

Tribhuvan University

Family Disintegration: A Marxist Reading of Premchand's *Nirmala*

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by

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Bhakta Bahadur Basnet has completed his thesis entitled “Family Disintegration: A Marxist Reading of Premchand's *Nirmala*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2068/05/01 B.S. to 2069/01/05 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Family Disintegration: A Marxist Reading of Premchand's *Nirmala*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Bhakta Bahadur Basnet has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Economic Inequality in <i>Nirmala</i>	1-11
II. Family Disintegration in <i>Nirmala</i>	12-46
III. Exploitation to Disintegration	47-49
Works Cited	

I. Economic Inequality in *Nirmala*

This project focuses on Munshi Premchand's novel *Nirmala* that was published in the year 1928 which challenged the existing bourgeois social norms by dealing with the sensitive social issues like marriage. The present research explores the prevalent economic inequality, dependence, unhealthy social relationship and class oppression in the contemporary Indian society that ultimately becomes the root cause for the disintegration of the families. The present study seeks to analyze the character bringing them into the frame of critical analysis, who develop a tendency of clinging to the essential social values at any cost in order to retain their social respect. But in course of it, the characters are destined to suffer more resulting the degeneration of the smooth running families.

Nirmala, a novel by Munshi Premchand is a story of a downfall of a young girl after continuous strain and mental trauma that she has to undergo throughout her life due to her troubled marital life as she is obliged to get married with a man of her father's age. *Nirmala* begins with the happy running childhood days of Nirmala where she rejoices the careful life of full freedom in her parental home. As the story develops the issue of her marriage comes to the front as it gets fixed with a son of rich man without the precondition of dowry. However, Nirmala's parents have to take a huge burden of making grand preparation of the marriage ceremony in order to maintain the social respect. Despite the lack of adequate economic resources, Nirmala's parents keep on preparing for grand marriage ceremony in a hope to maintain their prestige in the society.

However, the story takes another turn after Nirmala's father, Babu Udaybhan, the only income generator of the family gets murdered amid of the marriage

preparation. Babu Udaybhan is murdered by a social rogue, Matai for a revenge for his past deeds; this untimely demise is responsible to push Nirmala's family in a severe economic crisis. Thinking that bride's side will not be able to make proper arrangement for the marriage ceremony due to ongoing economic crisis in the family as the family loses its bread winner, the groom's family dismisses the already fixed marriage proposal with Nirmala. Despite the frequent pleads, requests and attempts of Nirmala's mother, Kalyani to continue the ongoing marriage process, the groom's family turn their back towards her and father seeks for a bride with lots of fortune to get as dowry.

Now, the happiness of Nirmala's family and her own life is eclipsed by the economic crisis as the family falls the victim of it. The society is constructed in such a way that the females are deprived of any economic activities so that Kalyani, Nirmala's mother can't afford for adequate dowry to the grooms. Thus, Nirmala is obliged to accept the boys of her age as her sons. Now the story of Nirmala mental and physical dissatisfaction initiates after her mismatched marriage with Munshi Totaram. Nirmala develops a kind of affection with her eldest step. So, her husband suspects their relationship and the downfall of that family begins. The eldest son dies because of it. Two other sons too leave the home. Munshi Totaram gradually grows old and becomes unable to generate income and ultimately declines from his job leaving the house in utter economic crisis. The family plunges into the depth of debt. Nirmala gives birth to a baby daughter however meets her tragic death owing to extreme poverty leaving her daughter alive alone in the world to suffer. Ultimately, Nirmala's family gets shattered away as a result of extreme poverty. Thus, the family disintegration befalls owing to economic causes.

Munshi Premchand, pseudonym of Dhanpat Rai Shrivastav has represented the contemporary Indian society in a realistic way through this novel *Nirmala* by exposing the then social evils as created by the feudalism of British Colonial period. In the dialect of common people, he vividly exposes the problem of peasant classes in the novel who are commodified in the hands of feudal lords like Balachandra. As he views literature as a work that expresses the true and the experiences of life impressively, he foregrounds the truths and experiences of the contemporary Indian society like communalism, corruption, colonialism, conservatism, *zamindari*, debt, poverty, misery, religiosity etc bringing them in the ground of reality by making them the main subject matter of his writings.

The present research revolves around the contemporary social evils and problems that Munshi Premchanda has exposed in the novel being instrumental in bringing out the concept of social realism. The research highlights the way to a somber acceptance of economic injustice that can't be rectified by any know human agency. The plights of the female characters like Nirmala, Rukmini, Sudha, Kalyani suggests the inherent economic inequality in the contemporary Indian society where the females had to undergo double marginalization. Similarly, the plight of male characters like Babu Udayabhan, Munshi Totaram and other unnamed servants suggests the bitter experiences of the lower class people in this claptrap of bourgeois society in the contemporary India. The fate of the major characters that have been compelled to bear sorrows is resulted from the class oppression prevalent in the society and bourgeois mindset of the people. The present study excavates the social evils like dowry, child marriage, forced marriage, corruption, exploitation which are the genuine outcome of the bourgeois mindset that eventually lead to the degradation and degeneration of the happy running families- moreover, the exploration of the

delineation of the lower class people's position in typical Indian Feudal society where the bourgeoisie imposition works as an inciting force to lead the tragic end of the families carry a significance in this study.

The primary objective of this research is to bring forth the Marxist discourse to portray the pathetic condition of the working class of people and females who lack the economic resources at their hand and who fall the victim of marginalization of class oppression. This study scrutinizes the inherent economic inequality and class oppression critically to analyze the tragedies of the happy running families in the claptrap of bourgeoisie. It also foregrounds the bitter experiences of the characters who cling to the essential social values at any cost in order to retain it for the social respect but that eventually lead to the family disintegration. The present study brings out the institutional realities and oppression that the ruling class has perpetuated over centuries in rural India.

Since the prime concern of this research is to demonstrate the unhappy ending of the smooth running families due to the deep rooted bourgeoisie mindset of the society, it highlights the tendency of the working class of people to go for more expenditure beyond their access in the social performances like marriage. Bourgeoisie culture is itself responsible for the initiation of such evil as they can make more money when the people buy their goods in such ceremonies. Dowry system, one of the residues of evils of bourgeoisie culture too is responsible for the disintegration of the lower class of families. The tradition of dowry also has been critically analyzed by this present study to prove it as one of the determining factors of family degeneration. As the working class people tend to manage dowry for the marriage of their daughter, they get plunged in heavy debt by borrowing money from the landlords in heavy interest. This research elevates this issue of dowry by bringing it into the frame of

critical analysis in order to demonstrate its negative impacts and consequences in the lives of working class of people that pushes the families towards their tragic ends like that of Nirmala.

This research also foregrounds the issue of class-oppression and class struggle in the text which was prevalent in the then contemporary Indian society. The tendency of the members of bourgeoisie to exploit the labor of the proletariats and the undercurrents of the tone of protest from the working class of people against of such exploitation has also got a primary space in the research. The continuous tension and conflict between haves and haves not are focused in this research. This study targets to prove the fact that such class oppression also leads to the disintegration of the families of working class as they do not get well paid for their hard physical labor. They are obliged to work hard in minimum wages and such wages doesn't suffice for the fulfillment of basic and essential needs of their families. The quality of life is never maintained in their families. Thus, they are destined to lead a miserable life of scarcity in the shadow of utter poverty.

Hence, Premchand's portrayal of his major characters is directed towards the criticism of the evils of bourgeoisie culture and society that is responsible for the degradation of human values and families by the commodification of human relationship. The commercialization of the sacred social institution of marriage has been brought under assault in this research. The deprivation of females from their access in the economic activities of the society, the exploitation of the servants in the houses of land owner and the evaluation of the sacred institution in terms of economic benefits are some of the major areas of concern in this research. This research also excavates the disintegration of families owing to such negative traits of a bourgeoisie society.

Nirmala is regarded as the prominent works of Munshi Premchand that is loaded with the traits of social realism. Since its publication, it has been able to accumulate lots of appreciation and criticisms. It has received various criticisms and is reviewed from different angles by different critics. The reviews regarding this novel varied in their opinions; which most applauded the careful portrayal of its characters. Many of the critics pointed on the slowness of the plot and the excessiveness of the description. Some of the critics also have raised their fingers for the portrayal of female characters as submissive and humble in the text. Geetangali Pandey, one of the major Indian feminist critics finds the female character in *Nirmala* being sidelined to the margins, who have to undergo lots of sufferings as they don't have access to the economic and social roles. Geetangali Pandey further argues:

Nirmala deals with the problems of marriage, a problem created by the compulsions of dowry and the power of wealth, and producing in its turn a whole sets of emotional and psychological consequences.

