing and men's the female tradition is overlooked and under valued by male critics. She has divided the women writers into three stages.

Feminine phase. (1840-80) Female writers like Geoge Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell imitated and internalized the dominant male aesthetic standards. Their works deal with the domestic and social background.

Feminist phase: (1880-1920) It includes the writers such as Elizabeth Robins and Olive Schreiner, who protested against male values.

Female phase: (1920- present time)- This phase developed the idea of female experience in the phase of self-discovery. Rebecca West, Katherine Mansfield and Dorothy Richard were the most important early female novelist in this phase.

She inspired women to take strength in their act of independence in the world and to construct a reliable map of the achievements of English women writers. She believes that women write differently not because they are different psychologically from men but because of their social experience. During the eighteenth century, a major text on feminism *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar concentrated on the suppressed female with a kind of realization of female identity. According to them, patriarchal aesthetic always wants a girl to be an inanimate object. But they argued that the nineteenth century women writers chose to express their own female anger in services of duplicitous textual strategies where by both the angel and the monster, the sweet heroine and the saying madwomen, are aspects of the author's self image, as well as elements of treacherous anti-patriarchal strategies. Feminist ideology can take many different forms. In the 1970's women started developing a theory which helped to explain their challenge against patriarchy's. Up to 1970, there was some what singularly of purpose among feminist; it was a revolt against patriarchal restraints, deprivations and oppressions. However, in course of time there were diversions and even splits among them as regards strategies, slogans and even the objectives. Most feminists claim themselves of revisionist. Like wise, Gilbert has said the aim of the feminist criticism is:

The feminist criticism wants decodes and demystify all the disguised questions and answers that have always shadowed of the connections between textuality and sexuality, genre and gender, psychosexual identity and cultural authority. (334)

These are the burning but common topics of discussion which are still obscure. The women writers say the male critics produced their own experiences which are universal. So, feminist critics invite women to theoretical grounds which

are genuinely women centered, independent, and intellectually coherent because they have their own subject system and voices.

Feminist writers always opposed the unnecessary restrictions and burdens given by the patriarchal society to women. Through their literature they have always appealed for the gender equality. One of the female writers Okin in her book *Justice, Gender and the family* says:

Women are systematically disadvantaged in all areas of life, and underlying all these inequalities is the unequal distribution of the unpaid labour of the family. Child rearing and domestic work should be shared equally. This equality within the home would make possible gender equality in all other areas of life so that a just future would be one without gender. (25)

Okin further argues that justice within the family is integrally bound up with justice in the wider society in two other ways. Firstly, she says that it is within the home that children learn the values on which they will base their adult life, and that the virtues of democratic citizenship can't be learned in a family based on domination and inequality. Secondly, redistribution of all forms of work will not simply free women from domestic responsibilities.

Everywhere women are neglected to some extent or other. Many women writers have very tender feelings towards women's pitiable identity. They really appreciate the feminist politics for social change. Sasha Walby in 1990 has also pressed it as one of the realities of the twentieth century. In *Practicing Feminism: Identity, Difference and Power*, she appreciates the feminists for their effective transformations through direct challenge to patriarchal dominant modes of thinking and hegemonic gender identities. Walby says; "Women are formally equal citizens

and most women are paid workers, women are still expected to be domestic creatures first and foremost, as wives, and to put the needs and interests of others before their own” (100).

In 1974, Nancy Chodorow talked about the challenging future of women. According to her, sex role development of girls in modern society is very complex. They go to school to prepare for life in technologically and socially complex society (54). Caroline O.N. Moser, a recent feminist, also agrees with her and says, the modern responsibility of women is more challenging to them because they have to play a triple role in the third world: the roles of reproductive work, productive work and community managing work.

Belindra Kremer in 1997 talks about gender issue which affects feminist researchers. She also agrees with Sandra Gilbert’s demand of sisterhood of 1979. Kremer asserts that women’s knowledge and experience are crucial to understand the socially constructed world which only women can truly and fully understand others. To develop women, women themselves have to face with difficulties and dilemmas of patriarchal setting.

The feminist concept, which refers to the ‘supporter’ of the feminism, and that is relevant to the women’s sensibility originates from the women’s awareness. This concept has been popularized since the women’s liberation Movement of 1960s in America. Analysing the participation of the women and their commitment to this movement Jane Sherrom De Hart says:

The feminist revolution of the 1960 [...] was begun largely by educated, middle class women whose diverse experiences had sharpened their sensibility to the fundamental inequality between the

sexes [...] stepped in a commitment to equality and the techniques of protest. (349)

Actually this movement was launched by two active feminist groups of women in America: (a) women's rights advocates consisting of experienced professional women demanding for women's equal rights outside home. (b) women's liberationists consisting of less-experienced young women motivated by politics and violence. Through both of these feminist groups were organized with two different purposes, their main objective was to protect women from the male domination and provide them equal social, political and legal rights.

But the feminists have received world wide popularity only after the International women's year 1975. In the historical development of feminist theories, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), Elaine Showalter's *A literature of Their Own* (1977) and Toril Moi's *Sexual politics* (1985) and *Feminist Literary Criticism* (1986) have heralded a new era in women's literature raising their voices for women.

