

## CHAPTER I

### **Introduction: Maxim Gorky and the Revolutionary Contexts**

In the novel *Mother*, Maxim Gorky presents the social condition that has caused inequality gulf between males and females. This novel, unlike most critics claimed, does not focus on the socialist movement alone or the communist movement. It also somehow implied the roles that the women should take up in the revolution so that the socialist movement would succeed. There are many characters women in the novel. But, what really striking is the usage of a “mother”. Gorky’s fight with idealistic literary tradition, moral fight with the accurate reflection of Czar Regime’s atrocity and oppression added a new dimension in literary history as well as in his literary career. Along with this, he became popular among his best wishers, admirers and readers all over the world. Then, he was credited as socialist realist. Many authors and critics view him in the same way as Russian critic Victor Schklovsky views about his future dimension as follows:

Just as the inventor of aero plane believed that air would hold man up, in the same way as it supported a bird in his flight, Gorky believed that the future would be precisely what man made it. In flying the air holds those who move in the future was likewise for those who transformed the present. This practical attitude toward the future may have been what led Gorky to the theory of socialist realism. (116)

Gorky’s style to demystify the human being, social and psychological realities based on material realities, scientific consideration of realism all helped to accomplish the social revolution and justice of his time, which has added a new revolutionary dimension to human society.

Gorky was the person, who understood the social condition of his time, its positive power as well as the rude realities, existing at that time and intensifying the Russian Revolution. He reflected the social and political consequence of such rude realities in his works. He was such a person equipped with a “Sixth Sense” who could comprehend the flow of life and foresee the future on the face of present exactly like in *Mother*. Because of his skill one of the women, Bolshevik leader and Lenin’s wife had exclaimed, “He [Gorky] described life as it was I all its’ concreteness seeing it with the eyes of a revolutionary” (277). Even talking about Gorky, George Lukacs says,

Furthermore, Gorky points to a concrete solution in his works that he shows how the revolutionary labor movement, the popular revolt awakens an individual, matures him, encourages his inner life to bloom and imbues him with awareness, power and sensitivity. Gorky does not counterpoise one social system to another or one ideology to another but presents the emergent new kinds of human being through whom the reader can experience directly and concretely the context of the new life. (902)

Gorky was born in lower middle class. Due to the death of his father he was orphaned in five years and was nurtured by his grandfather and grandmother. Because of poverty and to his daily needs and for educational he began to collect old clothes, papers, iron and sold them. Even he sold his own books for his grandmother’s treatment. He struggled very hard, faced the storm of grief when he was exiled from home by his grandfather in order to support his life by his own earning. When he worked in fancy shop, shoes house and in a ship, even he worked as a proletarian in

the field. He presented these bitter realities in his works *My Childhoods and in My University*.

Later on, Lenin inspired him to write about his experience. Nothing was left to be experienced by him. In course of wandering and searching work, once he met Mikhail Smurist, a cook in a hotel, who was a studious person, inspired Gorky to study more and more books. After this, he began to study about the famous writers and their books as well as he met many studious person and libraries. Then, he attempted to spread political consciousness among workers but he was beaten severely.

At that time, many political organizations were active against the despotic Czar Regime. Gorky himself was involved in one of the political parties for the sake of exploited, poor, and marginalized people's freedom. He was arrested many times because of his involvement in underground activities but the Czar government was obliged to release him owing to public rebellion in many places against Gorky's arrest. Later on, he became a member of Bolshevik party, he was searched by the government but Gorky was sent to America for the completion of institutional work of Bolshevik party. In America, he had to collect financial aid and increase public support to the armed revolution as well as to exert pressure on the foreign government to stop financial aid to Czar Regime. In America, he was warmly welcomed by intellectuals and proletarians, Gorky gave many influential speeches against the Czar Regime. In 1917, an ideological gap appeared between Gorky and Lenin during the socialist revolution. Despite such ideological gap, Gorky contributed to establish Socialist Soviet Union struggling in every moment and by facing uncountable upheavals in life, he passed away in 1936.

Though Gorky is known as a Marxist author, his works deal with humanism and other significant aspects of human life. He wrote many novels, stories, drama and

autobiographies by presenting the sense of humanity. One of his stories, “Danko” the protagonist fights for the sake of humanity and does not expect any reward in return. In *Chelkash* (1894), he presents the human beings’ greedy instinct of accumulation. In this story, one character decides to kill other man for the sake of property. Gorky says that it is instinct of farmer and views that the very greedy instinct will be an obstacle for their change.

Gorky’s another story “Song of Falcon” (1895) has been inspiring the revolutionaries of the world to move beyond reutilized common life and to advance toward ideal and revolutionary changes as well as for the struggle. In his *A Blue Eyed Woman* (1895), the writer presents the trouble faced by a widow to nurture her children. After the death of her husband, she goes to have permission for prostitution in the government’s office. This story presents how pathetic condition women had at that time where prostitution was the only option for survival.

In *Bhadraphor* (revelation) based on real events seen by Gorky in which a woman is accused of infidelity by her husband. She is unclothed and tied on horseback then both the horse and woman are whipped cruelly. Even her husband and eyewitnesses scold her using vulgar words and they are amused through this act. After being beaten severely, she falls on the ground and is wounded. This depiction of oppression, exploitation and atrocity upon women not only proves the pathetic condition of women but also exposes the hypocrisy, cruelty and inhumanity of patriarchy. The story presents the tragic love of a young girl as well as the appearance versus reality of the then intellectuals. Allocating to the story, a girl loves an engineer and regards him as her ideals but later on the engineer’s hypocrisy, narrow mindedness and selfish instinct is exposed. In this manner, the intellectual’s attempt to cast other upon illusion by concealing the inner reality and depiction of false

appearance is mocked in this play. Moreover, Gorky bitterly criticized to the characteristics of those intellectuals who always ignored the struggle for public welfare, socio-economic change, prosperity as well as for public facilities and they only centered upon their own ambition narrow-mindedly.

*Mother* is the masterpiece of Gorky, which he wrote during his stay in United States. In the period of the 1905 revolution in Russia a warrant was issued for his Gorky's arrest. Escaping Russia, he travelled abroad to plead the cause of the revolutionist in all the countries of the world. He spent a considerable period in America and it was a log cabin in Adirondacks that much of the manuscript of *Mother* was written. The setting of *Mother* was the ancient city of Nizhni Novgorod, birthplace of the author. The Krasnoye Sormo had developed a militant tradition. It was from the Sormovo workers and their families that Gorky chose the heroes and heroines in *Mother*. The Principal character, Pavel Vlasov, had a counterpart in real life in the Sormovo worker Pavel Zalomov. Like Vlasov. Zalomova's led a May Day demonstration of the Sormovo workers. Like Vlasov he was beaten, arrested, and given a long prison sentence. Pavel mother, Nilovna, was a composite portrait. She was modeled in part on Zalomov's mother and in part on the mother of another revolutionary worker named Kadomtsev. Incidents from the lives of other working women who had joined their children in revolutionary work also were drawn upon to complete the notable portrait of Nilovna. Socialistic Movement was led by Bolshevik party against this system and the despotic Czar Regime. During the underground movement, many workers and political cadres were arrested and exiled in Siberia. In such a background, Gorky wrote the novel *Mother* by reflecting the very situation and made the readers believe as if the events of the novel really happened.

In *Mother*, the major characters of the novel are Pelegeya Nilovna, the mother, Pavel Vlosov, Nathasha, Ukraine, Shasha, Rybin, Agore and other workers. The novel begins with the description of a town and factory workers. Mikhail Vlasov, a factory worker is always aggressive, unsatisfied and gloomy character. "Well, beat it, you louse!" (4). Every holiday he beat somebody, and everyone disliked and feared him. Neither he speaks sweetly nor treats politely with his wife and son, nor with other workers. He always scolds and beats his wife, because of excess alcohol consumption he falls ill and dies. After his death, Pavel goes to factory; he experiences everything in the beginning like smoking, wearing fashionable clothes, drinking, etc. But later on his speech and behavior are changed into politeness: he gives his earning to mother, returns home in time and goes to the city in the evening. Similarly, his friends come to his home and they introduce with mother, sometime they gather and discuss about rebels against "Swamp Kopek" and study forbidden books till midnight.