Nirmala becomes the center of her old husband's suspicion who sees sordidness in her attachment to his son from an earlier wife. *Nirmala* eventually dies, ending a wasted life. (50)

Here, Geetangali Pandey illustrates about the pathetic life of *Nirmala* who meets her untimely death after becoming the centre of suspicion in the eyes of her old husband. Her husband suspects the illicit relationship between *Nirmala* and her step-son. However, there was nothing like that. Pandey also touches the psychological and emotional consequences in the life of *Nirmala* brought about by the then contemporary social structure.

Similarly, Daisy Rockwell writes on *Nirmala* as a reading which fully acknowledges the aesthetic discomfort of the twenty first century readers. She

explores the plight of Indian women through the western eyes. She further writes, "The main argument is that the contemporary reader, faced with possibly jarring melodrama in *Nirmala*, needs to find a way to see through the often absurd and ludicrous surface, the exaggeration and excess, the teller's special pleading" (203).

Here, Daisy Rockwell makes a pungent criticism of the novel *Nirmala* by giving it a name of jarring melodrama. She instantly frowns at the absurd and ludicrous surface of the novel. She has expressed her deep disappointment towards the excessive exaggeration in the novel. Similarly the teller's special pleading in the novel is also a part of dissatisfaction for her.

Similarly, J. Owen another critic reads *Nirmala* as a mirror of Indian culture and history. According to him, the novel reflects the culture and history of then India. He further writes:

It will be a special book for lovers of Indian culture and history as possibly of the history of women's rights. It is not for the faint of heart not to be taken lightly of special interest and assistance to the reader is an after word and glossary which assist in we modern -day readers further understand the setting, circumstances, language and culture which contributed to *Nirmala's* demise. (53)

Here, Owen has elaborated the significance of the novel in terms of its depiction of history and culture of contemporary Indian society. He further appreciates the novel in its art of portraying the Indian history and possibly of women's rights and emancipation. The novel *Nirmala*, according to Owen, shouldn't be taken for the faint of heart and lightly. Owen also appreciates the novel for its careful depiction of the setting circumstances, language and culture that contribute for the plight and demise of the marginalized women like *Nirmala*.

According to Patricia Thomson, *Nirmala* is a novel that projects the reformist agenda along with the presentation of evils of child marriage too. She considers *Nirmala* one of the most moving and touching novels in Hindi on the theme of child marriage. The paper further writes:

Premchand's novella *Nirmala* is one of the most poignant novels in Hindi on the theme of young adolescent yoked to an elderly husband. Clearly reformist in its agenda, this novel succeeds in exploring sensitive and even dangerous terrain. This bitter melodrama was first published in Hindi, in 1925, and he aged well... *Nirmala* is a fine introduction to the work of a 20th century master of Hindi Literature.

(7)

Here, Patricia Thompson's criticism is focused on the theme of the novel i.e. the evils of child marriage. As she finds the novel exploring the sensitive and dangerous trend of child marriage, she regards it as a novel full of reformist's agenda that seeks to bring the improvements in the contemporary Indian society by foregrounding the issues of child marriage and its evils.

Charu Gupta, yet another critic highlights the issue of female subjugation in patriarchal society in Premchand's *Nirmala*. In her viewpoint, the deep rooted concepts of ideal womanhood acts as the basis for the women's continued subordination within the patriarchal framework. In this regard, she further writes:

Premchand's *Nirmala* has a mixed legacy, seen from a contemporary viewpoint; it is easy to see in his ideal of womanhood the basis for women's continued subordination within the patriarchal family.

Examined in the historical context, however *Nirmala* of Premchand is a brave pioneer expanding the frontiers were severely limited. (103)

Here, Charu Gupta blames the novelist for the continuation of women's subordination owing to the concept of ideal womanhood that the novelist bears in his mind.

According to her, it can be detected from the contemporary modern readers. However, if the novel is analyzed in its historical context, according to her, it can be considered as a daring attempt of the novelist who seeks to expand the frontiers of women's role and consciousness because at the time when the novel was written, the women's role were severely limited. The females' roles were rendered to the margins and they were merely confined within the household chores being isolated from the outer space as the outer space was on the hold of the brutal patriarchy.

From the above mentioned critics and their criticism regarding Premchand's novel, it is pretty obvious that most of them have focused on the women's oppression in the dominant patriarchy of that the then Indian society. The issue of female domination and subordination which is obvious in the novel has been able to draw the attention of most of the critics mentioned above. The scholars have failed to notice the issues of class oppression in the text and they have overlooked the role of class oppression for the disintegration of the families in the novel.

Thus, departing from all the above mentioned criticism, this research explores the unnoticed issue of the class oppression and its negative consequences in the lives of lower class of families in the novel *Nirmala* by incorporating the various revolutionary ideas that have been formulated in the discourse of Marxism. The project is basically focused to unveil the evils of class oppression that is responsible for the fragmentation of the happy running lower class families. The people from lower class have to undergo lots of suffering in the society that is guided by the handful of bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie determine the certain parameter of the society and in this course, the working class of people while reaching those parameters fall

themselves down where they are always obliged to live in fragmentation whereas the class that owns the means of production always achieves economic benefits. This eventually creates a huge gap between haves and have not. Thus the upper class that always enjoys the profound property accumulation and the people from lower class who always suffer from the family disintegration have been brought into the frame of critical analysis in this project in order to depict the inherent evils of such existing unequal socio-economic relations among the varied class of people in the novel. Hence, to dramatize the issue of such class oppression and the bourgeoisie hegemony in the text, the specified and revolutionary ideas formulated in the domain of Marxism remain as the primary tool of my analysis.

Since my research excavates the underlying sufferings of the working class of people who fall the victims of the capitalists, it incorporates the above mentioned ideas of Marxism. The commodification of the servants without having any fellow feelings towards their humanity, their exploitation for economic benefits have been vividly demonstrated in this research by the borrowing the significant and revolutionary ideas that have been formulated in the discourse of Marxism. The tendency of dominating the working class by the dominant ruling class ideology has been clearly highlighted in this research in order to portray how the ruling class ideology is responsible for the degeneration of the working class families in the Indian societies. By incorporating, the significant ideas that have been discussed under the domain of Marxism, the present research explores the miserable lifestyle of the servants who have to sustain their life in meager wages and sometimes without wages. Similarly, the research also makes a pungent criticism of the dowry system, a legacy of capitalism, by bringing forth its evils. The system of spending huge sum of

money in the social and religious institutions like marriage in order to maintain the social status has also been attacked by the research.

II. Family Disintegration in *Nirmala*

This project aims to explore the disintegration of the family values owing to the tendency of contemporary Indian society to cling on the essential social values as structural by the contemporary feudal society. India during 1920s was under the clasp of British colony and the Indian feudal and *zamindar* were on the top of the social rank to determine the social norms and values of the then Indian society. Since the people from lower middle class and proletariats had no access to the means of productions and were deprived of the profound economic activities ongoing on those days, they were obliged to adopt and follow the social norms, values and system as laid down by the feudal society. And as a matter of fact, the then feudal society always preferred to continue the social system that was in their favour. In other words, they tried to maintain the social values for their economic benefits. Thus, this research on *Nirmala* excavates the institutional realities and oppression that the ruling class has perpetuated over centuries in rural India.

Marriage is considered to be a sacred social institution that tends to reconcile a man and a woman, family and a family and society and a society. From the ancient times, it has been considered as the moral base of male and female relationship. It is a kind of social bond between male and female which is a process of cultural and social relation between the opposite sexes according to their agreement. However, this sacred institution has been totally corrupted and poisoned by the bourgeoisie ideology. As Andre Beteille argues, "the rules of descent and marriage are in hierarchical society designed to preserve the highest qualities at the top, and they are also a proof of their preservation. According to orthodox feudal Hindu scheme of values women should never marry downwards, although they might occasionally marry upward" (36). In the novel *Nirmala*, the institution of marriage has been

structured along with the lines of Indian feudal lords of the contemporary Indian society. The society is totally under the clasp of the feudal and thus the lower class and proletariats are compelled to accept the social institution of marriage in the way the ruling class has designed it.