These feminist critics' views on women are different, but the aim of each critic is to develop awareness in women and support them by attacking men's literary critical theories propounded by men that focus only on men without giving any space to women. Even Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* undermines women as 'secondary' or 'other sex' while men to her is the first sex or self or autonomous being. Elaine Showalter in her *A Literature of Their Own* strongly objects de Beauvoir's treatment of women as second sex and satirizes that if the women on earth are second sex, the women readers are also second readers. Kate Millet nick-named such male centred theories as patriarchal theologies for providing extreme power to men and attack such theologies for their dominating attitude towards women and

demanding more purity and femininity from them. Femininity can be contrasted with feminism because the former is a cultural word sought by anti-feminist men where as 'feminism' is a political connotation acknowledged by the feminist women.

Besides these feminist doctrines, the feminist novelists like Jane Austen, (1775-1817), Emile Bronte (1818-1848), George Eliot (1819-1880), Virginia Woolf (1882-1942) have also highly contributed to the feminist literature thorough their women centred novels. The main objective of all these novelists is the focus on the pathetic life of the women resisting men. But Austen's contribution to the feminist literature is of great importance. On the one hand she has opened a new era for the women identifying them as the most autonomous 'heroes' and highly supporting the women job' in her novels; on the other hand she has rebelled against the male for their corrupt attitude towards women. She has discouraged class, race and sex discrimination in the British society through her revolutionary ideas in her novels.

To sum up, the feminist literature in particular patriarchal society is to empower and free women. Feminists' critics believe that only a feminist struggle will significantly change relations between men and women that concerns issues such as sexuality, violence, control of women bodies by men, the cultural policies of dress, and other representation of gender and so on. They claim with their men folk to grant the similar rights that they have been enjoying for a long time. In these terms revolutionary men too have spoken of the need for equality of women in the history. Still half of the population in world have yet to be developed in the sense of humanity. So it is necessary to pave the equal path to safeguard the human rights.

Jane Austen, being a female writer explored the condition of women during her time. Although the concept 'feminism' was not developed during her time, being unhappy with the male domination over female she has portrayed the miserable

condition of women through her novels. In most of her novels she has created cool, passive, silent dependent and submissive female characters. Her intention was not to show the female as inferior but to make the reader aware of the reason of their inferiority. Through her novels, Austen advocates for the freedom and equality in favour of women. Her novels are women centred which also show reaction against male dominated society and establish women's world. She is very close to the liberal feminist thought.

Hence it would be more pleasant and appropriate to evaluate Austen's *Mansfield Park* within the concept of liberal feminism that has successfully established social harmony and prosperity in the society by giving high priority to family environment and self-righteousness.

III. TEXTUAL ANALYSES

In this chapter, I propose to analyse *Mansfield Park* from the feminist perspective. In order to do so, I will discuss *Mansfield Park* with focus upon the marriage that determines female's status in a society. Then, I will discuss female's situation in the society and male domination over them.

MARRIAGE, A DETERMINANT OF FEMALE CLASS

About thirty years ago, Miss Maria word of Huntingdon, with only seven thousands pounds, had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the country of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet's lady with all the comforts and consequences of a handsome house and large income. All Huntingdon exclaimed on the greatness of the match [...].(1)

The above lines show that due to Maria's marriage with the owner of a handsome house and a large income, she has been raised to the rank of baronet's lady. All Huntingdon feel surprised with the greatness of the match. Her status is raised in the society due to her marriage with a rich landlord, Sir Thomas Bertram.

Since the society of Jane Austen's novels are based on patriarchal in nature, women are always taken as subordinate, inferior and dependent to male and they are misjudged, misunderstood and mistreated by the society. Miss Maria's fate is determined by her marriage with Sir Thomas Bertram. She is considered to be lucky because her husband is rich. Her second sister Miss Ward marries Mr. Norris whose income is less than thousand a year. Due to her marriage with not a rich man the society does not exclaim on their match. She is not considered as lucky as her sister Miss Maria Ward. Male dominated society has judged her less in status than her own sister.

In the nineteenth century, women were not allowed to make their own decision because they were not entitled to do so by virtue of their being weaker sex. Most of the times, the decisions making was done by the senior male members of their family. They were expected to submit themselves to the decision of their male elders from their births like all other material possessions, women were also considered a thing of possession and consequently men were authorized to exert their authority upon them.

Miss Maria's third sister, Miss Frances, marries a lieutenant of Marines who is without education, fortune or connections. So all the family members are against her marriage. To make her love a success and to save herself from useless remonstrance, she never writes to her family on the subject till actually married. She has decided to marry Mr. Price against the wish of her family members. They want to make her as fortunate as Miss Maria but she elopes with a poor fellow.