Gradually, the mother knows the pathetic condition of the mothers of Ukraine and Natasha, the root cause of workers suffering and the mission of her son's comrades, even some aged people begin to consult with Pavel and they respect him. Once Pavel leads the group of workers and rebels against "Swamp Kopek" and the despotic Czar Regime where the workers utter slogan against the despotic Czar Regime, capitalism, and against "Swamp Kopek". Pavel is arrested by the police. Then, the mother begins to distribute pamphlets in the factory disguising herself as a soup and noodle seller. But later on Pavel is released from prison due to the lack of evidence. In May Demonstration, Pavel again leads the workers with red flag and utters slogan against atrocity and oppression of Czar Regime as before. Pavel and many workers are arrested, and the mother is cruelly mistreated by the policemen. Then, she migrates with Nikolay and is introduced with Sophia who tells how she

cheated policemen and spies, distributed pamphlets and helped her comrades to escape from Siberia. The mother knows about Agore, a workers being victimized by capitalistic exploitation and falls sick and dies at last. In his funeral ceremony, the workers swear to move as suggested by Agore and to overthrow the capitalism. Unfortunately, policemen interfere the mob, many workers are arrested and wounded even mother is mistreated by the police. Pavel and his comrades are brought in court because they are accused of traitors. On the day of verdict, Pavel and his comrades are brought in court because they are accused of traitors. On the day of verdict, Pavel begins to speak slowly in response to judge' gesture and against capitalistic system which teaches one person to cheat and exploit the other. It limits all relation to money. So, capitalism is the destructor of everything which does not regard humanity and other human relationship.

When Pavel and his comrades were exiled in Siberia, policemen searched the home and found the pamphlets with the mother in which Pavel's speech was printed for distribution. She is arrested but she urged other to accompany her son and their mission because they are struggling for the sake of poor and exploited people, but the policemen beat her cruelly. Gorky wrote *Mother* and published in 1906, it became a masterpiece in Marxist literary history. It became internationally famous and gave proletarian literary identity to him. As the novel provided the glimpse of accurate condition of workers and the then society, it gained much responses and criticism from many critics, who analyzed it from different angles like symbolic, literary discipleship, etc. And, they delivered their opinion both negatively and positively.

Alyssa W. Dinega takes *Mother* as a Gorky's literary discipleship to Tolstoy as the mother's political discipleship to her son, he views: "Perhaps mother, as a whole, is at base, just as much as book about Gorki's literary discipleship to Tolstoy and Gorki's

struggle to form his own artistic identity as it is about the mother's political discipleship to her son and similar gradual attainment of an independent identity" (76). Rex A. Wade sees this novel just as a neatly summarization of February revolution and Bolshevik's attempt to gain authority in their hand rather than the revolutionary event as mentioned in the novel (658).

Gorky relates it with the political ambitiousness of socialist party. Wade Rex opines, "The basic narrative presented here holds few surprises, as the author neatly summarizes the factors leading to the February Revolution and the contestation for authority followed. Although himself clearly sympathetic to the moderate socialist" (659). Even in course of analyzing this novel, Hare Richard judges this novel negatively on the ideological basis and takes this novel's language as tendentious and tone is stridden, he says that Gorky is largely forgotten in the west. Except for this lower depth, which is occasionally performed and for some of his short stories his works find little response outside the communist world. His mother which is celebrated in Soviet Russia as a "masterpiece of early proletarian writing bores us by its tendentiousness, its strident tone, and stereotyped characterization of the main male protagonist, Pavel Vlasov" (370). According to Barry P. Scherr, the religious aspects too, in which image and position of god has been indirectly focused, and this aspect is closely related with Gorky's another work confession. The mother, despite its ostensibly anti-religious message, contains numerous pages that present religion as an inspiration. Pavel the dedicated revolutionary whose arrest will spur his mother to activism hang a picture in his room.

Rybin a figure from country side argues about religion with Pavel in passage that clearly foreshadows the god building message found in confession (448).



One of the critic's professors F.M. Borrás argues that the novel attempts to accept the role of god and seems targeted to god building. He views that in *Mother*, surely not the figure of mother herself Pelageya Nilovna and Rybin but the whole novel is saturated in the curious theory of god building. And if the socialist elements in this crackpot synthesis of Marxism and Christianity would have been equally as abhorred to Tolstoy as to Dostoevsky, is not religious element rooted in that ultimate vision of perfect human society shared by both these writers.

E.V Volkova sees this novel and its characters in unique perspective and praises in very short sentences in this manner, *Mother* enriched world of art with the living figure of the new hero of the time, the conscious proletarian revolution full of the most courageous romanticism (284). According to the analysis of Lenin, the book *Mother* is timely book because he had once said with Gorky "The book is needed" (283), many workers took part in the revolutionary movement without awareness, spontaneously now they will read *Mother* with great profit for themselves.

According to these critics, this novel experiences a great emotional and revolutionary change. Some critics opine that the novel contains social as well as ideological aspect of the then current European and Russian society. Even some critics take this novel as summarization of Bolshevik revolution but none of them have attempted to explore the root cause of political consciousness in female and its consequence. This study has focused upon the issue of the awakening of a woman from her inactive peasant existence into active participation in her fight for social justice.

## CHAPTER II

### **Russian Revolution and Marxist Feminism**

Marxist feminism is the theory which focuses on the liberation of men and women from the bondage of the inhuman capitalist society. Marxist feminist states that private property, which give rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion, and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women. The Marxist feminism is a theory which focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as way of liberating women and men. Women can only be truly free, truly equal with men, truly feminists if they would only stand on the working class. As a movement, feminism regards that women are also human beings like men and declares the struggle against inequality, injustice and oppressions. It is a commitment to establishing the healthy and equal society for both male and female by ending the ideology of domination. Bryson defines feminism as, "the movement for women's liberation is part of the creation of a new society in which there is no discrimination. The society can't be separated from the process of its making" (257). It emphasizes upon economic, political, psychological and religious equality and seeks to abolish discrimination against women sprung from the patriarchal assumption that women are inferior, passive and physically weak.

In other words, feminism is a movement which attacks upon discriminatory act and biased ideology. This type of trend is not new since it was also prevailed in ancient time though it become popular and functioned as a movement only after the Second World War mainly in 1960s. About the origin of feminist struggle against patriarchal domination, oppression and ideology, M.A.R Habib writes in *History of Literary Criticism*:

Feminist criticism is not uniquely twentieth century phenomenon. It has antecedents going all the way back to ancient Greece in the work of Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata* which depicts women as taking over the treasury in the Acropolis, a female chorus as physically and intellectually superior to the male chorus and the use of sexuality as a weapon in an endeavor to put an end to the distinctly masculine project of the Peloponnesian war. In Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* who blatantly values "experience" over authority and was more than match for each of her five husbands. In the middle Ages, Christine De Pisan had had the courage to enter into debate with the predominant male critics of her day. During the Renaissance a number of women poets such as Catherine Des Roches emerged in France and England. (657)

These lines describe the history of feminist struggle since long in which females had dared to compete with males in intellectual sector as well as in the field of war by the use of mind. But the term feminism was first used by the French dramatist Alexander Dumas in 1872 in pamphlet "L" to refer the movement of women which was emerging for their rights. Gradually, it came to be known as worldwide movement to establish equality and liberty of women.

In course of development of society and human rights, women were not regarded as human beings and capable person despite their skills and talent. They had been treated in an inferior manner so their condition was different from that of males in many societies. Catherine. R. Stimpson writes:

The combination of being intellectually talented but institutionally marginal is one characteristic of the history of woman, education and literacy studies. Indeed a woman's movement whatever its specific

name and historical context, arises when enough women have always been educated in the general languages roles and customs of their culture. (254)

This history of women shows them as intellectually talented as males but institutionally they have been marginalized by patriarchy. In such critical phase and unbearable time, women's movement appears in any form. In the same vein, Fiona Tolan raises the problem by citing a piece of essay which Simone de Beauvoir had offered in *The Second Sex*:

There was no physical or psychological reason why women should be inferior to men, and yet, through history and across cultures, women had always been second-class citizen. They have had individual. Biological differences do not provide casual explanation for women at a disadvantage by trying them to the domestic sphere and associating them with the body and thus with animal's and nature. (681)

This piece of article obviously reflects the reality of females that they are hated, marginalized and confined to the four walls of house not because of any physical or psychological reason but because of the biological differences. Feminism not only studies the problem of female but also explores the root causes of problem and suffering and then it also provides solution. The primary task of this movement is to free woman from oppressive treatment of patriarchal society and to liberate them from narrow boundaries for their upliftment.

