

## I. INTRODUCTION

Austen's works are alive with the essential elements of feminism. She, with a stroke of pen, persuades the reader to transform the human soul more responsive and more uncompromising towards evil. Her world was a world of men and women facing the complex moral, social, personal, and fragmented aspects of life as they lived it, not only day after day but in a whole world as well. This was her unique ability to portray the simplest emotions and conditions of women, her place in whole structure that makes Austen the true master of fiction. The interesting issue in her writing is her thinking about women. People who read her novels will find the direct and indirect means of inferiorizing women in a male governed society.

### **Jane Austen's Context**

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is an English novelist, a profound social and moral thinker, and one of the greatest writers of realistic fiction of all time. Austen was born on December 16, 1775 at Steventon, Hampshire where her father reverend George Austen was a rector and her mother, Cassandra Austen, was a keen gardener. Austen is the seventh of eight children. She lived in an uneventful life in the atmosphere of her family affection. She was fond of family and enjoyed being a part of large family. Steventon remained her home for the first 26 years of her life. She remained unmarried throughout her life. She had neither the formal education nor did she move in a literary circle. Her novels were published in her own life time. She is mainly recognized by her six novels: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Persuasion* together with *Northanger Abbey* were published in the same year after her death at the end of December 1817. Austen is a prose-writer. Besides novels, she has written essays, letters and stories. In her life time, Austen did not travel more out-side, however she had read many books, novels and used to frequently visit

London and Bath. In 1816, Jane began falling sick and her health deteriorated day by day. Austen needed regular treatment for her illness. But all the treatment proved ineffective and useless. Consequently, she died on July 18, 1817.

In her life time, Jane Austen was merely a fashionable and not a popular novelist. Her novels enjoyed high brow readership. Sheridan, Maria Edgeworth, Marry Lascelles, Mitford and Walter Scott appreciated her novels. They admired her works partly because they were full of wit and varieties of characters, and mainly because they represented harsh realities. Marry Lascelles was surprised by Austen's true and mature outlook and also by the burlesque style. Lascelles applauds Austen's heroine for maintaining her femininity while solving the social issue. But these remarkable qualities did not impress the common readers a lot and her books never became best sellers in her own life time.

To common readers, her novels lacked moral and emotional elements. Possibly, another reason for it was that her novel did not contain Gothic melodramatic qualities and sentimental romance and moralizing tone, which were the chief ingredients of that time to be popular novel.

Jane Austen occupies a peculiar position in the history of English novel. She was the contemporary of Romantic poets but she cannot be described as a Romantic. She works with material extremely limited in them but she develops out of them themes of broadest significance. Austen's novels are valuable social documents. But besides their social significance, they have a deep concern with morality. Her subject matter is itself limited to the manners of a small section of English gentry and her novels have explored human experience a great deal widely and deeply than Jane Austen was able to expose it. She deals with the domestic life in villages, yet her novels have a universal significance. She has an authentic knowledge of certain aspects of domestic life and she deals with those aspects in her novel. Austen's novels show us the inner lives of her characters, and

her novels also talks the existing system of education on women's life and show the evil effects of improper education. Jane Austen is a moralist. She is a believer in right and wrong, a believer in justice. Austen is the novelist of family life. In a way, her novels are educational novels and they also paint the picture of the age. They represent everyday life of society and mingle satire and sentiment.

As a novelist she becomes more important and crucial towards the end of twentieth century. She keeps a distinguished position and popularity among the literary figures because the theme, setting, problem and their resolutions, as well as the presentation of characters are all unique. Mostly, her ingenuity is reflected in her presentation of female characters. Austen's age was very critical for women socially and politically.

Jane Austen kept her separate existence. She loved life and continued writing her novels as if nothing was happening outside. In her time, she had to struggle hard against the social and political atmosphere which was adverse for women. So her works became the subject for discussion and criticism. But the works she produced have occupied the significant space since the feminist theory became an important tool in literary fields. Feminist theory was a new movement for women to develop their personality and their ways of living. It is the means for women to be aware about the ways of exploitation against women in patriarchal society. But feminism as a movement did not exist in Austen's time. There was a patriarchal society; however, it does not mean that there was no feminist feeling. Today, feminism has become a way for women to be suitable in every field from politics to literature. In other sense, it encourages women to be readers and writers.

Austen, in her novels, expressed the consciousness of people with regards to women. She has a social experience of a male governed society. With this experience she

produces the consciousness. Austen is conscious regarding the bias against women in western society but she knows the impossibility to reform the structure of the society. She thinks that any effort to change the concept of discrimination between men and women for her is like to make a castle in the air. Austen was unhappy with this society because it always prevented women from social and political rights so she wrote *Northanger Abbey* to awaken women from the exploitation of male dominated society through the depiction of female protagonist Catherine Morland.

