

I: Introduction

Anton Chekhov's short stories break the female stereo-typical images and represent them as bold, hard, resistant, career conscious women who take interest in social and external activities. Traditionally, the female are tagged with the stereotypical images of passivity, timidity, physical weakness, submissiveness, fragility, sewing, cooking, taking care of and being faithful to the husband and family. But Chekhov represents bold and hard women subverting this image. Chekhovian women challenge the patriarchal conception. They do not hide their desires and instincts: they are brave characters. Chekhov's stories reflect the women's quest for self autonomy and identity ignoring the patriarchal values.

Female representation from antiquity seems to be unsatisfactory for the feminists. Male-power is everywhere and it misrepresent women for male's own superiority and to relegate the women to the lesser important position. Religion, law and science are all methods of patriarchal control working to define and limit women. In most of the fairy tales, male ideology is implemented which creates the demarcation of male superiority and female inferiority. It equates femininity with submission, encouraging women to tolerate familial abuse, wait patiently to be rescued by a man, and views marriage as the only desirable reward for right conduct. It represents the female as timid, and incapable of rescuing herself and male as rescuer and masculine figure. Male discourse played a vital role to tag the female with series of negative images and the male with weighty images. Even the agencies have generated male discourse in the society. Most of the print and electronic medias have represented women either as an ideal house wife or as a recreational object but not as human being with a separate personality. So, female stereotypical image is constructed by male hegemonial power. It deserves to be broken. The main concern of

feminist movement is to represent and understand female rightly and to break apart such constructed female stereotypical images; that Chekhov does in the representation of female characters in his short stories. Chekhov believes in the female boldness and their capacity to balance with the male. And therefore, he never considers women to be weak. What he wants them is to assert themselves and prove their ability to man, to make them understand that they are not inferior to male rather equalizer and sometime superior to male. Chekhov intention is to say that female are not deserve to be tagged with stereotypical images. As a result of this attitude, Chekhov writings reflect his very high opinion about women.

Patriarchy is the main ideology of the male dominated society, which restricts women to go in the open air. It binds women inside the home. They are restricted from enjoying and joining different professions. From the outset of human civilization, women are dominated and ill treated according to the deep rooted patriarchal rules and regulations. Society has been formed by the male oriented notion which has kept women in the inferior position and tagged with different negative images, social norms and values, behaviors and all other aspects of the society are controlled and guided by the male authority. So, they are tagged with weighty images. Men use their so-called superiority to dominate social, political, cultural, economic and religious aspects. In such society, women are not given any opportunities to uplift them. Rather they are forced to accept the male ideology. Patriarchy aspects women to serve men physically, taking care of husband, their homes, property, clothing. It sexually expects women as wives, mistress or prostitutes. It expects in the case of physical strength as female are and should be weak, fragile and timid. Female should assure the husband of her chastity. They should not even think of extra-relationship except from their legal husband. Remarriage is strictly prohibited for them. They are considered as

domestic beings whose attempt to walk out of their roles becomes a crime. They should pass their entire life within the four walls of their home. Males have controlled the conceptual factor and have determined and constructed the social values and institutions. And in such a case, females cannot name, explain and define the realities of their own experience. They are entwined everywhere with patriarchal vines. Whenever they break the patriarchal values, they are graded as 'second class'. If they show interest in autonomous and equal life with males, if they become bold, hard, resistant and assertive, ignoring the patriarchal boundaries, they are thought to be over-smart and tagged with a negative image as 'bad women'. But if they follow the patriarchal norm and become happy with their stereotypical image, they are respected as 'good women' or 'ideal women'. The 'good women' obey the patriarchal values. They have no needs of their own. They are completely satisfied by serving their husbands and families. They sacrifice their desires for the sake of their husbands' and families' happiness. They do not struggle or raise their voice for their autonomy and identity. They take sex as frightening or disgusting. They remain uninterested in sexual activities, except for the purpose of legitimate procreation, because it is believed in patriarchy that it is unnatural for women to have sexual desire. They accept their constructed stereotypical images and follow the traditional rules. But the 'bad women' release themselves from the male hegemonial power and ignore all the patriarchal bars and bondage for their right of choice. They always want newness in the society. They do not limit themselves within male-drawn boundaries. They have strong feminist and social ideas. Chekhovian women such as Anna, Raissa, Nadya and so on ignore the patriarchal norms and values. Since the patriarchy tags the bold, hard, resistant and assertive women as 'bad women', and passive, submissive, timid women as 'ideal women', Chekhovian women are also attributed with a series of negative images of 'bad women'. Chekhov

wants to strengthen women providing them the autonomous role of the 'heroes' in his stories. They have heroic character with autonomous power to strengthen female in the society. Chekhov is known for his advocacy of women's right and their higher social dignity. So, his stories are not written only to entertain his readers but also to reform the society. Chekhov challenges the Aristotelian concept of the heroic figure is only male, not female, and shows heroic figure in his short stories. His stories portray the female heroes to attack the society which regards female for their supremacy. Chekhov represents activist women to create self autonomy and self-identity. He shows the power of female character. Those bold Chekhovian women neglect all patriarchal ideology and move step for their autonomy and selfhood.

The main issue of feminist movement is to strike the so-called patriarchal norms and values made against women's autonomy and identity. Feminism is one of the many humanitarian voices related to social justice movement. It is not always gentle and calm but appears sometimes in the form of violent struggles and revolts. The main focus of this movement is to make female bold, strong, career conscious and sometime hard, resistant and assertive if needed. This movement also pertains with to free women from the patriarchal ideologies and to free them from cultural restraints which restrict women's identity within a narrow boundary. This movement strongly disregards the cultural definition of women. The stereotypical images of women is also cultural definition that feminism strongly opposes. This cultural definition limits women's autonomy, identity and existence within the male dominated world. Its role is to break the male hegemony. In a nutshell, the main aim of the feminists is to establish women's original status, image, autonomy and self-identity in the society by rejecting the male superiority and cultural domination, which helps them to dismiss the misrepresentation of women in the society. Feminism aims to

provide women's equal education and employment as well as free expression of women's experience. It endeavors to break male domination, suppression and discrimination on the basis of age, class, gender, language and tries to keep balance of power between male and female.

Chekhov's stories have been called psychological, but it is psychological in a very different sense from Tolstoy's, Dostoyevsky's or Marcel Proust's. His characters are singularly lacking in individual personality. Personality is absent from his stories. His characters all speak the same language, what is Chekhov's own. They cannot be recognized, as Tolstoy's and Dostoyevsky's can, by the mere sound of their voices. They are alike, all made of the same material- "the common stuff of humanity"- and in this sense Chekhov is the most "democratic" the most "unanimist" of all writers. Tolstoy attempts to 'tell', and Chekhov to 'show' the psychological state of their characters (Gullason, 269). The most famous of Chekhov short stories about children are similar in theme and structure. There is the same situation of a friendless, exploited child, the same alternation between past and present in the child's mind, and a surprising action at the end by the child to resolve his unbearable situation. All Chekhov's work is symbolical, but in most of his stories the symbolism is less concrete and more vaguely suggestive (Yermilov, 248). Chekhov either begins his stories with some single sentence which leads into the very essence of the narrative, or manages without even that. He confronts the challenges and cliches and stereotypes, the fixed perspectives and conventions of his times; widens and deepens the vision of reality and human nature. Chekhov's story's ending is famously open. In his stories, Chekhov successfully creates and develops, and generally canonizes in literature, the ending without resolution. Most of his stories end with the word 'began',

'think', 'reflected', 'thought' that contain the key to Chekhov's ending as the most important compositional element.

Literature Review:

Chekhov's stories have drawn the attention of many critics. Many critics have attempted different possibilities of interpretation of his stories right from the beginning to the recent time. Eudora Welty asserts:

It is the story he's written that has gained a self-a clear, unself-conscious, identity, vigorous, purposeful ongoing. This freeing of the form came from the depths of his temperament, we might suppose.

Thus, he dared to make himself free to enter the body. Spirit, mind and heart of a character and free of any crippling wish to use him for himself or as moral example. In the whole population of Chekhov's characters, every single one, the least, the smallest, the youngest, the most obscure, has its clear identity. No life is too brief or too inconsequential for him to be inattentive to its own reality. (1473)

Chekhov exposes the psychology of his characters by entering into their body, mind and soul. The seems to be reality in the representation of his characters. Every Chekhovian characters have their own identity. His characters sketch is nor too brief or too inconsequential.

Vladimir Nobokov criticizes Chekhov's 'The Lady with the Dog'. He reviews the story as:

A hard women with strong feminist and social ideas or her time but one whom her husband finds in his heart of hearts to be narrow, dull minded and devoid of grace. The natural transition is to Gurov's constant unfaithfulness to her, to his general attitude toward women-

'that inferior race' is what he calls them but without that inferior race he could not exist. (1472)

Vladimir Nobokov criticizes on Chekhov's representation of male-female relationship and male's attitude to hard and bold female. Virginia Llewellyn Smith sees Chekhov's own biographical sketch in 'The Lady With the Dog'. She posits her view on it as:

Chekhov's own attitudes and experience have clearly shaped Gurov's character and fate. The reader is told that Gurov 'was not yet forty': Chekhov was thirty-nine when he wrote 'The Lady With the Dog'. His (Gurov's) wife seems 'much older than he' and imagines herself to be an intellectual: familiar danger-signals. She is summed-up in three words; 'stiff, pompous, dignified' which epitomize a type of women that Chekhov heartily disliked. (314)

Smith's criticism denies anti-feminist inclination in Chekhov. Gurov in the story dislike the hard and assertive type of his wife. And Smith points out the same Gurov's nature in Chekhov.

Karl Kramer posits his view on the relationship and representation of the narrator, a painter and Lidia in 'The House with Mansard' as:

He (the narrator) indicates his passive nature again when he bows before Lida's decision that romance must come to an end. At the real center of the story, then stands the narrator, who vacillates between the extreme character types of Zhenia, who leads and is led by Zhenia, who admires and adores the strength of Lida's personality. (316)

Kramer claims that the narrator surrenders his philosophical thought to the strength personality of Lidia. He bows his head down before Lida's action of departing narrator from Zhenia.