Generally, various types of marriages have been appeared in the long human history. However, marriage can be categorized into two tendencies: arrange marriage and love marriage, according to their nature. Simply, arrange marriage refers to such types of marriage on which guardians of both male and female are agreed to marry them according to the social religious and cultural norms rules and regulations whereas the girl get married with their mutual understanding and agreement without the constant of their guardians. They can defy the traditional customs too. In the novel *Nirmala*, the prevalence of arrange marriage can be explicitly noticed as it unfolds the story of feudalistic Indian society. Feudal society never seeks to provide a proper space to the love marriage as the aspects of love, emotion do not get well recognized in such type of society. The system of arrange marriage demands the heavy expenditure in the marriage ceremony as it is regarded to be an emblem of social prestige. Thus, Marxism always associated arrange marriage with Feudalism as the feudal get an opportunity to assert their dominant position in the society by making lots of investments in such types of marriage in the name of maintaining social, cultural and religious norms, rules and regulations.

The society as depicted by Munshi Premchand in his novel *Nirmala* is governed by the feudal lords and Zamindars who prefer the system of arrange marriage by elevating it to the higher position. The higher class of people in the contemporary Indian society as portrayed in the novel has a tendency of spending huge sum of money in such social practice of marriage in order to retain their socio-

cultural values. The lower class of people who are obliged to sustain their livelihood on their meager income too are heavily influenced by such feudalistic notions and thus they tend to allocate amount by any means for the maintenance of their social prestige in the occasion like marriage though the characters like Babu Udaybhan hail from lower middle class, yet they can't remain aloof from such feudalistic tendency of arrange marriage and its specific feature of high expenditure because they are totally guided and hegemonies by the feudalistic notions.

Nirmala, a novel by Munshi Premchand vividly exposes the disintegration of a happy family of a lower middle class people like Babu Udaybhan as he is forced to internalize the feudalistic ideology of spending lots of money in his daughter's marriage ceremony. Babu Udaybhan, the father of the female protagonist Nirmala is an ordinary lawyer who works hard to survive his family. Nirmala is an innocent and ignorant girl of 15 whose marriage has already been fixed with Bhuwan Mohan Sinha, the eldest son of Bal Chandra Sinha, a renowned feudal of the society. Though there is no any pre-condition for dowry in source of fixing their marriage, however the family of Udaybhan clings to maintain the essential social values in order to retain the position of its family in the framework of feudal society. Babu Udaybhan makes up his mind to make a grand preparation for Nirmala's marriage to meet the expectations of bridegrooms side and keeps no stones unturned so as to please the bridegroom, the participants of Nirmala's marriage from bridegrooms side. The narrator in this context narrates the ongoing preparation of Nirmala's marriage at her home:

There was a commotion in Babu Udaybhan's house. The goldsmith was busy with his hammer and the tailors with their needles occupied by the *rerendan*. Under the *neem* tree the carpenter was busy making a

bed. The wooden oven had been prepared for the sweet maker another house has been arranged for the guests. The aim was to provide each guest with a separate bed, a table and a chair. One servant would accompany each guest at all times. (7)

The above quoted lines from the text vividly depict the attempts of Babu Udayabhan to maintain the essential social values that were prevalent at contemporary Indian feudal society. It is the clear indication that the lower middle class try to make an appropriate space in the framework of feudal society by investing its family income for the social institution of marriage Babu Udayabhan is engaged in arranging all these arrangements to meet the basic requirements of arrange marriage. Similarly, Udayabhan is obliged to do so in order to meet the expectation of bridegrooms father as his only "interest was that the Barats be well received and looked after so that no one could later complain or make fun of either of the families" (1).

It is the clear indication that the lower middle class tries to make an appropriate space in the framework of feudal society by investing its family income to maintain the basic feudalistic socio-cultural values of marriage the working class of people like goldsmith, tailor, sweet maker, carpenter and servants are forced to do hard labor so as to please the guest in the marriage ceremony. Such a tendency of hefty investment in the marriage ceremony is the system initiated by the feudalism that ultimately serves for the economic benefits of the feudal lords themselves. Marxism views such system of arrange marriage as a tool of capitalism to make money in the name of maintaining such social values. The capitalist social system compels the lower class people to invest a huge sum of money to consume compacts the lower class people to invest a huge sum of money to consume the goods produced by the capitalism itself. The consumption of goods of capitalist by the working class

of people merely contributes for the upgradation of the economic status of bourgeois, however degradation the economic condition of proletarians that ultimately leads to a family disintegration.

Moreover, the research seeks to foreground the presence of lumped proletariat in the novel *Nirmala* who acts as a key factor for the degeneration of happy running family of Udaybhan. Karl Mark mentions the lumpen proletariat as a dangerous class or the social scum. Among the members of this group are "ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds" (Battomore 242). This is the lumpen proletariat. However, Mark doesn't consider this group to be fancy importance in terms of potential for creating socialism, if any thing they may consider to have a conservation influence. One of the main reasons for mentioning them is to emphasize how capitalism uses and discards people not treating them as humans. As a matter of fact, the main reason behind the emergence of such lumpen proletariat is the homeless and underclass who are involved in criminal and illegal activities.

Munshi Premchand, in his novel *Nirmala* has mentioned about the influence of lumpen proletariat are class in the society that becomes one of the determining factors of the family disintegration in the text, the presence of a representative of lumpen proletariat are in the form of Matai plays a significant role in the downfall of Nirmala's family. Babu Udaybhan leaves his home at the issue of extra-expenditure in the on going marriage preparation. Udaybhan walks out of his home being angry with his wife Kalyani as she begins to raise a question over exceeding expense in marriage preparation. Udaybhan reaches up to the street in the darkness of the night. As he walks alone in the street, he feels as id he is being followed by someone in the

darkness of lonely street. He immediately pulls out torch from his pocket and looks at the person following him in the torchlight. The narrator narrates the future incident as:

A hefty man started following him carrying a rod on his shoulder.

Babu Sahib was startled to see him, as he was one of the known rogues of the town. Three years back he had been caught for robbery and been convinced with years of imprisonment. Babu Sahib had dealt the case. Since then he had wanted to take revenge and had been released from the prison yesterday. Now in the dark night when he saw Babuji walking alone, he thought that it was a god sent opportunity to take his revenge. He was all set to hit Babuji. . . Babu Sahib was hit on the head with the stick with a strong and calculated stroke. He could just utter, 'oh! He has killed me. (14)

Here, the above mentioned lines from the text vividly portray the death of Babu Udaybhan. And the presence of such lumpen proletariat in the capitalistic society like Matai is responsible for his death. In a sense, it can be argued that the capitalistic social structure is responsible for his death since the lumpen proletariats are the outcome of dehumanizing effects of capitalism. Babu Udaybhan is a breadwinner of his family. This death amid of the marriage preparation is the harbinger of the disintegration of his family in the upcoming future along with the certain upheavals in Nirmala's marriage.

The unexpected death of Babu Udaybhan in the critical situation brings lots of problems and challenges in the future of Nirmala's family. He was only the member of that family who could generate income for the family. The whole family survived on his labor. After this death, all the responsibilities and economic burden of the family rests on the shoulder of Kalyani mother of Nirmala. But there no any income

generating sources in her hand. Neither she owns property, nor could she earn money. However, she wants to accomplish the task of Nirmala's marriage. But the groom's father, Balchandra desires to halt the marriage of his son with Nirmala thinking that Kalyani would not be able to make proper arrangements for the guests during marriage ceremony as he has no sources of income and the earning man in the family has been already dead. Balchandra, being a representative of male bourgeoisie of the then contemporary Indian society holds a different attitude towards Kalyani. He says:

Kalyani is merely a poor woman. How could she afford for the huge expense of her daughter's marriage? She has no job, no money. If his husband had lived, we could expect something. Now our expectations are over. We can't marry our son to Nirmala. Kalyani is not wealthy enough to meet our demands . . . (22).