Austen was a literary artist who perfected her works with magnificent art and beauty. She has been compared with Chaucer and Shakespeare. People say that it is impossible to be novelist without having a wide experience but Austen refuted this thesis as she had a very limited experience but became in course of time a great novelist.

She proposed *Northanger Abbey* to develop the society by transforming its views especially with regards to women. She wrote *Northanger Abbey* to study women in her own male dominated society. The novel was well accepted since its publication and it has not remained an age oriented. *Northanger Abbey*, the title of the novel, is the name of home of Tilney's family. And the whole novel moves around the female characters.

Austen's performance in the literary field was flourished with *Emma*. She is honoured and praised by both feminists and other critics today. Critics praise Austen and her works for depicting plain human society. Austen is that novelist who not only presents the codes and sex discrimination of male dominated society but also she reveals the self in her works. Her novels talks about incomes and properties, inherited or acquired social rank, manner of all kinds, gender oriented professions, courtship and marriage, dress and fashion and so on.

Many readers and critics fail to appreciate her skill. The main reason is that at that time ... fiction was not considered as one of the branches of literature nor one

looked for genius in the novelist. Yet her art is found appreciated because readers found their society reflected in the background of humorous and realistic characters.

### **An Outline of Austen's Time**

Since the very beginning of human civilization, society has been shaped and governed according to patriarchal norms and values. In patriarchy, all aspects of society and human behavior are controlled and guided by men only. All social, cultural, literary, economic, religious, and legal and many other aspects are dominated by men to suit their purpose. In such society authority is passed through the male line from father to son. So, women are alienated and their plight is pitiable.

In Austen's time, the existence of female was miserable. The atmosphere of society for women was unfavorable. The female writers had to struggle more than male writers to establish themselves. There was no organization that favored women. So, as a result, women could not develop the sense of unity and could not participate in the activities of the world. The male governed society laughed at women and ridiculed their arts so the female works did not flourish in Austen's time. However to make the works popular, some female writers disguised their names. When Austen appeared in the literary field, the Age of Reason was about to end and the Romanticism was emerging as a dominant literary movement. Miss Austen wrote in the romantic era but, however, her style and temperament are classical.

Jane Austen was writing novels in the period of ups and downs all over Europe. The whole Europe was plunged into the state of war, causing tremendous political as well as social changes. The instability of Europe led to the execution of French Monarch Louis 14<sup>th</sup> in 1783. Thus the whole Europe during Austen's time was in turmoil that ultimately ended in the early eighteenth century with the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo.

It was the period of political unrest in England. Poverty, unemployment, injustice were common in England. The situation of England was reflected in art music and literature.

The scenario of politics and society was changing tremendously in Austen's time but Austen was quite aloof from the political changes and the state of warfare. She did not give any space of violence and war in her works as she thought it was frightening and painful to the readers. Her fictions were quite different from the events of her time. She was preoccupied with the social norms, values and the vision of eighteenth century. Her novels neither depict any urban cities nor the complicated life style of the people. All the characters of the novel are brought together, either by marriage or by other social and domestic ties. Thus her vision is limited on the unquestioning acceptance of the contemporary society. The novel neither talks about the French revolution nor the industrial revolution as it was. They were irrelevant to her.

In Austen's time the women were entirely depended either on their fathers or husbands. Women were taken simply as a machine to produce babies and an object to fill man's desire without any distinctive identity in the society. Thus in such social background marriage, then, was taken as a contract made on the basis of money and social dignity. There was in fact, no room for spiritual love. The society was entirely guided by traditional thought.

Austen, through, her novels has depicted the eighteenth century beliefs of a male governed society that ignored the female existence. In *Northanger Abbey* Austen through the heroine, Miss Catherine depicts how women are inferiorized by improper education and their evaluation in terms of money. And ultimately Catherine realizes the follies of patriarchal society. It is her self realization that makes her an enlightened human being and a perfect reader.

### **Critical Responses to *Northanger Abbey***

*Northanger Abbey* is a popular novel by Jane Austen which has remained at the centre of critical interest and has received much critical appraisals after its publication in 1817. *Northanger Abbey* delineates almost every affair of society and its placement in relation to humanity in general. The characters both male and female perform the roles according to social norms. Many critics have researched *Northanger Abbey* through different aspects. Some tend to interpret it focusing on irony and romance. Throughout the novel nothing unexpected take place except General Tilney's order to Catherine Morland to leave his house at once without a question.

Many critics have viewed Austen's works. Some of them appreciated her and the rest did not like her. Susan Ferrier was a critic of Austen's time. Viewing her novel, *Northanger Abbey* he says, "*Northanger Abbey* is excellent, there is no story whatever, and the heroine is no better than other people; but the characters are all so true to life, and the style so piquant, that it does not require the adventitious aids of mystery and adventure" (49).

