

## I. Exploration of Female Agency in Bantwal's Novel

Shobhan Bantwal's novel *The Sari Shop Widow* (2012) explores female agency as a form of resistance by applying the tool of postcolonial feminist theory. This research deals with the female writer, Bantwal who has created an ultra revolutionary character, Anjali Kapadia to bring forward the new feminist stand by defying the stereotypical patriarchal norms set in the society. She directly fantasizes sexual taboos, free drinks without any hesitation and controls her family business perfectly, in order to expose and liberate South Asian women, and gives them back female agencies by confiscating from the males' patriarchal hegemony. Bantwal creates a promising heroine, 37 year old Anjali, widowed after two years of her marriage who acquires master degree but is still obsessed with love and sex in her widowhood.

Anjali also challenges the male dominated Indian society but also the whole patriarchal chauvinism, being a successful businesswoman in foreign land, New Jersey in America. She challenges different obstacles faced by second generation Indian-Americans as they straddle two diverse cultures. In the conservative, old fashioned, orthodox and male chauvinistic Gujarati society, men have no idea how to love or how to give pleasure and satisfaction to women where women are taken as child producing machine. This research claims that the female character presented in the novel are equally important and influential as male and the norms and standard laid by patriarchal society are challenged by her actions.

In conservative Gujarati culture love, free sex and free drinks and other pleasures are restricted for female. Anjali argues that she was born in conservative culture and says, "I grew up in a rough neighborhood; my thinking's wrap" (33). This culture does not allow women to live free life. They are always under the dictation of

men folks. This is the stereotypical Gujarati culture that causes female position low and subordinate in the Indian community, ritual, culture, religion. Women's life is repressed, sorrowful and miserable, since they are forced to live in veil. Highlighting this subordinated position Frederick Hartt writes "A women tied to domesticity and constant pregnancy should scholarly participate in any other vary arduous physical activities" (16). Men and women marry for procreation but men do not care about the working of female bodies. As a result women consider sex as burden. Therefore, *The Sari Shop Widow's* main purpose is to open the conservative mind of the Indian people and to unfold the desires, feelings and passions of the women. Bantwal also wants to break down the tradition of conservative Gujarati culture and challenge the society by freely exploring carnal pleasure, free drinks and uplifting economic status in foreign land, America, through her main widow character, Anjali Kapadia.

By showing widow character Anjali, Bantwal wants to evoke mourning on the culturally set patterned rules of behavior for coping with death which is also socio-cultural tradition. There is no need to mourn for the death of their husbands; women can search another life partner in their life for their own choice and happiness. If one passes away, the life does not stop for the women. More than that sex is a biological need. If one's sex partner demises there should be fulfillment instead of one. Prescribed mourning was different for women and men in conservative Gujarati Indian society where Harikishan marries three times which was culturally accepted because of the male oriented society. But in the case of Anjali Kapadia there is the boundary which is created by social norms and values which restricted her to marry and have a free life of her own choice. Though there are rules and restriction which she is compelled to obey, she challenges the society by having physical relation and making love with her wish and enjoys free drinks.

There are different religions and myths in this cosmos, various religions have taken females as inferior status and regarded them to become secondary citizens. This is true to Hindu religion which defames widow women and limits their freedom and choice. Men and women are equal in the sight of God. Bantwal wants to reiterate it and discards the well made male Gujarati norms to confine her in the domain of males. She evokes sex and loves which are universal matters. It is not religion rather patriarchal society which is the real hindrance behind it. Religion alone cannot be blamed for assigning inferior position to females. However, religion is the byproduct of patriarchy and unless and until these social norms and values change women will continue to suffer in society from a situation where religion and patriarchal society are in alliance. Males and females are equal in the eyes of God or creator, stressing natural conception; it is true that God it is who did create you from a single soul and there from did create his mate that he might dwell with her in love. In Muslim society, there is a common belief that girls have to mind their home and hence, there is no need for them to go to school. They also check the virginity of girls before marriage but it does not apply in the case of boys.

Likewise, in Hindu mythology, a girl is supervised by her father while unmarried, by her husband after marriage. Girls are in the control of their father and husband like horse's helter which always remains in the hand of their owners. Females are not getting their own wishes and desires, and they are not allowed to make their own decisions to live the life they want. They have to depend on family's decisions. Women are not getting freedom, equality and liberty. But they are mentally tortured, bitten mercilessly and some time burned alive or murdered in the name of witch or for the lack and inadequacy of dowry.

Men and women are two wheels of a same cart. If one wheel does not function the cart cannot run properly. Thomas Jefferson evokes in his essay, “The Declaration of Independence” that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness” (20). This line by Thomas shows that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God or creator. So there is no any kind of superiority and inferiority between males and females where everyone needs equality. Likewise, Plato’s parable also evokes that males and females were attached together each other before separation. From Plato’s parable we also know that males and females are the two sides of the same coin; the patriarchy should not be taken women as inferior status and regarded them to a secondary position. In old fashioned and orthodox Gujarati culture women are flirting by patriarchal society. Kip, Jeevan, Rishi are the representative of it who are guided by patriarchal ideologies. Kapadia is a childless widow who is brutally flirting by different boyfriends. “Jeevan bhai did not tolerate married women in the family wearing anything but traditional grab” (22). This line shows the conservative thinking of male gaze in Asian misogynistic society. In the hand of patriarchal society females are becoming puppet and having no respect.

Gender equality is the highly discussed subject matter of modern society which is only limited in theory but not in practical life. Gender identity of women always used to present as monolithic and homogenous by social terrorists and mainstream feminists. This research reinforces Gujarati women are found as the subject of religion discourse and traditional subject matter. They have been in the verge of isolation in society and they need to challenge ideologies which compel to construct and manufacture the identities. The establishment of Gujarati women’s existence has been located within the particular socio-political, economic and

historical context in which they remain. In the name of Gujarati norms, values, rituals, traditions, females have to encounter so many obstacles.

In Gujarati culture, widow marriage is not allowed but it does not apply in case of widower. It also does not matter what the age is but he always searches to marry virgin and young girl. Though, there is gender equality and both men and women have equal role for child bearing but society always blames woman and punishes her brutally even if male is sterile. All norms, values and traditions are mainly imposed for women and men are superior in society they are beyond such rituals and values. This case is applied here in the case of Anjali.

Presentation of the voice of minorities by applying the feminist perspective is one of the bases of this research. Males treat women as inferior submissive, minor, secondary being as well as household labor. Here, despite of all the boundaries of patriarchy, women try to come out in equal line with male, they attempt to live free life and being happiness in their life by taking social and economic space in society.

Female have been dominated, marginalized, subordinated by social structure. The society in novel is class conflict between male and female, rich and poor, powerless and powerful etc. where males are always superior and female has inferior position. In the society of Gujarat males enjoy all kinds of privilege of society but females are always confined with domesticity but in this novel woman are revolutionary and they are fully conscious about domination and deprivation. This novel wants to show the independency of female and free insight as male, they raise the voice against the suppression is the insight of this research.

In need to deal with their subversive ethos, the present research relies in postcolonial feminist which is a social theory and political movement primarily in formed and fuelled by the experience of women. It can be understood as a doctrine

which advocates equal right and dignity for women in regards to men. Third world feminism pursues the political agendas, inserted by the cracks and fissures of post colonial nationhood and internationalized feminism. The ground of struggle is varied working condition and economic self-determination, family and ideology, ethnic conflict and pluralism, sexuality and subversion, and production of academic knowledge, religion and secularism, human right and supra-liberalism.

Why women have been consigned to a subservient status in relation to men is the main concerns of feminism. It shows the social system controlled and constructed by men as the cause behind women's subordination. It also revolves around the question with how women's lives have changed throughout the history. The major focus is how the experiences of females are different from males. The systems and rituals of patriarchal society to the extent that they make unfair claims about the inferiority of women are called into question by this awakened economical and cultural movement. Though patriarchy constructed different ideologies, this research mainly concerned with women as equal with male, they cannot bear such bias patriarchal ideologies. So, they are fighting against patriarchy with bold determination to demolish the traditional norms which undermine the female sex.

Being head of the family males construct the patriarchal system in society where women are given subordinate status as worker whose production is exploited and appropriated by male. As the head of family, male financially manages of family while women stay at home and care for the children and house hold activities. If we research the history, women in patriarchal society, whatever their class and race have been assigned to the task of social reproduction like child bearing, child caring, housekeeping, food preparation of ill and dependent, emotional and sexual services and provided entertainment to their family. Patriarchy means the institutionalization

of male dominance over women and children and at same time it imposes male ideologies over women in the society. This research wants to show women are not submissive, secondary citizen and marginalized characters but they also fight against injustice, unequal treatment and subordination of patriarchal ideologies to construct their own identity, status and position.