Karl Kramer comments 'The Betrothed' as the story of ambiguity in the representation of Nadya. He states as:

The question remains: has Nadya escaped a narrowly provincial life and will she find some kind of more exalted existence, or is she condemned to an endless repetition of these awakenings and disillusionment? It seems to me both interpretation are equally tenable and this, of course, is at the heart of the story's ambiguity. (318)

Kramer shows the ambiguity in Nadya's twice escape from home for better life; whether she gets better future or it is merely the repetition of her awakenings of her life.

Leo Tolstoy criticizes on Chekhov's treatment to the characters in 'The Darling'. He posits his view on it as:

The author (Chekhov) evidently wanted to laugh at this pitiful creature-as he judged her with his intellect, not with his heart-this 'Darling', who, after sharing Kukin's troubles about his theater and then immersing herself in the interests of the timber business, under the influence of the veterinary surgeon considers the struggle against bovine tuberculosis to be the most important matter in the world, and is finally absorbed in questions of grammar and the interests of the little schoolboy. Kukin's name is ridiculous, and so even in his illness, and the telegram announcing his death. The timber dealer with his sedateness is ridiculous; but the soul of 'Darling', with her capacity for devoting herself with her whole being to the one she loves, is not ridiculous but wonderful and holy. (318)

Tolstoy blames Chekhov of ridiculing his female character Olenka in 'The Darling'. For Tolstoy, Chekhov represented her as a ridiculous character whose intention was to laugh at her. Tolstoy, in such way, tries to prove Chekhov as anti-feminist. But another critic Renato Poggitio safe-guards Chekhov from the Tolstoin accusation of anti-feminist. Renato criticizes on Tolstoin criticism as:

Nothing could be more exact, or better said; yet one may wonder whether Tolstoy is equally right in identifying the motive that had led the author of 'The Darling' to take the pen. What Chekhov meant to do was to reassert his belief in his belief in the ideal of woman's emancipation, in her right and duty to have a mind and a soul of her own. While acknowledging the artistic miracle which had turned a satirical vignette into a noble human image, Tolstoy seems to enjoy as a good joke the implication that the author had to throw his beliefs overboard in the process. Being strongly adverse to the cause of women's emancipation, Tolstoy speaks here for himself, but the readers has no compelling reason to prefer Tolstoy's anti-feminism to Chekhov's feminism. (324)

Here, Renato proves Chekhov as feminist writer whose effort is to emancipate women for their right and duty. he persuades us that readers prefer Chekhov's feminist idea to Tolstoy's anti-feminist idea.

This thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first one is an introduction, which introduces the main thesis topic, main aim of feminism and includes literature review. The second chapter provides a theoretical basis for the analysis of the text. It primarily consists of a discussion on the definition of feminism, representation of women from antiquity and role of power in it and female stereotype.

The third chapter analyses these stories "The House with the Mansard", "The Witch", "Anna in the Neck", "The Betrothed", "The Darling", "The Lady With the Dog", "A Misfortune", "The Horse Stealers" and "Ionitch" in detail on the basis of the theoretical modality developed in the preceding chapter. The last chapter summarizes the argument and ideas.

II: Theoretical Modality: Feminism

Feminism

Feminism pertains with marginalization of all women. It is the social movement that seeks equal right for women giving them equal status with men and freedom to decide their career and life pattern. This movement itself grows out of previous centuries of struggle by women to win equal rights. It questions such long-standing dominant male phallogocentric ideology, patriarchal attitudes and male interpretation in the society where there women have been excluded to marginality. Feminism is an aggressive conscious feeling of women who begin to reject their own passivity and aims to develop women's personalities. Sheila Ruth, about this movement, posits her view as; "A Conceptualization of the women's movement that strikes me as more helpful and more constructive is simply that of women moving toward greater strength and freedom both in their awareness and in their socio-political position" (444). Women's movement aims to make and feel the women mentally and socially strength and freedom. Women are taken to be weak in term of education, culture, body whereas male are considered as strong in every aspect of life. Due to this deep rooted gender conception, men dominate women. Thus, the main target of the feminists has become to change or revolt against such misconception on gender construction, and to identify and remedy the sources of all kinds of oppression and subordination. So, feminists are ultimately in pursuit of a more radical change, the creation of the world where one gender does not set the standard of human values.

Many discussions attempt to fix origin of the women movement. Different scholars argue differently to pinpoint the origin of this movement. Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the abolition of slavery and the American Civil Rights Movements have been pinpointed for origin. These attempts have a certain logic, but

they can be misleading. They tend to focus attention not on one movement but on many; an eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century movements each with a discernible starting point, each built around distinct needs and goals, and each with separate and characteristic political attitudes, personalities and strategies. Sheila Ruth sees no fixed origin of the women's movement. She asserts;

Women's movement has been conceptualized and communicated in varying contents-political, economic, psychological or even physical and it is not easily confined to one model. From this perspective, there is no discernible "beginning" or cutoff point to this movement. We do not need to exclude from consideration the Roman Women demonstrating in the forum in 195 B.C. for repeal of the anti-female oppian laws, or the struggle for survival of a thirteenth century group of women. (444)

Development of the feminist movement has been happening through the centuries often for individuals, sometimes collectively.

The feminists have written for the emancipation of female from patriarchy as well as to establish women's position in the society. Feminists are always strongly against anti-feminist's views which they claim are of narrow and conservative disposition. Human life is a gift of nature. Human culture and religion also agree with this truth. But the man of the society only conceives of anatomy as destiny. Another point of the anti-feminists is that they say man's existence is possible without women. Because man is the subject, absolute whereas women is an incidental, inessential being some critics review on these statements. Women are backward than men, because they have no past, these statements seem absolutely baseless. History is related to life and naturally all lives have a history. Biologically, on unicellular being

also is important and has a history. Women are certainly superior to such beings. The reality is that they are in search of opportunity. The feminists think that femininity is their divine gift. They take it as the weapon to fight against patriarchy. They disagree with the inferior role inflicted upon them by patriarchal culture. They put female in the supreme place and show that women are also bold enough to decide whatever is better for their life. All feminists start from one perception that is recognition of the patriarchal structure of society, that the world is organized on terms dictated by men and to the advantage of men. Feminists examine the experiences of diversities life of women for all races and classes and culture.

There is no harmony between man and women in relation to the status in the society. Women are silenced in the patriarchal ideology. Thus, feminists try to break the silence of women. All the feminists are concerned with the destruction of patriarchal ideology, its insufficiency and onesideness. Maria Mies says, "feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-women relationship and who want to change it"(6). She talks in favour of women's autonomy, and views that feminists are against oppressive male ideology and unequal treatment to women which imposed upon them to be silent. For her, autonomy is the feminist effort to maintain and recreate the innermost subjective human essence in women. Toril Moi defines feminists as; "The word feminist or feminism are political level indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement" (217). Moi's concept about feminism focuses it as a political movement which aims at breaking the patriarchal boundary and hierarchy between men and women. Feminism is the search for equality in social, political, educational and cultural aspects. Or, in short, feminism is the quest for autonomous existence required by women. Likewise, Sandra Gilbert views as; "The feminist criticism wants decodes

and demystify all the disguised questions and answers that have always shadowed of the connection between textually and sexuality, genre and gender, psychosexual identify and cultural authority" (334). Feminist criticism, for Gilbert, intends to make the clear relationship between text and male-female sexuality, sexual identification and cultural dictation upon female by male.

Besides feminists, all the developmental agencies too have realized the need for educating women to promote and maintain family education, health nutrition. Gender issue and general well being. Indeed, the education of women is a big necessity in any society. Men are guests of their own home and women with their maturity and intelligence can govern their family environment. Modern feminists are more alert of their existence. Unlike ancient women, today's feminists are proud of their feamaleness and have made a vital tool to feminity to perceive their existence. The earlier aim of feminism is different from the recent aim. The women writers express their desire that women should also be a part of history, and emphasis upon equality or legal reform for women's rights. In this concern, Katering Tomaseuski asserts; "The present day feminism is a struggle for achievement of women's equality, dignity and freedom of choice to control our lives and bodies within outside the home" (34).

The women, specially of the third world, are not enjoying their humanity. Instead of developing women's personality, the new age has added more responsibility upon them. The world is not completely modern because half of its population lacks humanity. Humanity and feminism can be enumerated as synonyms. Feminism came into existence for the sake of women rights and human equality. So, most of the feminists who are concerned with the world's bias, demand equal rights for all human beings.

Femininity: A Debate

The Debate, whether women are created or constructed, is running through every feminist. Is there an innate or natural difference between man and women? Is a woman a woman because she is biologically female, or because she behaves like a woman? It is the debate that holds the root of being women. This challenging issue separates the feminists themselves into two spheres; one believes, since women are biologically different from men, they are also psychologically and emotionally different; those are essentialists. Another group believes, women are constructed as women by the society; those are anti-essentialists.

The essentialists argue, difference is not something to be overcome, as though it is shameful not to be man, but something to celebrate: women should be proud to be women. Feminism, they argue, should work to liberate women from a system of male-centered values and beliefs and should empower them to discover their own uniquely female identity. This identity is frequently described as being more empathetic and co-operative, more connected to others, and more accepting of multiple view points, unlike male identity, which is monolithic, authoritarian, and founded in a rationalist belief in one truth. Another sphere, anti-essentialists such as de Beauvoir, however, argue that sexual difference is a consequence of cultural conditioning. Society has created women as other, and the means by which this difference has been created must be exposed and discredited, so that women can achieve their full potential as the equals of men. Essentialists counter this argument by insisting that the preoccupation with equality serves only to perpetuate the assimilation of women into a masculine society. Essential female values are overwhelmed in a male system, and women need to identify and assert their difference.

Anti-essentialists respond that the emphasis on difference perpetuates a misogynistic belief system that has traditionally worked to exclude women from male sphere. They assume that culture is a gender neutral project that men participate in, and from which women are excluded consequently, their aim is equal access to social opportunity (Waugh, 323).