History of feminism is divided into two waves: a) feminism from 1830 to 1920, and b) feminism from 1960 to the present. During these two waves many feminist authors emerged in the field of literature and criticism by reflecting females' condition and advocating for the rights of female. One of the important writer Mary

Wollstonecraft in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* undercuts the Rousseaus's view by saying that, "men's superiority over women as law of nature" (214) as false notion by referring to Locke's view that "As mind is a tabula rasa or a blank sheet of paper and our experiences write knowledge over it" (102). But patriarchal society causes females' backwardness by depriving them of education and opportunity to use their talent. Virginia Woolf in her essay *A Room of One's Own* presented the condition of female where they must remain without any financial and psychological freedom like in "concentration camp" and are obliged to live a life of a passive, immanent and in cable person. According to her "a women must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (677). Simon de Beavouir in *The Second Sex* writes that:

Throughout history women have always occupied secondary role in relation to man. They have been relegated to the position of the "other". They have remained like a slave within the circle of duties imposed by maternal and reproductive functions. Talking about division of sex Beavouir writes that, "The division of sexes is a biological fact, not an event in human history she is the other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another" (681).

Indeed, women have no autonomous history and they have been treated as the others and have gained secondary role like that of a slave because of their reproductive function.

Later on, numerous female authors emerged in the field of literature and criticism and their presentations are concerned with problems which women are facing. Sandra Gilbert and Gubar, Elaine Showalter, Helen Cixious, etc. are the

feminist writers who have raised the problem of women's exploitation, suppression and suffering as mentioned above and many feminist movements have come to the fore to declare struggle for rights, liberty and justice and against the discrimination upon female. Along with feminist streams, the emergence of many female scholars itself has been categorized in many sub-branches such as liberal feminism. For instance, feminists who follow political stream and assume politics as a determinant factor for the liberation of female are known as Marxist feminist. They advocate women's participation in politics through class struggle since it is only viable option to get rid of all these oppressions and injustice.

Marxist feminism, one of the sub-branches of feminism appeared in the field of literature and criticism after the arrival of radical feminism in 1960s, by combining the best of both radical and Marxist feminism. Marxist feminists argue that in class society such rights can benefit only a few middle class women. Most women like most men remain oppressed until the capitalist economy system is replaced by communism. From this perspective, the key to women's liberation is their entry into paid labour market and their participation in class struggle. It is only in communist society that economic dependency of women will appear.

Furthermore, another school of feminism is socialist feminism which combines the best of Marxist and radical feminism. As mentioned above it is essential to know the key assumptions of radical feminism in brief, which are also included by socialist feminism. Radical feminists argue 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 world of economic and political activity, but it characterizes all relationship between sexes, including the most intimate one. Some radical feminists argue that not social but biological differences are there between male and female.

Women posse superior qualities it means all men are considered to be enemy according to them and lesbian separatism becomes the only viable feminist option. Others reject it and opine that men as group oppress women in all area of life and the undermining of this must be central to any feminist politics. Even radical feminist insist that all male power is the root cause of exploitation upon women and it must be seen as political. They seek, however, to give patriarchy power a history and to understand its relationship with other forms of domination, they advocate struggle at all levels.

It is essential to be clear about the use of “Marxist feminism” and “Socialist Feminism”. Feminism seems used and being applied interchangeably by those who see socialist and feminist goals are interrelated. Others use them more precisely to distinguish Marxist from those left-wing feminists who do not base their analysis on Marxist theory. To clarify the confusion, the writer Valory Bryson writes that:

Some writers use both terms interchangeably and apply them to all those who see socialist and feminist goals as interrelated. I use “Marxist Feminism” fairly loosely to refer to all feminist theories which Marxist analysis, even this has been modified by radical feminist ideas. I use “Socialist Feminist” as an inclusive category covering all feminist who believe that women’s liberation requires the socialist transformation of socio-economic system: I have not therefore based this chapter upon any rigid classification, in both theory and practice and that see gender and, increasingly, race as key to categories that can’t be simply explained in terms of class analysis. (234)

Feminism searches the root cause of female’s oppression in society and the way for liberty, equality and freedom. Marxist Feminism attempts to find the oppression of

women and seeks its resolution from Marxist standpoint. According to Marxist and socialist feminism the root cause of females' oppression and its way out is overthrow of social system. Because of the capitalism prioritizes economic inequality, dependency, political confusion and finally unhealthy social relation between men and women in an indirect way for personal benefit.

Marxist feminism is used to understand the feminist issues, economic, political and social condition and its one of the primary tasks is to create a kind of world in which women will experience themselves as whole persons, as integrated rather than fragmented or splintered beings. Gender inequality is the production of capitalism and determined by capitalistic modes of production. For Marxist and socialist feminists, gender oppression is class oppression and women's oppression is seen as a form of class oppression and women's situation cannot be understood by separating them from socio-economic context. In capitalism women are treated as commodity and made inferior in which labor is co modified. Even it prioritizes alienation and patriarchal domination. To get rid of this situation is communism because there is no class and gender in socialism, in which such discrimination will be diminished. When the classless society is established, all the people become equal and means of production will be run by government and profit will be distributed equality to everybody. Then only in that society women will get proper place and equality.

Women are mostly confined to household activities and they are not allowed to go out and work because their strength skill and ability are taken inferior to the males. In fact, it is not true but general assumption. Women are doing household work without any payment. Their works play vital role in performing outside work but they do not get any credit. Women enter into the productive and important work before the



males of society because they pave the ways for outward activities and make base for industry. Rosemarie Tong says:

No woman has to enter the productive workforce, for all women are already in it, even no one care this fact. Women's work is the necessary conditions for all other lab our form which in turn surplus value is extracted. By providing current and future, workers are not only with food and clothes but also with emotional and domestic comfort women keep the logs of the capitalist machine running. (54)

Marxist feminists see no difference between male and female in the family and bourgeois/proletarian society. A husband and father or male member in a family is like bourgeois and wife in the family is like a proletarian in capitalism. Women are exploited in society on the basis of patriarchal norms and values. Which are constructions of economic power position? And about this economic power position Tong opine "men's control over women is rooted in the fact that he, not she controls the property, the property will cease only with the dissolution of the institution of private property" (49). The major principle of Marxist and socialist feminism is that women's situation can't be understood in isolation from its social-economic context and any meaningful improvement in the lives of women requires that his context must be changed.

Marxism adds to this basic position the idea that society will be changed not by appeals to this basic position the idea that society will be changed not by appeals to reason and justice, but by collective class struggle that can only succeed at a particular stage of economic and social development. Tong further views that, "Women history is a given history and it can be ended in the context of a socialist revolution that is itself the product of a specific historical situation" (47). Marx argued that

revolutionary theory can be deduced not from abstract speculation or outside observation but it can result only from concrete practices.

Relating this issue of Marx, Harstock has claimed that, “Through consciousness raising feminist have re-invented the original Marxist method, which insists that theory be based on experience, and integrates personal and political transformation, arguing that both are part of the same process of revolutionary practice” (236). Some Marxist and socialist feminists argue that the housework which women do in their house is most significant and productive labour. Strategically, her work is so important that Bryson writes in this manner:

Thus, some writers argue that because domestic labour does produce value in the same way as other forms of production labour, then role of the housewife is as strategically important as the factory worker, and the home itself can be seen as a site of anti capitalist struggle, for woman is the slave of a wage-slave and her slavery ensures the slavery of her man. From this perspective woman should not enter the paid work force as earlier Marxist analysis had suggested. (238)

This quote obviously proves that a husband’s condition determines his wife’s life. Even some Marxist and socialist feminists opine that the housework which women performs, not only represent a personal service to her family but also serve the interest of the capitalist economy by reproducing and maintaining the work force in particularly cheap and efficient ways.

In addition, the next point expressed by Marxist feminist is that women’s economic identity is primarily based upon her role as a housewife rather than a paid worker. Bryson borrows the line from Lise Vogel and writes:

Lise Vogel adds his view upon Marx's unexplored recognitions by saying that, maintenance and reproduction of the working class are essential requirements of capitalism, to argue that the material basis of women's oppression is to be found in social reproduction of the working class are essential requirements of capitalism, to argue that the material basis of women's oppression is to be found in social reproduction. The biological fact of childbearing imposes a basic division of labour and means that economic productivity of reproductively active women is temporarily reduce women's biological role as child bearer almost always increases an economic dependency upon men whereby women are disproportionately responsible for the domestic labour necessarily to maintain the workforce to women. (257)

Other point presented by Marxist and socialist feminists is that however in socialist society, in which productions is for uses rather than for profit, the economic imperative to extract a surplus from women's labour will no longer be operative, child care and domestic labour will be socialized and biological division of labour will no longer involve an oppressive community's dependency.