Females, in patriarchal society under search evils norms and values are taken on the basis of their beauty, virginity and chastity. So they are compared to be passive, weak and submissive victim of society though they have strong sense of disgust and revolt against the rules and system of the chauvinist patriarchal society. Here in this novel, Anjali represents the all women of the patriarchy who are exploited, suppressed and downtrodden. But she also proves that women of this era are no more submissive and fragile; they are revolutionary and self-dependent. She has done active revolt against Gujarati cultures and society by blurring restricted rules and system in society made by patriarchy. She enforced all females to involve in struggle for the liberation of whole women which can only possible by challenging and blurring the systems and ideologies made by males to dominated females.

This research excavates the contemporary issue of women with romantic tone and highlights on the universality of sexuality. *The Sari Shop Widow* presents the burning subject matter of feminism in modern era where many revolutionary deeds are done to challenge the stereotypical images of patriarchal society. A feminist critic April has revolutionary thinking and in the book review she argues that “I’m not sure I liked the heroine, especially the fact that she slept with her bartender friend. She could have been portrayed as independent as and more liberal than her parents were without her having to have that meaningless sex” (2). This shows that the main female character Anjali Kapadia goes against the norms and values of eastern society by

choosing the freedom of outer world involving in business as equal to male and fantasizes sexual taboos without any hesitation being a widow and shows the pornographic highlights in order to liberate the south Asian women. This novel concerns with the recent issues of the world of immigration, globalization, hybrid life, quest for identity, and so on. This research makes a case for recognizing psychoanalysis, Socio-historical and gender overturn in *The Sari Shop Widow*, a resistance towards the male chauvinistic society.

The primary objective of the study is to dig out the contemporary feminist discourse with revolutionary women in *The Sari Shop Widow*. Through the critical analysis of Bantwal often centered on female characters Anjali Kapadia, Samanta and Usha Kapadia who have challenged the contemporary conservative male made society. This study aims to deconstruct the patriarchal norms and values which are in favor of male. Likewise, this research highlights the female character and proves that women are equal to male which is discarded by patriarchal society. The widow Anjali Kapadia challenges the society by involving in love, sex and free drinks which are not allowed in the South Asian patriarchal society.

Though the heroine of the novel *The Sari Shop Widow*, Anjali Kapadia is left alone by her life partner in the journey of life and her desires and passions are watered on the sand for she is doubly dominated physically and sexually. She has aggressive attitude against patriarchy which she wants to change. Her aggressive and revolutionary nature can be seen when she adopts western culture of having free drinks and free sex by changing her sex partners. The conservative Gujarati culture cannot allow such freedom and live colorful life to a widow as they should condemn remaining black and white world through their whole life.



This research not only assumes that women are submissive character who are limited within the domestic arena and give up their personal desires and passions for the sake of their family maintaining the social norms and values, but it also presumes that they can have the life of their own with freedom of physicality and sexuality by breaking the line of patriarchal society which always has given the inferior and lower status and has suffocated them. Anjali Kapadia does boldly challenges the patriarchal norms to maintain equality between two sexes and makes resistance where as sexuality as a force. It is through sexually motivated activities and economic independent, Anjali asserts her freedom, individuality and selfhood.

This study focuses on the female characters of the novel *The Sari Shop Widow* representing marginalized female voice of the contemporary society and understanding them from feministic approach where females are represented in their own respective perspectives and using female voice as core issue.

The novel *The Sari Shop Widow* has been interpreted and analyzed in various ways by different critics. Some critics have analyzed the novel from postmodernist point of views. Some other have interpreted its Marxist, socio-economic, cultural-hybridism, and so on. The present research applies the postcolonial feminist which method is not used by others. And some critics interpret the novel regarding its aesthetics and realistic portrayal of the modern society.

Shobhan Bantwal is a famous Indian American female novelist who focuses on the voices of Indian American people, their way of life, culture and history.

Bantwal in the introduction part of her book argues “Love and family are the most important thing and fate sometimes does second chances” (II). The central character of the novel *The Sari Shop Widow*, Anjali Kapadia is running a business in a highly competitive environment of American culture which is challenging task for a widow

woman of Indian society. There is a lot of realism portrayed in lives of the characters in Novel which represent the Indian American community. Likewise Yatin Gupta in his book review of *The Sari Shop Widow* says:

The book opens with a bad news. Silk and Sapphires owned by the protagonist of this book. Anjali Kapadia and her parents Mohan and Usha Kapadia were going to haywire because of financial problems. Anjali, at 37 is a widow and her life revolves around her boutique. She is an ace designer and sells all her design at her store in New Jersey.

(2)

These lines of Yatin Gupta argue the life of Anjali is full of storm and stress but she faced such obstacles by launching great effort.

A female critic, Karishma Attari in her book review *A Desi Cinderella in America* quotes the line of Bantwal and agues, “Anjali belonged to a conservative Gujarati family that would be shocked if it discovered what was going on. In fact despite all their Americanization they were living in 19<sup>th</sup> century Gujarat culture where something never changes” (2). These lines show that the Gujarati people are not living in the age of 21<sup>st</sup> century but still are backward who believe in the conservative norms and values which repress and dominate the women.

Postcolonial feminism is a challenging domain, which criticizes the dominating, coercive, and denigrating ethos of western feminism and post colonialism as well as third world male culture. Postcolonial feminism is a subset of feminism that developed as a response to the fact that feminism seemed to focus solely on the experiences of women in western cultures. Postcolonial feminism seeks to account for the way that racism and the long lasting political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism affect non-white, non-western women in the postcolonial world.

Postcolonial feminism originated as a critique of feminist theorists in developed countries. The critique points out the universalizing tendencies of mainstream feminist ideas and the way that women living in non-Western countries are misrepresented. Postcolonial feminism tries to explore female identity by opposing forms of exploitation propagated by male ideology and female submission to them.

Feminism is a strong reaction against the phallogocentric thinking of patriarchal society. It aims to dismantle the gender biased categorization of biological being. Biology determines our sex whereas culture determines our gender and categorizes as masculine and feminine. The society and culture are responsible to grant inferior position to females; it's not the biological difference to do so. So in the Foucault term feminism is a counter discourse as it tries to refute the patriarchal truths that women are inferior and it opposes the patriarchal formed power.

For postcolonial critic Uma Narayan, essentialist generalizations of the Western Feminist thinking proceeds with the Western feminist representations of the women in the Third World contests she valorizes individualistic exploration of self in this context by amalgamating the core Third World issues. She argues:

Ahistorical and apolitical Western feminist understandings of “Third World traditions” continue to appear, for instance, in more contemporary work on issues such sati and dowry-murder, and discussions relating to human rights-based interventions into “cultural practices” affecting Third World women. (43)

By this, she comments on western feminists on the ground of their colonialist stance with respect to their representations of Third World cultures, traditions, and problems. Her case study sati and dowry murder is a vicious history and unique experiences of the Third World countries.

Postcolonial feminist criticism comes in many forms and feminist critics have a variety of goals. Sara Suleri shows male domination and chauvinism in various forms of nationalism. She is a prominent postcolonial feminist theorist, observes the feminist discourse which is attached with the questions of identity formation. Though there is century long struggle for the recognition of women's culture roles and achievements for the women's social and political right as distinct and concrete approach to literature, feminist criticism was not inaugurated until 1960s, it came out in its full shape only in late 1960s.

In this way, the novel is considered to be her master piece, has elicited a host of criticism. A number of American and Indian critics have interpreted it from various perspectives. This novel analyzes through socio-economic structure, women liberation political practice. And no critic has attempted to analyze this novel from the subversive female agency perspective. So the present research seeks to analyze feministic point of view.

It is very challenging task to produce sexually explicit texts in orthodox Gujarati culture by revolting against patriarchal ideologies by upbringing in this culture. It should be limited either in the bedroom or the brothel, a girlie magazine or vulgar book. Traditionally sex is treated as one of the problems, or a biological fact or as a guilty secret so it is hard for women in misogynistic society to allow themselves the pleasure of sexual fantasies. The feminist agendas need to emphasis the need for sex education and attack sexism as representative of male power rather than attacking sexual material as representative of male sexuality. In order to challenge the dominant sexual ideology of society, feminists have to view the sexually explicit literature. Butler claims that even the binary of subject/object, which forms the basic assumption for feminist practices - "we, 'women,' must become subjects and not objects" - is a

hegemonic and artificial division. The notion of a subject, instead, is for her formed through repetition, through a "practice of signification" (144). By means of sexuality as the power, the main character Anjali Kapadia questions the narrow definition of female roles in literature from which reader can see many gender fuelled injustices and also the power hold by economic self dependent.