According to him, *Northanger Abbey* is a realistic fiction. Everything of this novel is the copy of society and life of Austen's time. He interprets the text focusing on realism. The material that Austen uses in *Northanger Abbey* is limited. All the characters of the novel are of the same social and economic group except general Tilney. The subject of the novel is courtship and marriage. Exploring the limitedness in material in *Northanger Abbey* E.N. Hayes writes:

There is revealed in the book no attitude toward the major political, economic, psychological or philosophical problems with which most novelists of importance since Richardson have more or less been concerned in their book. And if the irony is the tone of *Northanger Abbey*,

the voice with which the author addresses her reader, it never carries any conception of the essential nature of man and society, which I take to be the ultimate subject of any good novel. (77)

Arnold Kettle is a modern critic on Jane Austen. According to her, Austen was a serious and conscious writer, absorbed in her art, wrestling with its problem. Her works extend the theme of love and marriage. In *Northanger Abbey*, Isabella Thrope falls in love with James Morland, Catherine with intelligence selects Henry Tilney and succeeds to many with him and Eleanor Tilney marries to a wealthy man. Focusing on this aspect, Arnold Kettle interprets the novel, *Northanger Abbey* with love and marriage theme.

*Northanger Abbey* is about marriage. It begins with one marriage that of Miss Isabella Thrope, ends with three more by the way. The subject is marriage, but not marriage in the abstract. There is nothing of the moral fable here: indeed it is impossible to conceive of the subject except in its concrete expression which is the plot [...]. If it is not quite adequate to say that *Northanger Abbey* is about marriage it is also not adequate to say it is about Miss Catherine. (83)

Rachel M. Brownstein is another critic of Jane Austen. He explores the novel, *Northanger Abbey*, and then describes the novel as mockery and defense of fiction. According to him *Northanger Abbey* sets about to make a heroine in the manner of sentimental by arranging the young lady's entrance into the social world. He writes:

The mixed mockery and defense of fiction in *Northanger Abbey* is evident from the first sentence, which (like the more famous first sentence of *pride and prejudice*) Here the subject is the idea of a heroine, No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supported her born to be an heroine. Clearly 'no one' i.e. everyone is wrong. (36)



Austen's major works are dominated by the powerfully and diversely treated themes of man and woman's relationship, love, marriage and money. The aim of Austen is to educate her female readers. She writes when she feels the need to teach women. So she leaves a lesson behind on the completion of work of art. The major reason for this is that Austen writes novel principally as a mechanism to preach the female reader. Martin Green is of the opinion that Austen describes such preaching in *Northanger Abbey*. The majority of the critics has dealt *Northanger Abbey* from the social point of view and has praised its realistic detail.

In Austen's novels, people of different social classes clash with one another and romance is interwoven with the intense social and moral searching of the characters, shown in their complex ties with the people's thought. Austen through *Northanger Abbey* wants to be one with the suffered female. She is aware about the precarious woman's existence of her time, therefore she writes this novel, *Northanger Abbey* to make other women about their status in their vicinity. Rachel M. Brownsten viewing this novel, *Northanger Abbey*, explains:

Austen makes the point that social and literary conventions collaborate with biology to construct femininity much as Simone de Beauvoir does in the second sex where she memorably declares; one is not born but rather becomes, a woman. If the novelist is less outraged by her insight than the 20<sup>th</sup> century polemicist is, she is also more chary than de, Beauvoir of the romantic idea of the heroic transcendent self. (36)

Most of the modern critics on Austen stress on her morality. Among them, Malcolm Bradbury in 1962 expresses his ideas by saying that "Austen is concerned with two kind of world the social world and the moral world" (36).

In *Northanger Abbey*, we know the issue of money and property have become one of significant point of the novel. John Thrope the male character, thinks that the family of Mr. Allen does not have any children therefore, he hopes that Catherine will be the heiress of their property, similarly, when General Tilney becomes known that Catherine is from middle class and she cannot bring the sufficient dowry, then, he cancels the marriage between Catherine and his son. Deirdre E. Gilbert is another critic of Austen's novel, *Northanger Abbey*, who describes the novel from the perspective of property and a willful behaviour:

Austen includes several stories of inheritance in *Northanger Abbey*, each one reflecting different aspects of a complex argument. On one hand, she dramatizes that landowners were the backbone of the country; laws ought to ensure that family lands remained in the family, ideally in perpetuity. On the other hand, she illustrates the profligate heir that profligate disparages [...] moreover, she includes a story of inheritance of an unlanded family to provide yet another aspect of eighteenth century life that further complicated the issues that had faced landowners-the interchange between landed families and other groups in society. (15)

Jane Austen is brought to light by Scott's view on *Emma*. It is one of the classic essays on Jane Austen which defends her from many more hostile attacks. Scott, in his essay, recognizes that "She is writing new kind of fiction and she knows how to create art out of common place materials" (27).