Julia Mitchell, one of the Marxists and socialist feminists opines that an analysis of the present is the basis for hopes and prediction for the future in which economic condition is fundamental factor but political and ideological struggles also have a key role. This analysis also leads her to advocate autonomous women's organization. She insists that as an oppressed group women must work for their own liberation and there will be no automatic dissolution of patriarchy without feminist struggle for the liberation of female emphasizes upon females' certain role in these line, "women ought to be able to do men's work and man should develop their caring

and nurturing qualities through participation in product life and child rearing activities such changes are important prerequisites of gender equality and an important goal in itself (75). Some writers relate modern Marxist and Socialist feminism with post-modernism which is moving towards a more pluralistic approach. Here capitalism is close to modernism because of its profit seeking myopic vision, policy of exploitation but socialism prioritizes inclusiveness, equality, justice, liberty, and human rights.

Both allow a greater independence of political and ideological struggle from idea of economic determinism and narrowly understood class conflict. According to those Marxist and socialist feminists, the old economic groupings have become fragmented and the fight for socialism must be seen in terms of multiple struggle and sites of resistance rather than straight forward confrontation between opposing classes. In this context, race and gender becomes independently important dimension. Talking about postmodern approach in relation to socialism she presents her idea in these words:

Postmodernism which attacks the whole idea of certainty or objectivity in human thought it also challenges the validity of such categories as “working class” denying the existence of stable and objectively knowable class interests like family and the workplace, the new and state institutions are arena of struggle in which battles may be fought and real gains won. In line with much Marxist thought many also see the struggle over ideology as of critical importance. (259)

These lines clarify that postmodernism attacks on the whole idea of certainty or objectivity in human thoughts. It regards multiple truths, and sees everything from different angles as socialism analyzes the things and system.

From the beginning of the novel to the end, the viewpoint of Pelageya Nilovna was used by Gorky to show the state of things before the Revolution of 1917. This viewpoint is one of the most important factors to consider, if not the most important, in discussing the full meaning of the novel. This style of Gorky, i.e. focusing more on the physical details of setting, his creative skills in breathing life to his characters and deep knowledge of the peasantry are his assets for becoming the socialist realism.

Gorky's reputation as a unique literary voice from the bottom strata of society and as a fervent advocate of Russia's social, political, and cultural transformation grew. By 1899, he was openly associating with the emerging Marxist social democratic movement which helped make him a celebrity among both the intelligentsia and the growing numbers of "conscious" workers. At the heart of all his work was a belief in the inherent worth and potential of the human person. In his writing, he counterposed individuals, aware of their natural dignity, and inspired by energy and will, with people who succumb to the degrading conditions of life around them. Both his writings and his letters reveal a "restless man" (a frequent self-description) struggling to resolve contradictory feelings of faith and skepticism, love of life and disgust at the vulgarity and pettiness of the human world.

Gorky publicly opposed the Tsarist regime and was arrested many times. He befriended many revolutionaries and became Lenin's personal friend after they met in 1906. He exposed government control of the press affair. In 1902, Gorky was elected an honorary Academician of literature but Nicholas II ordered this annulled. In protest Anton Chekhov and Vladimir Korolenko left the Academy. Incidentally on hearing from his friends of a warrant he instantly left for Germany and thence to France and finally to America.

### Chapters III

#### Women and Political Consciousness: The Role of the Mother

In Gorky's *Mother* as in the real world, women are oppressed and males are oppressor. Women are exploited not only by males but by the capitalist social system so that females have been facing double exploitation and oppression. Such oppression and inequality has given birth to class struggle. Therefore, the novel presents the class struggle between female and capitalism as well as female versus patriarchy. In the novel, it seems that the revolutionaries led by the male characters like Pavel, Ukraine, Agore, Rybin etc. and their movement seems only targeted towards political mission but the inner reality is that there is a crucial contribution of female for the success of revolution.

Another significant point is that even if the mission is of political but it also carries out the female issue because politics determines social, economic, cultural factors and nothing can remain untouched by politics. So whatever the mission is the inner fact is to improve the condition of female in society. Owing to such purpose of women empowerment, social and economic reforms female characters have accompanied the males as possible as they can and one of the most important female characters is Pelaggeya Nilovna who has stood not only as mother of Pavel but also as the Mother and the source of inspiration to all revolutionaries as well as the pillar for socialist revolution.

The relationship here between male and female is like the relationship between mother and child and sisters and brothers. So, the mother has urged others to accompany their son's comrades. She plays crucial role by carrying and distributing papers pamphlets. Here, the females' attitude towards male characters can be

understood from Sofya's statement towards Yegore after his death:

I have never seen him without a joke on his lips: and what a worker. He is an artist of the revolution, a great master who skillfully manipulates revolutionary thought what a capacity he has for tempering the horrible with gay humor. I am really indebted to him and I shall never forget his merry eyes. (249)

This expression of Sofya definitely proves that Agore is a good friend, an artist of the revolution and a man of skill to whom his friends never forget and they are really indebted to him. Furthermore, Pelageya Nilovna, the mother understands her son Pavel and his comrades as truth seeker struggling for truth, justice and freedom, and they are working on the tough path for the public welfare.

Gorky has shown that only the men should take up roles in the revolution that women, whatever their ages are, should contribute for the success of their movement. When she started giving the pamphlet secretly to the people in the factory, we see her understanding of the ideology her son was fighting for. This understanding was very crucial, because many have joined the socialist movement without really understanding why. With Pelageya's naivety, people had identified themselves with her and with her understanding, they understood as well. The climax of the novel is not placed in the end, where we see Pelageya fighting with a spy just for her to disseminate her son's speech. This was symbolic though also socialist-realist.

Besides the mother's Gorky has given accounts of many other courageous and brave female characters in the novel like Natasha, Sasha, Ludmilla and Sophia. Natasha and Sasha leave their relatively peaceful lives to join the revolutionary struggle for the establishment of a socialist society. The character of Natasha is particularly appealing as she is the daughter of a rich businessman who owns a lot of

property. Yet she disowns her father, bids adieu to a comfortable lifestyle and opts to become a teacher-cum-activist. The writer's depiction of this character is strong enough to get the reader fall in love with her.

The female characters that have left their mansions and plantations to help the movement and be with the proletariat were an implication of Gorky's belief and a glorification of the Marxist-feminism as well. Unlike Pelageya who had nothing in the beginning of the story, women who supposed to have everything were presented yet they felt nothing and only felt their worth with the leaders of the revolution while helping them with their cause. Undoubtedly, it can say that the revolutionaries are the spirit of mother and of all females. The lines which mother speaks while Pavel is detained in May Demonstration further clarifies that point:

Our children are going in the world towards happiness. They went for the sake of all, and for Christ's truth- against all with our malicious false avaricious one have captured, tied and crushed. Then don't go away from them don't renounce, don't forsake them don't leave your children on a lonely path, love them! Understand the children's hearts. Believe your son's hearts. They have brought forth the truth. (179)

It proves that there is a good relationship between males and females have significant role in spreading political consciousness in society. They have accompanied male and they are struggling together for truth, and here the truth, justice, liberty and freedom for all minorities where females are the important factors and the struggle is for the establishment of socialism. The major female characters who have struggled for the existence of female and poor people are Pelageya Nilovna, Natasha, Shasha and revolutionary activities are forwarded by the male characters and they are accompanied by female characters in equal proportion.



As viewed from Marxist feminist point of view, women's economic identity is primarily based upon her role as housewife rather than paid workers. Identity of Pelageya, Nilovna is based upon her husband Mikhail Vlasov. Once she asks for money with Mikhail and he replies, "Don't ask me for money anymore. Pasha will feed you now. None of your business, you louse" (5). He beats her in intoxication of alcohol. After his death; she gets money from Pavel which he earns from factory. Even in her life she always faced scolding and domestic violence by Mikhail Socially, her duty was to prepare meal and feed it for Pavel and Mikhail. Now, she is housewife, and her financial dependency upon her husband, her inferior social rank in family is determined not because of her ability but because of patriarchal society's norm and values.