During Austen's time, women were dependent, calm and passive. Actually they were made dependent and passive by the patriarchal society. Male dominated society never supported them to be independent. Women were treated as the object of pleasure and childbearing machine. Their social status was determined by their husband's property. Unlike Lady Bertram's, Mrs. Price does not have good status due to her marriage with a poor lieutenant. She has not been involved in any money earning work. Her husband turns in to a drunkard and treats her as a child bearing machine. Her miserable condition is proved by these lines:

By the end of eleven years, Mrs. price could no longer afford to cherish pride or resentment, or to lose one connection that might possible assist her. A large and still increasing family, a husband disabled for active service, but not the less equal to company and good

liquor, and a very small income to supply their wants, made her eager to regain the friends she had so carelessly sacrificed. After a long time, she had written a letter addressing lady Bertram hoping help from her side. She was preparing for her ninth lying in, and after bewailing the circumstance, and imploring their countenance as sponsors to the expected child, she could not conceal how important she felt they might be to the future maintenance of the eight already being. (2)

Despite the poor economic condition Mrs. Price doesn't work to earn money. Similarly her sisters also engage themselves within four walls. Mrs. Norris runs things at Mansfield Park but Lady Bertram engages herself in useless needle work. Without doing any productive work Lady Bertram has a very good status in the society.

In *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen has given a lively picture of the contemporary patriarchal society and how it pervades and tries to exploit women in the name of traditional norms and values. Besides, Austen has also given an assessment of how much a woman has to suffer in order to overcome it and how much the society has to reciprocally suffer for the disharmony created by the deprivation of one sex by the other. Discrimination of women not only leaves her behind but it also affects male because it cuts off the chance for utilizing her when she is needed.

Lady Bertram's daughters, Maria and Julia are seeking wealthy and handsome husband to secure their future. Neither they are involved in any work nor do they have any plan in future. They are also the product of the same patriarchal society. They have also internalized the same patriarchal rules that women should not go outside to work. Following the trend of contemporary society Maria Bertram is seeking a wealthy husband. Her attraction towards wealth is seen by these lines:

Being now in her twenty-first year, Maria Bertram was beginning to think matrimony a duty, and as marriage with Mr. Rushworth would have given her the enjoyment of a larger income than her father's, as well as ensure her the house in town which was now a prime object [...]. (19)

Maria is a beautiful girl and Mr. Rushworth is struck with the beauty of her. He is a heavy young man, with not more than common sense. Maria is attracted to him because he is very rich and Mr. Rushworth is attracted to her because of her beautiful complexion. Maria's brother Edmund accepts Rushworth due to his wealth. Edmund says, "If this man had not twelve thousand a year, he would be a very stupid fellow" (30).

Sir Thomas, Bertram is also happy with their match. He is happy not because Mr. Rushworth is a very intelligent and smart fellow but because he has a good economic condition. Actually Maria doesn't love Rushworth. She only loves his property and annual income. Sir Thomas Bertram also does not create any hindrance in their relation. His acceptance of match is clear in these lines:

Sir Thomas, however, was truly happy in the prospect of an alliance. It was exactly a right sort of connection. The connection is in the same country, and the same interest. His most hearty agreement was conveyed as soon as possible. He only conditioned that the marriage shouldn't take place before his return, which he was eagerly looking forward to. (30)

Sir Thomas Bertram- a conservative male patriarch is never seen aware of his daughter's education. Only money is important for him. He himself involves in money earning activities and his wife remains idle at home doing useless needle work.

He is a supporter of conservative patriarchal values. He becomes happy when his daughter chooses a rich landowner. Without judging his morality and talent, he is ready to give his daughter to Mr. Rushworth just because of his considerable income and property. For him only property is important. He never gives good education and lesson of morality to his children. Internalizing patriarchal norms and their father's money minded mentality, the Bertram daughters also seek the man of fortune.

Lady Bertram is the victim of patriarchal values. She seems to be calm, cool and passive. She never goes out side to visit with her children. She prefers to live inside the four walls. Question arises why does she never go out side? Perhaps she may have internalize the strict patriarchal rules that women should not go out side. She seems passive but question arises is she really passive? Or, is she made passive? It may be possible that she is made passive, calm and cool by the patriarchal system. She doesn't seem to make any decision herself. For any decision she waits for her husband's view. She even doesn't care for daughter's education. She busies herself in household activities. She cares for her pet dog more than her daughters. This proves that she is very inferior and submissive female character in the novel and is also money minded. She is also happy when her daughters choose rich husband. She never cares of their education but hopes for their bright and comfortable future. For her, only the marriage with a rich person can make her daughters happy. In marriage she gives priority to wealth. She does whatever her husband likes. Her husband thinks, the son in-law should be wealthy to make his daughters happy. Following the patriarchal concept of marriage, Mrs. Norris also wants rich suitor for her niece. She says,

"Oh! Miss Julia and Mr. Crawford. Yes, Indeed a very pretty match.

What is his property"?

"Four thousand a year!"

"Very well"- "Those who have not more, must be satisfied with what they have. Four thousand a year is a pretty estate, and he seems a very genteel, steady young man, so I hope Miss Julia will be very happy."(93)

This conversation clearly shows that Mrs. Norris is also very careful about the property of her niece's suitor.

Similarly, Lady Bertram seems to be indifferent towards her daughters' education but is conscious about the wealth of their suitor. She may have followed her husbands' concept. Henry Crawford has a good estate in Norfolk and Mary has twenty thousand pounds. Because of his good estate in Norfolk Henry is free to date Julia. Julia doesn't have any income of her own nor is she involved in any occupation that provides her money. Marriage is the only one way to raise her status. Sir Thomas Bertram without making his daughters educated and independent, only seeks rich young men to marry his daughters for the sake of their good status in the society. During 19th century women were treated as passive and subordinate. Male dominated society never believed in their talents. They always believed that only the marriage with a rich man make them happy and secure in future but it was their false ideology.