The novel *Northanger Abbey* begins depicting the innocent and emotional and sentimental lady, Catherine Morland. As the novel develops she becomes an experienced woman from a defective reader she turns into a perfect reader focusing this side of the

novel. Melissa Schaub is another critic of Jane Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey*. She describes this novel from the viewpoint of enlightenment. She writes:

*Northanger Abbey* as "an instrument of enlightenment" in which we as readers observe Catherine Morland's intellectual development and grow along with her. Catherine begins the novel as a defective reader of Gothic and ends it as an accurate reader of something more important. Human nature, Henry Tilney teaches her to read by indirection and irony. And Austen teaches us as well, by the same method that ideal reader for whom she writes—one who notes every detail and can interpret life correctly. (20)

Le Roy Smith is devoted to Austen's arts. Having been influenced by Austen's art, Smith had a great hope in Austen's style of writing which might be a new approach and certainly, it would bring a quake in the history of women's writing and of the women's movement. Smith published a book titled *Jane Austen and the Drama of women* in 1962 to disclose Austen's extraordinary work. Smith enjoyed on Austen's courage to oppose her severe society and her desire to remove the barriers between the sexes.

Austen, in her novels depicts a vivid picture of the contemporary society. We never come across with an evil and a villainous character in her novels. The characters bear love, virtue, self-deceptions, snobbery etc. which are the essential features of an ideal society. In Austen's time, the whole Europe was raging in war. There was ups and downs in people's life. But Austen does not give space of war and destruction. She only portrays the life and society in *Northanger Abbey*. Focusing this issue Arnold Kettle, a critic of Austen writes:

The limitations of class society and the one important criticism of Jane Austen is that her vision is limited by the unquestioning acceptance of

class society. That she did not write about the French Revolution or the industrial is as irrelevant as that she didn't write about the Holy Roman Empire. They were not her subjects. (107-8)

Apart from the social theme of her novels, they are also treated as the psychological, the novels with moral aspects etc. The use of irony and satire are indeed excellent in her novels. And ultimately her technique of the use of irony made her parallel to Dickens and Henry James.

Marvin Mudrick's article *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery* is probably the original and fully developed interpretative study of Jane Austen. It takes Austen as: "having a relationship to the social world" (1). It doesn't only talk about her use of irony but it also shows the major theme of her novels, i.e. irony. And the development of her irony is determined by her temperament, something employed by the novelist as a defense against of her own personal involvement and still sometimes employed as a means of exploration devising the essential significance of a character and a situation.

In this way, the novel is observed from several angles by different, critics and reviewers in terms of love, romance, satire, humour and in terms of mockery as well. However, they fail to address adequately the issue that I have raised. Therefore, the argument is that this research will show quite a solidly feminist- oriented discourse in effect. This feminist enterprise will involve deconstructing dominate male patterns of thought while reconstructing female experience previously hidden or overlooked and to propagate the feminist message by protecting her from traditional and usual interpretation. Right justice has not been awarded to the female. Thus justice can be given to Catherine Morland in the story only if looked at it through this perspective. The principal focus of this research will be to study the female realization through the

experience humiliation and improper education that gives the text a different dimension altogether and this study will also highlight the intensity and immediacy of message that Austen had intended in the story. It will depict the suppressed and oppressed condition of woman in England.

Thus the researcher's endeavor in this work will be to unveil the all-sided exploitation of woman by analyzing this novel from feminist light. Researcher's attention will be to focus on the role of awakening in the life of woman and the researcher will not hesitate to phrase the humiliation and unsuitable education in her life and will disregard other influences of the methodology of this research will be textual as construed and guarded by circumference of feminist approach.

## II. FEMINISM AND FEMALE AWAKENING

### Introduction

Feminism is a part of women's movement. It is an aggressive conscious feeling of women who begin to reject their own passivity. The main aim of feminist movement is to develop women's personalities and to make them aware about the precarious women's existence in a patriarchal society. Arvonne S. Fraser defines feminist, "The object of feminism was to elevate the equal rights and human rights status of women of race, language or religion, in order to achieve equality with men in all fields of human interprise and to eliminate all discrimination against women" (44). It, therefore, studies women as people who are either oppressed or suppressed or rejected the freedom of personal expression. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy to contain their womanhood are generally considered feminists. Men may also be feminists, but they can not be pure feminist because of lack of femininity.