Here, capitalistic as well as patriarchal tone can be easily detected in the words delivered by Balchandra. He has negative attitude towards women who doesn't have access to the economic activities in the Indian society. In his context, it is appropriate to introduce Marxist feminist rite Alexandra Kollontai, who offered a remedy for the class cum gender oppression in the society. In her article, "*The social Basis of the Women Question*" she contends;

Specific economic factors were behind the subordination of women, natural qualities have been a secondary factor in this process. Only the complete disappearance of these factors, only the evolution of those forces which at some point in the past gave rise to the subjection of women, is able in a fundamental way to influence and change their social position. (80) `

Here, primarily her argument is that women have been side lined to margins due to economic causes. As women are only considered as domestic labor devoid of any wages, they have no rules in the major economic activities of a family as well as of a society. Same is the case with Kalyani. Owing to the exploitive social structure of bourgeoisie society, she is deprived of being involved in economic activities. Since one is kept away from economic activity she has become poor and is unable to make proper arrangements for her daughter's marriage. The Marxist feminist like Alexandra Kollontai holds the view that private property, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the root cause of women's oppression in the contemporary social context. It can be well asserted that if Kalyani had owned her private property and if she had an access to the economic activities, she could have attained a different status in the society as Balchandra would have got no space to raise a question about her inability to conduct her daughter's marriage well.

This project also brings forth the issue of dowry, the ways in which different social classes enter into the negotiation exchange during matchmaking, producing a residential category of women for whom demands of dowry are entertained. These women are marked by a combination of poor social economic and normative gender attributes that restricts their access to patriarchal norms of femininity and relegates them to the margins of the marriage market. Nirmala in the text too falls a victim of such custom of property exchange in the form of dowry. Her marriage with the son of Balchandra that had been already fixed gets halted after her father passed away. The family of bridegroom expects some property in the form of dowry from Nirmala's family. But the untimely demise of Babu Udaybhan, a bread winner the family moulds the situation. After his death, bridegroom family think that Kalyani is not

economically well enough to provide the dowry as per their expectations as she owns no property and job. Thus, that marriage gets cancelled.

Kalyani sends Pandit Moteram, a matchmaker to bride groom's house to convince Balchandra to rethink over the cause of Nirmals's marriage. She writes a letter to him requesting to marry his son to her daughter. But Balchandra is not touched by it. Being a product of bourgeois society, he just calculates about the economic advantage from the marriage but neglects the social relations the makes lots of pretentious and false reasons to Pandit Moteram to reject his son's marriage with Nirmala. But the ultimate cause of his disinterestedness to adopt Nirmala as his daughter in law is dowry. The following narration from the narrator in the next clarifies this context further:

Rangili Bai was preparing beetle leaf, hearing him she said "I have told you that we will have he marriage in that house". Balchandra, "yes, I have said so, but due to hesitation I couldn't say it had to make a fake story". Rangilibai, "What is the harm in telling the truth? It's our wish; if we don't want the relationship then we will not have it. When we are getting ten thousand rupees as dowry elsewhere, why should we accept their daughter? Their daughter is not made of gold. Had Vakil Sahib been alive, he would have given fifteen or twenty thousand rupees without mentioning it. What is left now? (2)

The above mentioned lines from he text clearly state that Nirmala's marriage has been cancelled for dowry Rangilibai, the groom's mother accepts the fact that they she is not willing to get her son married to Nirmala because they are not receiving any dowry from bride's side. If Vakil Sahib (Udaybhan) had been alive, the Nirmala's family would have been able to provide dory. But he is dead, so the economic

condition of Nirmala's family has been degraded. And another fact is that they are expecting ten thousand rupees as dowry from where so they regard marriage with Nirmala as insignificant deal. As they are blindfolded in the bourgeoisie society by the bourgeois ideology of economic benefit, they turn their back toward Nirmala's family.

In this context, it is appropriate to introduce the ideas of Indian Marxist, Dr. Praveena Kodoth who states that such demands and negotiations of dowry are the cause behind the disintegration of the families of lower class of people who can't afford for the appropriate dowry. She further contends:

. . . in endorsing marriage as an important element of women social security, the bourgeoisie society enables the families to invest disproportionately in marriage are a serve financial strains on parents of girls as the painstaking and often stressful process of 'looking' for a boy' dovetails with the financial out lays for the wedding in including dowries that are often disproportionate to the level of family income.

(1)

The prevalent and rampant system of negotiations for dowry is one of the malpractices of bourgeoisie led societies that eventually lead to the disintegration of many families. As the shoulders of the family of bride the society compels them to invest the family income disproportionately in their daughter's marriage and as a result the family suffers from the financial crises in the upcoming days. If the parents fail to manage the appropriate arrangements to meet the demands of dowry from boy's side, the girls are obliged to remain unmarried or they are compelled to get married with elderly and widowed groom. In this case too, the girls do not get physical, emotional as well as mental satisfaction. They are forced to lead an unhappy life with

full of dissatisfaction. They can't enjoy their married and conjugal life and their lies the seed of family degradation and disintegration owing to the bourgeoisie culture of dowry in Indian context.

In this context, the system of dowry as promoted by the bourgeoisies society, in the form of monetary payments can be regarded as the commodification refers to reification or objectification that is derived from Hegelian-Marxist however, this term was itself used by Georges Lukacs in his work 'History and Class Consciousness.' Oxford Dictionary defines reification as “the mental conversion of a person or an abstract concept into a thing.” The human values are also converted into a thing in the context of Nirmala's marriage in the negotiation of dowry. Thomas Manter also defines reification as “the turning of something into a thing or object” (363).

The bride Nirmala has also been turned into an object by the bourgeois i.e. the society regards Nirmala as an object which is a means for monetary bargaining in the form of bride price or dowry on marriage. Commodification occurs in the context of Nirmala's marriage when the concepts of marriage that is supposed to describe a healthy human relationship is utilized by the bourgeoisie as a means for financial bargain.

According to Marxist concepts in capitalist society, the lower class of people are used and treated as the capitalist want. The human relations and values can be fixed and controlled to the capitalist's desires. The marriage can be fixed and cancelled as per their wish as in the case of Nirmala. As Manter asserts "reification occurs when something that depends on human decision and an action" (363), the institution of marriage has also been reified in the context of Nirmala's marriage. The sacred institution of marriage is turned down into a marriage market where there prevails the negotiations and bargaining for bride price and the brides are frequently

purchased and sold as per the wish and desires of capitalists. So, the capitalist reify human beings state of mind or social practice when the when social and human relations are traded as an object or marketable commodity. In this context of the social reality of the text *Nirmala* so called high class people from bourgeoisie culture want nothing except to make maximum economic profit by marketing human beings and their relationships by changing human relations, emotions, feelings and cultural practices into commodity or things without respecting the real essence of these human values.

In the capitalist society, the lower class of people like the family of Udaybhan in the text are always treated as commodities and thus reified. They are reified because of the hegemony of capitalists. In capitalism, the upper class of people like Babu Balchadra maintain control over dominance but also ideologically, though a hegemonic culture in which the values a consensus culture develops in which people in the working class identify their own good with the good of the bourgeoisie and help to maintain the status quo rather than raising a strong voice against capitalism. In the novel too, Premchand has created a character in the form of Udaybhan was instead of revolting the bourgeois tendency of spending huge sum of money of the arrangement for his daughter's marriage. He has been totally homogenized for his bourgeoisie ideology. He has internalized the bourgeois notions and leads to maintain the status quo-Regarding hegemony, Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist thinker states:

Permeation throughout society of a system values, attitudes belief and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo-in power relations, hegemony, in this sense might be defined as a "organizing principle" that is diffused by the procency socialization into every area of daily life. (qtd. in Boggs 39)

This above extract has the implication that hegemony power means consent to be governed and working class always given consent with capitalist and they are always dominated by capitalist. So, being guided by this hegemonic culture, Babu Udaybhan intends to follow the bourgeoisie tradition investing money from family income in Nirmala's marriage to maintain a social status, though he comes from a poor class of family. Hence, he desires to make perfect arrangements for his daughter's marriage in such a way that "nothing was to be left unattended, so nobody could complain people would remember this wedding and praise, it for years to come" (2).

Similarly, the text further reveals the evidences about the tendency of bourgeoisie to cling on economic profit being indifferent towards the social relations. The capitalist are always concerned about their material prosperity without caring for the human values and relations. Bhuvan Mohan, the groom who cancelled his marriage with Nirmala can be illustrated as a perfect instance of the people who always entertain the reification of human values. Though his marriage had already been fixed with Nirmala however, he cancels it as he senses that he won't get any economic benefit from Nirmala's side due to the degraded economic condition of Nirmala's family after her father's death. He openly confesses that he wants to marry a girl who possesses lots of money for dowry. The attributed and qualities of a girl doesn't matter to him. It is only the money that matters to him a lot. In a context, the narrator narrates mother on the issue of his marriage.