Another instance of her financial dependency upon male member is that once Pavel arrives at home by drinking liquor and asks for the father's pipe to smoke. Then, she urges him not to drink and expresses her bitter past and pain in these poignant words. "What sorts of bread giver will you be to me if you begin to drink? But don't you drink. Your father drank for both of you and he made enough misery for me. Take pity on your mother. Then you will not?" (8). Before the death of her husband, she faced excess domestic violence. Once when her husband bit her being intoxicated she pressed her child (Pavel) in her breast to be secured, escapes from the house and spends the night outside the home in half naked condition but later on she returns home and then remains silent due to the fear of her husband. Other examples of females, economic dependent house wife are the mothers of Ukraine and Natasha. Natasha whose mother, is always beaten-down is afraid of everybody, economically dependent upon her husband and is confined within four walls, can do nothing against the oppression of her husband. Natasha says with Pelageya "My father is a stupid,

coarse man and my oldest sister unhappy, but my mother I am sorry for! She's a simple woman like you, a beaten-down frightened creature, so tiny, like a little mouse, as afraid of everybody" (30). Moreover, another character, Ukraine's foster mother, who had adopted him as a son is economically dependent upon her husband, a shoemaker even if she is a washer woman. She marries such a drunkard and later on he becomes the source of violence, beating and suffering. Ukraine tells about his real mother in these words. It seems to me that "perhaps she may be somewhere in Kiev begging alms and drinking Whiskey" (27). It proves that what sort of life a female lives for bread and butter, neither have they had earning nor any identity. Such factor clarifies how they are identified and dependent upon males.

In *Mother*, the social condition of female is miserable. Socially females are confined within house then treated as inferior, weak, submissive and passive and confined within house which is the assumption of patriarchal society. The female characters have no personal freedom and liberty, the only option is to obey the norms and value of patriarchal society as well as the command of her husband. The main protagonist Pelageya Nilovna, is the representative female character of the then society. Neither she is behaved properly by her father before her marriage nor is the marriage conducted in common consent with Mikhail Vlasov. She is victimized by the domestic violence and beaten cruelly by her husband. Before her marriage once her father had told her that, "No sense in making a face! If somebody's turned up whose food enough to take you to wife, grab the chance! All hens get married and they all have children who bring them nothing but a pack trouble you are no different from the rest" (129). In traditional society, female are commodified as a pack of trouble and treated in an inferior manner, not as a human being but as a hen.

When Mikhail sees her, he seizes her in a dark porch by pressing her with his whole body and asks, "Will you marry me? Don't put on airs now, you fool! I will send you a match marker to you next Sunday, and he did" (25). It clarifies that how weak status, the females have in their own personal affair of marriage. After their marriage Pelageya becomes patient and Mikhail becomes the agent of domestic violence. Pavel's statement proves the point: "Think what kind of a life you are leading father beat you. I understand now that he avenged his life. On your body: the wretchedness of his life. He worked for thirty years: he began to work when the whole factory occupied but two building now there are seven of them. The mills grow and a people die, working for them; "what joys did you know?" (13). These extracted lines prove that the social condition of females as well as workers who have pathetic life and have been victimized by both capitalism and patriarchy. Natasha's mother is a dominated, oppressed woman who is afraid of her stupid husband and the husband is a wealthy hardware businessman.

Because of hatred toward patriarchal domination capitalistic exploitation and such social situation Natasha denied the given history of female by the male and entered in revolutionary movement. Due to her involvement in such act she is driven out of the house by her father. It is clear from Pavel's statement in, "Look her father is a rich man; he is in the hardware business and own much property. He drove out of the house because she got into this movement" (17). It is proof that woman's history is a given history. Since, no female character has any personal affair whether it is about her marriage or something else. Just she has to accept whatever the role and status the patriarchal society gives her. Before marriage the mother is identified by her father's name. She is married forcibly without her interest then oppression, beating and suffering become usual phenomenon in post- marriage time. She has to accept the role

of submissive, weak, passive and dependent woman and against such history of domination and torture Natasha, mother, Shashenka have stepped forward to the direction of socialist revolution.

In family structure, women have secondary position, and they bear oppression, domination and exploitation. As women in the family, proletariats are exploited by bourgeois under capitalistic system. Women are extremely victimized factors in the proletarian class. Mikhail Vlasov is the consequence of capitalistic exploitation having gloomy, aggressive and sullen mood and never behaves respectfully to anybody. Mother has to live with such drunkard husband. Not only Mikhail but also the condition of Agore shows miserable condition of proletarians. Agore is a strong worker who spends all his life to make golden wash basin for the mistress of his factory owner, which he once says with his comrades, "A man killed me with work in order to comfort his mistress with my blood. He bought her a gold wash basin with my blood" (222). But when Agore becomes ill he is driven out from his work at last and he dies after being hospitalized, even in his funeral the police intervene and arrest them by beating cruelly.

From Rybin's view, the role of workers in maintaining the production and supporting life of capitalists is expressed with Pavel:

"We plow and we sow,  
 All high and how  
 Boasting the cheap  
 But the harvest we reap  
 A feast we'll make  
 And rest we'll take." (147)

This poem clearly depicts the exploitative relationship between bourgeois and proletariats. It is very similar to Rybin's idea "We are that living force which feeds and amuses the world from cradle to grave. Always and everywhere we are first in work but last in life, who cares for us? Who wishes us good? Who regards us as human being? No- one!" (64). Those lines very clearly show that condition of workers is like that of animals. And when the workers rebel against this system, Pavel and his comrades are exiled in Siberia. It is remarkable that women have problems within family structure. This problem is worsened by capitalism, and patriarchal norms and values. It is biological function of women to give birth to their off-spring and to nurture them. Women who give birth to children, support family as house wives are underestimated in the family. Not only the factory works but the house hold works are important for the survival of both male and female. Furthermore, there confinement within four walls of house and the role of house wife make them always busy and restless but provide no wage. For such important, invaluable, essential role the life of their children they devote themselves every time. But in return they gain credited with underestimation and undervaluation. Pelageya Nilovna the mother of Pavel is such a figure who is not untouched with the reality as mentioned above.

When the mother is pregnant she is cruelly beaten by her drunken husband, she has to escape for self defense. To get suffering and beating from husband becomes usual phenomena for her. It is further clarified in the following quote, "Her heavy body broken down with long years of toil and the beating of her husband as if she were in constant fear of knocking up against something" (8). Once, Ukraine asks her. "Who made that hole in your forehead mother? I ask because my foster mother had her head smashed just exactly like your" (19). These lines undoubtedly give the fact that not only Pelageya but other females have been equally victimized by the domestic

violence. Another example of women's suffering in a family is clarified by mother's statement which she says to Andriyusha:

He beat me so- not as wife is beaten but as one whom you hate and detest. Lord Christ in heaven! What did I live for? Beatings work! I saw nothing except husband, I know nothing but fear. All my concerns, all my thoughts were centered upon one thing – to feed my beast pleasing to his plate and served on time, so as to escape the terror of beating to get him to spare me but once! (90-91)

It exposes the fact that how women are confined to house hold work and afraid of their husbands who are economically in powerful position which causes women's dependency upon male and the very dependency compels them to be confined to house and to obey the norms and values of patriarchal society.

Because of this they attempt to please them in order to escape from male violence like Pelageya and Ukraine's foster mother. Marya states the fact that the mother had sometimes saved her from her husband's beating, "You remember how you used to hide me from my husband?" (76). Thus, Natasha's father is stupid, economically a powerful man and representative of capitalist and the despotic Czar, regime, he drives her out from the house owing to her involvement in socialist Democratic Party. In this context, only option to get rid of this hellish and monotonous state is dissolution of institution of private property through socialism.

Women perform housework within the four walls of house; do not get any wage as Pelageya Nilova lives in penniless condition though their contribution is invaluable because no family can run without their household work. Strategically, the role of Pelageya Nilovna, Marya Korsunova and the foster mother of Ukraine is so significant that they nurture their children and care their husband, it is the act of

saving and securing one's life on the contrary the labour which Mikhail Vlasov and other workers do in factory help exploit themselves and fulfill the interest of capitalist. Whatever the workers do in factory is like, "Man proposes god disposes" (56). Since the workers intend to improve their life but their work produce profit to capitalist to great extent though it plays vital role for their survival too, this truth has already been proved by the Rybin's poem.