Henry Crawford is morally not a good character. He flirts extensively with Julia and Maria. Julia and Maria also prefer him. Actually he is very mean and selfish fellow. He first of all uses them and later on throws them away. He clearly knows that Maria is engaged to Mr. Rushworth but he doesn't care about social morality and flirts with her. He says " An engaged women is always more agreeable than a disengaged. All is safe with a lady engaged and no harm can be done"(34).

For him married or engaged women are “safe and therefore more fun.” This shows how mean and morally degraded he is. He takes women as an object of entertainment. His behavior reflects the concept of patriarchal society towards women. Henry is not really in love with Maria and Julia. Actually he takes them as an object of enjoyment. His behavior towards two Bertram sisters shows the attitude of men towards women during Austen's time.

Austen depicts the exploitation of male over female through her novels creating different kinds of characters like Henry Crawford, Sir Thomas Bertram, Mr. Price etc. Henry Crawford is a character who psychologically exploits women for his own sake. First of all he uses Julia Bertram and plays with her emotion after some time he turns to Maria who is engaged with Mr. Rushworth. He doesn't care about the social morality and regulation. During Austen's time male were free to do what ever they liked. Only Women had to follow the social rules and regulations. The social restrictions were made only for women. Mentally and physically females were the victim of patriarchal society. Being in disagreement with the same patriarchal society, Austen has raised her female voice against male dominated society.

Mrs. Price has a miserable condition due to her marriage with a drunkard sailor. He treats her as a child bearing machine. She has nine children and due to so many children her health is not so good. Being restricted to stay only within four walls she couldn't raise her economic status by her own. She is compelled to depend on her drunkard husband for economic support to run the family. She represents the condition of women in patriarchal society.

Henry's Sister Mary Crawford is an ambiguous figure. First of all she is interested in Tom Bertram, the elder son of Sir Thomas Bertram. Mrs. Grant encourages her to engage with Mr. Bertram. Following her sister's advice, she goes

for Mr. Bertram. Tom most of the time lives in London. Mary finds him well mannered and very good. She is interested in him not because he is intelligent and handsome but because he is the eldest son of Sir Thomas Bertram and will be the owner of the Bertram estate. She is always for property. Her mind is filled with corrupted patriarchal mentality that to be economically secured in future. And so a woman must choose a wealthy life partner. Without caring for her education, her brother also encourages her to look for a rich husband. The cause of Mary's liking Mr. Bertram is clarified by these lines.

She acknowledged, however, that Mr. Bertrams were very fine young men. Two such young men were not often seen together even in London. Their manners, particularly those of the elders, were very good. He had been much in London, and had more liveliness and gallantry than Edmund, and must therefore, be preferred. Indeed, his being the eldest was another strong claim. She had felt an early presentiment that she should like the eldest best she knew it was her way. (36)

Mary tries to win Tom's heart but is not able. Tom doesn't care about Mary. Without saying to her he leaves for London. His indifference compels her to turn towards Edmund, the second son of Sir Thomas Bertram. Edmund is also interested in Mary. They both are attracted towards each other. Edmund has given Fanny a horse to ride. But when he falls in love with Mary, he gives the same horse to Mary which deprives Fanny of her usual exercise. This shows how even Edmund, a conscious person, can act like a typical patriarchal character. Later on, he realizes his mistake and returns the horse to Fanny. Henry tells Mary about his intention to become a clergyman which is not liked by her. Mary is money minded fellow. She

is in search of a wealthy and prosperous husband. A clergyman cannot be wealthy. So, Mary opposes his idea of becoming a clergyman. She says, "But why are you to be a clergy man. I thought that was always the lot of the youngest, where there were many to choose before him". (71)

She further says:

What is to be done in the church? Men love to distinguish themselves, and in either of the other lines, distinction may be gained, but not in the Church. A clergyman is nothing. A clergyman can't be high in state or fashion. He must not head mobs, or set the ton on dress. No one here can call the office nothing. If the man who holds it is so, it is by the neglect of his duty, by foraging its just importance, and stepping out of his place to appear what he ought not to appear. (72)

She criticizes Edmund for his future plan to become a clergyman not because she is aware of his future but actually because she is aware of her own future. According to her a clergyman is not a good occupation because he can't acquire high status in society. Her money minded mentality is clearly seen by her conversation with Edmund.

She continues her relation with Edmund but time and again criticizes his future plan. Edmund likes her very much but hesitates to propose. Fanny is aware of their relation from the initial phase. As Mary Crawford hates domestic and agricultural life in the villages, Fanny opposes it saying that everything is necessary for the social and economic balance in the society. In Mansfield Park, she is the only one who always wants to continue with the religious and cultural tradition as per the wishes of Sir Thomas Bertram and Edmund Bertram. Mary becomes very interested in Edmund when she comes to know about Tom's fatal sickness. This proves that she

is a very mean and selfish fellow. She wants Tom's death because after Tom's death Edmund will become the owner of the Bertram estate. When Edmund knows Mary's intention he refuses to marry her.