Sex, the biological difference between man and woman, is created or innate and inborn as well as unchangeable and natural process whereas gender is constructed socially and culturally. According to social and cultural norms and values, the community creates the boundaries rules and regulation for male and female. Every society has different roles and status of male and female, the cause of difference is their own culture and society. So, from primitive age to recent period males are supreme in the society. They create the rules and regulations for their own benefit, females are marginalized in social, economic, political and academic sectors as well. Males see differently to female as daughters are not sent to school and deprived from the rights to property, political and others. Traditional gender roles have been used very successfully to justify the act of excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision making positions in every fields as in the family, political, academic and economic area. Patriarchy, the main cause of difference, has determined, in very large, the nature and quality of our society, its value and priorities, the place and image of women within it and relation between the sexes. Patriarchy is, thus, by definition sexist which means it promotes the belief that women are innately inferior to men.

The feminists do not deny the biological differences between man and women; in fact, many feminists celebrate these differences. But they do not agree that such differences as physical size, shape and body chemistry make men naturally superior to

women; for example, more intelligent, more logical, more challenges or better leaders. Feminism therefore distinguishes between the world sex which refers to our biological constitution as female or male, and the word gender, which refers to cultural programming as feminine or masculine, which are categories created by society rather than by nature (Tyson, 84). The belief that men are superior to women has been used, feminists have observed, to justify and maintain the male monopoly of position of economic, political and social power, in another words, to keep women powerless by denying them the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political and social power. This is, the inferior position long occupied by women in patriarchal society has been culturally not biologically produced.

Feminism is a necessary movement to divert the view of society which gives women the subordinate position. Women from the beginning of human civilization are being treated with worth ambivalence and misogyny. Women had to live in the discriminatory male-made culture on the basis of sex, race, age, class. Such culture was the main boundary for women for the freedom of expression of their experience. Jane Freedman says "The distinction between biological sex and the social creation of the 'eternal feminine' is a precursor of the distinction between sex and gender that is common in much feminist theory" (14). The concept of patriarchy or sexism is the major ideological value which all feminist criticism share as their motto. All the feminists argue that the entire cultural phenomena are dominated by a patriarchal value. Patriarchy plays role not only in political system but also in literary and philosophical system.

Although various hypothesis have been formulated, ranging from the scientific to the religious and from the accepting to the vehemently opposed, the origins and causes of women's subordination have never been definitively explained. This

consciousness about women as no subordinate being rather equal human being is somehow the contribution of feminist movement. Feminists view that only a feminist struggle will particularly change relations between man and woman that concerns issues such as sexuality, violence, gender discrimination, emancipation, freedom and equality for women.

Discourse and Power

The system of discourse is to exclude the females by showing the reference of subordinate image described from the pre-historic time. It is the discourse of male which includes female's characteristics in derogatory manner. The feminists resist female's subordinate image represented in male discourse. The discourse equates truth which is made by male to dominate female. Discourse is a way of talking, thinking, acting and feeling about an idea, issue or areas of concern. It may be generated and experienced verbally, visually, aurally or in a way of the sign systems operating within a society. The society, under the system, possesses some knowledge and by using such knowledge. The society creates discourse. This discourse consists of representation, power and truth. Representation has different form; written audiovisual oral etc. Power is circulated through different forms of representation. This very represented power creates the truth, which ultimately becomes truth to everyone who is under the system. Dr. Arun Gupto says about the discourse and the power exercise over female which creates the truth about them as; "Truth is determined by the power the institution like patriarchy exercises over the female. [...]

Discourse is productive. Patriarchal discourse produced women as a cultural construct...(177). Dr. Gupto makes the clear cut idea on the intertwinement of discourse, power and truth. Patriarchy exercises the power upon female and what it generates through discourse that become truth in the society.

Discourse can help us to interpret many slices of social and political systems that we have never even considered before. It also helps to illuminate part of the ordinary world that is controlled by the expert of society. Thus, discourse is a major point in the society that effects how we can speak, act and interpret things. As Michel Foucault views;

Each society has its regime of truth its 'general politics of truth'; that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes functions true; the mechanisms and instances with which enable one to distinguish true and false statement, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who changed with saying what causes as truth. (73)

Discourse is a system of constraint or exclusion which sets boundaries for what can and cannot be said or done in all everyday lives. The experts define the situation and then divide the line between reason and unreason for the society. And it determines for us what is proper and improper through eyes of experts. The system of discourse is regard to everything constantly changes within years, decades and centuries according to who has the power.

Our social lives are dominated by the written words of discourse. It is constructed to achieve particular social goals rather than representing facts. Likewise, male discourse is created from the earliest age to subordinate women which is not the true representation of the women. Since the male were in power in the earliest age, they controlled and guided everything as their wish. They created such discourses that would uplift them as superior and relegate female as inferior. Even the religion is not left untouched from the male ideology in the case of female representation. The Bible also seems to be biased on female that represents women as the bio-product of male;

Eve was born out of Adam's rib. Woman is declared in the Bible, as the half man. Eve has been represented as unfaithful to God and man who causes the destruction of God's creation; the Eden garden. The God's curse seems to be very significant for women subordination to man as;

I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception
in sorrow that shall bring forth children
and thy desire should be to thy husband
and he shall rule over thee (qtd. in *Ancient Tales*-120)

This curse provided a legacy to the western people to subordinate women. Bible proved to be the corner-stone for the biological distinction between men and women; that women beget children and cultural distinction that men rule over women. Eve, a woman, in the history of human civilization, stepped for the knowledge at the risk of her life but it was shadowed in the name of disobedience to god and highlighted her subordinate position to men. An American feminist Mary Daly, in her book '*Gyn/Ecology*' (1978), argued that religion, law and science were all methods of patriarchal control working to define and limit women. Daly began as a feminist critic of Christianity, arguing that the image of 'God the father' was constructed to validate the rule of the father in patriarchy. The masculine bias of Christianity has always preoccupied feminist theologians, who work to distinguish the spiritual message, from its masculine traditions, but Daly eventually concluded that Christianity was irreparably anti-female, and abandoned it entirely. Christianity she argued, had violently overthrown an earlier goddess based religion and assimilated the original female fertility myths. The ascendancy of patriarchy had involved the murder of woman living outside patriarchal control, such as unmarried or widowed women, and

wise women healers, who were burned as witches by the church. For Daly, this was symptomatic of the Christian perception of women.

John Milton, later in the Renaissance, recreated Biblical history in his epic 'paradise lost'. His representative way of Eve in his epic opened the way for the post modern feminist like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar for the sharp criticism upon him. They argued that Milton has always been a repressive figure to independent female intellectuals. They, in a chapter of *The Mad Women in the Attic* entitled "Milton's Bogey; Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers" write: "To such women the unholy trinity of Satan, sin and Eve diabolically the holly training of God, Christ and Adam have seemed even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to illustrate that historical disposition and degradation of the female principle" (75). The unholy trinitities of Satan, sin and Even have been shown very unnecessarily by copying the holy trinity of God, Christ and Adam by Milton to represent women, that degraded representation continued even on eighteenth and nineteenth century. Milton brings Satan, Sin and Eve together and Eve is equalized with the same victim of Satan, and Adam being man is excluded from his sin and equalized with the God and Christ. Feminist literary scholars have taken Milton's representation of Eve as unsatisfactory.

Most of the fairy tales are also male discourse in which male ideology is imposed in the representation of female characters that is unsatisfactory to the feminists scholars. The implementation of patriarchy ideology creates the demarcation of superiority and inferiority between male and female respectively. Feminists have long been aware that the role of women, which patriarchy imposes upon the imagination of young girl, it is a destructive role because it equates femininity with submission, encouraging women to tolerate familial abuse, wait patiently to be rescued by a man, and views marriage as the only desirable reward for right conduct.

In most of the fairy tales, a beautiful, sweet young girl is rescued from a dire situation by a dashing young man who carries her off to marry him and "live happily ever after". It seems that females must be beautiful, sweet, young and incapable of rescuing herself if they are to be worthy of romantic admiration. The fairy tales, the male discourse, represent the female character as submissive and polite figure and male as rescuer and masculine figure.

The representation of women as evil is a well-worn theme from antiquity to the present. We can see the representation of women in antiquity as such:

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

Women is a sharp iron dagger that cuts a man's throat (qtd. in Ruth,
Issue in Feminism-158) -Mesopotamian poem

Man who trusts womankind trusts deceivers. (qtd. in Ruth, 158)
-Hesiod

I have not left any calamity more detrimental to mankind than woman.
(qtd. in Ruth, 158) -Islamic saying

The female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities (qtd. in
Ruth, 109) -Aristotle

From the outset of human civilizations, women are stigmatized by the chauvinistic society, that fanned the fire for the feminist movement.

The feminist scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Michele Barrett and Betty Friedan saw literary texts as modes and agents of male power. They began to examine the representation of female characters in male authored works. They argued that all the literature was subject to implicit social ideas about the roles of men and women. Power, on essential weapon is the human society, is exerted directly or indirectly in civil and domestic life to constrain women. Kate Millet has

said in *Sexual politics*, "The Essence of Politics is Power" (205). In her analysis of male author such as D.H. Lawrence, Norman Mailer, and Henry Miller, Millet concluded literature as a record of male dominance. As a resisting feminist figure, she included critiques of male power, crude sexuality and violence against women. She argued that male writers distort women by associating them with male deviance. According to Millet:

The relationship between man and women must be understood as a deeply embedded power structure with political implication. Patriarchy society works to incalculable male supremacy through a variety of covert means; politically. Women have negative representation; the biological sciences legitimize chauvinistic belief in female inferiority and social systems entrench political and social inequality in the private sphere. (Waugh, 326)

Millet believed that women were subjected to an artificially constructed idea of the feminine. Women's oppression was achieved by a combination of physical violence and cultural pressure. All aspects of society and culture functioned according to a sexual politics that encouraged women to internalize their own inferiority until it become psychologically rooted. Literature is a tool of political ideology because it recreated sexual inequalities and cemented the patriarchal values of society.

Germaine Greer, a popular feminist writer, in her work *The Female Eunuch* (1970) also examined literature as a product of its patriarchal culture. Feminists scholars have pointed to the frequency with which texts punish women associated with sexuality and lust. Typical examples would include Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*, both of which contain adulterous heroines who eventually commit suicide in misery and torment. In both, the female character is eventually

penalized for her actions and the patriarchal moral code is reasserted and actually strengthened. Again literature is proved to be an agent of power expression.