The present research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter explores the repressive upbringing of females and highlights the female agencies by including different views of postcolonial feminist writers and critics. This introductory outline of the work includes the Gujarati orthodox culture which gives a bird's eye view of this research. The second chapter discusses briefly about different feminist writers to talk about female position in society and this chapter further excavates the text at a considerable length in *The Sari Shop Widow*. It serves as the core part of this research. The final chapter is the conclusion of this research based on textual analysis in second chapter. It concludes the explanation and an argument put forward in the preceding chapters and shows Bantwal *The Sari Shop Widow* in which she reconstructs female identity through her protagonist, Anjali Kapadia by applying postcolonial feminist attitudes.

## II. Rise of South Asian New Women in Bantwal's Novel

Shobhan Bantwal's *The Sari Shop Widow* deconstructs the orthodoxies of Gujarati patriarchal culture and reconstructs it by recapturing the rights which were under seize in the Gujarati patriarchy. The novel projects the breakdown of the Anjali Kapadia's psychological and mental state amidst the fault line of colonialism and patriarchy supported by female as well as colonized person themselves. Anjali's father, uncle and her mother continuously force her to accept the economic support of Rishi in the novel. Anjali suffers from forceful economic investment of Rishi in her store, creates disturbances in her mind and she starts involving in free love, sex, drinks and finally becomes a successful businesswoman. In this context, the present research studies postcolonial women's suppression through native patriarchy which is supported by females themselves and which is also supported by colonized people thereby the exploration of Anjali's identity and individuality in relation to post colonialist women.

This research explores Anjali's life story with different men: Vikram, Rishi, Kip, Jeevan who contact with her life in different modes. Vikram, husband of Kapadia died of a brain aneurysm within two years of their marriage who was selected by herself. She has followed love marriage, which is not allowed in her society, with him rather arrange marriage. Second person is Kip who stands for a colonizer is an American bar tender. He works as a sex partner of Anjali chosen by her and fulfills her sexual desire with him in his own bar. She frequently meets him for having free drinks and sex. Rishi is a next person, who represent a colonizer and he says, "I was more British than Indian I've lived most of my life as a white man in England" (330). He is a successful businessman, who has shares in different countries like California, UK, USA, and India. He is her business as well as sex partner in her life from whom

she loves quenching her physical passion. Jeevan Kaka is the oldest brother of Kapadias family who is the business partner of Rishi and is highly conservative in thinking. He highly supports Rishi for his wealth and power. Usha, mother of Anjali, is a matron in her family and therefore decides everything by her own way. Jeevan and Mohan are agents and followers of male patriarchy as well as supporters of colonialism. Anjali creates her own status by revenging Asian patriarchal male gaze society as well colonizers. By taking their armors she attacks upon them too. Being a widow, she does not commit a suicide as she desires. Her actions such as free drinks, free sex and economic independent are her full freedom and exercise of self.

Ketu Ketrak, feminist prominent theorist, defines Third World Women's body in the essay named "Theorizing Politics of Female Body" where she evokes women's body has been colonized by patriarchy. Most of the women are dominated through language and their sexuality in patriarchy. By using the English language, colonizers impose racial superiority and linguistically and culturally alienated from native language and culture. Ketrak says, "The uses of English over indigenous languages, imposed by colonialism and how linguistic choices encode cultural belonging or alienation and second the female body and generated inequalities in patriarchal postcolonial society" (1). In the novel Anjali creates her own identity and individuality by blurring the rules and regulations, norms and values constructed by patriarchy as well by colonizers. She fights against the colonizers that have been represented by Rishi and Kip by using their English language and having drink, free sexual intercourse with them which makes her new woman in American society. By taking the setting of 2012 Bantwal, here, is inadvertently exposed to current situation of the rising counter culture, including feminism the novel presents the main

protagonist Anjali from marginalized group who becomes successful to be free and independent woman in foreign land, USA economically as well sexually.

Anjali becomes a widow after two years of her marriage and devoted to transform her parents' sari shop into chic boutique. The store has become the entire world for her. She has grown up in conservative Gujarati culture where there is restriction of love marriage, free drinks and free sex. She says, "I grew up in a rough neighborhood; my thinking warped, Kip squeezed her arm. I apologize" (33). She encloses her identity with her sex partner Kip Rowling who is owner of bar named Rowing Rok Bar and Lounge. She closed her store and went to meet him which shows her revolutionary nature in the conservative patriarchal society. "A few second later, he puts a tall glass of rum and cola in her hand. It was only thing she drank and he knew it well" (33). This line creates Anjali's own identity by following free drinks with Kip in his bar at night which is restricted by their society, it is challenging task for their patriarchal chauvinist society.

In the patriarchal society women are given the double identity, in one hand as a Goddess and an angel like figure and in other hand as a whore, prostitute if they become furious towards females. There is physical relation between Kip and Anjali. Kip declares:

Her feeling for him was based on lust and genuine friendly affection he was confirmed bachelor; way too independent for her to think about anything permanent with him. Besides, in her old fashioned and orthodox Gujarati family kip would stick out like Mount Everest planted admits gentle rolling hills. (35)

These lines show the superiority of males in the patriarchal society. Kip always focuses on beauty of the girls and physical passion. Men are always hungry to catch



the beauty of women and relax with them by their body. Narrator says, “His only criterion was beauty” (35). Male society always focus on beauty of girls, they love because of women’s beauty and charm.

Kapadia is second generation Indian-American widow raised in the conservative family, Gujarati society, has relation with Don Juan like Kip. Women always behave as objects of beauty in the society. Their eyes, lips, cheeks, hair, and complexion compare with different beautiful objects. Kip saw the figure of Anjali and starts to objectify her by saying “So are you an angel descended from heaven or am I dreaming? He’d asked, with a wicked glint of humor in his eyes. So, what’s your name, Pretty lady?” (35) For male, women are the subject of entertainment who should be ready to fulfill the desires and passion of males. In the responses of Kip to challenge him or patriarchal view, she says, “Why do you want to know? She’d challenged him, trying to put as much starch in to her voice as possible. She was not going to give her name or anything else to a flirtatious wolf with the most beautifully sculpted body and incredible smile” (35). She challenges Kips nature of insulting behavior upon the women. She has bold rejection and revolution towards the words of patriarch. Here we find that the male characters, who treat women in terms of the object of beauty, smile and gracefulness.

Men and women play equal role in the sexual acts but men do not care about the working of female body so that women take sex as a burden. They consider sex is only for male pleasure and entertainment. Women are created by males in patriarchal society, the story of women are created by males. If the women involve in new and important work in the society that is shadowed by males. “He’d pretended to clutch his heart and gasp, making her giggle. An-ja-li? As in An-gel-face? I knew it you

were an angel from heaven” (36). These lines show how women are treated by males in this society.

Anjali is very much laborious, hard working business woman so; she is able to conduct her life as well family. She wants to progress in her life for that she gives full time to the business. Narrator says, “She was sensible business woman raised in an orthodox Hindu household and yet, here she was having sex with a Casanova. It was almost as if she was seeking out of cheap thrill from something forbidden, just to brighten up her life” (37). Though she is from conservative Gujarati culture where free drinks, love, sex are highly restricted to the females she involves in such restricted activities. Patriarchy thinks women are created by and for males. She challenges the society by performing forbidden task.

Different writers and critics have explored the idea of a *desi* identity and Indian values in a foreign land. Feminist critic Karishna Attari in her book review writes:

Second generation Americans of Indian ethnicity have earned a catchy acronym ABCD, or American Born Confused Desi. This kind of confusion or dual assimilation is an attractive facet of Anjali’s character. She wakes for a ritual puja but doesn’t balk at visiting a pub late at night and hanging out with a ladies’ man. Bantwal explains, “She belongs to a conservative Gujarati family that would be shock if it discovered what going on. In fact, despite all their Americanization, they could very well be living in 19<sup>th</sup> century Gujarat. Some things never change.” Anjali keeps up appearances make up stories about meeting girlfriends and manage to satisfy her needs for companions’ hip on the sly.(2)

According to Karisma Attari, Anjali is remaining in conservative society where is full of patriarchal dogmas. Anjali, the protagonist of the novel, spends her life through the pleasure of sexual experience and free drinks. She is contemporary young woman as well as consumerist way of life. She is a revolutionist character who is indulging in both the physical and spiritual life.

In third world postcolonial society women have become scapegoats of gender inequalities both in the indigenous and colonial culture. For Indian nationalism Gandhi resistance against British colonial rule females have equal participation. Sara Suleri says, “Both men and women were encouraged to adopt a passivity exclusively associated with feminist although only for the purposes of breaking colonial authority not patriarchal authority” (179).