Feminism and feminist criticism bloomed up as a self awakened movement in the 1960s. After two centuries struggle for women's writing used to be taken in a pejorative manner. So, women reacted against such automatic disparagement of their work, by objecting first to traditional definitions of women handed down by great philosophers, scientists, leaders and prophets. Simone de Beauvoir stated in her *Reawakening* that female sex had been subordinated through out time and contends what Aristotle and St Thomas made their definition about women such as, " The female is female by virtue of a certain with a natural defectiveness", said Aristotle (144). And St. Thomas pronounced women to be an "imperfect men" an "incidental" being which symbolized 'Eve' made from "a supernumerary bone" of Adam, as described in Genesis (144). Thus the feminist feels as Simone de Beauvoir said, in her *The Second Sex*. Beauvoir said that woman was not regarded as an autonomous being. Humanity was male and male defined women.

Every institution from culture through ideology to literature is all male-made standards. So feminist writer attacked this notion of patriarchy to awaken women about the discrimination imposed upon women to inferiorize them from law to religion.

The words "feminists" and "feminism" are political. These two terms indicate to support the women's movement which emerged in the late 1960s. Defining feminist criticism, Toril Moi writes, "it is a specific kind of political discourse; a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature" (204). In the same spirit Catherine Betsey said that for the reader there is no innocent or neutral approach to literature: all interpretation is political. In this context she further said that the feminist reader might ask how the texts represent women, what is said about gender relations and how it defines sexual differences.

While we talk the history of women we come to know that they had been excluded to marginality from the existing social structure. Monologist interpretation of society by men is still audible since the origin of human being. So the awakened women of a patriarchal society raised a movement named feminism in order to awaken women about every institution of male governed society that lowered their status and degraded their humanity. The feminists did so to make women realize that they are not the secondary or complementary part of male but they are equal to men. The goal of the feminist movement is to win the equal rights. It questions such long standing dominate male phallogocentric ideologies, patriarchal attitudes and male interpretation in literature. Feminism is concerned both with representation of women in literature and with changing women's position in society by freeing them from oppressive restraints. Unjustified is the condition under which most women live. So, feminists are ultimately in pursuit of a more radical change for enlightening women of a patriarchal society that

exploited women from a long history in the names of sex differences. Feminist literary criticism is revisionist criticism. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar have quoted Edrine Rich in *Infection in the Sentence*:

Revision the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction, an act of survival only by actively seeking a female precursor who, far from representing a threatening force to be denied or killed, proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible. (1244)

Feminism, basically, is political in nature. It concerns itself with the marginalization of all women. Feminists disagree with the inferior role inflicted upon them by patriarchal culture. They talk about how to unmask the culture and challenge it through literary texts. Feminist criticism includes a great variety of practices. English feminist criticism is oriented to textual interpretation. It focuses on women's writing. French feminist criticism is psychoanalytic. It stresses on repression. American feminist criticism is essentially textual and its focus is on expression. Nevertheless, nearly all feminist start from one fundamental perception, that is, recognition of the patriarchal structure of society, that the world is organized by men for the advantage of men. Feminists examine the experience of diversities life of woman from all races and classes and cultures.

Feminism studies woman as people who are either oppressed or suppressed or deprived of the freedom of personal expression. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy in favour of womanhood are generally considered feminists. Today feminists have stepped forward against male dominance in order to enhance women's rights and to secure women's emancipation. Feminist writers take pride in their femaleness making it a vital tool of struggle for their rights and emancipation. In this relation, feminism is also a



political theory and practice to break the social bondage of patriarchy. Focusing on this aspect, Troil Moi states, "The word feminist or feminism are political levels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement" (35).

Because of the diversities, the feminist criticism is no more unified. But they agree upon common ground of exposing patriarchy, examining socio-cultural and psychosexual context of literature and reevaluating literature by women. So, they study contexts once believed to be 'outside' the mainstream of life and literature.

Mary Wollstonecraft first raised her voice in support of women's emancipation as well as women's education. She was the first feminist writer to raise her voice in favour of women through her work *A Vindication of the Rights of women*. Mary Wollstonecraft is included in the list of forerunner feminists. She was the first to publish the women's problem in a male oriented society.

In the case of education, Wollstonecraft viewed in *A vindication of the Right of Women*. According to Wollstonecraft the educational system is man made. It is suited and fitted to men for their benefit that internalize women to become emotional and sentimental woman rather than to play the role of rational and enlightened women. She was in the favour to promote a girl's education. Wollstonecraft was aware about the women's limitations in public and private life. She was against women's coquetry and submissiveness to men and their general irresponsibility towards themselves and their society.