Another applied aspect of Marxist and Socialist feminist in the context of *Mother* is that the mother's slavery ensures the slavery of Mikhail Vlasov since it is the universal fact that if a dependent, penniless wife's husband is wage earner then the wife cannot remain untouched from such slavery. That's why; Pelageya Nilovna's slavery state proves her husband's life is like that of a slave. These lines describe that, "think what kind of life you are leading. You are forty years old and have you live. He worked for thirty years, now there are seven of them. The mills grow and people die, working for them" (13). This description clearly depicts that Mikhail has been living for last thirty years a slave like life but neither he nor Pelageya have gained anything except the pathetic life under capitalism. This ensures his slavery because of minimum wage as well as the confinement to the factory.

If such is the condition, Pelageya and other women must advance forward to get rid of this slavery. It is the only life blood for liberation equality, right, justice and financial independence. Such anti-capitalist struggle seems to be declared from home by Pelageya Nilovna, Natasha, Sofya, Marya Korsunova etc. then Pavel expresses the motto of anti-capitalist struggle and socialist revolution. The line he speaks, "We want to be people, and we must know those who sit on our necks and cover up our eyes. We are not foolish, we are not animals, we do not want merely to eat, but also to live like decent human beings" (26). It means that the marginalized women and workers are

treated inhumanly that's why they are attempting to get position, what they are not getting.

Due to such reason mother accompanies her son's mission. It is clear in the given dialogue between mother and Pavel:

Please go to the city immediately and deliver this note, "is it dangerous? She asked yes! A newspaper is being published for us down there! That muddy penny story must go into next issue! I'll go at once, "She replied begging hurriedly to put on her wraps. This was the first commission her son had given her. She was happy that he spoke to her so openly about the matter. (61)

It is the beginning of mother's involvement in anti-capitalist and accompaniment of mother in revolution. If women's house household work and biological function is analyzed rigorously there becomes the source of domination to them. Andrey, Rybin, Mikhail, Vlaso, Ukraine, Pavel Vlasov, Fyodor, Vyesovschiko are the work force and the results of females' biological reproduction and Pelageya Nilovna and Marya Korsunova are the symbol of mothers for performing biological duties, give birth to children, nurturing them and caring their husband. Male members are the work force who supports capitalists to fulfill their interest. In this context, as argued by Marxist feminists, women pave the way for capitalism through the preparation of work force including Pavel, Ukraine, Mikhail, Rybin, Agore, Fyodor, etc.

The female characters like Pelageya Nilovna, Marya, Ukraine's mother already become the means for bourgeois to complete their interest. It is the first entrance of females in manufacturing works and their husband and sons enter in the second step. That's way, it is the main involvement of female in capitalist market, only after that males enter in to production as a work force, so there is no necessity to Pelageya and



other women it enters in to productive work force since all women are already in it. In this way, women keep the cog of machine running. But the very work force remains subsequently in upper status and woman in the lower; the chain of domination begins from that hierarchy because it is embedded with capitalism and patriarchal society grants to female is underestimation and undervaluation

This assumption of patriarchal society is that females have no courage and skill, which is challenged by Sofya, Pelageya Nilovna, Natasha, Marya and Ukraine's foster mother. Patriarchal society takes female as inferior and weak but Natasha step forward against this oppression and declares for social and political changes. Then, she revolts from home and accompanies to Pavel. Despite being a female she is not afraid to do anything and to walk a long distance at night lonely. The extracted line, "Natasha arrived Saturday night, cold and tired, but always fresh and lively in exhaustible good spirits look! She is a girl and walks four mile every night "you have left your own family and everything" (30). These lines depict the fact that Natasha is the person of strong personality with simple living and pure thought who revolts against social injustice and takes part in revolution like any courageous male revolutionary. Yet she walks at night without any fear for the revolutionary act despite her is a daughter of a rich man. It proves that she is an exceptional female in that society.

Pelageya Nilovna, the most important and capable figure to do man's work and move in accordance with the demand of time. She is a capable woman to endure the agony and alienation patiently that is caused by capitalism. After the death of Agore despite the probability of police intervention she arranges the funeral of Agore Ivanovich. The given lines mention the fact:

The whole of the day the mother was busy with the preparations for funeral and the next morning a number of men and women stood at the

gate of the hospital waiting for the coffin of their comrade to be carried out to the street spies circled about, their ears alert to catch each sound noticing faces manner words. A group of policemen with revolver at their belts looked on. (248-51)

The work which mother determines to complete is not out of risk and she completes this work at any cost.

But the representative of capitalist and the patriarchal society, especially the policemen, not only intervene but also behave her inhumanly and immorally. They keep continuing to exhibit their intellectually, as “it is your own fault, little mother, that you weren’t not able to inspire your son with reverence for god and the Tsar she was ordered to search Vlasov. Well, what can be done? You have to submit, Pelageya Nilovna” (182- 83). This quota proves that daily routine of policemen is to search the female body, to harass them psychologically and physically as well as to teach lesson about the so called God, Tsar, and the leader of feudalistic patriarchal society. Moreover, they exhibit their bravery in this way as described in following lines:

She received a blow on the staggering and fell on the bench. A large policeman caught collar with his red hand and shook her; the spy struck her face with a short swing of his hand. The salty taste of blood filled her mouth. She was pushed in the neck and the back, beaten about shoulder on head. Her legs bent, her body trembled, burned with pain grew heavy and stagger powerless. (382-84)

This proves that Pelageya performs every work courageously, which are essential for gender equality, are not properly evaluated or judged in patriarchal society but she is

treated like an animal which is ready to be butchered in slaughter house. Such behavior is shown by the guards of patriarchal society's leader.

In course of running family, caring children Ukraine's foster-mother does the same work what a male does. She dares to care the other's child and adopt Ukraine as her son. Indeed, to be a self dependent she becomes a washer-woman. These extracted lines mention, "She was a washer woman and he was a shoemaker, it was alter she had taken me as her son that she found him somewhere a drunkard and married him to her great misfortune. He beat her – I tell you may skin almost burst with terror" (20). These lines deliver the fact that she attempts to preserve one's life by adopting him as a son and takes a profession of washer woman for earning bread and butter. Such act is done by civilized person in a civilized society. Liudmila, another woman who also struggles for the sake of females and marginalized groups like a brave male: tells her past about staying with Yegor in exile, "We were in exile together, we went together at time it was intolerable, disguising and very hard" (246). Liudmilla is not also untouched with the experience of exile, struggle, hard labor which she has faced during the struggle for the sake of women and worker's freedom. As mentioned in these above lines she has no less grief and experience in comparison to male revolutionary. Mother's participation in cultural and social field, Ukraine's foster mother's effort to be financially independent and Natasha's role in social as well as political field proves that female are able to do men's work which are prerequisite for gender equality.

Because of vast gap between worker and factory owner and the controls of mean of production by workers are obliged rely upon the factory owners. In the beginning, Maxim Gorky describes, "In the chill morning twilight they walked through the narrow, unpaved street to the tall stone cage that waited for them cold

assurance in the evening the factory ejected it's people like burned-out ashes and again walked through the streets with black smoke covered face" (1). The extract clarifies the workers' dependency upon the factories and the next statement further describes that "The whole mills grow, and people die work for them factory occupied but two buildings; now there are seven of them" (13). These lines further clarify the inequality between the people where some lives in minor huts and some posses the seven buildings. From the labor of workers the number of building and factories are increasing.

This description clarifies the worker's dependency upon rich and the increasing inequality between them. Moreover, political confusion and alienation are next factors resulted by capitalism. Natasha, Ukraine, mother of Pavel and Sofya are the persons devoted to socialism but many of the workers are unaware about their mission. Neither they have taken advantage from capitalism nor are they able to comprehend the negative impact of capitalism even they are not clear about socialism as well as the mission of Pavel, Pelageya, Sofaya etc. When Pavel is arrested and mother lives pathetic life. Isay Gorbov speaks through his teeth, "If I were the governor I would have your son hanged! Let him not mislead the people" (17). Isay Gorbov is the symbol of those who are unaware about socialist revolution and wants to flatter capitalist even if he is a worker. When Pavel is arrested in May Demonstration mother persuades other and urges them in these words, "Listen for the sake of Christ for the sake of your young ones they have devoted themselves to the sacred cause. They want another life, the life of truth and justice, please follow them" (179). It means that there is a political confusion among people which has been existing since long and the mother is attempting to remove the confusion and clarifying the mission of her son and his comrades.