Sara Suleri shows male domination and chauvinism in various forms of nationalism. She is a prominent postcolonial feminist theorist, observes the feminist discourse which is attached with the questions of identity formation.

I would claim that while current feminist discourse remains vexed by questions of identity formation and the concomitant debates between essentialism and constructivism, or distinctions between situated and universal knowledge, it is still prepared to grant an uneasy selfhood to a voice that is best described as the poverty of postcolonial woman.

(57)

Sara Suleri realizes that reality is Eurocentric and patriarchal, which cannot disclose disparate cultural and ethnic realities by western feminist.

In patriarchal society, if women do any new and creative work that is shadowed by males. Women are always taken inferior, meek, fragile, naive, kindhearted person in the male gaze societies who are unaware about the pains,

pathos, pangs, sorrows and feelings of the women. Anjali wants to challenge the society by taking bold determination and rejection of those norms and values which are for the domination of males in the patriarchal society. In this or that way women are always push back towards dark sides. To challenge the patriarchal society Anjali evokes; “Face it Anjali, She told herself. You are different from other Indian women. You are free spirited and your sex drive is a tad to active. Learn to live with it.” (38) She wants to challenge that society, which tells sex is the secret subject matter, it only limited between husband and wife. Widows never allowed having sex with other but she easily and frankly quenches her physical passion with Kip in his bar. In male chauvinistic society women are confined in domestic arena, have endowed domestic activities and are compelled to do such burdensome activities unwillingly. Usha, mother of Anjali, is such type of character who is limited in domestic activities. “By early Monday morning, Usha had the house in perfect order. Every dust bunny and cobweb had been eradicated the carpets professionally, cleaned and the nice fluffy pillows, a brand new blanket and bed spread” (39).

Usha Kapadia is a housewife who is bounded on her house. Her actions are prescribed by patriarchy that she accomplish without complain being a docile lady. Narrator evokes:

He was her one and only outlet from the long hours of work and the strict, puritanical atmosphere of her home. Her parents would never understand something as basic as the carnal needs of a young woman. All they knew was how not to talk about sex and how to satisfy anything remotely sexual within the sanctity a nice connubial bed, concealed of course behind locked doors. But Anjali didn't have that luxury. Not anymore. She was not in love with Kip thank goodness. (35)

Anjali always wants to fulfill her physical passion with Kip which don't understand by her parents. They always want to put her daughter away from the free drinks and free sex. Narrator exposes that she is bold character and says, "And how had she a second generation Indian-American widow raised in a conservative family ended up with a Don Juan like Kip?"(35) She used to return in her home at midnight but used to tell her parent "She was going out with her parents?"(36)

She meets Kip, a boy friend as well as sex partner time and again. Narrator feels, "May be she'd call her boyfriend, Kip, and meet him later for a drink. He had helped her relax. For lack of better term, she thought of Kip as her boy friend. He was her friend for sure, her lover too, and a comfort to have at times which relation is not tight" (23). It was just friendship with some free drinks and sex thrown in when it was mutually convenient. The traditional Gujarati culture does not allow the love, sex, marriage after widows. They have to spend and sacrifice their whole life for their death husband's soul by remaining in white clothes and untouched with love and sex. Anjali is a new woman of the Gujarati society who is different than other women in society. "In fact, despite all their Americanization they could very well be living in nineteenth century Gujarat some things never changed" (254). Narrator says Indians have conservation ideal feeling which cannot omit easily.

Gujarati society is conservative in thinking, for instance the mother becomes suspect on the outgoing of Anjali and raises question to her, "You were out late last night. Mother is suspicious with daughter's late night. Her mum's assessing look lingered on her. You don't look all that well" (40). Anjali cheats her, "I went to meet my friends after a long time. She convinces herself that she was not hurting any more or doing anything wrong" (40). Both Kip and she are single; they are free to enjoy each other with no string attached. Narrator discloses that sex between responsible

adults is the norms in American culture. She wants completely new life but she cannot begin it because her husband's relics and memory of the past, time and again hangs around her. She wants to forget the past completely to create new life.

Females are sizzled within the backdrop of patriarchy. Being afraid of Jeevan Kaka, Usha wears traditional dress which shows women are compelled to follow traditional norms and values unwillingly. Women are compelled to performed activities according to the choice of males. Narrator says:

Usha was wearing a butter yellow sari with a daisy print. She had opted for the *mangalsutra* and old fashioned diamond cluster earrings today. It wouldn't do to wear any of the delicate, contemporary jewelry that she usually favored. Jeevan *Bhai* did not tolerate married women in family wearing anything but traditional garb. They were supposed to take pride in the Kapadia name and their Gujarati tradition. (42)

In Jeevan's mind traditional superstitions are deeply rooted in his mind in the postmodern mind also because he is guided by Gujarati patriarchal society. He thinks women should follow the traditional norms and values made by male gaze society to make women in passive and motionless situation. They never want to show women become dependent, intellectual modern, dandy, powerful, revolutionary.

Patriarchy always thinks women are traditional, powerless, meek, naive, inferior, and cow like animal that have to guide by others not themselves. The women have to cover their whole part of the body by full clothes. "Somewhat nervous herself, Anjali wore a sensible pastel blue *salwar-kameez* that covered most of her arms and legs. She become unusual because of the fear of uncle, it was in direct contrast to her usual form fitting clothes" (42). But Anjali is not such a character who passively accepts each and every dogmas of the society. To enforce Anjali narrator critiques,

“But that didn’t stop her from enjoying her slim, youthful figure and wearing clothes that suited her. She wears dandy and fashionable clothes as owner of a fashionable boutique” (42). Her cruel uncle is coming to house, is very much conservative in thinking; “his voice is robust and commanding” (43). These lines show that males voice is hoarse in sound which shows dominating nature of patriarchy upon females.

By talking about the society, he is referring to the patriarchal society where there is the prevalence of male culture. Males are discounted for his every vile behavior, where as women are not. Father, mother and children have their close relationship of blood and marriage but sometimes they are like criminal, demonic figure which made them by their chauvinistic manner-less patriarchal so-called society. Women are doubly marginalized, in one way by patriarchy and in another way by colonizers.

The behavior of uncle to their family is cruel like that of colonizers to the colonized person. Narrator argues, “It was her uncle all right. For a slimmed down man, however, his voice was still robust and commanding” (43). They have the ego of Indian conservative society of which is full of dogmas. “Anjali watched her mother flash her most cordial smile and bend down to touch Jeevan’s feet. She followed her mother’s example and did the same. It would be best if she played the passive woman for the moment at least” (43). Narrator evokes to show the society each and every have to followed traditions otherwise they will be harshly penalized. Here one question can be raised why women have to touch men’s feet not the women’s by men. By inferior voice Jeevan says, “I can find you a nice Gujarati man. Our town has some rich men who are looking for a pretty wife like you” (47). This line shows how males behave to the females in the society as meek creature and subject of beauty. Jeevan says to Anjali that you need a good husband. Finding a good husband is the

best case for everything. Jeevan Kaka always thinks Anjali as a dependent, fragile, weak, meek, passive creature. Anjali discards the superstitious ideas and thinking of patriarchy, “But I’m not ill. Widowhood is not a disease: Anjali tried to keep her voice even, but her distress was beginning to rise” (47). She rejects his concept by telling “I’d like to find my own man.” Jeevan teases her by saying “You have modern ideas” (48). Patriarchy questions each and every subject matter related to women. It raises questions on life style, fashion, behavior, clothes and so on. “Anju what kind of clothes are you wearing? He had asked. Why did you change from sulwar-kameez to pants?” (55) Jeevan shows his own patriarchal feelings towards Anjali. In response, she replies, “This is typical American attire, Jeevan Kaka”, she’d replied” (55). Anju is ace boutique designer and her designs are perfect, “All designed by our Anju, Rishi. She is very talented in these things you know. Her designs are quiet attractive Shah Says, “Everything here is quite impressive” (59). Anjali rejects the help of Rishi but she was forced by Jeevan and Mohan. Here, Jeevan and Mohan support Rishi’s help in the life of Anju. She is bold in her idea; she rejects their idea of changing the name of store which shows her identity. She wants to apply her own views, opinion and ideas, cognition on her business. “How can you do this? You and Jeevan Kaka charge in here a pair of bulls, criticize everything, and then plan to turn our beautiful and elegant boutique listed a cheap mockery of, of ...” (62). She rejects their ideas of changing store and wants to apply her own idea. Narrator praises the idea of Anjali and says, “She was sarcastically referring to the practice of announcing spontaneous sales by popular discount department stores to get rid of excess inventory. Anjali has the creative mind and the visionary behind the business” (66). Jeevan Kaka accepts that, she is highly intellectual person she has taken great change in their boutique in such competitive market of New Jersey.