Elaine Showalter was another feminist. She divided women's literary development into three distinct phases: the 'feminine' phase (1840-1880), where they imitated the masculine role; the 'feminist '(1880-1920), where they advocated the rights of women and protested male norms and values; and the 'female' (1920-present) was the phase of self discovery where women's experiences were their main purpose. Elaine

Showalter entitled *Women's Writing and Women's Culture* in which she said that women have their own types of culture, women have their own types of body, the speaking style, the language, the capacity of thinking and behaving, all are their own sorts and male have their own. So they are naturally different.

Feminism began especially with Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett and Betty Friedan along with the contribution of outstanding female authors. They examined the female's self as interpreted by male authors and saw these texts as models of power. Beauvoir said that women were taken as secondary to men. Men defined humans, not women. Friedan, through her publication, stressed to abandon gender biasness and enforcement of equal rights. Millett focused on ideology in 'sexual politics'. She viewed that sex is biological differences and gender is a psychological concept. The essence of politics is power, which is pervasively interpreted according to male interest. Millet said that literature has served patriarchy.

### **The Issues of Female Awakening**

From the origin of human beings the existence of women was miserable due to the imposed laws and customs by men upon women in a patriarchal society. Women in such a society became the means to fulfill the sexual desire of men. They became the object of sex. Their role was limited within the frame of house-works and they became the source of entertainment for men. They had to please their husbands at any cost.

In a patriarchal society sexual differences caused sexual discrimination and repression. Because of the biological differences women had been compelled to lead a poor life. The sexual difference caused women to remain within the four walls of a house. The patriarchal society had its own norms, values and culture. By imposing these norms, values and culture upon women they dominated the women.

But with the development of time the movement named feminism came into existence to deny the male culture, male norms and values that undervalued women as complement parts of men. The feminism as a movement aimed awakening women in all sides. Its overall goal was to develop all round personalities of women. This movement endeavored to make conscious to the women that by biological difference they were not inferior to men. They could be equal to men if they got the same education, opportunities, and chances. They can do the work what men can do.

Feminist critics like Mary Wollstonecraft, Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter, Simone de Beauvoir, Vergina Woolf, and Susan Gilbert were the renowned critics to enlighten the women about the precarious existence of women in a male governed society. These feminists talked about religion, festival, education, culture, myth, and literature, and so on to manifest it that these above mentioned things were the tools for male to dominate and exploit women. They further said that with these means the patriarchal society exploited women. They proved the superiority of male and compelled women to internalize their inferiority.

By this contribution of these female writers, women in a male governed society began to understand the ways of exploitation upon them by their fathers, brothers, and husbands. Being conscious women, they began to realize the inferior status of women not because of their sex difference but because of male culture and values. Being awakened women, they attempted to deconstruct all male values, norms and culture in order to reshape the norms and values that will make no difference between male and female. By reconstructing and reshaping the culture they brought the marginalized women into centre.

### **Female Awakening in Educational System**

Feminists were always against anti-feminist's views which they claimed were of narrow and conservative disposition. In Austen's time the system of education was different from man to women. The male governed society of that time desired to keep women emotional and sentimental. So the society encouraged women to read sentimental and emotional type of novels. Austen realized the effect of sentimental novel on women's lives. Due to impact of sentimental novel, Austen in *Northanger Abbey* depicted the protagonist Catherine Morland's precarious situation. This protagonist could not understand the meaning of the text in depth because the society never allowed her to go in depth. The society wanted to keep her in emotional and sentimental state rather than to make them rational and intellectual. By providing emotional and sentimental education, the male oriented society made women emotional and sentimental and then claimed that women can not be rational and intellectual. Criticizing the patriarchal education system, Mary Wollstonecraft said:

To do everything in an orderly manner is a most important precept which women, who, generally speaking, receive only a disorderly kind of education, seldom attend to with that degree of exactness that men, who from their infancy are broken into method observe-This negligent kind of guesswork-for what other epithet can be used to point out the random exertions of a sort of instinctive common sense never brought to the test of reason? -prevents their generalizing matters of fact; so they do today what they did yesterday merely because they did it yesterday. (94)

Mary Wollstonecraft, British political thinker through her *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in which she emphasized the awareness on the part of woman which could only be possible when they are given proper rational education and brought into

the mainstream of multi-sectoral development of society. She believed in the equality of gender in terms of capacity, skill and intelligence.

Wollstonecraft has bitter experience of the educational system of patriarchal society that deliberately made women inferior by emotional and sentimental type of texts. She criticizes this low type of education for women and says, "I advise my sex not to read such flimsy works, it is to induce them to read something superior, for I coincide in opinion with a sagacious man, who having a daughter and niece under his care, pursued a very different plan with each" (399). Thus the feminist movement made aware to the female about the educational system of patriarchal society that made the female bankrupt in thinking. Thus the feminist movement made conscious to female and encouraged to deconstruct the patriarchal education in order to reconstruct the system of education that is beneficial to the whole community equally both female and male.