Even Pavel states at the court, “We are socialist enemies to private property which separates people, arm them against one another and brings forth an irreconcilable hostility” (347). This makes clear who the working people are. But the government pursues despotic regime, even capitalists desire to exploit people and against this trend socialist Party is in underground movement. There is no clear political solution that’s why neither the workers seem to support socialist till Pavel’s exile nor are the workers in favor of Pavel. Another consequence of capitalism is alienation, which is caused by extreme exploitation. Due to extreme exploitation and exhaustion Mikhail is always gloomy and never behaves in good manner with his son and wife during his illness. Instead of asking to treatment with his wife he says, “Go to the devil! I will die myself you louse don’t dare! It will be worse for you if, I get well” (6). It proves that there is alienation within his family, that’s why he does not want the help of others.

After the death of her husband, when Pavel is arrested in May Demonstration due to revolt against “Swamp Kopek” Pelageya is again alienated. This line describes her alienation, “when the police led Pavel away the mother sat down on the bench began to weep quietly bound up in grief and injured sense of her impotence, she cried long gently and monotonously, pouring out all the pain of her wounded heart in sobs” (70). After the arrest of her son she begins to weep quietly, to bind up in grief and to cry in monotonous way. This is the result of alienation. Even Sizov is the worker who lost his son after being crushed in the factory and now he is alienated after his nephew is arrested by the police. The line further proves the facts, “Today they’ve arrested my nephew, a pure and intelligent boy” (180). Natasha is not also exception from this problem. Even Sofya who rebels against the atrocity of capitalism and consequently, she is obliged to be alienated from her family in spite of getting love of her father .

She expresses, “that was which I was in exile from lack of anything to do. Then I quarreled with my husband” (205). She tells about her bitter past with mother when she is alienated from her father, after her husband’s arrest and death. Capitalism has badly affected female to great extent.

Once, Yegor tells about couple of his friend in these words, “Now it’s the wife’s turn to go to Siberia, to be a revolutionary and to be married is very inconvenient arrangement, inconvenient for the husband, inconvenient for the wife and at the end for the cause also!” (84). It proves that alienation has left nobody untouched whether they are mother or son, husband and wife or the dear comrades, Pelageya Nilovna faces the last unforgettable alienation. When Pavel is exiled in Siberia mother is cruelly treated by the police. Moreover, the death of Yegor is the permanent alienation from his comrades. Marxist feminists argue that socialist movement is the only viable option to eradicate such critical phase of alienation.

As opined by Julia Michelle only the political and ideological struggle against capitalism is an option for females’ liberation. The political and ideological struggle here is socialist versus capitalism in which socialist ideology is led by Natasha, Pavel, Mother, Ukraine, Sofya etc. and capitalism is led by Tsar Nicholas. Here, Natasha introduces her and her comrades who they are? The lines she speaks, “We are socialist” (32) and the mother ask with Pavel “Pavlusha are you a socialist?” “Yes”, he said (32). It clarifies that that they are. After her announcement, the trend of helping other begins and party’s activities are intensified. Pelageya Nilovna cannot remain without helping their mission since she sees the liberation for all. Once she says, “Why should I like idle when my gives up his life for the sake of truth. I understand what you are striving for. I see a burden you all carry on your shoulder. Take me to you for the sake of Christ that I may be able to help my son! Take me to

you!” (189). These lines portray the desire of mother that how she is interested and devoted to her son’s mission.

Later on, she begins to carry bundle of paper to distribute to the workers. The given lines prove that, “she considered it her duty to carry the pamphlets regularly to the factory indeed; she elaborated a number of devices for escaping detection” (120). In course of spreading the political consciousness, she urges other to accompany her son when he is arrested. She says, “They went just for the purpose of showing you all the path of truth. To take all on that path, I pity your selves, I love them, and I understand the children’s heart. Believe your son’s heart, “They have brought for the truth” (179). Obviously, it is the exact expression what her son and his comrades are intending and is also the mother’s attempt to make other people cautious about their mission. Pelageya Nilovna distribution of literature, in fact became the mother’s occupation. Several times a month, “dressed as a nun or as a peddler of laces or small linen articles, as a rich merchant’s wife or a religious pilgrim,” (232). It justifies that Pelageya is devoted towards the political and ideological struggle against capitalistic system and her daily routine is to distributing the pamphlet and literature at any cost either in disguise of pilgrim or in merchant’s wife. Only her mission is to empower the ideological and political struggle and to overthrow the patriarchal norms and values, capitalistic exploitation and the despotic Tsar regime. Sofya is another female character who launches the political struggle against the exiting patriarchal and Capitalistic system, takes part in political struggle many times with different ideas. Which Gorky describes in this manner: “She had to live under changed name use counterfeit documents herself in various costumes to hide from spies, carry hundreds of pounds of illegal books through various cities arranges escape for comrades in exile and escort them abroad” (207). This description apparently presents how clever Sofya

is and how she conducts the underground movement by disguising herself in various forms, carrying illegal books and pamphlets and helping her comrades to exile from Siberia.

It is her significant role and contribution to success and forwards the political struggle for the liberation of female. Once she says with her comrade that, “We’ll arrange and escape for Pavel Mikhaylovich. There is nothing for him to do in Siberia and he is indispensable here” (195). It further proves that what important role Sofya does for the political mission. Because of female character’s crucial and active role in movement they are accompanied by the males who request them to involve in the movement in this way, “Give me some hard work to do, comrades I can’t live this life any longer. It’s so senseless, so useless you are all working in the movement and I see that it is growing I am outside of it all” (145). It is evident that not only female but also other males are eager to take part in this revolution since Nikolay ask for his place and role in movement.

Even the mother is playing such vital role by distributing the papers once she says, “Yesterday they tied the political prisoners; my son was one of them Vlasov he made a speech. Here it is I’m carrying to the people in order that they should read think about truth” (379). This extract clarifies that, till her final phase, mother is devoted to spread the truth; she is carrying the printed paper containing the truth to deliver it to public who are unaware about political and ideological struggle for their sake. After sometime, she is arrested and cruelly beaten by the policeman. Though, she speaks the last and most important truth, “You will not drown the truth in the seas of blood” (384). All these extracts from the text clearly depict the facts that all female characters have waged ideological struggle in various form and they have forwarded their ideology with the distribution of papers and illegal books.



Indeed, Sofya and the mother have immortalized this struggle by preparing escape to their comrades and spreading truth. The next instance of ideological struggle is that once Natasha says, “We are socialist and mother’s question, Pavlsha is you socialist? Yes he said standing before her” (32). Here, Natasha’s statement and Pavel’s response make clear that they are the different ideological personalities fighting against alienation, exploitation, unhealthy social relation, discrimination and inequality caused by Capitalism. They have devoted their whole life in favor of this socialist revolution. What Pavel, mother and Ukraine are fighting for is made clear at these words:

We are socialist that means we are enemies to private property which separate people, arms them against one another and brings forth an irreconcilable hostility of interest corrupt all with false head hypocrisy and malice. We maintain that a society that regards man only as tool for its enrichment it is hostile to us; it’s cruel relation to individual is repugnant to us. (347)

Apparently, these lines mention that their ideology is concerned against that policy which separates people, creates conflict between people, prioritize enslavement and private property and corrupts all with falsehood and hypocrisy. Moreover, Pavel says, “We are people devoid of the right to fight our dignity down with private property! You see we are not rebels we are rebels we are revolutionist and will be such as long as private property exists” (348). Obviously, Pavel presents himself as a revolutionary and the representative of the exploited worker and marginalized women who are devoid of their rights.

Further, he says that he is rebellion of private property since it prioritizes exploitation, oppression and creates the gulf between people for profit. Samoylov,

friend of Pavel, further adds his opinion against Capitalistic ideology and speaks, “You deprave women and girls, you breed spies, you put them in the position which forces them to thievery and murder, and you corrupt whiskey-international butchery, universal falsehood depravity and savagery that are your civilization. Yes, we are enemies of this civilization” (352). Samoylov’s expression again proves that their ideology is against the capitalist culture, which causes depravity of women and girls, breed spies, even emphasizes upon thievery, murder, corruption, international butchery and savagery. It further elucidates that Pavel and his friends are against such savages ideology.

Because of their revolution and struggle against such civilization Pavel is exiled in Siberia by the despotic Tsar government when a man asks with Sizov;

“What was the sentence?

“Exile”

“All”

“Thank you.” (358)

After the verdict of the court not only Pavel but his comrades are exiled in Siberia. Natasha, Shasha, Sofya and Mother continue to distribute papers for the socialist revolution, and to make people conscious about the going on movement against capitalism and Tsar Government.