Usha is also revolutionary character, rejects the norms and values constructed by patriarchal society. Usha is also modern in her thinking and behavior not like Jeevan. “But poor Usha Auntie was up till late and she had been slogging in the kitchen all day” (108) Rishi says in her defense. She used to wake up at late morning. Jeevan Kaka has conservative in his thinking and says, “I think Usha is in the bad habit of waking up late” (108). Rishi’s and Jeevan’s views are different each other. Jeevan Kaka has no any kind off pity towards females; he thinks women are like machine. But Rishi shows hit sympathy towards Usha.

Morning Prayer of Jeevan Kaka disturbs mainly Anju and Nilesh as well all of the family members. Jeevan Kaka asked “Is the fire emergency over, Miss Kapadia?” She sends him an apologetic look and says, “Sorry but Jeevan Kaka’s bell sounded like the fire alarm” (100). Jeevan Kaka always used to get up early in the morning and involve in morning praying by singing bell. He is religious as well as conservative and thinks he is superior and other is inferior. He says, “If my brother and his family are having problems, it is my duty to help them. And I trust you to come up with good plan for them” (109). This line shows Jeevan Kaka’s so-called self appraising nature. Women are such creatures who quench the sexual passion of men in the hand of patriarchy. Narrator says, “He was either a very clever man, or a very sick one whose libido was so out of control that he had to love a woman in every town” (312). Jeevan says, “Rishi seems very extremely protective of you... Like he’s wooried about you of something” (307). Rishi is fond of me, Anju”. Jeevan supports Rishi each and every manner blindly.

In different communities female are treated as inferior meek creatures, colonized subject, and given the position of other, pleasure-giving commodities, child-bearing machines, second object, emotional beings, domestic animals etc. But in

this modern era women are not such and they raise question on advocates gender specific right for women and campaign on issues such as reproductive right, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment, discrimination, violence and domination.

Rishi involves with different girls in different countries who has many girlfriends; Samantha, Laura both is totally European. It proves the fact that patriarchy takes women as the means of pleasure. Narrator evokes, “Rishi had come to the conclusion that Samantha wasn’t wifely sort. She was good in bed, efficient as a business associate and marvelous as the woman on his arm at business and social functions, but she was certainly not the wife-and-mother type” (106). Samantha is such revolutionary character who is economically and socially powerful. In modern societies there is everywhere domination and discrimination, stereotyping, sexual objectification upon females in this or that way but women are challenging and revolting against them by different means.

Anjali has the fear of changing the name of her boutique name. So she rejects Jeevan, Rishi and others’ idea. At last they accept the idea of Anjali. Rishi says:

I realize Jeevan Kaka and look like a pair of bullies at the moment but I hope in time you’ll realize that once the refurbishing and set-up are complete, we’ll leave everything to you and your parents. The store is still very much your parents. The store is still very much yours. We’ll only be silent partners. We don’t plants interfere unless it becomes necessary, Anjali. (117)

Rishi accepts the idea of Anjali and they follow up her ideas and opinion. Anjali is a designer of the store by taking help of Rishi and Jeevan. She changed her boutique into marvelous store. She says: “Why...would you want me to design the new store?”

I'm sure you have some fancy interior designer in London. You'd prefer to work with." They become happy. We are buying the neighbor's store and making this store bigger and better and nice-nice" (120). Sejal becomes happy tells to Anjali, "I can be like you, Anju. I can become a full-time designer and fashion consultant." Anjali has great personality who is respected by each and other character. In this highly competitive American society, she becomes the great business woman by managing Rishi, Jeevan and their family members.

Women are dominated and exploited in different ways. Prostitution is a remarkable domination which is performed by female prostitute, but people always treat them badly. No women are ready to do such kind of activity to gain money by selling their body. Males make them prostitute in the name of sexual pleasure and entertainment and behaves them harshly. Women have to sacrifice their happiness to please their husband and lover. They don't have right to think about themselves. Here, Chandrika, Samantha, Usha all becomes the scapegoat of oppressive patriarchy. Though females are not satisfied with the behavior of males, they cannot simply reject because of their ghost like behavior. Males never think about female pleasure and satisfaction but only conscious about their own choice and demand. Anjali riches in the bar of Kip to quench her physical passion but he is not aware about her feeling because of his business and fulfill his own desire by kissing and says, "Sure is ... He learned over the counted, cupped her face in both his hands, and kissed her full on the mouth. We'll talk later in the week, Angel-face" Women are became objectified in patriarchal society.

She has secret sexual relation with Kip. Narrator says, "She would not be able to face her mother. And Jeevan Kaka? His potential reaction made her legs go weak" (125). Rishi knows the secret matter of Anjali but narrator enforces to Anjali by

saying, “What she did with her personal life was none of his business” (125). In patriarchal society males are free to do anything. No one can arise question whatever they do. Usha says, “You could have gone to that old man, the Indian Capitalist with three wives... What’s his name... Harikishan” (13). Usha Kapadia gives decisive, unladylike snot. After killing of his first two wives, old Harikishan has finally met his match. His third wife is young and pretty and smart. She remarked by exposing reality. Usha and Anjali are amazons and unlady like character who question upon male barbarism; male can marry many times in their life for not allowed for females. Rishi raises question to Anjali,

Is everyone in America that affable with each other in a pub? Is kissing the patrons a part of customers revolutionary activities patriarchy raises piles of question for them. Patriarchy always raises questions and makes norms. There is violence against women either in the forms of physical or psychological Gujarati culture and tradition is so orthodox and misogynistic. Rishi raises dominating voice against Anju “Making alternate plans for your future rendezvous with the rolling stone?”(128)

In response to Rishi, Anju says this line. Rishi become jealous by seeking Kip and Anjali’s intimacy. Anjali with her bold rejection says, “Mr Shah, What I do with my private life is my business” (128). She says to empower her voice with Rishi by exposing her anger. Narrator empowers Anju’s voice and says, “She could not imagine why she felt the need to defend herself. It truly was her concern, not this man’s and not evens her families. Though, she lived with her parents for the sake of convenience and economy, at her age she was free to come and go as she pleased (128).Anjali, in above lines, is challenging to the whole not only Gujarati culture but

whole patriarchal society. Despite several restrictions in the society, she rebels talking openly about her freedom in drinks and sexuality which gradually enforces sexual agency in her life. These lines show females are not the sources of pleasures for males rather they can enjoy in their own style. Each and every person has their own way of life. From the nature of kiss that Rishi had witnessed between those two, he could tell they were lovers. She has secret relationship with Kip, their family members are unknown about that relation. Rishi realizes that Kapadia's family is conservative but Anjali is not. By taking Rishi's view writer says, "Rishi had already become quite familiar with the Kapadia family and realized how conservative they were" (131). Nilesh is no more conservative. In the sense, he never cares about her sisters going outside. Nilesh said, "She meets her girlfriends there for drink she needs to get away from the shop and my parents sometimes" (132). This line shows Nilesh like new generation people have modern thinking not conservative like Mohan and Jeevan.

Antagonistic behavior is shown by Anjali towards Rishi. The writer to empower Anjali critiques to Rishi and evokes:

He had no right to judge her. It was none of his business what she did in her spare time. His main concern was her commitment to the store, and from what he'd observed far, she was dedicated to its own hundred percent. In fact, she seemed obsessed with it, afraid to let anyone near it, like a mother guarding on ailing child. (133)

She shows aggressive nature towards him who highly cares for her without any reason.

By birth an individual is obsessed with the traditions constructed by the society. Being united to rules and regulations of the society, sometimes, even unwillingly, male becomes follower of the system. Society constructs men most

crude, selfish, demon like figure and women as 'second sex' as by Simone De Beauvoir and gives men the superior position. Though men are fragile, they pretend as capable, fit and fine every sector which makes them as demons.