### **Awakening in Sexual Discrimination**

A simple biological opposition male/female had been understood variously by people. All the sides of male were weighty and significant. He was the victor because of his anatomy,. Whereas the female had a series of negative values because of a different anatomy. Cixous notes that each opposition is hierarchy and is biased to women.

A fundamental goal of feminist theory was to analyze gender relations. The study of gender relations included to what were often considered the feminist issues. The purpose of feminist theory was to avoid thinking about gender. Feminists are proud of their femaleness and have made a vital tool to femininity to perceive their existence. Viewing the discrimination upon women by patriarchal culture and society Toril Moi writes, "Feminist criticism, then, is a specific kind of political discourse, a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism not simply concern for gender in literature" (204).

In patriarchal society men defined women as other and men as universal because of sex difference. The radical feminist insisted that the root of women's oppression were buried deep in patriarchy was sex/gender system. Kate Millet in her *Sexual Politics* (1970) argued that sex is political primarily because the male-female relationship is determined by it. Because of gender difference men controlled of the public and private world. The patriarchal ideology exaggerated biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always had the dominate, or "masculine" roles and that women always had the subordinate ones. This ideology became the tool for the men to oppress women. Men with the superior concept of masculine gender oppressed women through institution such as academy, the church and the family. Each Justified and reinforced women's subordination to men with the result that most women internalized a sense of inferiority to men.

But the feminism as a political movement awakened women about their miserable existence in the male governed society because of sex difference. By making conscious to the female about their precarious situation, this movement helped women gain not only in legal, political, and economic liberties and equalities but also in sexual ones. The feminist movement awakened to the women that women will always remain subordinate to men unless inferiority of sexual concept is reconceived and reconstructed.

### **Awakening in Dowry System**

The issue of female suffering in a male dominated society is also the dowry system. Regarding the issue of dowry Ram Ahuja says, "The practice of giving dowry to a daughter is not an age-old institution. Having no right to parental property under the 'Mitakshare' system of inheritance, she was given part of it at the time of her marriage to help her set up a new home" (122). In a dowry system girls are in no ways responsible, but they are considered to be the cause of it. In a patriarchal society, the woman can not

have their own dignity. They are always treated as secondary being. Girls are evaluated in terms of dowry instead of their intellectual and academic qualities. If the girl is poor and if her parents can not afford the money to the boy side, then, and there their marriage is canceled. If the dowry does not meet the demand of boy's side, then, the bride has to bear the suffering. She is beaten to death and compelled to suicide. She is burnt to fire if the dowry is inadequate. The success of their marriage life depends on dowry how much their parents afford to the male side.

In a male governed society when the brides fail to bring the expected dowry they are burnt or killed. But no one will question of untimely death of a bride nor does the law search the criminal. The criminal can easily escape from the punishment. Ram Ahuja depicts the horrible situation because of dowry. He further writes, "There is some scattered data suggesting that the murder of a young wife or a daughter-in-law on the issue of dowry is far more prevalent than what the public or professionals realize" (122). From the beginning, the world is under the control of male. Every institutions, rules and laws were men made. Everything was oriented to male because they were the product of men. The male oriented society ignored the existence of women. As a result women were humiliated and tortured on dowry issue.

Feminism as a political movement awakened women about the cruelties imposed upon them by male due to the inadequate dowry. This movement enlightened the women and, then challenged the dowry system. Feminists argued that marriage is not a business transaction. They further said that in the name of dowry the married girl should not be ill-treated.

Feminism made women conscious. It made them bold to question the bride's death for dowry. Ram Ahuja questioning the dowry system says, "Why do girls submit to oppression? Why do they not walk out of their marriage and try to stand on their own

legs?" (148). Feminism gave them the feeling of independence and the feeling of equality to men. It encouraged breaking the dowry system as it inferiorized women to men in order to reconstruct the new system where men and women can be equal. In this new structure, there will be no space for dowry.

### **Awakening from Male Hegemony**

Hegemony is generally understood to mean domination by consent. Hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes of their interests are interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, but by a more subtle and inclusive power by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted.