Rangili, "Tell me clearly, if you would like to marry in that house or not?"

Bhuvan Mohan, "The marriage should be performed, but I will not marry in that house."

Rangili bai, "Are you not ashamed to say so?"

Bhuvan Mohan? I will not be able to collect on lakh rupees. Even if pay the examination this year, I will not hardly get a job for two hundred rupees and by the next year, my salary reaches five hundred or six hundred rupees, the major part of my life would already be over. If I marry a rich man's daughter, life will be comfortable. I don't want much, only a lakh in cash or some rich widow with property, even with a child will do.

Rangilibai, "The women can be of any type?"

Bhuvan Mohan, "Wealth hides all the defects. Even if she abuses me, I will not say anything. Who will mind being hit by a milking csow?"

(25)

The above discussion vividly depicts Bhuwan Mohan's lust for property. He expects at least one lakh from his bride. He doesn't expect love, affection and other relations of humanity rather heartily desires for the property. Materials comforts and economic prosperity is the only goal of his marriage. He doesn't seem to keep a mutual relationship with his wife; instead he merely clings to the property that he is supposed to obtain in the form of dowry form his future bride. It is doubtless that he is inclined to treat his wife as a commodity. He relegates the position of his future wife to the position of "milking cow". In this context, it would be justifiable to quote the statements of Dr. Praveena Kodoth on dowry in the circumstances of capitalistic society. She argues:

The term dowry took a very specific meaning i.e. the negotiation of exchange or demands based on transfer of property. Despite denials marriage proposal for a small section of women did involve open negotiation and payments of dowry. These women were marked by a

combination of poor social and economic profile and gender attributes circumstances that located them on the Margins of patriarchal femininity and of the marriage market ... the open negotiation and payment of dowry among a section of women revealed the patriarchal underbelly of bourgeois respectability in the region sustained by a shared ideological emphasizes on conjugality as a normative premise of feminine identity. Among those who denied resort to it, the rationale for dowry informed more sophisticated bargaining and trade offs that informed property concerns. (1)

Here, Dr. Kodoth associated the social institutions of marriage to the trade where frequently bargaining and negotiations are made. According to her, the marriage has become a system in which property gets transferred from the girl's side to the boy's family. In the name of dowry however, the girls from lower social class are destined to fall the victim of such malpractice maintained the upper class people in the capitalist society. Her ideas can be further assisted by the Marxian ideas of reification where he express that reification starts with the primitive direct barter system where he focused that it was the exchange of use values. This is changed by the exchanging goods in other human relations, customs and values with money values. He insists that reification exist to a certain extent in all social forms in so far as they reach the level of commodity, production and money circulation; but in the capitalist mode of production and in capital which in dominating category. Thus, in the developed form of capitalism, reification reaches its peak in the all forms of human relations. To assist this point, Marx further contends:

In capital -profit or still better capital interest, land-ground rent, labor wage, this economic trinity represented as the connection between the

component parts mystification of the capitalist mode of production, the reification of social relations and immediate coalescence of material production with their historical and social determination. It is an exhausted, perverted, topsy-turvy world, in which Monsieur le capital and Madam le Tern do their ghost walking as social characters and the same time directly as things. (48)

Thus, the above lines of Marx clearly signify the fact that human relations, stand and develop only in use-value. Where there is value, the capitalist society uses them and exchanges them with materials. The material enchanted world has ruled over the human relations. All the human relations have been relegated to the profit based relations not with the heartily relations. Owing to this fact Bhuwan Mohan in the text desires to have a profit based relationship where there is no value for the love, affection, emotion and human values aside and treats marriage as a system of barter where human relations are exchanged with the material value in the form of dowry. It is also pretty clear that such profit based social relations do not last for long time. Such a prevalent tendency of the commodification of women treating them as a "milking cow" and talking the social institution of marriage as a trade ultimately lead to the degeneration of social and family values resulting from the disintegration of a family.

Moreover, the project also highlights the issue of polygamy that is prevalent in the contemporary Indian society where the male who possesses the economy have freedom to marry as many wives as possesses the economy have freedom to marry as many wives as they wise. Engels asserts that in the earlier stage of these were different sorts of relationship family and sexual relationship. Some these were group marriage, polygamy. In terms of family structures, Engels argues that group marriage

was the earliest form of the family. As societies developed, there began to be "prohibitions regarding appropriate sexual partners" (Sydie 95). However, in the feudal system, there was a gradual development towards the pairing family a male female form of relationship. As in the earlier stages, polygamy regained its position in the feudal societies where all the economy was on the hands of males. In the novel for, such an instance of practice for polygamy can be noticed.

After Nirmala's marriage gets missed with Bhuvan Mohan, her mother tries her best to seek for an appropriate boy for Nirmala. Pandit Moteram, a match maker accumulates lots of information about many boys and displays their status to Kalyani. He proposes different boys from different socio-economic backgrounds to convince Kalyani for her daughter's marriage. In one case, he brings a proposal for polygamy. He brings a proposal of a landowner's son who is rich and earns handsome amount money however, he already possesses a wife. As he has no children from his first wife, he desires to marry second one. The narrator further clarifies this situation as: "Moteram, "look at this third one. This is a landowner son-and they have some irrigated land also. The boy is not very second marriage . . . but there is no children. But they live well and rich" (35).

The above lines imply that a landowner can keep more than one wife. He has land and money so that he can marry another wife too. If he had been poor, he wouldn't have desired for second marriage. Since Nirmala is poor she is unable to get an appropriate husband according to her will. All the social relations are determined by the wealth and property. Similarly, Pundit Moteram brings another proposal of second marriage. The man is already thirty five years old with three children. But his first wife has already been dead. In this context the narrator narrates: "Moteram, "Now Look at this one. This one is lawyer, thirty five years of age earning three

hundred to four hundred rupees month. He has three sons from his first wife who is dead. He has his own house and has bought some property also" (36).

In this case too, there is a proposal for second marriage. And the groom is twenty years older than Nirmala along with three sons. However, Kalyani accepts this proposal and makes up her mind to marry her daughter with that man. Kalyani remains positive towards this proposal as his family is economically sound. In this case too, there is the continuation of polygamy where the man with property is able to enjoy his second marriage. Due to unequal economic relations, the practice of polygamy sustains in a society where the desires of females are sacrificed for the property. The females who hail from lower class are destined to remain submissive towards their husband who owns property and enjoys polygamy. In this context thinker R.A. Sydie who holds the idea of polygamy as:

. . . one man lives with one woman, but the relationship is such that polygamy and occasional infidelity remain the right of the men, even though for economic reasons polygamy is rare, while for the women the strictest fidelity is general demanded throughout the time she live with the man and adultery on her parts is cruelly punished. (111)

Here, Sydie argues that polygamy and infidelity are the parts of man's right as granted by the capitalist society. The males are the owner of the property and thus they have right to do anything they like. The society provides the male an enough space to exercise polygamy no matter the females are subjugated in this course. It is quiet evident that the values of property determines the fate and future of the females. In this regard, it can be well asserted that gross injustices and inequalities that prevail in the society are the outcome of capitalist economic relations. Marx argues "economic factors determined the human consciousness, but consciousness by life" (qtd. in

Adams 625). It implies that the economic condition of people determines their every social relations hips and mortality. In relation to the same idea, Marx further argues:

Men are the producers of their conceptions idea etc-real active men as they are conditioned by development o their productive forces of the intercourse of these up to the furthest forms, consciousness can never be anything else than consciousness existence, and existence of men in their actual life process. (qtd. in Adams 625)

Here, Marx relates the production of ideas, conceptions and consciousness to the material reality in which they live. Since Nirmala belongs to a lower class of family, she is ready to accept the widowed and aged person as her husband because he owns some property. If Nirmala's family had been rich enough to provide dowry, her consciousness would have been different from the present status. She would have been able to get a perfect by for her husband, the poverty compels her to get married with an elderly widowed person is an outcome of her economic reality. Her degraded economic condition is responsible for her mismatched marriage that ultimately leads to her family disintegration. It is because she can't enjoy a happy married life with an elderly husband who is like the age of her father.