According to Jeevan Kaka, women are such fragile character who cannot take decision so; he did not call females in the meeting. Sometimes male also take favor of female, here Rishi says females also involve in meeting. He explains, "Anjali and Auntie are equal partners in the business. They should be involved in the business. They should be involved in the meeting" (134). The above lines show that Rishi, business partner of Anjali has some sympathetic feelings for women but still problem is remain there that Rishi always wants to interrupt business, society is there to direct his sympathies and sentiments. There is no any kind of cooperation and coordination between and among the women to raise voice against chauvinistic patriarchy, who are following the system constructed by male in the names of civilization. That is the main cause of backwardness of the women. This response is given by Rishi against the idea of Jeevan, for him in economic sectors there is no place for women and males are rules and decision makers. "I see. As usual her uncle had assumed it was a man's place to deal with the contractors. She and her mother hadn't been invited to talks although Jeevan kaka seems to think "women have no place in such matters" (134) Jeevan Kaka is from deep rooted conservative society he is unaware about post modern society and culture because he want to continue patriarchal dogmas. Jeevan thinks "The women's involvement with no further protest" (134). Surprisingly, Jeevan accepted the women's involvement with no further protest at last which creates new women's identity in women.

Anjali's parents are so much old fashioned Indian. The narrator critiques, "They don't even though each other in public. Only hours ago she'd been sitting in a

bar with him, resenting his having witnessed her kiss a man in public. And here she was now, sharing memories of collage days with him, like an old friend” (136). This is sin for them to kiss, embrace each other in public places. Narrator evokes that she is frank because she is modern girl. She shares boyfriends and relax with them. Above lines explore that Anjali is not old-fashioned girl rather she is revolutionary, frank, dandy and bold character, which empower her female agency. She is modern in behavior though from Gujarati society. She damn cares the patriarchal society so she is a new woman in this ways.

The power relation always maintains colonizers in superior position and colonized people in inferior, dependent and back warded position. Jeevan Kaka supports Rishi in each and every subject matter. Narrator explains: “Anjali wondered once again about the relationship between these two. Why was her uncle so dependent on Rishi? For a stubborn, independent old man, Jeevan Kaka was like a fretful, clingy child as far as Rishi was concerned” (142). These above lines transparently show that Jeevan Kaka is like fretful, clingy child and so independent on Rishi. Colonized people blindly accept the superiority of colonizers in this sense.

Marriage is biological and psychological relationship between a male and a female joined as husband and wife, which is proved by the prevailing social norms, values, and laws. Marriage is taken to be top of the utmost importance which is the precious gift of god and bond of two souls, and couple is considered two sides of the same coin. There should mutual understanding between couple to run the life smoothly. But the society provides over burden to the women. Though males are in their old age choose beautiful and little girl in the name of virginity. In chauvinistic Gujarati society man can marry many girls and they can leave their without any cause. No one raise questions towards men if they marry many girls and left their but if a

woman without spouse patriarchy look them in narrow sense and provide their name as witch, nonsense. Harikishan marries three times in his life though he is old he marries beautiful and charming young girl. Usha says, “After killing his first two wives, old Harikishan has finally met his match. His third wife is young, pretty and smart” (13). This line shows that women are forced to marriage with old man though they are smart and young in patriarchal society, if women do so, they will harshly punished by males.

Women are treated like servant in husband’s home whose daily routine is to prepare food, feed to family members, care them after completing all domestic activities and to fulfill their husband’s wishes and desires show the miserable condition of women who have to sacrifice their whole life to make other happy and healthy.

In modern era women cannot bear extreme torture, pain as well as domination and deprivation in society. They are no more passive, submissive, and fragile characters who raise voices against males also. To talk about love, marriage, and sex by females is restricted in patriarchal society but Anjali being bold raises question related to marriage with Rishi: “Are you married” (148)? Rishi have indulged relation with different girls but they all are not passive but revolutionary. Rishi s, “Laura believed men and women are born to be promiscuous” (149). In Laura’s view men and women are equal there is no discrimination between and among them. For enforcing of agency towards Anjali, She sympathizes for him by saying, “What a gold-digger” (149)!

In society males make women prostitute and after sucking their sexual passion they start to reject them and start to talk about another girl Samantha, who has relation with him for five years. Rishi says “one or two. I have a girlfriend at the moment.



Samantha and I stay together... We've been together for nearly five years" (149). He further says: "I didn't say I was married to her" (149). Here Rishi's inner psycho exposes, that females are for pleasure to the males. Anjali time and again raises question why did you left to marriage to Samantha? She raises: "Isn't living together the same thing" (149)? Rishi takes women in simple manner which shows by this line "Staying under the same rood doesn't extend to her the right to share in my assets or certain... private areas of my life. I've given up on marriage." Here Rishi says sharing bed and remaining together doesn't mean marriage but modern social practice, living together.

In society males easily expose their sexual passion but women are not allowed to evoke sexual subject matters openly. If they openly expose the sexual subject matter, patriarchy names them as a prostitute. Sex is physical needs for both males and females are shown by that sentence. Narrator says, "Impulsiveness and the deep physical need to feel a warm male body against hers were the only reasons she could think of, because all she derived from it on an emotional level" (150). This sentence tells that only not the male female represented by Anjali, are also free in their private subject matter. Rishi time and again ask same question to Anjali why did you involve with Kip Rowling? Anju says. "It was too personal. Goodnight Rishi" (150). Anjali has bold rejection towards Rishi and evokes their sexual subject matter is personal.

"Too busy for marriage" (157), asked Usha. In the response of Rishi she gives her old traditional thinking. Patriarchal society takes marriage is essential at time if not they are the subject matter of discussion in society who harshly criticized by everyone. Usha was surprising on Rishi and says, "It's a shame that such a pleasant young man is not marriage" (157). Because of business of the Rishi, he didn't get chance to marry narrator says: "In Usha's old-fashioned way of thinking, marriage

and family had to be a part of one's life, no matter how busy one was. How many times did she remind Anjali that it was time for her to let go of Vik and forget her hand ups about marriage and settle down with a good man" (157)?

Modern thinking applied by Anjali is varying from her mother's traditional thinking where marriage is essential thing and sex is only confined with husband and wife. Anjali wants freedom, free sex which empowers her female agency in Gujarati culture.

The novelist thinks that feminist is their gift given by god. So, she takes it as the weapon to fight against patriarchy. She puts female in the supreme place and shows that they are also bond enough to decide whatever to better for their life. Feminism is the quest for female autonomy. There is no harmony between men and women in the relation to their status in the society. Women are silent in the patriarchal ideology. Thus, feminist try to break the silence of women. There is inequality shown in the norms created by the males where women are taken as taking plight to follow shown in the norms created by males of their work Maria Miles declares, feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-women relationship and who want to change it. She talks in favor of women's autonomy. For her autonomy is the feminist effort to maintain and recreate the innermost subjective human essence in women. The feminist claim to autonomy means a rejection of all tendencies to subsume the women's question and the women movement under some other apparently more general theme if movement. Feminist are in search of a situational leadership. There should be dynamism, diversity, as well as the truly humanistic environment.

In modern society women are revolting against patriarchy and searching their self identity in each and every sector. Samantha, Anjali are such character that are

economically, psychologically and socially strong character. Narrator says, “But Anjali could easily relate to Rishi’s ideas about freedom” (157). According to narrator also Anjali is also wants freedom in her life so she rejects norms and values of patriarchy.

Women become success in their sectors like Samantha, narrator states, “Samantha, a woman who was more than comfortable in her business and she didn’t need his money” (157). Women are not fragile like patriarchy used to think but they are success and eminence in their business and life.

In this society males are always dominating females without caring their needs and desires. Males fulfill their physical passion and all kinds of desires but unaware about those females. Rishi and Samantha have five years relationship but he wants to avoid the relationship where Samantha desired Rishi. Rishi exposes his, inner psyche female are the subject of use and throw, and says, “People change; circumstances change. We need to look at realistically, Samantha. We respect each other and like each other. But there haven’t been deep feelings on either side once the day we met. It’s been mostly a physical attraction” (165). These lines show the selfish nature of Rishi after getting Anjali a perfect business woman as well charming woman. And declares, “But we’ve had a five-year relationship, Rishi. We’ve shared a bed ... a home” (165). Again Rishi says, “Women are different. We have been together for so long. It’s only natural that we progress to that next level. After a while, a woman feels the need for a husband and home... and perhaps children” (166). These lines show that in this or that way women are dominating each and every part of the world though there is equality in theory which is not come in practical life. Rishi fulfill his sexual passion for five years with Samantha but now he wants to avoid their relation and says, “I just want to move on ... get on with my life” (166). In the response of

Rishi she evokes, “Just like that.” She snapped” (167). She turns into violent, uses foul languages and flings things around. “You are a first-class-bastard” (167)! She finally spat out, and turned on her heel, looking regal and superior, even in bare feet and nothing more than a see through robe. But while using Samantha in his life, held more generous with Samantha. Her entire wardrobe, including her expensive accessories and toiletries, came free of charge from his boutiques. She had staged in his house rent-free for all these years and held paid for the food, entertainment, joint vacations and everything else.