Mary Crawford represents a modern fashionable girl who has come from London's high society. Since she is interested in materialism, self-gratification and self-deceptive nature she doesn't care about social aspect and religious duty and moral values. She is selfish, destructive and cunning, restless for novelty and disequilibrium in thoughts. As she enters into the Mansfield Park she tries to develop intimacy with Fanny and becomes successful. So some critics call her an antithesis of Fanny. She is also impressed with Fanny's moral principle and virtue so encourages her brother and Fanny to move ahead for marriage. According to her doctrine, marriage is important for money and settlement. To some extent, Fanny is aware about her self-deceptive nature. She becomes close due to her apparent generosity. Mary has also realized that Fanny is not been treated properly by the family as she ought to be. Yet Fanny remains unchanged and Maria and Henry commit adultery. She blames Fanny for not accepting Henry.

Marriage is one of the themes of this novel. Austin gives high priority to the issue of marriage. Her main purpose may be to give real picture of contemporary society which is influenced by the material values, sense of pleasure principle rather than spiritual and moral values.

During her period, marriage was taken as an important and best way to gain independent and economic security for women. According to Leroy W. Smith in his book entitled, *Jane Austen and the Drama of Women*:

A well-bred young woman seeks a quiet equilibrium in life based on social and economic security, fulfillment of her duties and family and

society as a mother and companion, and with luck, development of a tender and respectful relationship with her husband as a means of reducing her sense of subordination and dependence. (30)

The story of *Mansfield Park* begins with the description of good luck of Miss Maria World-Lady Bertram and her economic benefit through a marriage with a baronet Sir Thomas Bertram. Although "she had two sisters to be benefited by her elevation, [...]" Miss Frances could not get it because "she married in common phase to disoblige the family, and by fixing on a lieutenant of Marine's without education, fortune or connections, did it thoroughly" (1) . This is the real picture of society which gives high preference for material values above than moral and individual judgment.

Another out standing female character is Fanny Price who represents the new generation. Due to the poor economic condition of her family she is bought at Mansfield Park by Sir Thomas Bertram. She is only one female character in the novel who revolts against patriarchy in her quest for identity and her stands for dignity and liberty. She firmly refuses a marriage proposal by Henry Crawford, a Young and wealthy man with good fortune whom Sir Thomas Bertram considers a suitable candidate for her.

"You are mistaken, Sir", cried Fanny

"Am I to understand, said Thomas, after a few moment silent," That you mean to refuse Mr. Crawford ?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Refuse him ?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Refuse Mr. Crawford ! Upon what plan? For what reason."

"I- I can't like him, sir, will enough to marry him."(246)

This conversation clearly shows that Fanny refuses a marriage proposal of Henry Crawford who is a wealthy man of good fortune.

Sir Thomas Bertram, the master at the Mansfield Park and a model of the patriarchal system of early nineteenth century, is genuinely shocked when he at first hears the resistance of Fanny price against his decision. Fanny Price, who is supposed to be an inferior female offspring should have accepted the male chauvinism without any question. But she wants to secure her individual freedom and personal integrity by choosing her husband within the patriarchal society at a time when marriage was not a private affair, rather a social one. The parents had social as well as moral authority to give away their daughter's hand to a suitable candidate whose suitability was decided upon his social and economic ranking in the society. Fanny wants to marry someone whom she is in love with not someone who is chosen by her parents. Where as, Sir Thomas Bertram is not willingly prepared to allow her to take such decision. As a result there occurs a conflict between the conservative patriarchy and dogmatic creed versus modern feminist identity, moral principles and self knowledge; and individualism versus cynicism, vanity and self-obsession that causes suffering to Fanny Price.

Sir Thomas Bertram-a conservative male patriarch is not happy with Fanny Price for her decision of rejecting Henry Crawford. He considers Henry a very suitable match for Fanny because he is wealthy and for him to be wealthy is a very good qualification of any man to get a fair lady. According to him if a person has a good income he can marry early. He says "I am an advocate for early marriages, where there are means in proportion, and would have every young man, with a

sufficient income, settle as soon after four and twenty as he can” (247). Sir Thomas tries to convince Fanny by all means but in vain.

From Her early age of ten, Fanny is exiled from Portsmouth to the Mansfield Park. As she reaches Mansfield Park, she is undermined and neglected by the society. Neither her uncle Sir Thomas Bertram nor his family members except Edmund Bertram, the younger son of Bertram family, try to comfort her. Rather she has to be frightened by lady Bertram’s silence, awed by sir Thomas’s grave looks and teased by the Bertram children for her ignorance and illiteracy.

Fanny grows in Mansfield Park. She has to face a lot of problems. She is always hunted by the ill behavior of Mrs. Norris. Fanny is always guided by moral values. She feels happy when Sir Thomas Bertram returns home where as his own children feel very sad. She has different feelings towards his absence from the house whom she regards as a guardian for moral values. She can't be ungrateful and says, “Sir Thomas, who had done so much for her and her brothers and who was gone perhaps never to return! That she should see him go without a tear! - It was a shameful insensibility” (24). Taking advantage of Sir Thomas Bertram’s absence, Bertram children and their friends who put personal pleasure and gratification of vanity above all else commit series of immoral activities. Once, as they go to Southerton in the estate of Mr. Rushworth, Where Mary Crawford and Edmund, Maria and Henry Crawford disappear from the scene creating uncomfortable situation.