Moreover, Kalyani, the mother of Nirmala in the novel is quiet aware about the mounting expense in her daughter's marriage in their upcoming days. Yet, despite this prediction the family is obligated to keep up the tendency of spending a huge sum of money in marriage ceremony in order to maintain their family and social values. Kalyani in on hand tries her best to convince her husband not to go for unwanted expenditure, however Babu Vdaybahan is inclined to retain the position her family in the society by exposing a grand feast and celebration in his daughters ceremony as he is completely guided by the bourgeoisie ideology. Thus, issue of expense becomes the

initiation of family conflict in Udaybhan's family. Regarding this context, the narrator narrates the ongoing discussion between Kalyani and Udayabhan:

Babu Sahib looked at her and said, "The expense will not be less than ten thousand and rupees. It may be more."

Kalyani, "In ten days it has become ten thousand from five thousand. In a months time it will become a lakh."

Udaybhan, "What can be done? We can't have the world laughing at us. If people find faults, they will make fun and says bad things . . . It has become imperative for me to make the best possible arrangement for the guests. (8)

The above discussion vividly portrays the fact that their family is not free to act on its own will, it is bound within the parameter as laid down by the bourgeoisie norms and values. The family is compelled to make its decision on according to the social norms and values in order to meet the demands of a society that has been constructed by the capitalism. In course of the preparation of Nirmala's marriage the family expense exceeds ten thousand from five thousand within the span of ten days. Owing to this fact, Kalyani is quiet scared of surmounting expenditure of her daughter's marriage. She frowns at the increasing expense and dares to make her husband aware that the expense might cross the limit of one lakh till the marriage preparation is over within a month. However, Udaybhan the breadwinner of the family is not likely to half the ongoing preparation the holds that he has to accomplish this task well so as to meet the basic requirements of the society. He doesn't wish to see the society laughing at his family. Udaybhan is determined to maintain the prestige of his family at any cost. He is scared of the social criticism and doesn't want to be a character of mockery. He is quiet aware of the fact that the capitalistic society will surely undermine his family

status if he fails to manage the better arrangements for the guests from bridegroom's side. Hence, the prevailing capitalistic social structure compels him to invest more money in Nirmala's marriage.

However, it is pretty clear that excessive expenditure on Nirmala's marriage will jeopardize the survival of the other family members in the upcoming day as the family has to bear a huge economic burden. It is because still there is a son and a daughter to be married in the future along with the remaining whole life to be lived by Nirmala's parents on Udaybhan's meager income. The family has other alternative sources of income except the meager income of Udaybhan. The family doesn't own any private property and Udaybhan's income doesn't suffice to recover the debt of Nirmala's marriage. Owing to this fact, the family is likely to fall the victim of low quality of life as it cannot fulfill the basic as well as additional needs of family members. The degradation of family initiates along with the failure of meeting the essential demands of a family that ultimately lead to the family conflict resulting family disintegration.

Regarding this context of maintaining social status, Andre Beteille in his book "*Inequality Among Men*" signifies the value of money. He holds the view that the prestige of a family dwells upon the wealth of a family fortune matters a lot for the maintenance of dignity and identity of a family in a capitalistic society. He further contends:

The importance of money comes out particularly clearly in those studies which deal primarily with "prestige classes" or with social class viewed primarily in terms of status. Differences of wealth are readily visible in small circumstances and the rise and fall of family fortunes are noted with diligence and care. (82)

Here, Andre Beteille seeks to foreground the significance of money and family property as are of the determining factor of family prestige. The families which don't own the material property are deliberately sidelined to the margins. They are not considered to be the respectable social members. This sort of social inequality ultimately impacts negative impacts on the lower class of people that leads to their family conflict and family disintegration.

Beside the analysis of marriage and family relations, this project also offers a space for the analysis class struggle, primarily the exploitation of the proletariat by the feudal in the then contemporary Indian society. The project is to excavate the suppression of working class of people in the form of domestic servants by the feudal lords who merely relegates their status in the society as the objects. The feelings and sentiments of the working class of the people do not get well respects in the capitalist society. They are physically exploited. The masters who hold the capital are devoted of feelings for humanity, Marx considers economic relations very important, for him, colonial relations, that is, and the relationship between forces of production and the means of production are responsible for the creation of class consciousness in the society. The capitalist or the bourgeoisies are the owners of capital, purchasing and exploiting labor power using the surplus value form the employment this labor power to accumulate or expand their capital.

In the text, Munshi Permchand draws a picture of how the bourgeois class creates institutions to protect and construct their economic through the exploitation of working class of people. In the novel, Pandit Moteram goes to the house of Babu Balchandra taking a message from Kalyani about Nirmala's marriage. It is because the circumstances have been changed after the death of Nirmala father, Pandit Moteram is sent to Balchandra's house in order to ease the circumstances. As Pandit reaches there,

he sees Balchandra is seated relaxed holding the position of typical feudal employing order working class of people for his comfort. In this context the narrator further narrates:

It was evening; Babu Balchandra was lying on an easy chair in the lounge of his house, semi dressed and in a relaxed mood smoking his hukka. He was a well-built man and was very tall. He was extremely dark in complexion the looked like a black monster. Two men were fanning, standing behind him but yet he was sweating. He held a high post in the income tax department and got a wage of rupees five hundred per month. He was extremely corrupt and took a lot bribe. The contractors had just to keep him happy as it would help them in their business. He was such a massive man that if he was seen on moonlight at night, not only children and women, but even men would feel scared. (16)

Here, the picture drawn by the narrator of Balchandra clearly implies that he belongs to a typical bourgeoisie class who enjoys the material comfort by the exploitation of the labor of working class of people. He has employed working class of people in his service who are fanning his massive body. A hierarchy regarding social class can be detected here. He is seating on a easy chair in the lounge because he is bourgeoisie. And his servants are standing behind him fanning his monstrous massive body this massive black physique gives a glimpse of the evils of bourgeoisies. He looks like a black monster. As a matter of fact, he is a monster a representative of the evils of bourgeoisie society not only children and women, even men are scared of him. He is a monster of bourgeoisie who engulfs all the happiness of the working class of people and satisfies his hunger of wealth. Not only this, he is also corrupt official at income

tax. He concerns nothing except his economic benefits at any cost without having any fellow feelings for his servants. This context is further narrated by the narrator as:

The minute he saw Pandit ji, he got up from his chair and welcomed him with respect saying, "Oh! Its you, we are lucky to be graced by your presence." Then he started showing the names of his servants, "Ramgulam, Bhawani, Chakaudi, Gurdeen, Jhagroo, where are you all, are you all dead, why is it that when they are needed not one of them appear. Get a chair for Sahib. (16)

From these lines it is pretty clear that capitalism is not seemingly rude and cruel, it even sounds rude and crude. Balchandra calls for servant names of his servants in a loud and rude voice. He refers them as dead people. He is behaving his servants as dead people as a objects. He has kept several servants and do not treat them well. This ill-treatment towards them vividly depicts that they are not paid well there. They are in the claptrap of the capitalism. They are compelled to tolerate the domination of capitalism due to unequal economic relations. The servants do not own private property, thus are obligated to work as servants without being paid well to sustain their family. They are the proletariats who are merely the owners of labor power with no resource other than the ability to work with their hands, bodies and mind. Since these workers have no property, in order to survive and obtain an income for themselves and their families, they are obligated to find employment and work for a rude and cruet employer like Balchandra. The worker has to work hard for a capitalist employer in an exploitative social relationship without getting appropriate wages. In the text too, we find that Balchandra is not paying his servants well. He provides them nominal wages and exploits them. Such as instance is narrated by the narrator as:

Babu Sahib repeated these five names several times, but did not send even one of the two servants fanning him to get a chair. After short while, a one eyed man came, coughing and said, "My lord, I can not do the work for such meager amount, how long will I borrow and eat." Balchandra, "Don't talk nonsense, whenever he is asked to do any work he starts crying" (17)

Here, the novelist has depicted the miserable condition of the working class of people. The servant who brings a chair has lost his one eye. He has not got good health as he is coughing but yet he has to do his work in meager amount. As Marx in the opening line of *The Communist Manifesto*, states, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle."(1), we can also excavate the enjoying class of struggle in the novel. The one eyed servants of Balchandra makes an attempts to raise a voice of resistance is immediately-silenced by Balchandra. It is because there is unequal economic relationship in the society thus a hierarchical relationship has existed between a servant and an employer. Regarding such an existences and master, George D. Pappas contends:

Once peasants became workers, a new material relationship began to develop between master and servants. In short, master became employer ad servant became worker. Workers now affected their labor in exchange for low wages employers became capitalist whereby power was exemplified by profit maximization and productivity through technological break thoughts. This relationship is based a materialistic nature. This material nature was composed of the relationship between the forces of production (worker and employer)

and worker and his labor. A new breed of consciousness emerged during this capitalist between worker (wages) and capitalist (profit). (9)

Here, George D. Pappas claims that the maternal relationship exists between a servant and his master. It clearly indicates that the masters like Balchandra are devoted of any human relationship. The relationship is particularly commodified the workers exchange their labor for meager-wages where capitalist master maximizes their profit. This sort of exploitation work relationship recreates or reproduces itself continually. The capitalist employer and master like Balchandra develop a tendency of making profit and accumulating capital. It clearly indicates that the proletariat and servants like one eyed old man in the text are exploited with the surplus time worked by the worker creating the surplus benefits for the maters. While the worker works, the benefits created by his hard labor are taken by the capitalists themselves and accumulate capital. Thus it produces the surplus value or profit for the capitalist but poverty for the workers. This occurs each day of labor process, preventing worked form gaining ownership of property and recreating the condition for further exploitation.

Moreover, such a tendency of capitalists to explore the labor of the working class of people by depressing them form their own labor ultimately leads to the family disintegration of the working class of people. The working class of people has to sustain on merger income which can't fulfill the basic as well as the additional needs of their family. As the old servants of Balchandra says, "how long will I borrow and eat," this frankly states that the working class of people have compelled to survive on borrowed money as their own income is not sufficient enough to afford for the needs of their family. They have to borrow the money with the masters like Balchandra and have to pay heavy interest. However, the masters enjoy the master's comforts form the

surplus capital obtained from the exploitation of the workers. In the context we can vividly recognize the existence class distinction between Master Balchandra and his servants. In this regard Giddens argues that classes are formed by the forces that define the mode of production, and classes are aspects of relations of production. According to Giddens, classes do not result from distribution of products (income differences, lender and borrower) social evaluation (status, honor) or political or military power, but emerge right from relationship to the process of production. Class as are an essential aspects of production, the division of labor and the labor process. To clarify it, Giddens further argues:

Classes are constituted by the relationship of grouping of individuals to the ownership of private property in the means of production. This yields a model of class relations which is basically dichotomous (since some own and others do not, some work and others live off the fruits of those who labor): all class societies are built around a primary line of division between two antagonistic classes, one dominant and other subordinate. (37)

Here, Giddens notes about the dichotomous class relationship between the worker and a servant. He foregrounds the primary line of division between these two antagonistic forces. The masters are the oppressor and the slaves are the oppressed in the society. This basic struggle concerns who performs the labor and who obtains the benefit from the labor. Marx also mentions that various tanks and orders of the society such as masters and servants, bourgeoisie and proletariat the forms of struggles between classes are primarily viewed as occurring around control and use of property, the means of production, and production as a whole and the manner in which these are used for Marx, especially in capitalism domination comes from control of economy

or material factors, although it is not confined to this the dominant class is the class which is able to own, or at least control the means of production or property which forms the basis for wealth. This class also has the capability of appropriating much of the social surplus created by workers or producers. Such as ongoing class struggles in the society have also been illustrated Balchandra's house, Balchandra orders his servants to bring a chair for Moteram to sit. No one of his servants responds him positively, the servants reluctance to responds him immediately can be analyzed as the resistance of working class of people against of the dominant capitalism. Noticing such situation, Balchandra gets furious at his servants. The narrator further narrates the incidents as:

Balchandra , "...Oh! No one has still come, Chakdi, Ramgulam, at least some one should answer."

Again that old servant came out laughing and said, "Sir please give me my salary, I cannot work like this anymore. My feets are painig due to the continuous working."

Balchandra, "you do no work but you want your money first. The whole day you are lying, coughing and doing nothing and your salary is getting accumulated. Now run and get sweets from the market for one rupee." (19)

Here, the line mentioned above from the text, illustrate the fact that the capitalism is unwilling to provide the appropriate wages for the laborers. The servants at the Balchandra's house works day and night however gets no salary except. But the market Balchandra is reluctant to grant him his price for labor. Although the servant works hard and her feet are painig due to continuous hard labor, still he is not paid well. Instead of providing his servants appropriate salary, Balchandra makes him do

more work and orders him to go market to buy sweets. However, the servants dares to resist the oppression of Balchandra by saying that he couldn't do any work anymore without being paid his proper salary, yet he is obliged to continue his work there. It happens so as he owns no any private property and means of production.

The antagonistic and contradictory nature of this system is evident here as capitalists in the form of Balchandra are attempting to reduce wages and make workers work more intensively, while the workers have exactly the opposite set of interest. Marx argues that work and the labor process in the capitalist mode of production an organized so that workers remain propertyless members for the proletariats. The surplus products and value created by workers turn into capital, while is accumulated in the hands of the capitalist by which the capitalist enjoy a comfortable life full of material comfort whereas the servants have to lead a pathetic life and have to survive their family on borrowed money. According to Marx, there is a certain unity between the classes, in that capitalist and workers use in a social relationship with each other. However, it is a unity of opposites, an antagonistic social relationship, with struggle between these two classes.

Furthermore, Munshi Premchand has illuminated the existing class struggles in the contemporary Indian society that was obviously governed by the capitalism. He has also attempted to portray how the working classes of people tend to construct their own consciousness in the society on the basis o their economic status in the society. The narrator, in the text narrates the conversation between Pandit Moteram and the old servants as:

Moteram," . . . I told him not to be angry as you are an old man, and would take sometime to come, I was wondering about Babu Sahib's strange behavior and how he retains his helpers with that attitude."

Servant, "Nobody except me has stayed here for so long and nobody ever will. He doesn't give the salary and if you ask for it, he gets angry poor. Servants have no choice but to leave the job. The servants who were fanning are the official helpers, he gets two people and that is why they are still with him. I feel that there is no point leaving Ten years have passed like this, let me work for a few more years." (26)

In the above discussion between Pandit Moteram and the servant, it has been clearly stated that the servants have to undergo extreme exploitation in the house of Balchandra. The servants do not get angry. Even Pandit Moteram expresses his dissatisfaction towards Balchandra's negative attitudes towards the servants. The servant states that he has passed ten years like this and also desires to work for Balchandra for a few more years. The economic condition of the servants' moulds his consciousness in such a way that he feels it better to work at Balchandra's house rather than leaving the job as the earlier servants did. He feels that there is no point in leaving as he doesn't own any private property. In this regard Marx also notes that there are many reasons why the proletariat would become a class that is conscious of its own position, power, responsibilities and opportunities. The objective situation of the class exists because of its place in the productive forces. Ownership or non-ownership of the means of production, position in the labor process, and the control over surplus determine this. A class in itself is a class that exists in common conditions in a society. These are the classes such as bourgeoisies and proletariats. However, the members of such a class may not be aware of their common position or interest and are not able to act on these. In this context Adams and Sydie contend:

A class for itself is a class that develops consciousness of itself, knows its position and capabilities within society and is able to take actions in

its own interest using this knowledge. The working class may acquire subjective awareness of its own position and situation, and thus develop a working class consciousness. (37)

Moreover in the text it can be well asserted that the root cause of the disintegration of family is the existing unequal economic relationships between males and females. The prominent female characters in the novel like Nirmala, Kalyani, Rukmimi, Krishna and Rangalibai are economically dependent upon males particularly their husbands. Basically, the societies in capitalism are particularly and the owner of private property are the males which gives rise to economic inequality dependence and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women. It becomes the root of women's oppression in the current social context that gives rise to the family disintegration.

In the novel, Nirmala gets married to an elderly widowed man Munshi Totaram. He is of her father's age having 3 children from previous wife. Nirmala, after entering his life as a bride, is confined within the domestic chores whereas her husband enjoys the outer spheres of the society being economically active. Her position is relegated merely to a domestic house wife and is deprived of economic activities. Her potentialities end up with the care for her step sons and performing kitchen works. As Marx and Engels in their analysis of gender oppression in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* outline that a woman's subordination is not a result of her biological disposition but of socio-economic relations, here Nirmala's confinement within household chores too signifies the same fact.