Anjali wants to meet Kip for physical satisfaction in his bar by cheating her parents and tells I am with my girlfriend to have supper. When she reached to bar she saw Rishi with girl on the bed of bar. She pummeled his chest with both fists and says, “G-get away from me. I don’t...want to...see you again” (175). She threatened him in rough language. She says, “Well, now that you’ve found me, why don’t you go your own way and I’ll go mine” (175). She said and fished her car keys out of her bag at that time her hands are shaking so much that the key rattled. But Rishi is such person who always put illegal relation with other females and he says, “Sorry babe, I was only doing what I’m programmed to do-screw many women as possible” (178). Rishi always wants to lure girls in different purposes; he takes benefit from females and change girlfriends.

Rishi feels patriarchy realizes that marriage is necessary only to produce child. Rishi realizes sexual pleasures only exist for men and for women it is a kind of burden because men never try to understand the working of female bodies; they are like men pleasing machines. Men take that women are pleasure giving commodities.

Every rules and regulations are made by males which might be loveless, a kind of passionate desire for sexual thrust and uses female like a commodity, which

crushes the equal thirst for passion in female. Every man wants to be the first to deflower females' virginity in the name of becoming superior. But Anjali is not such person who blindly accepts patriarchal ideology. She is frank in her sexual subject matter. She explains, "Having sex is not finding happiness. Each time I fulfill my need for sex, I feel awful. I go home feeling like... like a Whore" (186). Anjali threatens Rishi by telling sex is personal subject matter. In society no one questions about the relation of male with other women but women should bear various questions which are raised by patriarchy. Anju pronouns, "I am just a middle-class widow with a struggling store that you and my uncle are toying to save. My life's here in Jersey. I can't give it up just to sleep with a guy like you every now and then whenever you're in town" (186). Rishi wants to marry with Anjali but she rejects his propose. Anjali again realizes that Jeevan Kaka is a conservative old man who thinks in terms of marriage and family. She says, "Jeevan Kaka is a conservative old man who thinks in terms of marriage and family, not in terms of sleeping with each other to scratch an occasional bitch" (187). Rishi wants to fulfill Jeevan Kaka's desire to marry with Anju.

In Indian village there are various kinds of criminal activities such as robbery, looting, kidnapping and so on. Rishi illustrates:

A few years ago, his house was broken into by a band of dacoits. They were travelling from village to village, looting rich landowner's homes. Jeevan Kaka was assaulted. Thank goodness he and Kaki weren't killed... there were servants in the house and they fended off the attack. But there have been a few killings in some rural areas. (204)

These lines show how Indians are barbaric and wild like which show by their behavior and habit.

Anjali Kapadia was grown up in conservative Gujarati culture where women cannot select their boyfriend and husband. But she is a modern woman who seeks boyfriends herself and makes them in her own favor. She used to drink, have free love and sex with other boys so narrator articulates, “She kissed only two other men before, one of them being her husband” (190). She utilized kip and Rishi like people. Anju and Rishi spend whole night in a hotel and talk about marriage and their girlfriends and boyfriends. Rishi focused to marry with Anju but Anju only wants to put physical relation, at that time Anju asked the relation between Jeevan Kaka and Rishi. “Who are you and my uncle so tight lipped about your relationship? And since when has Jeevan Kaka started to take on business partners?” (191). These lines show Jeevan is so conservative a person who is always tinged with Rishi, here Rishi stands for colonizer Jeevan always respects Rishi like colonized persons always take colonizers are very powerful, rich, superior and so on.

Uma Narayan aims at the related notion of nation, identity, and tradition to show how western and third world scholars have misrepresented third world culture and feminist genders in *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third World Feminism* (1997). It focuses on the burning subject such as nationalism, post-colonial studies, and the cultural politics of debates over tradition and westernization in Third World context. For her western feminism cannot locate the unique experience of third world cultural designation, it is invalid in such a situation. She evokes, “Third World feminism is not a mindless mimicking of “western agendas” in one clear and simple sense that, for instance Indian feminism is clearly a response to issues specifically confronting many Indian women” (13). She further argues:

Women in Western context might be unfamiliar with the violence against women connected to the contemporary functioning of the

institutions of dowry and marriages. They have no strangers to battery and violence prevalent within their own various forms of marriage and family management...there is considerable irony in the face that our westernization is blamed for our feminist cultural contestations, while the similarities I have mentioned suggest that “western culture” has hardly displayed an easy willing to take the fate of women seriously!

(13)

In such designations, it shows that Western feminism cannot address different, and so called unique experiences of the Third World women. Their continual ignorance to address the cause of dowry murders, dowry related harassment, issues relating to women’s poverty, work, health and reproduction shows that there unable to address the social cultural experiences of Third World societies.

For her, essentialist generalizations of the Western Feminist thinking proceeds with the Western feminist representations of the women in the Third World contests she valorizes individualistic exploration of self in this context by amalgamating the core Third World issues. She argues:

Ahistorical and apolitical Western feminist understandings of “Third World traditions” continue to appear, for instance, in more contemporary work on issues such sati and dowry-murder, and discussions relating to human rights-based interventions into “cultural practices” affecting Third World women. (43)

By this, she comments on western feminists on the ground of their colonialist stance with respect to their representations of Third World cultures, traditions, and problems. Her case study sati and dowry murder is a vicious history and unique experiences of the Third World countries.

Females are given inferior rank in the patriarchal society. They are compelled to bear each and every kind of pain and domination. Women are poor and servant like character in the society, their position is inferior who are bounded only in domestic arena. Rishi is not poor though he lives in small house with his family and says, “We weren’t poor, but we lived in a small house on the farm. We had one women-servant who took care of me during the day, cleaned, and cooked, while my mother worked at the clinic” (195). These lines show women are confined in the four walls in Gujarati patriarchal. But Ellen Porter, Rishi’s mother is not such woman who is confined in the domestic activities; she is a nurse, works in a clinic. Women in this era are in each and every aspects of life.

Rishi is a brave businessman from their early childhood who conducts business himself by laboring hard. Here Rishi has a colonizer position that saved colonized people from their death instead of saving their own father from the fire caught in his own house. Narrator declares, “They were father and son a bond that was forged on that night, when a young boy had saved the life of a grown man, but had lost his father at the same time” (202). This line shows the superiority of European people who saved the life of the Indian instead of saving their own relatives.

Modern women cannot tolerate every identity given by male chauvinistic society; Mohan is suspicious on Anjali of her going outside at early morning. By making suspicious eyes Mohan says, “But you never work in the morning” (40). In the response of this question she gives bold rejection by saying; “Well the contractors taking up our Mondays these days, I’ve decided to go in the morning” (210). She said with a straight face narrator says. She is bold in her idea and did not accept everything prescribed by family and patriarchal society. She went to gym which in challenging



task for patriarchy. From their beginning of life she is revolutionary in her thinking always she does not want to remain in domestic arena. She explains; “I did most of cooking when I was married. Vik was a good helper” (215). This line shows superiority or new personality in Anjali where males are helper for women in modern society. She selects different workers for store by herself it proves that she has a new identity in society where she provides different jobs for different unemployed. “The beauty salon staff and *mehandi* artist had already been interviewed and hired and were waiting to start work from Friday. A good part time photographer for the bridal studio and a *mandip* and floral designer had been lined up as well” (210). This line shows Anju has become a perfect businesswoman who can select qualified staffs to conduct store smoothly.

The next character Rishi always compels her to marry her and says, “Sharing a home with so many people cannot be easy. That’s something else that puzzles me about you. Why do you stay with your parents when you were such an independent and modern women?” (222) Rishi accepts Anjali is a modern and independent who is perfect in her life. Anju saves the family by investing all her saving money. “I put all my savings into expanding the store, so, I did not have much money to live on my own. After a while, it just became a habit-the three of us as a team, with Nilesh an occasional forth. We do everything together” (222). Anju wants to remain with her family to save them. Rishi says, “You did all the planning and designing” (225). Anju becomes perfect person to control and guide everything in the store.