The feminist scholars have taken the impetus from Foucault's new historicist and Derridan types of poststructuralist theory, perhaps because they actually refuse to assert a masculine authority truth. The feminists argue that religion, law and science are all methods of patriarchal control working to define and limit women. Most radical feminists take the view that women have been brainwashed by such type of patriarchal ideology which produces stereotypes of strong men and feeble women. The feminists think that men should take females their necessary counterparts and help them to come in the independent arena. Women must be regarded as important human beings. Accepting such reality some male writers began to write empowering or valourizing women position and giving autonomous power to women character in their literary writing. Such male writers even subvert the traditional gender role of women and represent the strong and hard female character who ignore the patriarchal norm for their autonomy.

Patriarchy and Stereotype of Women

Patriarchy, the rule of father in literal, would refer not simply a society where men hold power, but rather to a society ruled by a certain kind of men wielding a certain kind of power. It is a society that reflects the underlying values of the traditional male idea. Patriarchy is a culture whose driving ethos in an embodiment of masculist ideas and practices. It has determined in very large part the nature and quality of our society, its values and priorities, the place and image of women with in it, and the relation between the sexes. Patriarchy expects women to serve the men physically, taking care of their homes, property, clothing or persons; economically, doing countless jobs for which women are ill paid or not paid at all; sexually, as

wives, mistress or prostitutes; and reproductively, assuring men of paternity through female chastity. In a society, where men have controlled the conceptual arena and have determined social values, it is not surprising that women should have lost the power of naming, of explaining and defining for themselves the realities of their own experience. Sheila Ruth says:

In a patriarchal culture, men define the female as they define nearly everything else. The issue is not only that men perceive women from masculine perspectives, but that given the nature of socialization, all members of society, including women, perceive the female from the prevailing masculine perspectives. (84)

In patriarchy, male dominated is so much rooted that it evaluates women not regarding the human being but like everything else. Women are culturally compelled to perceive women from male perspective. The naming of women has been effected by men primarily through control of the social institution that determine behaviour and attitude. In patriarchy, everything is measured in the touchstone of male ideology.

Patriarchy sets the stereotypes for women. Stereotype is a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality. Anne Cranny- Francis, Wendy Warning, Pam Stavropoulos and Joan Kirkby Jointly write about stereotype as:

A stereotype is a political practice that divides the world into like and unlike, self and other. It is a radically reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few key characteristics. Different stereotypes applied to particular social group or community may attribute to them conflicting characteristics. This apparent contradiction reveal the fact that stereotypes are (a) generated

by those outside the group and (b) are part of a political strategy for managing that group or community. While marginalized groups receive negative stereotypes: powerful groups are endowed with positive stereotypes. Against the way women are stereotyped as emotional, nurturing, sensitive and deferring, men are seen as all-powerful, emotionless and authoritarian. (141-142)

Stereotypes exclude or reject everything which falls out of its definition, everything which is different. It sets up symbolic boundaries and then provides the mechanisms of cultural production for people to police those boundaries. People use stereotypes to determine who should naturally belong to one group or another. One person cannot produce and circulate a stereotype all alone; stereotypes function within groups of people as knowledge. Importantly, they are usually produced by people who are positioned to circulate their ideas widely, so that even the group stereotyped may then come to take on this as a kind of fact.

Sheila Ruth in her text *Issues in Feminism* posits her view on female stereotype and its effect as:

They all say that women as human beings are substandard: less intelligent; less moral; less competent; less able physically, psychologically, and spiritually; small of body, mind and character; often bad or destructive. These and other stereotypical images of women are destructive to us. In their negative, deprecatory and ugly aspect, they flourish in the minds of women, who are forced to live them. The tragedy of female stereotype is that it impels women not only to appear substandard, but to become substandard; it moves to form us into the loathed monster. If the work of the stereotype be done,

we are reduced to the weak, hapless creatures. Life and personhood defined within such patriarchal constraints must be distorted. (96)

Female are stereotyped as unintelligent, incompetent, physically weak to male. This stereotypical image forces women to become substandard, weak and hapless creatures. Female stereotype is the patriarchal definition that is to be broken apart.

The women have both images of fascinating and destructive in patriarchal society. They are stereotyped as either good women or bad women. If the woman accepts her traditional gender role of being gentle, submissive, passive, emotional, virginal, angelic etc. and obeys the patriarchal rules, she is a 'good woman'; if she does not, she is a 'bad woman' who is violent and aggressive. These two roles also identified women as 'Madonna' and 'whore' or 'angel' and 'bitch'. These two images are defined according to the place and the time in which they live. These two images are projections of patriarchal male desire. We can see the image of 'good girl' and 'bad girl' in Lois Tyson's word as such:

According to a patriarchal ideology, 'bad girls' violate patriarchal norms in some way; they are sexually forward in appearance or behaviour, or they have multiple sexual partners. The 'good girl' is rewarded for her 'good' behaviour by being placed on a pedestal by patriarchal culture. She is attributed all the virtues associated with patriarchal femininity and domesticity; she is modest, unassuming, self sacrificing, and nurturing. She has no needs of her own, for she is completely satisfied by serving her family. (89)

The 'good girls' obey the patriarchal norms whereas 'bad girls' violate it. The good girl has to remain uninterested in sexual activity. Except for the purpose of legitimate procreation, because it is believed in patriarchy unnatural for women to have sexual

desire. The 'good woman' is expected to find sex frightening or disgusting. She does not want her own self autonomy in the society. She only knows about the traditional rules. But the 'bad women' who are power seeking always want newness in the society. They do not limit themselves within the boundary which is drawn by the patriarchy. They have strong feminist idea and they are hard and bold enough that they can do what male. So, they want their self autonomy.

A regrettable matter is that even the media has generated male discourse in the society. Most of the communicative medias have conservative sources. They represent women either as an ideal house wife, incompetent, nurturing or as a recreational object but not as a human being with a separate personality. The media plays a vital role to confirm the public consciousness. Deborah says; "The Press is increasingly responsible for supplying the information and images through which we understand our lives. The media play a crucial role in shaping public consciousness and public policy" (91). Media is also a responsible factor to establish the female images in the society. Within women's magazines, more than half the ads are directed towards women's appearance including, fashions, exercise cosmetics and the like. Those representative ads directly involving women's bodies are characterized a particular and peculiar negativity. Most of the ads represent women exposing their body in nude.

There is hierarchy made between male and female where male has the standard images and female has subordinate. The woman is made to be subjugated by male. Simone de Beauvoir, in her work 'The Second Sex' has demonstrated how women are marginalized, subordinated and hegemonized by patriarchal ideology. 'The Second Sex' argued that there was no such thing as 'feminine nature'. There was no physical or psychological reason why women should be inferior to man, and yet,

throughout history women had always been second class citizens. Biological differences do not provide a causal explanation for women's oppression, however their reproductive function has placed women at a disadvantage by tying them to the domestic sphere. Just as man considers himself superior to nature, so he considers himself superior to women. Over the centuries, the concept of the female's passive, submissive, nurturing maternal role has become so deeply entrenched in culture and society that it was presumed to be women's natural destiny. De Beauvoir argued that there was nothing natural about the hierarchal division of men and women into a first and second sex. She makes clear about the construction of women by culture rather than creation by birth. She posits her view in this context as; 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman ... it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature which described as feminine" (89). Knowing the fact that women's stereotypical image as construction of patriarchy, all the feminists are concerned with the foundation breaking of the patriarchal ideology. The stereotypical image of women is merely a cultural identification. It is the patriarchal civilization that produces the feminine nature to identify women.

Female Self-Autonomy

The concept autonomy expresses the positive goal for the feminists movement. It is the freedom from domination regarding the bodies and lives, Maria Mies says; "The feminist claim to autonomy means a rejection of all tendencies to subsume the women's question and the women's movement under some other apparently more general theme or movement" (41). Autonomy is associated with persons. We are autonomous to social processes which bring us into being as self for ourselves and others.

There are so many concepts about autonomy in the feminist movement. But the most common concept among feminists is 'individual independence', 'self determination of the individual women' or the 'right to individual choice.' The emphasis on individualism refers to the autonomous existence. Women in the patriarchy fight for their individuality. Women have united for their self-autonomy which is taken as the essential thing for women's development. If the person is independent, she/he can live her/his life well. Feminists think that woman is a biological person or subject. This is the main feature of women which characterizes the feminist writing. In Louis Marin's view, "... writing of the self gives rise to a theoretical and methodological occasion allowing us to grasp with greater rigor and precision the manner in which these two sets of signifiers function" (199).

The individualistic sense of uniqueness and self consciousness is wide spread which is not shared to the same extent by people. Every person has feelings of self identity and need their own autonomous. Identity is the social construction. Women in the patriarchal society had false identity and limited autonomy. They were restricted to go outside from the house. Feminism is the movement which demands autonomous existence and true identity of female.

Writing for self is for visual portrait and signification. All the markers of possession and of the appropriation of the written object emerge from the tensions inscribed within 'I'. Self is the representation of 'I'. Women are in search of 'I' or subjective. Simone de Beauvoir says; "in sexuality and maternity women as subject can claim autonomy; but to be a 'true woman' she must accept herself as the other" (1000). The feminist ambition to maintain and recreate this innermost subjective human essence in women is expressed and preserved in the concept of autonomy. Everyone is free to fulfill all her/his desires and needs that individual freedom is

identical. With the choice of the self-activity and subjectivity of the person, Maria Mies focuses her view on autonomy and says:

...autonomy means the preservation of human essence in woman... it is also a struggle concept which was developed to demonstrate the women wanted to separate from mixed, male domination organizations and to form their autonomous organization, with their own analysis, programmes and methods. (40-42)

The feminist approaches mentioned above are useful to deal with the representation of women in Chekhov's stories who subverts the stereotypes of women as, submissive, nurturing, emotional, passive, weak and represents them as bold and hard having strong feminist idea who ignore the patriarchal norms and values, and become autonomous.