Fanny is always strict in her character. She never flirts with any one but Bertram’s daughters flirts extensively with Henry. They are behind him for the sake of property. When Henry judges their moral character and compares with Fanny he wants to get rid of them and appreciates Fanny for her goodness. He tells his idea of

marrying Fanny to his sister Mary. He says, "Fanny looked so lovely ! ... I am quite determined to marry her. My mind is entirely made up" (228).

Henry also flirts with Maria and Julia but it does not matter for the society. Patriarchal society only judges the morality of female. Henry is also the supporter of the tyrannical patriarchal concept. He only judges the morality of two Bertram daughters but not his own and says, " I care neither what they say, nor what they feel. They will now see what sort of women it is that can attach me, that can attach a man of sense. I wish the discovery may do them any good" (233). Henry tries to convince Fanny by all means. To achieve his goal, he makes William a lieutenant and Fanny also becomes grateful to Henry for his act but is not ready to give her heart. She already knows his flirting behavior with girls. He is very rich in wealth but on the contrary very poor in morality and personal character so, she firmly rejects his marriage proposal.

Sir Thomas Bertram suggests Fanny to accept the proposal of Henry. He talks about the advantage of marrying Henry. While convincing her he says:

The advantage or disadvantages of your family-of your parents-your brothers and sisters... never seems to have had a moment's share in your thoughts on this occasion. How they might be benefited and how they must rejoice in such an establishment is nothing to you. You think only of yourself. You do not feel for Mr. Crawford exactly what a young, heated fancy imagines to be necessary for happiness. You resolve to refuse him at once without wishing even for a little time to consider of it a little more time for cool consideration [...]. You are throwing away such an opportunity for being settled in life, eligibly, honorably, nobly settled, as will, probably, never occurs to you again.

Here is a young man of sense, of character, of temper, of manners, and of fortune, exceedingly attached to you, and seeking your hand in the most handsome and disinterested way; and let me tell you, Fanny, that you may live eighteenth years longer in the world, without being addressed by a man of half Mr. Crawford's estate, or a tenth part of his merits. (249)

Leroy W. Smith in *Jane Austen and The Drama of Women*, says, “these words are the expression of patriarchal system that does not tolerate the independence of spirit and identifies it wilful and ungrateful concern of self that opposes the parents' wishes” (120). For Sir Thomas material values and a concern of status and security in the society and its interest above than individual aspirations and emotional happiness. But he does not find these patriarchal principles in Fanny and accused her of her ingratitude. For him, the interest of the family is above than the individual aspirations. Moreover, he tries to convince her reminding the material pleasure and benefits that she can achieve from Henry. Because he has understood that such kind of opportunities rarely come to Fanny who is from low social status. So it is the best chance of achieving worldly happiness for her. But Fanny does not care about such things which are out of individual interest and moral judgment. Here Fanny can not compromise her personal judgment of integrity and moral principle of righteousness with false material Value.

Sir Thomas Bertram only gives emphasis on Henry's property without caring about his personal character. For him, if Fanny marries Henry her future will be bright. While bringing her at Mansfield Park they promise to provide education as well as introduce her properly in the world, the reality seems to be far beyond it. Because, Sir Thomas is ready to facilitate Fanny at the very outset, but he is still not

ready to give equal status and rights to her like his daughters. Without providing her good education he expects her to get good future and good status in the society. For him, to be of high status a woman should marry a rich husband. He never thinks that education, genius and talent of women can also make them of high status. Without caring the importance of these things in any women's life he always runs behind the old patriarchal concept that a woman should choose a wealthy husband to gain high status in the society.

Edmund also attempts to convince her as per the wish of his father. She finds him different from her expectation. He talks to her in an indirect way but her witty mind knows that he has been there according to the wish of Sir Thomas. He uses the same kind of suggestion that Sir Thomas and other in the family have used. She gives reason for that he has weak character of a fortune hunter which she can not approve. She has taken Edmund for her first and single friend; she has tender feeling for him and loves him. So his presence as a mediator hurts her even more severely than others. His attitudes are also similar to the patriarchal Society and not free from conventional idea. So he further adds:

You will supply the rest; and a most fortunate man he is to attach himself to such a creature - to a woman, who is firm as a rock in her own principles, has a gentleness of character so well adapted to recommend them [...]. He will make you happy; Fanny, I know he will make you happy; but you will make him everything. (272)

Since he is not free from the prejudice of male domination he also uses the term "creature" for Fanny or women. He has also same kinds of feelings towards Henry's property and its benefits for her. In response to his economic and social benefit, Fanny has to submit submissive service to him.

When Edmund knows, he doesn't receive positive response from Marry due to his profession which Mary dislikes in terms of income he realizes his weakness for Mary Crawford who is always seeking for material life and pleasure. He says he will never forgive her and says, my eyes are opened" (362). He adds " Her's are faults of principle, Fanny, of blunted delicacy and a corrupted, vitiated mind" (363). When Edmund is deceived by cunning Mary, he understands the true love of Fanny and accepts her as his life partner. Fanny also accepts his proposal and remains happily at Mansfield Park after marriage.