Pavel is regarded by many people and he is honored after listening of his name. The sentence expressed by somebody in the crowd mentions that, “People! This is the mother Pavel Vlasov! Somebody shouted and presently all became your son will be an example of manhood for all of us! Long live the proletariat!” (358). As viewed by Marx, the female characters like Natasha, Sofya, the mother has practiced the revolutionary act directly or indirectly in different ways. In course of spreading truth, and consciousness, they have followed all possible ways and have applied the original Marxist theory of class struggle. In practice, mother Sofya, Natasha, Shashenka, Rybin, Pavel etc. have proved

that both theory, it means illegal books, pamphlets and papers have important role from theoretical perspective.

From another point of view, the practice which they do differently in different place till Pavel's exile and mother's arrest are the process of revolutionary act and prerequisite for spreading political consciousness. Despite political confusion among people, later on, they are politically aware due to incessant distribution of pamphlet, paper and Pavel's speech. The mother and other female character's accompaniment in socialist mission has brought a real revolution in Russia. About revolution Suryamani Adhikari describes in his book:

During March 1917, strike and demonstration intensified. Proletarians, peasants and women came on the road in starved and naked condition then delivered the slogan demanding "Bread, land and cease the war." Even troops disobeyed the command of government to fire at the revolutionaries. The royal family of Tsar Nicholas II was imprisoned after being obliged to be dethroned. During transition the government runs by Kerensky, the leader of socialist Menshevik party was overthrown due to revolt led by V.I. Lenin and Lenin established communist regime. Even it is said that Tsar Nicholas, the queen, a son and their four daughters were executed in 1918 and the despotic kingship was ended forever by October revolution. My translation. (178)

Socialism which is followed by mother, Pavel, Ukraine, Natasha, Sofya is related to post-modernism and the modernism is related to capitalism. Socialism attacks on the whole idea of certainty and capitalistic myopic vision. In other words, capitalism is challenged by the pluralistic approaches of socialism likewise the characters of this novel have seen struggle from multiple perspective like political, religious, cultural, economic, social, etc.

The Tsar government and capitalistic system want to regard domination and authority upon workers as certain truth but the very truth is challenged by Pavel, Ukraine, mother etc. Capitalism wants to dominate and confine female within house but socialism seeks to provide freedom to women. Economically, women are dependent upon husband or upon son in capitalism but socialism intend to make them self-dependent through work obligatory to all. Politically, it regards only existing of Tsar Regime as ultimate system but socialism challenges it with socialist system containing inclusiveness, equality and freedom. A female character's statement, "They will not fold their hands until the people are welded in to one soul until they will say in voice: I am the ruler and I myself will make the laws equal for all" (293). It proves that socialism is in favor of equality, freedom, and inclusiveness. These points have already been mentioned in detail. But the remaining part is religious and cultural aspect.

The capitalist and the feudalist present religion and make it in their own favor in a wrong way. But socialism wants to see the god in real form in which Christ had lived as Pavel says: "The priest threaten us as with a stick, about God in whose name they want to force all of us to the evil will of few" we must have change to our God, they have dressed him up in the falsehood and calumny; they have distorted his face in order to destroy our souls!" (56). Pavel's views defend the capitalistic and feudalistic notion of god and herald it to change as the real truth in favor of all human. Moreover, when representative of socialism, the mother speaks about the cause of Pavel's arrest, then the eyewitness regard her word as real words of God's word good people! Listen to her!" (180). The capitalist and the feudalist regard the Bible as word of god, exploitation and oppression as religion and the gift of god to all human beings.

Besides this, socialism seeks the Christ in exact form which he lived in his life. Once when mother meets a church she sees Christ being decorated with expensive cloth and ornament, which were offered by capitalist and the feudalist. These lines mention

that, “In cities stood churches filled with gold, silver not needed by God at the entrance to the churches shivered the beggars vainly awaiting little copper coins to be thrust their hand he was a friend of the poor that he dressed simply” (23). Socialism views the religion and God from different angles, so to say, in real form. Capitalist and feudalist have been presenting God in a total different form from Christ’s life. Christ had lived poorly and dressed simply on the contrary this false presentation of God and the evil way to cheat common people is challenged by socialism.

Capitalism seeks to get only profit and human beings are not treated as human but as a machine. But socialism aims to end this trend of capitalism and attempts to look human being as the prime factor, “We are the people devoid of the rights for our human dignity” (348). And the next lines, “who cares for us? Who wishes us good? Who regard us as human beings? No One! ” (64). It depicts the reality that capitalism has no sense of humanity but socialism intends such ends as Pavel speaks at court, “We maintain that a society that regards man only as tool for its enrichment is anti-human. It is hostile to us we can’t reconciled to its morality. We want to fight and will fight every form of physical and moral enslavement by such a society” (348). Capitalism looks everything from economical stand point for the profit only. This profit seeking tendency causes exploitation and alienation which has been mentioned above.

On the contrary, socialism unites the world into one huge world. This line proves that, “Socialism will write the world rent asunder by you into one huge world. And this will be” (348). Therefore, it clarifies that everything in capitalism is looked from economic perspective, whatever is done, is only for the material profit and it causes many things bad. But socialism sees everything with multiple perspectives but not only from financial view point.

## CHAPTER IV

### Conclusion

Gorky's attempt is concerned with deep exploration of feminist issues, and it has been explored in terms of class differences rather than from the perspective of gender inequality. Whatever problems the female characters are facing the consequences of capitalism, despotic monarchy and patriarchal norms and values. All these aspects are interwoven with each other, that is why females have been victimized like a worker in factory and like a slave in his master's house. Marxist feminists see politics as determining factor and like a slave in his master's house. They advocate for females participation in anti-capitalist movement and forward the vision of socialism through political ideological and class struggle.

To equalize male and female they emphasize strongly on female's skill for the performance of every act that is done by their male counterparts. They raise the point that females ought to begin anti-capitalist movement from the home and should advance themselves politically and ideologically against existing system. It takes part in class struggle until the establishment of socialism is permanent solution to all these inequality, discrimination and in justice.

In *Mother*, Pelageya Nilovna, an illiterate woman, dominated by and afraid of her husband, is confined only within four walls of house and same is the condition of her son Pavel. But his mother's pathetic condition of past gets his eyes opened. His contact with comrades in city and the study of forbidden books compels him to comprehend the root cause of people's suffering, and persuade his mother about the truth. Marx views that matter gives birth to consciousness. In the context of the mother, the control of means of production and creation of surplus value by capitalist

system, despotic Tsar Regime, and patriarchal domination and oppression oblige female to advance for justice, liberty and equality, and the very compulsion has given birth to political consciousness.

Of course, females' biological roles in creating workforce for capitalism, their attempt to be financially independence, their service to husband, their nurturing of children are not evaluated properly. Even the suppression of their truth, freedom and liberty seeking tendency as well as the bourgeois' effort to exploit worker through "Swamp Kopek Plan" arrest of Pavel and Ukraine without any evidence, inhuman treatment upon Agore, hypocrite and showy presentation of Christ in church in the name of God compel them to move forward for the right, liberty and justice. Consequently, in *Mother Pelageya Nilovna*, Sofiya, Natasha, Pavel and Ukraine wage political and ideological war against the capitalistic, patriarchal injustice and help their exiled comrade to escape from Siberia and they also distribute Pamphlets, forbidden books and papers for political awareness. At last, the public knows the truth due to invaluable contribution of Pelageya, Nilovna, Sofya, Natasha, Shasenka and their accompaniment to male revolutionary characters. As a result, a real revolution took place in Russia which was for the sake of have-nots and females.

The novel, however, has not shown the possibility of the worst case scenario if socialism would be successfully. It seemed to be just an attempt to explain socialism and what the revolutionist are fighting for. The author is indeed successful with his objectives, especially placing a "heart" to the ideology which seems to be (and really is) harsh.

In general, the author has vividly captured the emotions and conditions of the pre-revolutionary Russia. The novel is indeed an aesthetically written work which work is a perfect example of a "socialist realism." Though the novel lacks some of the

Russian formalist elements, it has made its own name for its own depiction of captured situations and emotions of the socialist movement. In addition, Marxim should not be the only approach used in reading the text. One should always remember that the hero is a woman, and the novel is entitled "*Mother*." A better understanding of the Marxism-feminism would be of great help in future studies of this novel.



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