III: Subversion of Female Stereotype and Patriarchal Ideology in Chekhov's Stories

Some male writers began to write empowering or valorizing women and giving autonomous power to female character in their literary writing. Such male writers even subvert the traditional gender role of women and represent the strong and hard female character who ignore the patriarchal ideology for their autonomy. Among them, Anton Chekhov is one who represents bold, hard, resistant and courageous women subverting their stereotypical images of timidity, passivity, weakness, emotionality, submissiveness, fragility and tenderness. The women with the latter qualities are perceived as ideal women or good women in the patriarchal society. But if they ignore to be tagged with this image of ideal women and resist the patriarchal norms, they are tagged with "wanton", "witch", "bitch", "monster", "lower breed", or "bad women" in the patriarchal society. Male discourse played a vital role to tag the female with this series of negative images. It represented timid, weak and submissive women as good and bold and resistant as bad women. It equates femininity with submission, encouraging women to tolerate familial abuse and wait patiently to be rescued by a man. Even the agencies have generated male discourse in the society. Most of the communicative medias have represented women either as an ideal housewife or as a recreational object but not as a human being with a separate personality. Since the male expert creates the discourse in the society, all the sides of male are weighty and significant whereas the female has a series of negative values. Females are represented to relegate to the lesser important position in male discourse.

The women are considered as domestic beings whose attempt to walk out of their roles becomes a crime. Their intelligence and boldness are not promoted by domestic chores such as cooking, sewing, bearing children and taking care of husband

submissively through out their life. They are closed with in the four walls of their home. If they show interest in autonomous and equal life with male, they are thought to be over smart and tagged with a series of negative images of bad women. Their characters become at stake. But the 'bad women' release themselves from the male hegemonial power and ignore the patriarchal bar and bondage for their right of choice. The 'good women' obey the patriarchal norm whereas 'bad women' violate it Chekhov represents the 'bad women' who never show their agreement with the patriarchal norms and values to which they consider as the obstacle for their autonomy. Such representation of women as a heroic figure in the stories is Chekhov's way of strengthening them to act forward so that to get equal place in the society. Chekhovian women are not afraid of the society to work whatever they like though there is the chance to be out cast from the society. They challenge the male dominated society which was totally grounded upon traditional and conservative power seeking tendency of the male and their narrow-mindedness misconception about the female. Female heroism is vividly shown in Chekhov's stories.

Chekhov strikes the long rooted social values that women cannot do what male can and they deserve to be limited within kitchen by representing a handsome female character Lidia in 'The house with the Mansard' who is a social worker and teacher in the Zemstvo school in her own village. She goes out of the home to serve the villagers. She does not limit herself with in patriarchal social boundary. She is very active in social activities:

She had come to ask for subscriptions for some villagers whose cottage had been burnt down. Speaking with great earnestness and precision, and not looking at us she told how many houses in the village of Siyanovo had been burnt how many men, women and children were

left homeless and what steps were proposed to begin with by the relief committee, of which she was now a member. (143)

Chekhov represents Lidia empowering her position as liberator of the villagers whose houses were burnt and become homeless. She equalizes her position with male in the society she is the member of relief committee. She is strong and hard girl who sometime keeps male under her thumb; "She was giving some orders to one of men" (546). Besides, she is an energetic, genuine girl with convictions and it is interesting to listen to her who does not care for endearments and talks only of serious matters.

She possess the social ideas and attacks on the then government system. She criticizes the unfair and injustice appointment in Zemstvo Board boldly and reasonably as:

It's not right, it's too bad. Our whole district is in the hands of Balagin. He is the chairman of the Zemstvo Board, and he has distributed all the posts in the district among his nephews and sons-in-law; and he does as he likes. He ought to be opposed. The young men ought to make a strong party; but you see what the young men among us are like. It's a shame. (541)

She seems to be revolutionary, so she criticizes the corrupt government system. She encourages the young men to take a hard step to overthrow the corrupt system. She dislikes status-quo and idle persons like narrator, the artist. The heart of the story lies in the debate between Lidia and the artist. The artist appears idle and wastes his time painting the landscape for he does not like the social structure. He argues to change the social structure that causes the suffering for the peasants. But the most misleading factor in his argument is that he does not move even a step for the change, only remains a passive looker. It is the true analysis of this story that his thought is better

than her but her action is better than him. He is revolutionary in thought. She is revolutionary in action. Whatever be the noble thought and talency, all becomes useless and worthless, if it is not applied in action and practical life. The artist is thinking being whereas Lidia is act being. She posits her life-ethic as:

I will only say one thing; one cannot sit with one's hands in one's lap its true that we are not saving humanity, and perhaps we make a great many mistakes; but we do what we can and we are right. The highest and holiest task for a civilized being is to serve his neighbours, and we try to serve them as best we can, you do not like it, but one cannot please everyone. (550)

Everyone has to serve the needy and seek the solutions of the problem not for oneself but more for others. And this is the holiest task and noble path for the humanity which Lidia does and follows. She insists in; one must do something. One should not waste his or her time with lip service rather should spend with hand service. She opines that belief in action means success in aim. She succeeds in her aim of overthrowing Balagin, a corrupt man from the post of chairman of Zemstvo Board, making a strong party. This proves her determination in action.

Chekhov seems to be champion to represent bold and hard women with social and feminist ideas who are no inferior to male rather sometime impose their hardness upon male. This scenario is depicted in this story representing a minor female character Liubov Ivanovna. Though she plays very little role in the story, her role is remarkable due to her hardness that she imposes upon Byelokurov, her lodge partner. She controls him in everything; "she kept a sharp hand over him so much so that he had to ask her permission when he went out of the house. She often robbed in a deep hoarse, masculine tones" (147). Chekhov represents the women in this story who

prove themselves not to be weak, soft and passive looker to male rather to be bold, hard and active doer, who can apply their thought in right action.

Chekhov represents a resistant female character Raissa in the story 'The Witch'. Raissa revolts against the church's rule and patriarchal norm. She crosses the patriarchal barrier that women should not have sexual and emotional relationship except from their legal husband though they are not satisfied with their marital life. Raissa expresses her dissatisfaction on church's rule of Father Nikodim taking almost all the corps for himself. Though its merely an expression of dissatisfaction, its a bold action she took in the sense that church and female are antonyms from the root of Christianity which burned women alive in its history. Moreover, church used to held the supreme power in pre-revolutionary period in the then soviet union. A single word against the church would cost almost death. It is an irony for the patriarchal society; which regards male to be revolutionary and resisting figure with courage; that savely, Raissa's husband, supports the ill-rule of church as; "Father Nikodim is a saintly soul a luminary of the church and if he does take the crop, its the regulation" (281). This adverse representation of the male and female characters break their stereotype respectively.

Raissa breaks the patriarchal norm of if male is not satisfied with his wife in marital relationship, he's allowed to seek the alternative way of satisfaction. But if the female is not satisfied, she must attach with her husband throughout her life. She is victimized in both hands of her father and husband. She expresses to the postman her dissatisfaction of marriage with Savely as; "My father was saxton here in the old days, and when the time came for him to die, he went to the consistory and asked them to send some unmarried men to marry me that I might keep the place. So I married him"

(281). The seed of revolution planted in her soul with this knowledge of injustice and unfair to her.

Her emotion and interest is addressed neither before marries nor after it. Instead of trying to understand her feeling, her husband nags her all the time. Raissa says, "he is lazy and afraid of people" (281). He is very orthodox in his thought. He blames his wife to be witch and causes of snow storm as; "when your blood's on fire there's sure to be bad weather, and when there's bad weather there's bound to be some crazy fellow turning up here. It happens so every time ! so it must be you" (289) ! He always speaks with harsh sound to his wife. He tries to impose religious rigidity upon her. Raissa is compelled to have sexual relationship with other male since her husband never understands her; "when Savely returned two hours later, worn out and covered with snow, she was undressed in bed. Her eyes were closed, but from the slight tremor that ran over her face he guessed that she was not asleep. His wife remained mute, but her chin quivered. Savely undressed slowly, clambered over his wife, and lay down next to the wall" (286). Raissa is bold enough to resist the patriarchal norm. As Savely does not understand her emotion and physical need, she openly expresses her anger on marital relationship as; "I am no wife for you. If it weren't for you, I might have married a merchant or some gentle men ! if it weren't for you. I should love my husband now" (286) ! Raissa seems to be bold and strong mentally as well as physically. She has the radical feminist idea of female also should keep extra sexual relationship if they are not satisfied with their marital relationship as male do in the patriarchal society. So, she tries to satisfy herself by taking help of other males like the Mechanic, the Marshal's clerk and the postman. Raissa does not care her husband's suspicion about her extra-relationship who threatens her signaling to the church punishment as; "Not only at the dread seal of judgment, but in your earthly life you'll

be punished too" (279) ! It's not the fault of women to keep extra-relationship if the husband lose the meaning to be husband. What happens if the male is not satisfied with his wife? Does he belong only to his wife? Of course not, he seeks for alternative ways that he considers as his right. If so, its the matter of equality if the female seek for alternative ways for their satisfaction. Here, Raissa also tries to consume the same equality. She is bold lady who is enough capable to resist the physical attack by her husband; "Then he grew bolder and stroked her neck, "Leave off !" She shouted and prodded him on the nose with her elbow with such violence that he saw stars before his eyes" (286). He undermined female's strength and tried to show so-called male's strength. But Raissa turns over his thought of female feebleness.

Every patriarchal society expects women to indulge in domestic chores and to remain within the family boundary getting marriage. Such society deprives female from their career building opportunity. But Chekhov, in the story "Ionitch", represents the female character, Ekaterina Ivanovna who avoids the marriage for her career to be an artist. Ionitch, the district doctor, is attracted to her. The narrator describes her physical strength and beauty as; Ekaternina Ivanovna, rosy from the violent exercise, strong and vigorous, with a lock of hair falling over the forehead, attracted him very much" (107). She has not only outer beauty but also inner one. She wants to develop her career in the field of art and literature. She possesses beauty with brain that causes the fascination of Ivoitch to her:

She fascinated him by her freshness, the naive expression of her eyes and cheeks and at the same time, in spite of this naivete, she seemed to him intelligent and developed beyond years. he could talk with her about literature, about art, about anything he liked; could complain to her of life, of people though it sometimes happened in the middle of

serious conversation she would laugh inappropriately or run away into the house. Like almost all girls of her neighbourhood, she had read a great deal. (110)

She equalizes herself with male in the field of knowledge. She is a well-known lady of art and literature. Chekhov very clearly empowers female position representing them as educated being. He mentions not only Ivanovna but almost all girls of her neighbourhood are educated. Education is a sign of change. So, Chekhov represents educated character to push her beyond the traditional patriarchal boundary. Patriarchal society never digests a female's equality with male particularly in the area of knowledge such as art and literature.