MALE DOMINATION AND SITUATION OF WOMEN

Most of the female characters in the novel are shown submissive, passive and cool. Their condition reflects the condition of women during Austen's time. Jane Austen, by creating different submissive female characters, presents the real picture of her society. One of the major female characters Lady Bertram is shown very passive. She is described as:

Lady Bertram is a women who spend her days in sitting nicely dressed on sofa, doing some needle work of little use and no beauty, thinking more of her pug than children, but very indulgent of he latter, when it did not put herself to inconvenience, guided in everything important by Sir Thomas, and in smaller concerns by her sister. (14)

She is careless even in her daughter's education. They are under the care of governess. Most of the times she remains silent dependents on Sir Thomas for any decision. This shows how submissive she is.

Another major female character Fanny Price also most of the time remains silent observer in the story which has been also criticized in different ways by different critics. According to Lionel Trilling silence in women has been viewed as

the place of oppression, the mark of women's exclusion from representation as speakers in the text. Fanny's silence is full of powerful heat of revolt than when she responds in speech. By creating such silent characters, Austen has given a clear picture of powerless female and their problems in the conservative male dominated society.

In the novel, most of the female characters are directly or indirectly dominated by males. They are dominated physically, psychologically or sexually. Lady Bertram's young sister Miss Frances is also sexually exploited by her husband. Although the economic condition of the house is very weak Mr. Price doesn't care about the growing population . The growing population and its burden in the family is proved by these lines: She was preparing for her ninth lying-in, and after bewailing the circumstance, and imploring their countenance as sponsors to the expected child [...](2).

Despite the poor economical condition Mrs. Price's preparation for ninth laying-in and searching the sponsor for her expected child. Her husband is a drunkard and she has to serve him domestically, emotionally as well as sexually. This shows how miserable life she is passing with her husband.

Sir Thomas Bertram resembles a shrewd patriarch and is a tyrannical father. His absence from the house is taken as relief from the tyrannical authority by his children. Especially Maria and Julia are happy in his absence. One can imagine that his own children are happy in their father's absence. What kind of father is he? Obviously very tyrannical and self-centred. Miss Bertrams are restricted by their father more than needed so in his absence they feel relieved from all kinds of patriarchal regulation. Their view on the absence of their father can be clearly seen in these lines:

The Miss Bertrams were much to be pitied on the occasion not for their sorrow but for their want of it. Their father was not the object of love and he never seems to be friend of their pleasure so his absence was heartily welcome. In his absence, they were relieved from all kinds of restraints [...]. (24)

Patriarchal society always takes women as an inferior creature. Women are considered as marginal and subordinate and complementary to masculine desire and enterprises. While adopting the child of Mrs. Price, Sir. Thomas Bertram chooses to adopt Fanny rather than her brother. Sir Thomas Bertram is aware of its consequence. If they take a boy William instead of Fanny, it may be more challenging to them which they do not want since they were also aware that Fanny, a girl could be more submissive than a boy. Besides, the Bertram family decides to adopt Fanny Price thinking that Bertram's son Tom and Edmund will remain safe from falling into love with someone who is living under the same roof. Even Fanny's parents are not willing to send their son William at Mansfield Park because son is not considered a burden in the family in any patriarchal society. So, to be relieved from the burden of over population they send their daughter at Mansfield Park. This shows how women were treated in the patriarchal society.

Sir Thomas Bertram, a conservative male patriarch not only imposes his patriarchal restraints on his daughters but also on his niece, Fanny Price. He forces her to marry Henry Crawford without her wish and when she rejects him he becomes angry. He scolds her saying self-willed, obstinate, selfish and ungrateful. He says, "she has deceived his expectation, she has lost his opinion" (249). In response to Sir Thomas, Fanny clearly says, "[...] she did not love him; that such a change was quite impossible, that the subject was quite impossible, that the subject was painful to her

that she must entreat him never to mention it again, to allow her to leave him at once, and let it be concluded for ever" (225). Even after he knows about her negative response towards him, he once again suggests her to accept Henry's proposal. For him, Fanny should obey him because he is a male. Female should obey male in every steps of life. This proves how tyrannical he is. Being the superior member of the family, he always forces inferior female members to do everything according to his wish.

Sir Thomas Bertram's elder son Tom is also guided by his father's Patriarchal values. In the absence of Sir Thomas he forces Fanny to act in a play without her wish. This proves how women in a patriarchal society are forced to do anything without their wish and how they are dominated by them. The behavior of Tom towards Fanny reflects the rigid behavior of any male in male dominated society.

"I could not act anything if you were to give me the world. No, indeed, I can not, act."

"Indeed but you must, for we can not excuse you."

"No, indeed Mr. Bertram, you must excuse me."

"Phoo ! Phoo ! Don't be so shameful" (114-15).

For Fanny the theatrical performance is not good inside the private house in the absence of main guardian of the family. Thinking it not a good work she rejects to act but she is forced. Tom does not give up his desire for her and regularly attacks her, because he possesses the patriarchal ideology that always wants to get something through hard labour. Later, he compelled Fanny to act.