Patriarchy cannot bear the new identity so they always want to put women in the domestic arena. Anjali pours her anger upon Rishi and says: “Damn Right. Distractions drive me mad” (228). Anjali is not a traditional weak character in society who is not guided by rules and regulations made by patriarchy, narrator explains:

She knew exactly how that felt. Her life had been tidy and free of discrimination, too, but then he would come saving in, a thorn in the side initially. And how her physical need to be with him was not only interrupting her work, but causing major emotional upheaval as well. Ever since, he'd kissed her that day, she'd lain in her bed night after night, wondering what it would be like to make love. With him, she had built fantasies around him but was afraid to act on them. (228)

Anjali is not Gujarati traditional woman but modern American; she freely wants to put relation with Rishi and says "Okay, I'll go with you" (229). Widows are not allowed sex and marriage in the culture but Anjali cannot bear such patriarchal ethos and she used to remain with Rishi at night. The narrator elucidates, "But she was not going to her own bed. She was going to his" (250). To quench her sexual passion, she utilized Rishi. "With the utmost gentleness, his fingers explored it now, slowly but surely setting her nearer on fire" (237). Anjali enjoy a lot with Rishi at night. "Enjoy the euphoria, Anjali." She whispered to the starry eyed woman in the mirror and feels it had been mostly physical, skin to skin, breath to breath. "Desire and lust-nothing more" (242). Narrator discloses her feelings Rishi wants to drive Anjali to home but she rejects it by saying, "Don't be silly. I can get home on my own. I've been driving myself since I was teenager, Rishi. Go back to bed. You need your rest" (243). This line shows the independent identity of Anjali in society which creates her new personality in society. They remain in hotel up to late night.

Rishi and Anjali freely move into garden state park way for relax in the evening they kissing each other for a long time, neither one of them waiting to break up the fiery contact. They remained oblivious to the voice in the distance. They reach in the ocean and involve in physical activities. Narrator says, "Hearing a child's voice

so late on a chilly evening by the ocean was totally unexpected” (261). Anjali and Rishi involve in scandalous activities in the store where Usha is sitting. “We have to stop now”. Thanks for that quick pick-me-up” (272). Anjali says with Rishi though these is the presence of Usha, Anju involves in scandalous activities with Rishi in the store which is challenging task for the Gujarati traditional culture. She is also a new woman in Gujarati culture bear she is conducting this store in which there are different shop; cafe, jeweler shop. Bouting us, barber and so on. In the response of Rishi’s marry with Anju, she give bold rejection “Sound delights fat, but i.....i can’t marry you. Why? I have obligations here-my parents can’t run the store by themselves” (289). She is conducting each and every thing. Anjali know their opening day was a success. Narrator explains:

At least a dozen customers had remarked on how unique and beautiful the store was, and how it was so very different from anything they’d seen in the neighborhood, or elsewhere too for that matter. Gratified, she held on to that praise and passed it along to the others in the family and of course to Rishi knowing they’d all worked equally hard in making the entire idea come to life Nearly all day she floated on a cloud of excitement.(275)

These lines show that each and everything are managed by Anjali by using family members as well Rishi. She becomes economically independent. Anju is such a character who utilized different persons in her life to make her life peaceful, progressive and happy. She utilized a successful businessman, who has business in California, UK, USA, India and different parts in the world. Anju speaks, “I thought you’d be telling me we could be friends that if you happened to be in the future, and if

we can make the time, we could sleep to-gether” (288). Anju always utilized such character for her progress.

Anju is successful woman who has designing various costumes. She is successful businesswoman in American society though depressive widow. Mohan explains, “She’s our partner and basically she’s the one who has managed most of the designing and merchandising” (331). She has control her family so his father wants to remain with her. Rishi says, “She’s jeevan kaka’s niece and she is a very talented designer. I have plans to market her designs to some may is culture houses in the fashion industry” (320). Anjali is highly praise by Rishi which shows praising nature of males if they need women.

Rishi rejects Samantha’s proposal of marriage. “Samantha’s tightened visibly. Is that your ideas of a joke?” (320) she was demanding immediate answer from Rishi “in one quick & unexpected move, Samantha flung her help-empty glass across the room at Rishi:. You it’e despicable (320). “I will not! I intend to stay here until you apologize for your atrocious behavior. I like some hussy you had a one-night stand with, we have had a five-year relationship, unlike your cheep, two week flight with that trollop” (321). Rishi replies “Not my bathroom I’ll call the front desk and yet you a room. Tomorrow you’d better be on a plane back to London. But Samantha says, “I don’t take orders from you!” and I don’t have to put up with this” (321). Samantha cannot tolerate his domination “She marched towards the door. Just before she stepped outside, she raised her hand and slapped him across the check “Bastard” (323)! This line says by Samantha shows that women are no more fragile. In our culture, when a man and woman live together, then they’re expected to be husband & wife. “And apparently you lived together for five years” (330). Usha believed on the norms and values of the society made by patriarchy. So, she questioned for the

relation of Rishi and Kapadia. But Anjali Kapadia, a bold and successive protagonist, directly rejects it.

To challenge the patriarchal society Anjali evokes, “Face it Anjali, She told herself. You are different from other Indian women. You are free spirited and your sex drive is a tad to active. Learn to live with it” (38). She wants to challenge that society, which tells sex is the secret subject matter, it only limited between husband and wife. Widows never allowed having carnal pleasure with other but she easily and frankly quenches her physical passion with Kip in his bar. In male chauvinistic society women are confined in domestic arena, have endowed domestic activities and are compelled to do such burdensome activities unwillingly but Kapadia wipe out such traditions.

Anjali Kapadia becomes the successful new woman who fights for the emancipation of the South Asian females and able to construct her own identity. Though the society does not allow widow woman for carnal pleasure and love, Kapadia become able to dismantle those very norms and values constructed by so called patriarchy. Not only physically but also economically she becomes the successive female because of her innovative ideas which also empower her personality.

### III. Conclusion: Assertion of Female Identity

In Bantwal's *The Sari Shop Widow*, the protagonist, a young widow woman living in a modern world; leads physical, spiritual and economical aspects of life by involving herself in the pleasures of sexual experience with many males, drinks, free love, and take her own decision in business. Bantwal creates a culture that is obsessed with love and physical pleasure and it remains severely misogynistic society where selfish and lusty nature of male character's stereotypical concept always dominates females. She is an intellectual and innovative woman so that success to construct her own identity by defying against chauvinistic patriarchal society and their norms and values. She wants to establish relationship with different people to quench her physical passion and creates new identity by utilizing them in foreign land, New Jersey in America. She takes colonizer's armor, English language and their help to uplift her status and at last she becomes an independent and free woman. At the beginning phase of her life there are pain and pathos domination and deprivation and challenges which create bold determination in her mind and at last she becomes success to create new identity by challenging whole patriarchy.

Women are most influential characters in this novel who are involving in each and every fields of the society. Bantwal shows the plight of women characters and bitter reality of female subordination that are suppressed under the male chauvinistic society in one way. But in other way, through the revolutionary character Anjali Kapadia, who at the end of the novel achieves her true independence which shows Bantwal's aggressive attitude towards oppressive patriarchy which she wants to transform. The novel is the story of feminine pleasure that is everywhere, frozen with desire, feverish and demanding if we gaze with feministic spectacles. The main

character Anjali always celebrates her own body with different young guys and utilized them according to her choice and desire.

In this context, Bantwal's *The Sari Shop Widow* takes the issue of a woman by constructing protagonist Anjali, who explores her own identity and individuality by opposing forceful help of Rishi. She creates certain level of strong anger as well bold rejection and involve in business with great determination at last become a success businesswoman by using males in her life. By rejecting norms and values constructed by patriarchy she creates her new identity in foreign land America which is challenging task for widow to fight against Gujarati male patriarchy as well as whole male chauvinistic society where females are doubly marginalized. She challenges the domestic violence of patriarchy and also domination of colonizers upon South Asian women by that she liberates whole females' society in the world.

Being a widow in conservative society, she prioritized to maintain her sexual identity as if a young woman does not have sexual fulfillment with a man counterpart. She becomes frustrated; her intellectual earning also decreases and her whole career falls at crisis at the beginning of her life. She makes direct sexual relationship with many guys and indulges herself in the sexual pleasures. She seems to pay more attention to satisfy her youthful instinct then to establish her personal career. The more sexual relation she hastens, the farther she moves from her quest to construct her identity. She freely involves in love, sex and business from which she creates her new identity in her life at last.

To sum up, Anjali explores her identity and self by opposing to be a victim of the domestic violence caused by the patriarchal as well as colonizers system backed up by both males and females themselves. Anjali takes the help of females, males and colonizers in her life and creates her new identity to become a free and independent

businesswoman. Anjali, the protagonist of the novel, spends her life for physical pleasure through the means of sexual experience. She is a modern young woman as well as consumerist way of life. She is revolutionist character who is indulging in both physical and spiritual free life that is more American rather than Indian where as her mother became straddle in both cultures. She creates her own identity by free love, carnal pleasure, alcoholism, economic success, freedom from chauvinistic patriarchal society, etc. She develops her value of freedom and self to the extent that her extreme hatred and revenge turns her out to be a successful woman. At last she seizes perfect life economically, spiritually as well as socially, thereby asserting herself as a role model of 'new woman' from South Asia and gets perfection in her life.



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