Ivanovna ignores the patriarchal norm of female should be confined within the house. She goes outside the home; "she was getting ready to go to a dance at the club" (113). Male chauvinistic society does not allow women to enjoy openly in the public ceremony. Patriarchal norm takes women going dance club as unusual but Ivanovna ignores it she does not accept Ionitch's marriage proposal due to career. She wants to be an artist. She does not want to put her dream of name, fame and success at stake accepting his marriage proposal. She does not want to live empty and useless life getting marriage with Ionitch. She opines that one must move towards a lofty and glorious goal in life. She understands marriage as bondage which hinders the career. She has revolutionary thought to ignore the patriarchal norm of female should sacrifice their career for the sake of marriage. Marriage seems to be benefited for male in two ways; first he gets a free slave to whom he should not pay any amount for taking care of him and second marriage is a license for male to abuse female body. Ivanouna perhaps understood all this. As she ignores his proposal for her career, his attitude after four year towards her is as such:

He did not like her pallor, her new expression, her faint smile, her voice, and soul afterwards he disliked her clothes, too, the low chair in which she sitting; he disliked something in the past when he had almost married her. He thought of his love, of the dreams and the hopes which had troubled him four years before and he felt awkward.

(118)

This is merely a male gaze to the female who ignore the male marriage proposal. Moreover, this attitude proves, his love was more fleshy and less spiritual. He loved just her outer shining skin. As he gets it lesser shining, his love is changed. Ionitch's thought of; 'I expect they will give a decent dowry' (113), depicts his greediness and meanness. Chekhov represents Ionitch as a passive male who falls in the survival crisis; "He is solitary. He leads a dreary life; nothing interests him" (120). But Ivonovna is represented as active though she is visibly older in the last of the story; 'Kitten (Ivanovna) plays the piano for four hours everyday' (123). She used to play the piano for four-five hours in her youth and she is still doing it.

From the outset of human civilization, women are considered to be physically weak to men. The same conception causes the female violence in the society. But the superiority of men in terms of physical strength to female is only their day dreaming, not reality. There are number of incidents and examples in the society in which female have proved their physical strength. But the male have still misconception about females strength which produces stereotype of strong men and feeble women. Chekhov subverts this long rooted male misconception that female are physically weak to men by representing a female character Lyubka in the story, 'The Horse Stealers'. Lyubka proves herself not to be feeble to men rather more powerful and stronger. Twenty years old Lybuka lives at inn where she has to deal with many

males. But she is neither afraid of anyone nor she feels shy. "She was a healthy, active girl always laughing..." (25)

Lyubka loves Merik, the horse stealer but he does not seem to be as honest as she is in their relation. Merik does not hesitate to attack her in his jealousy but she easily succeeds herself to rescue as:

Merik, looking angrily at her, and showing his teeth in a grin, flew towards her in the same crouching posture as though he wanted to crush her with his terrible legs, while she jumped up, flung back her head, and waving her arms as big bird does its wings, floated across the room scarcely touching the floor...(28)

Female are expected generally to be rescued by a male from a dire situation. Female are stereotyped as incapable to rescue themselves and male are as rescuer of female. Male have the misconception that only their twisted arms and legs and flat chest need to rescue others and to be rescued. But the female have their own tactics to be rescued from a dire situation. Lyubka does not need anyone to rescue herself rather she is alone enough tactful to do so. She is described due to her tactics as; "What a flame of girl!" and depicted her as: "A splendid girl"(29). Patriarchy expects female to be chaste, not to have sexual relationship before marriage but glorifies male's sexual activities before marriage as bravery. But Lyubka shatters this patriarchal value of female chastity as; "it was true she was only a girl but not likely to be chaste". (30)

The story takes the turning point while Lyubka shares hand with Merik in stealing horse of Yergunov's, a medical assistant, which incident unfolds her physical strength, courage and boisterity Lyubka stops Yergunov who runs behind Merik to stop stealing his horse. Merik succeeds in his plan of stealing Yergunov's horse only with the help of Lyubka. She stands as a pillar in the door to stop Yergunov who fails

to remove her with his all might; "he shouted and giving her an angry blow on the shoulder, he pressed his chest against her with all his might to push her away from the door, but she kept tight hold of the bolt, and was like iron" (31).

Lyubka is a female hero who punches on patriarchal misconception of female are feeble and should be feeble to male. Lyubka is just an example of female boldness in Chekhov's stories which hold the female issue. But the difference is that she is represented stronger to male in terms of physical strength who does not move an inch back in the scuffle with Yergunov. Her anger to Yergunov is described as; "She looked at Yergunov with repulsion and terror in her eyes, and like a wild beast in a trap" and she says to him; "Get away, dirty brute". (33)

The last scuffle scene between Lyubka and Yergunov exposes the female physical strength in which Lyubka not only equalizes with male but proves herself to be superior to male in terms of physical strength as:

She slipped out of his arms; and freeing one hand the other was tangled in the torn shift-hit him a blow with her fist on the skull. His head was dizzy with the pain, there was a ringing and ratting in his ears, he staggered back and at that moment received another blow-this time on the temple. His head ached, and there was an uproar in his ears as though he were sitting under a railway bridge and hearing the trains passing over his head. (33)

Lyubka overturns the long rooted stereotype of female feebleness and male strength. Here, both characters Yergunov and Lyubka are representative figure of the society; the former represents the males of the patriarchal society who have the misconception of female as feeble and fragile and undermine female's strength and the later

represents the female who strike on the male misconception and prove their boldness and hardness.

It is a long debate among the readers and critics on Chekhov's representation of Olenka in the story "The Darling" whether Chekhov meant to ridicule Olenka's character, as representative of women whose life has no meaning outside of her relationship to men, or to celebrate her character as an ideal of selfless love and capable women with strong feminist ideas. The later issue seems to be stronger to former one as the representation of Olenka is concerned. Chekhov being the left sider never ridicules the marginalized group; women are considered to be so; rather celebrates and supports them for the change of rooted social norms and values. Chekhov, being the great sympathizer and promoter of women, represents Olenka as bold woman to challenge the long-rooted patriarchal norm that women should pass rest of their life mourning at the death of their husband. But it is far away to expect from male to pass their life mourning at the death of their wife. Female are prohibited for remarriage but for male, no restriction. If the female do that, there is extreme possibility of being out casted from the society. But if the male do, they are called brave. It is inequality as well as a great injustice to women.

Chekhov represents Olenka to break the same social norm of inequality and injustice. Olenka marries Kukin, the owner of an out door theater, who suddenly dies in Moscow. After the death of the husband, the society expects from wife to mourn throughout her life. But Olenka ignores this patriarchal norm and remarries with timber merchant, Postovalov. Olenka, again challenging the social norm, remarries with Smirin after the death of Pustovalov. Here, Olenka seems to be passionate women if she is looked at through male's eyes. But if she is perceived through the eye of equality, she is a great equalizer with male in the patriarchal society.

People believe that wives cannot help their husband, mainly in his economic problem. They believe that wives have no knowledge, mainly in his economic power and how to handle the property. Olenka overturns this conservative thought of male as:

She used to sit in his office, to look after things in the Tivali, to put down the accounts and pay the wages. She took part in the rehearsals., She corrected the actors, she kept or eye on the behaviour of the musicians, and when there was unfavourable notice in the local papers, she went to the editor's office to set things correct. (262)

She helps her husband Kukin sitting in his office of theatre and she takes part in different activities of theatre; she even handles the economic activities and sets the things correct about the theater.

Though Olenka remarries, she remains faithful to her husband. She does not keep any elicit relationship when her husband is alive. She remarries only after her husband's death for true company and support. She takes care of her husband in his decreasing health conditions; "Kukin grew thinner and yellowier. He used to cough at night, and she used to give him hot raspberry tea or lime-flower water, to rub him with each-de-courage and to wrap him in her warm shawls" (261). Olenka comes to know about Vladimir Plotonich Smirin that he was married and had a little boy but was separated from his wife because she had been unfaithful to him, and now he hated her and sent her forty rubles a month for the maintenance of their son. And hearing of all this, she gives him very intelligent and practical suggestion that proves to be mouthful answer to those who consider women as unintelligent and impractical. She suggests as, "you know, Vladmir Platorich, you'd better make it up with your wife. You should forgive her for the sake of your son. You may be sure the little fellow

understands" (263). It is note worthy that her suggestion comes to be true in Vladmir's life later on. It proves her foresight.

Women are generally stereotyped as jealous being of their husband's relation with other women. But Olenka has very wide-heart. When Smirin, to whom once she had loved and lived together, comes to her with his reconciled wife and son, she helps him offering her own house as:

Good gracious, my dear soul ! lodgings? Why not have my house?

Why, shouldn't that suit you? Why, my goodness, I wouldn't take any rent ! cried Olenka in a flutter, beginning to cry again you live here, and the lodge will do nicely for me. Oh dear ! how glad I am (264) !

She offers her house to Smirin's family and herself goes to live in lodge. She is lovely and open-hearted women who ignore the social norms and values for self happiness.

For Olenka, Almost any kind of person or any kind of love can do equally well; her love is above the self. Unlike Olenka, her three men and even her foster child are slightly ridiculous characters, and one must add that they remain unchangingly so from whatever standpoint we may look. She receives her husband's opinions, and makes them her own, while returning something for more solid and valuable in exchange. And when she loses the person she loves, she has no more use for his views, or for any views at all.