In the novel, Maria and Julia have secondary position. Their father is not the friend of their pleasure so, they always want his absence. This shows how miserable condition they have within their own family. Henry Crawford flirts with them. He

takes them as a means of recreation and entertainment. Later, he tries to make passes to Fanny but Fanny, knowing his bad character, firmly rejects him. Being, unable to get Fanny he goes to London and elopes with Maria, who is married with Mr. Rushworth. His behaviour towards Maria, Julia and Fanny reflects the behavior of men in Patriarchal society who takes women only as symbol of beauty and means of recreation to them. They should wear colorful clothes to attract them. In this context Edmund says, "A women can never be too fine while she is in all white. No, I see no finery about you; nothing but what is perfectly proper. Your gown seems very pretty. I like these glossy spots." (173). Edmund exposes his patriarchal idea that a woman should be attractive and to be so she must wear colourful clothes which can attract men.

By all means, Females are considered as inferior, passive, dependent and cool in this novel. They are dominated and exploited by the males. They are dependent because they are compelled to remain within the four walls. Their situation is very miserable due to the male domination over them and lack of power to take their own decision.

IV. CONCLUSION

Jane Austen deserves a place of honour and distinction in English literature. She occupies an important position in literary history and we have no hesitation in placing her, a woman, of whom England is justly proud. She has produced a few novels in her short life but whatever and how many she wrote were immensely remarkable and marvelous. Each novel stands a excellence. Each of her novel was, is and will be an exemplary and immortal piece of art. She is an extraordinary writer of extraordinary calibre and skill to deal with most ordinary themes. She is probably the only writer of grandeur and universal fame. She never crossed the border of theme she set herself to. In her world, she circled round love, marriage, wealth, family life, human feelings, social environment etc. Most of her novels reflect her female consciousness, which is one of the main characteristics of feminism. She has highly contributed to the women's issue by taking the side of women. Austen's arguments for the women's realm are unforgettable. Through *Mansfield Park* she has argued and raised the issues of biased education, sexual discrimination, and concept of marriage.

In *Mansfield Park*, Austen has shown how women are made dependent on male and how only marriage determines their class in the society. She has selected very ordinary subject matters and treated them in a unique style and fascinating language that no other writer could have done. She presented what she intended in a captivating manner. By showing female's subordinate position in the society Austen has portrayed the real picture of her contemporary society which was full of gender biase. Through different female characters like Lady Bertram. Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Price, Fanny, Maria, Julia and Mary Crawford she showed their attitude towards their own marriage. Austen has shown how marriage plays vital role to fix their class in the society and following the patriarchal trend of marriage how females willingly or

unwillingly have to choose rich male partner even when they are not good and worthy of them.

It is the unique quality of Jane Austen that she reveals a great thing through common and simple incidents. In the novel, Lady Bertram is considered very fortunate because she is married with Sir Thomas Bertram. Even though she seems to be careless, she has not any fear for her future. In the novel, it is clearly shown that she does not involve in any kind of economic work and nor she has any interest in it. Only due to her marriage with Sir Thomas Bertram, her status is raised and she becomes baronet's lady with a large income and a handsome house. Unlike Lady Bertram her two sisters could not get rich husbands so their status is not good in the society. If they, too, had got wealthy husbands they would have become part of high class society. Despite their poor economic condition, perhaps, due to the strict social restriction, they don't involve themselves in any effective economic work to sustain their family. So, they are compelled to have lower economic condition and status in the society. Their two nieces Maria and Julia always run after wealthy men. They want to be married in high class and become wealthy persons. So, instead of paying attention to their education and professional life they always seek for a wealthy suitor. This shows their victimization by old patriarchal concept that a woman should choose a wealthy partner to be economically secured in future. Actually Maria Bertram does not love Mr. Rushworth because he is dull and not charming. He has only one good qualification i.e. he has a large estate and a good income. To secure her future, without caring about her wish and love, Miss Maria agrees to accept Mr. Rushworth as her husband so that she can enjoy a comfortable and higher social status in the society. Another female character, Mary Crawford also seeks a wealthy suitor so that she can be economically secured. First of all she runs after the elder son of Sir

Thomas Bertram but when he neglects her she goes after Edmund. Again, when she learns that Edmund is going to be a clergyman she bitterly criticizes him because she does not see any future in that profession. For her, being a clergyman is not an economically good occupation. Knowing that she will be economically insecure with Edmund Bertram, she distances herself from him. This proves her money-minded behaviour and faith in marriage as the determinant of female's class.

During Austen's period, marriage was taken as an important and the best way to gain independence and economic security for women. She also shows that those who are interested to get married in order to get financial benefit, social security and status inevitably end up in despondency. But anyway, the story of *Mansfield Park* begins with a description of good luck of Miss Maria Ward, Lady Bertram and her economic benefit through a marriage with a baronet Sir Thomas Bertram. Like other Austen's heroines, Fanny in part, will determine her class by marrying since women could not enter any professions. Marriage was the only way in the nineteenth century to ascend or descend the social ladder. Fanny's mother has fallen down quite a bit through her own marriage to a sailor who turns out to be a drunk; her aunt Lady Bertram and her cousin Maria, on the other hand do fairly well by marrying rich men. It is the real power of Jane Austen to present the real picture of her society through this novel. Since the literature is the mirror of the society, the novel represents the condition of women in the patriarchal society.

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