Nirmala's family, in that given social context is a proletariat that survives on the daily wages of Munshi Totaram, a male thus head of the family. However, in that family too, Nirmala becomes a proletariat having no access to the means of the

production and economic activities. The women perform the task of domestic servants for the male bourgeoisie without getting any wages for their labor. In this regard, Engels opines, "The man takes the command in the home also, the woman is degraded and reduced to servitude, she becomes the slave of his lust and mere instruments for the production of children" (qtd. Sydie 120-121). According to him women are merely the domestic servants for the male bourgeoisie. The males have command over their wives and their activities. Their social position is reduced into servitude being a slave for her husband. Husband exploits her in all aspects. In this regard Engels further notes that "within the family he is bourgeoisie, and the wife represents the proletariat" (Sydie 137). It means that the husband, father and patriarch become the master with slaves, and with wife servants and children servants. There are many different forms that this takes place in different societies, "but in all cases the general relationship is seen to show that women are subject men in and out of marriage" (Sydie 97).

In the novel, Nirmala is found to be engaged in her domestic tasks devoid of any wages and salary. In the time of her sister's marriage, Nirmala tries to provide economic support to her mother however she fails to do it. Kalyani, her mother runs out of money in preparation of Krishna's marriage but Nirmala finds herself helpless to provide economic help to her mother. Kalyani invites Nirmala, but she is unable to attend in the marriage ceremony of Krishna in time as she is busy in her domestic chores. In this context, the narrator narrates:

Nirmala, though very busy with household chores could not stay back in the time for Krishna's marriage arrived. Her mother had lovingly invited her. The biggest attraction was that Krishna was getting married into the same house where Nirmala's marriage had once been

fixed. She had feared that Krishna would also be married to an unsuitable partner, due to lack of money. She wanted to give some money to her mother for her sister's marriage, but now her resources were also diminishing. Vakil Sahib was not working any more and the money lender had started litigation against him. (114)

Here, it has been clearly stated that Nirmala is not free to exercise her outer space of the society. Neither she is free nor does she generate income. She works hard, however earns nothing. In this case, the Marxist Feminists see ongoing gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. This gender oppression and the relationship between man and women in the society are similar to the relations between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained as it serves the interest of capital and ruling class. The domestic work is excluded from wages work. So that the women like Nirmala do not own any economic resources. Therefore, she is unable to support her mother economically. Although she wanted to give some money to her sister's marriage, however she has no economic resources and the existing resources are also diminishing. She is economically dependent on her husband and the money lender. This sort of existing male female economic inequality eventually leads to the degeneration of the family.

Similarly, in another incident, Nirmala reaches her mother's house to attend her sister's marriage. Both the sisters, Nirmala and Krishna share their happiness and sorrows of their life and go to the bed. But around two in the night Nirmala wakes up as the baby cries. She is surprised not to see Krishna in her bed. She searches for Krishna and finally finds her in her own room sitting deeply engrossed at the spinning

wheel. The whole house was asleep and there was Krishna so immersed in her spinning as if she was in a state of meditation. The narrator further narrates:

Nirmala, "What are you doing? Is it time to spin?"

Krishna got startled by her sudden appearance and feeling shy, "How did you wake up? I had kept the water near your bed."

Nirmala, "Don't you get time in the day that you are spinning in the middle of the night?"

Krishna, "There is no free time during the day." (119)

From the above discussion we can certainly assume that the females are really subordinated in the family. They don't have enough time at the day time and have to work for night too. Krishna doesn't get enough time to spin at day as she is busy in domestic activity and thus keeps her busy herself at night. Marx views how working class is exploited for profit by the capitalists who gain wealth by paying workers a bare minimum of the value they produce. However, the Marxist feminists view the capitalist drive for profits as responsible for women's second class status and other forms of oppression. Women, in their houses are treated as worker and exploited at higher level. Women are also a source of unpaid domestic labor which is an arrangement that allows the world of the capitalists to accumulate more private property.

Owing to these varied economic reasons, Niramla's family disintegrates at the end. The eldest step son dies; two other flee away from home to get rid of their family poverty. Munshi Tottaram, husband of Nirmala leaves home and Nirmala in search of his run away sons and doesn't return home. Nirmala is obliged to lead a desperate lonely life in utter darkness of poverty along with her newly born daughter. She doesn't have enough money to afford for food and milk for her daughter. The milk

man stops to bring milk as Rukmini says, "His wife came and said that you first have to pay the old bills then only will supply the milk . . ." (190). The health condition of the Nirmala gradually declines. She gets weak day by day and "Nirmala refused to take medicines when she was sick. What else could she do, money was hardly sufficient for food, where could she buy the medicine from" (193). Ultimately, Nirmala too passes away and her family gets totally shattered which is an outcome of unhealthy economic relationship in the society that is in the claptrap of capitalism.

III. Exploitation to Disintegration

In this research, the capitalist notion of lower class people inferior has been put under assault in order to assert the identity of the working class of people. The social structure and economic discrimination created by the bourgeoisie for the exploitation of working class people has been questioned bringing the suffering and miserable condition of the life of working class of people. The contemporary social reality of the situation of proletariats of that Indian society is highlighted in this research.

The novel gives a glimpse of how the proletariats were perceived and treated by the capitalists in the Indian society. The novel also talks about the various modes of exploitation along with the negative outcome of such exploitation in the lives of working class people. We can broadly notice the different images of people in the text; hard working lower middle class representatives like Babu Vdaybhan and Munshi Totaram, the female proletariats who are deprived of socio-economic activities like Kalyani and Nirmala, the bourgeoisie representative like Balchandra, the exploited servants and other many. Although most of the events in the novel have been presented as the exploitation of the proletariats as they are sidelined to the margins by the dominant capitalism, yet there are some place where the proletariats to have been offensive towards the capitalism. This sense of periodical resistance suggests the gradual progress of proletariats towards their way of liberation to assert their own space in the society. Yet, the system of capitalism is so deeply rooted in the society that the proletariats in one way or other have to undergo immense sufferings.

This project on *Nirmala* raises the issue of high degree of socio-economic inequality prevalent in the society regarding the proletariats. Nevertheless, this research dismantles the pre-existing and prevalent hierarchy between bourgeoisie and

proletariats. Somehow, the research nourishes the exploited characters from working class in order to make them assertive and strong willed who struggle hard against of the capitalism in the class-segregated environment. This research has empowered the voice of the voiceless proletariats to bring them to the mainstream. The inaudible voice of the proletariats is made audible for to counter the prevailing bourgeois attitude.

Moreover, this project conveys the message that the existing unequal socio-economic relation among the people in the society leads to the plight of the happiness of the poor people. The issue of dowry system as an existing evil of the Indian society, the commodification of the human values has been touched in an effective way in the present research. In the societies where the capitalism is in an elevated position, the working classes of people too have the compulsion of managing enough dowries to get a good social status. In course of it, they undergo various sufferings along with harassment, social violence and economic deprivation. It is also quite evident that geographical and cultural locations, economic, social and political conditions also determine the varied layers of experiences of the working class of people.

To wrap up, the present research on *Nirmala* clearly states that the discrimination practices from the part of capitalism in the society always comes up with negative impact upon the daily lives of the proletariats. The social system, codes, values with the mode of thinking as structured by the capitalism is always directed towards the exploitation of the working class of people that ultimately disintegrates the happiness of the somehow sustaining poor families by shattering their dreams. The bourgeoisie ideology rules the minds of the proletariats as they get hegemonized by the way of bourgeoisie thinking and thus are compelled to lose their family

happiness in making attempts to meet the social expectations from their poor economic background, however they fail to do it merely getting lots of sufferings, sorrow, fragmentation, deprivation, separation, degeneration and ultimately the plight of family and happiness as the major characters of the novel *Nirmala* and Munshi Totaram had to undergo such experiences.

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Abstract

Nirmala, an Indian novel by Munshi Premchand has its roots anchored in the capitalist society where the proletariats undergo profound suffering. The present research in *Nirmala* explains the prevalent exploitation upon working class people and examines the then Indian society, especially attacking the epoch long norm that the lower class people are the objects to be used. It studies the system of marriage regarded as a barter system in the dominant capitalist mode of society and the tendency of giving priority to surplus value. The tendency of people being indifferent to human values have been put under assault by bringing forth the degeneration of the working class families as an outcome of such tendency.