Chekhov represents Sofya in "A Misfortune" who is hung between two poles of husband Adrey and lover Ilyin. Sofya loves Ilyin in her unconscious but her conscience drags her on the ground reality of being someone else's wife and mother of a daughter. She tries to justify both husband and lover. The story in this sense is rich to deal the female psychology. She is standing in a thin ice; in one side is her husband who expects her traditional gender role and in another side is her lover, her choice

Chekhov by representing Sofya unfolds the reality that women try their best to be dutiful to the husband and family. But if the husbands do not understand their feeling or if their husbands behave indifferently to the wives, they eventually take a hard step of leaving their husbands. Sofya, in the beginning of the story, tries to end her friendly relationship with Ilyin for the sake of married life. She asserts to Ilyin as:

If you really love and respect me, please make an end of this pursuit of me ! I am married. I love my husband, I respect him; I have a daughter; and in any case I value the peace of my home. I would rather let myself be killed than be a cause of unhappiness to Andrey and his daughter...And I beg you, for God's sake leave me in peace ! Let us be as good true friends as we used to be. Don't be angry; Let us be friends.
(563)

Sofya handles her love case very intelligently and wants to drive it for the safe landing. She seems to be submissive to her husband and family. As she comes to know her husband's indifferent and unhelpful nature, she tears the veil of submissiveness. Her husband Andrey does not try to understand her feelings. She tells him to go together for tour but he shows his official and monetary problem and says her, "Go by yourself if you like" (566).

She is not physically satisfied with Andrey since he falls asleep as soon as he comes from the office. She does not feel her youth and beauty due to the lack of husband's love to her. But she gets her triumph, power, youth and beauty with the presence of her lover Ilyin that fells her to take decision in his favour as:

The presence of man who loved her to distraction, filled her soul with triumph, and her unassailable virtue, and since, she had decided to go

away, gave herself full license for that evening. She flirted, laughed, incessantly, sang with peculiar feeling and gusto. (568)

The presence of her husband does not give enthusiasm to live but the presence of her lover gives energy and enthusiasm to live her. So, she takes the bold action of choosing the later one. It is a great threat to the patriarchal society that a female left husband and chose the lover. She does not hesitate to disclose her secret to the husband as; "if you do not go with me, you are in danger of losing me. I believe I am ...in love already" (570). But instead of understanding the gist of the case, he preaches her about family and infidelity as; "he delivered himself of his opinion on the family, on infidelity...spoke listlessly for about ten minutes and got into bed again" (571). She is bold enough to break the patriarchal value that women should remain faithful throughout their life to the husband. Male are free to do whatever they like. But there are number of social boundaries to prevent women for their choice of male partner. Chekhov subverts this female submissiveness to their husband and represents them as hard and hold women who ignore all these racial barriers.

Chekhov has represented Anna Sergeyevna in the story 'The lady with the Dog' whose bold movement to experience the life avoiding the patriarchal norm is stigmatized by some critics as adultery. As the women ignore the social value and take step for their free life, they are attributed with such series of negative images. But it's merely an orthodox male perception to bold and courageous women. Anna is bold enough to travel alone from one place to another in quest of life. In Yalta; "she was always alone" (225). She goes and lives alone in Yalta. She is not satisfied with the life that she is living with her flunky husband. She wants something higher in life. She exposes the secret of her traveling here and there, her dissatisfaction with husband and her opinion of life as; "My husband is not doubt an honest, worthy man, but he is a

flunky. I was only twenty when I married him, and I was devoured by curiosity. I wanted something higher. I told myself there must be a different kind of life. I wanted to live, to live...I was burning with curiosity" (226). She wants to experience the different colour in life. She has the extreme curiosity of life. The same curiosity drives her from one place to another lying her husband not for adultery but to get rid of monotonous life that she is living with her husband. She wants to be respected. When both of them consume love in Yalta, Anna regrets as; "Its not right, you will never respect me anymore. How can I justify myself? I am a wicked fallen women. I despise myself and have not the least thought of self-justification" (225). If she had intentional adulterous nature, she would not regret what she did. She wouldn't talk of respect and justification. Though she is not satisfied with marital life, it does not mean that she is disobedient to husband; "A letter came in which he told his wife that he was having trouble with his eyes and implore her to come home as soon as possible. Anna Sergeyevena made hasty preparation for leaving" (226).

Anna married at the age of twenty. This age itself is the age to seek through freedom and colourful life. She wants to live, to experience life. But her husband is a minor, small-town official whom she calls flunkey and "belongs to the orthodox church" (226). It signals that he is strict in religious and social norms and values. Religious and social norm had excluded the women to experience the life. She cannot expect her desire of higher life to be fulfilled from her orthodox husband. That compelled her to avoid the social barrier and to seek higher life of her own. She is the bold lady who does not give up the desire to be free and to live and to experience higher and different kind of life. She boldly travels alone Yalta and Moscow:

Anna sergeyevna began going to Moscow to see him. Every two or three month she left the town of S; telling her husband that she was

going to consult a specialist on female disease. In Moscow she always stayed at the slavyanski Baggar, spending a mar in a red cap to Gurov the moment she arrived. (227)

Patriarchal society underestimates as female are timid. They cannot travel alone. They should go out of home with male company since male are bold. Anna blurs this demarcation of male boldness and female timidity by traveling alone.

Chekhov represents Gurov's wife as hard women with strong feminist and social ideas of her time; "she was a tall women with dark eyebrows, erect, dignified, imposing and she said of herself a thinker. She was a great omitted the 'hard sign' at the end of words in her letters, and called her husband 'Dimitry' instead of 'Dmitry'" (225). She instructs him as; "The role of a coxcomb does not suit you a bit, Dmitry" (227). But Gurov's perception to her as unintelligent and harsh women exposes the male gaze to the female who possess the feminist qualities.

Chekhov represents another Anna in the story 'Anna on the Neck'. She, in the beginning, is frightened to her husband and followed his strict norm and values, silently. But she slowly grows to be bold, assertive and well performer lady. Her husband, Aleksich, is the man of principle; "even in marriage he put up religion and morality about everything" (132). Her marriage with Aleksich was a compulsion for the betterment of her life. She is not satisfied with her marriage; she felt cheated, guilty and ridiculous. Here, she had married a rich man and yet she had not money, her wedding dress had been bought on credit" (132). Before marriage Anna had to look after her father and after marriage too she could not enjoy her life. She had to live under the strict restriction of husband who used to say; "family life not being a pleasure but a duty, if you took care of the Kopecks, the rubles would take care of themselves" and he put "religion and morality before everything else in the world"

(133). Anna was very frightened with his strict moral and religious principle. She would get angry with herself for letting him to treat with her as an idiot. Her married life was worse than earlier single life. She had the sense of resistance but she could not resist:

She did everything her husband wanted her to, and was furious with herself for having let him deceive her like the merest idiot. She had married him only for his money, and yet she had less money now than before her marriage. In the old days, her father would sometime give her twenty Kopeks, but now she had not a farthing to take money by stealth or ask for it, she could not, she was afraid of her husband, she trembled before him. She felt as though she had been afraid of him for years she was afraid to say anything in opposition to her husband.

(133)

She could not utter even a word and would tremble before him. She was completely under the domination of husband. But this domination gradually turns into resistance.

The ball dance in the house of Nobility offers a turning point in her life that awakens and exposes her inner performance. That makes her bold, capable to resist husband's brutality and free from his grip. Her husband asks her to consult with two ladies to prepare her ball dress. But Anna does not consult anyone and starts using her own skill. She has inherited skill to arrange the costume; "Anne could make a new dress out of an old one, clean gloves with benzine, rent jewels..." (134). She does not care her husband's moral and religious theme of life in the ball. She starts to ignore her husband's domination and restriction that was imposed upon her from the right beginning of her married life. She belongs to the charity bazaar, an association of elite

persons. Due to her magical beauty and dancing performance, she grabs the success.

Her feeling is now described as:

She is afraid with no one now; She realized now that she was created exclusively for this noisy, brilliant, laughing life, with its music its dancers, its adorers and her old terror of a force, that was sweeping down upon her. She was afraid of no one now, and regretted only that her mother could not be there to rejoice at her success (135).

She thinks herself now bold and is created for this brilliant life. Her terror of the past is swept away now.

She even could not imagine to spend night without husband's permission but now passes night with members of charity bazaar and returns home only when it is daylight. She could not utter even a word in opposition to the husband in the past but now does not hesitate in front of him to call "Be off, you Blockhead !" (138). From this time onward, Anna never had one day free, as she was always taking part in outer activities such as "expeditions and performances" (132). She returns home everyday after midnight. She behaves now as:

She needed a very great deal of money, but she was no longer afraid of modest Alekseich, and spent his money as though it were her own; and she did not ask, did not demand it, simply sent him in the bills; "Give bearer two hundred rubles" or "pay one hundred rubles at once. (136)

She was afraid of her husband in the past to ask for money even politely. But now she equalizes herself with him in name, fame, money and success, so she does not scare to him. She rather gives him order. Chekhov represents Anna transforming her from submissive to assertive, coward to bold and follower to resistant of husband's moral and religious values.

Chekhov represents Nadya in 'The Betrothed' with strong feminist idea of female should not marry without building their career and secure their future. Nadya breaks the wedding with Andrey to be independent and to uplift and to secure her career. She has a dubious attitude in the beginning whether to get marriage with Andrey or to break the wedding in pursuit of her future. It is a general female psychology. But Nadya crosses the possibility of traditional marital bondage and identifies herself as a resistant and revolutionary figure. She is fed up with idle life that Andrey and her own family members are living. She is encouraged by Sasha to avoid idle life and to move step for creative life. Sasha, being himself a male, highly promotes the female. It seems that Sasha has the feminist inclination like Chekhov himself. Sasha tries to persuade Nadya, Nadya's mother Nina and his friend's wife to avoid the traditional female role and to make an ideal feminist image. Moreover, Sasha is a mouthpiece of Chekhov himself. As Chekhov tries his best to push the female beyond the traditional limit and to break the female stereotype, Sasha, being a carrier of Chekhovian feminist notion, also follows the same Chekhovian effort and tells about his friend's wife as; "The wife is a marvelous person. I keep trying to persuade her to go and study. I want her to turn her life topsy-turvy" (255). Sasha encourages the women to put step on the cusp of success.

Nadya begins to hate Andrey her suitor as she is overcome by her thought of moving beyond the traditional female stereotype and boundary Andrey takes her to show his house but her psychology is described as; "All she saw has vulgarity, stupid, naive, intolerable vulgarity, and his arm round her waist seemed to her cold and rigid like an iron hoop" (256). This feeling leads her to break the wedding with Andrey. She wants to do something better in life. She neither wants to be slave of husband nor to be imprisoned herself within a certain periphery of a home. But Andrey wants to

draw a traditional boundary for her as; "when we are married, we will go to live in the country, my dear one we will buy a little plot of land with a garden and a stream and we will toil, observe life...ob, how lovely it will be" (257). Andrey does not release himself from traditional thought of marriage. He has no aim for lofty and glorious life. He wants to confine Nadya within his aimless and monotonous life. That fanned the fire for her thought of avoiding the marriage. She wants to release herself from the prison of marriage. She begins to hate this idle, shallow and humiliating life. Her mother insists her for the marriage but she rejects it and raises the voice against it as:

The wedding must not, will not be, believe me. I don' love that man...I can't bear to speak about him. Think, try to understand me, I implore you ! only think how shallow and humiliating our life is ! My eyes have been opened; I see it all now. And what is you Andrey Andreyich? Why, he is not a bit clever man, Mama. Oh God, oh God ! only think, Mama, why, he is stupid ! you and grandmother keep torturing me. I'm still young, I want to live, you'll made an old women of me ! (257)

Each word displays her boldness, resistance of marriage and confidence. She wants to 'live'. She wants to develop her personality as energetic and dynamic. But her mother and grandmother are living idle life that gives her torture. Her utterance, "my eyes have been opened," signifies that females are no more ignorant about their right of self-identity and autonomy. She determines to break the wedding. She does not want to waste her youth being idle and passive like Andrey, her own mother and grandmother. She wants to live but not like an old woman.

She gets ready to take a bold action of leaving house and to flee away with Sasha for the study. She goes to Moscow with Sasha and then alone to Petersburg.

She strikes a hard blow on the patriarchal value that women are just a recreational object, and whose destiny is to play in the kitchen and to satisfy male physical need. She rather proves that female can alone pursuit their future, break the obstacle of female autonomy, easily rescue themselves from the trap of male; and whose eyes are opened to capture their rights.

Female Autonomy

Chekhov's prime focus is on personal happiness and autonomy. Moreover, he gives emphasizes on female autonomy. He represents bold, resistant, career and future conscious women who possess social and feminist ideas. They concentrate themselves on their autonomy. Until and unless the patriarchal norm and criteria is ignored, the female can not obtain their autonomy. The social construction is in favour of male. The same social construction constructed the women as 'women'. Women are not 'women' by birth; it is not the creation rather construction. But the Chekhovian women never show their agreement in this social favouritism. They break all these constructed barrier. If the women do not follow the male rules and regulations, they are followed by number of unnecessary traps. But the Chekhovian women keep aside all these traps. They prove that if the women get equal chance, they can also do what male can. They aim to establish female autonomy as male have in the society. They make free from any barriers. They do not care of anything in front of their freedom. Their activeness, boldness, hardness and resistance of male values are positive traits, and those traits help them to establish their aim of autonomy and self-identity.

Ivanovna rejects the marriage proposal of a district doctor for her autonomy and self-identity. She is well-known to the fact that marriage hinders the female autonomy and identity and they can not uplift their career as much as they can before marriage. She rejects his proposal as:

Dmitri Ionitch, I am very grateful to you for the honor. I respect you but forgive me, I cannot be your wife. Dmitri Ionitch, you know I love art beyond everything in life. I adore music; I love it frantically; I have dedicated my whole life to it. I want to be an artist, I want fame, success and freedom; and you want me to go on living in this town, to go on living this empty, useless life, which was insufferable to me. To become a wife-oh no, forgive me ! One must strive towards a lofty, glorious goal, and married life would put me in bondage for ever. (115)

She knows that life becomes empty and worthless without freedom. Self-identity lies on the foundation of freedom. She wants to make her identity as an artist and she needs freedom for that. Marriage is a handcuff which she does not want to put on knowingly. She wants to capture a glorious goal and to live a lofty life. Marriage stands in opposite of that goal and life. But Ivanovna being a Chekhovian women does not compromise at the risk of autonomy and identity.

Anna wants to live something higher and different life. She is driven by an intense curiosity and desire to live. She was in extreme need of autonomy to quench her thirst of living. Her husbands' orthodoxy norms and values oppressed her autonomy. That leads her to seek freedom and moves her step for that. She goes to Yalta and Moscow lying her husband. She comes to visit freely Yalta. She pretends for the freedom as; "I told my husband I was ill and I came here" (222). Males are free in the society but females are restricted everywhere to live freely. But Anna being a Chekhovian women breaks all sort of restriction and stepped for autonomy. She understands her curiosity of higher life depends on the autonomy. So, she dares to consume that autonomy facing any risk. Boldness needs to entertain the freedom which Anna possesses.

Women are restricted for the remarriage but male are not only allowed but also encouraged for it in the society. It is a patriarchal norm. Male consider it as their right of autonomy. Olenka in 'The Darling' breaks this patriarchal norm of one sided right of autonomy and equalizes herself with autonomous male in remarriage case. Since the autonomy refers to the right of choice, Olenka also grabs the same right of choice of remarriage.

Anti-husband's feeling occurs in Chekhovian women such as Raissa's and Sofya's mind when they cannot fulfill their sexual desire from their husband. It is the right of female autonomy to keep extra relationship if the husband does not satisfy his wife or he becomes indifferent to her. Both of their husbands are indifferent to perceive their feeling. So, they move for their autonomy of choosing extra relationship. Raissa keeps extra-sexual relationship and Sofya elopes with her lover leaving her husband back. They have the radical feminist idea that female should not suppress their sexual desire and tolerate husband's negligence to the wives. Males are autonomous in the society to take any ways for their satisfaction. So, if the female follow the same path, it is nothing; just the matter of equality to consume the right of autonomy.

Anna has no autonomous life in the beginning of the story "Anna in the Neck". Her husband oppresses her autonomy. She is afraid of him. She begins her autonomous life from the ball dance where there; "For the first time in her life she felt rich and free" (135). Then, she tackles the oppression upon her, becomes bold and lives freely. She does not confine herself within husband's periphery rather becomes busy in outside activities. Likewise, Nadya in "The Betrothed" breaks the wedding for her autonomy. She does not limit her autonomy in the marital bondage. She says to her mother who inforces her for the marriage as; "I want to live ! to live ! can't you let

me have my freedom" (249)? She escapes from the home for the freedom. She understands autonomy as a means to live.

Female are perceived negatively as they move for their autonomy. They are given different pseudo-names. Their entire race is cursed. Gurov's wife in 'The Lady with the Dog' is hard and assertive to her husband. He dislikes her and calls women lower creature as:

He secretly considered her shallow, narrow-minded and dowdy, he stood in awe of her, and disliked being at home. He had first began deceiving her long ago and he was now constantly unfaithful to her, and this was no doubt why he spoke slightingly of women, to whom he referred as the *lower race*. (221)

Male cannot tolerate female's boldness, hardness and assertiveness. They attribute such women with series of negative images. Raissa is perceived as 'witch' and 'heathen wanton'. Her husband opines about hard women as; "There's no creature in this world as cunning as your female sort !" (278) Sofya is given a long preach about infidelity as she boldly declares her elopement. As Nadya breaks the wedding, she is mocked as: "There goes the bride!" (250)

Chekhov represents the bold, hard, assertive, resistant female characters with social and feminist ideas subverting the female stereotypical images of timidity, weakness, sewing, cooking, passivity, tenderness. He unfolds the social reality by representing them that the women with this new image are tagged as bad women. And the women with the traditional stereotype are known as Ideal women in the society.

IV: Conclusion

This research has analyzed Chekhov's representation of female characters in his short stories from feminist perspective. His representative way strengthens and uplifts female character's position as he represents them as strong, bold, hard, resistant, assertive, career conscious women who take part in different social activities. They take steps to free themselves from patriarchal boundaries by establishing their self-autonomy and identity. They break any type of social boundaries which entwine female from establishing their autonomy and identity. They prove their physical strength, break the wedding, ignore the marriage proposal, remarry after the death of husband, oppose the church rule and the then government system and keep extra relationship. Their success to rebel against the rigid restraints of the society dramatizes the possibility of freedom of women. This research also examines the misrepresentation of women in male discourse and confirms it as the cause of power.

The hierarchy made between men and women by patriarchal society has marginalized women from the social position. But, some male have also raised questions against such discrimination. Among them, Chekhov is one who rejects the view that women should serve males, should be passive and timid, should spend their life sewing, cooking and looking after the household and children. Chekhov has written the stories that hold the female issue to emancipate women from that discriminated society. Chekhovian women are fighting for women's freedom and self identity. They turnover the conservative male ideology. Women in multiple activities are highly accepted in his stories.

Lyubka shows her physical strength and she knocks down the medical assistant, Yergunov. Ivanovna rejects the marriage proposal of Ionitch. She moves

towards the lofty and glorious goal of life. She herself declares that she wants, name, fame and success. She rejects the proposal for her identity. Lidia serves the villagers, opposes the policy of Zemstvo board and gets victory in the election. She struggles to make her identity being autonomous. Raissa, and Sofya keep extra relationship as they are not satisfied with their marital relationship. Anna keeps her husband under her thumb eventually. Nadya revolts in the family, breaks the wedding and escapes from home in pursuit of better life. In short, these Chekhovian women are guided by the sense of autonomy and identity. So, they ignore every patriarchal barrier.

Female heroism is one of the salient features in Chekhov's writings. The necessity of female heroism in the literary texts, especially in male's text, is to keep female in social dignity. Female heroism in male's text is necessary to abolish the social concept which gives women the marginal status. To bring women in the world of freedom and equality, it is necessary to give women the role of the protagonist in the literary texts and to help women to come in the open ground without hesitation which Chekhov does in his short stories.

Chekhov is a man with full understanding of women's status and their power in society. So, he himself can be taken as a feminist writer. That is why, his representation of female characters in his short stories correlates with his idea of the female as being equal in society. We can conclude that Chekhov has represented the female characters as a conscious, bold, resistant and assertive subverting their stereotypical images who move their step for their right of autonomy against the patriarchal norms and values. Their courage and behaviour help them to challenge the patriarchal society and gain victory over it in order to attain their self autonomy.