The concept of male hegemony is not new in a patriarchal society. Women in the society consciously or unconsciously consent to their subordination before male. They are encouraged "freely" to choose their inferior status and accept male exploitation as natural. History is only male centered and women are completely absent. The concept of history for women is inappropriate. Males have thought themselves as the ruler of the world. From the historical time they have made women inferior. The patriarchal society thought that man's existence is possible without women. Because man is the subject, absolute whereas woman is an incidental and inessential being. Rosemarie Tong quotes Millet's "*Sexual Politics*" in *Feminist Thought* about the male's superiority in patriarchal society. Tong quotes:

Patriarchal ideology, according to Millett, exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or "masculine," roles and that women always have the subordinate, or "feminine," ones. This ideology is particularly powerful because through conditioning, men usually secure the apparent consent of



the very women they oppress. They do this through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men with the result that most women internalize the sense of inferiority to men. (96)

Feminism as a political movement started questioning such longstanding, dominate, male phallogentric ideologies. Feminists by awakening women tried to establish common ground. They hit hard the male centered biased attitude. The feminists' movement made aware to the women that they themselves were not the reason to be unfit, but it was male's desire, not to give the women any respect. Making women enlightened the feminist movement, challenged the male hegemony to create a favorable situation for women to develop their personality.

### **Female Awakening from the Domestic Affairs**

Because of the male oriented social structure from the very beginning of the social history, the concept of the society about women was born hostess. Women were expected to stay at home and confine themselves to domestic duties and social graces-playing music and decorating themselves for men. In a sense they were satisfied with their given status in the society. They had no idea about their secondary object like female position in the family. Stating this situation Rosemarie quotes Friedan, "According to Friedan, the feminine mystique - that is, the idea that women can find satisfaction exclusively in the traditional role of wife and mother. Deprived of meaningful goals, these women dust and polish their furniture as if they were Sisyphus rolling an enormous boulder as a steep hill only to have it roll down again" (256). They were totally unaware about their state of being and most of them believed that was what their natural role and duties and followed them without any complain. Not only ordinary people, even the scholars thought in the same way and helped to strengthen this concept.

The patriarchal society thought that women were naturally inferior to men. Women internalized their subordinate position and accepted their role to be weak and passive. Their duties were to please men. They had to be useful to men and they had to win their love. These were women's duties in ages and that were taught to women from childhood.

Women followed their duties made by patriarchal society without any question and they never tried to challenge it. The modern feminist critic Virginia Woolf questions, "Whether part of the housework was her task" (34). The male structure society compelled women to think that was their destiny and women did not think necessary to revolt against this thinking. Thus, it became easy for men to convince women that their role in life was to be wives and mothers and to serve the family. Generally women were taught 'drawing room' piano playing and dancing in the place of real education like boys got. Rosemarie quotes Betty Friedan in *Feminist Thought* that, "Patriarchal society thinks women are ideally suited only for certain occupations - teaching, nursing, and clerking - and are largely incapable of other tasks" (28). Women had to look after their younger brothers and sisters. They were taught domestic skills such as sewing and laundry work aimed at making them good house wives and mothers in the place of independent human being.

The feminist movement enlightened the women about their confinement within the four walls of a house. Rosemarie Tong asserts , " Feminists tend to agree, a person's biological sex should in no way determine his or her psychological or social gender" (31). This movement made conscious to the female about the domestic oppression by male upon women and then, it encouraged the women to challenge male -oriented social structure that prevented women in public life. Making women conscious, feminist's movement gave inspiration to question the assigned role of female in the society.

Feminists aimed at deconstructing male made position of women in a house to make them acknowledge the reality of female power.

### **Female Awakening for Economic Rights**

From centuries our culture has been patriarchal culture where male has dominated women over every aspect of the world and female has to accept the secondary position assigned by patriarchy. Rosemarie quotes in Adrine Rich's *Woman Born*, "Men, suggested Rich, have convinced women that unless a woman is a mother, she is not really a woman. Indeed, patriarchy has kept women convinced that mothering is their one and only job" (87). In a society where men have determined social values and the structure of institutions. Henrietta L. Moore shows the discrimination in economic structure of male governed society between male and female. Moore writes, "Elite men can maximize their social ad economic resources and opportunities but Elite women were denied" (12). In a patriarchal society, females have been exploited and marginalized in every domain. So the field related to employment and economy did not remain aloof.

The female workers were unpaid and underpaid in a male governed society. They were sexually harassed and limited employment of women in income generating sources. They had no right in property. The patriarchal society placed women as proletariat and men as bourgeois.

Feminists questioned the discrimination of unequal distribution of job and capital. It proposed to wage a war against the unequal distribution and disrupted the socio-economic structure and configured new one which will give equal opportunity to both sexes and economic hierarchy will be dismantled. Marxist feminists attacked the prevailing capitalistic system and advocated a revolutionary approach in which the

overthrow of capitalizing is viewed as the necessary precondition to dismantling male privilege.

### **Female Awakening for Freedom and Equality**

Freedom of expression is one of the liberties that women have at least nominally enjoyed for a considerable period of time. For a long period women's publications had been among the materials removed from the public and school libraries. As a result they could not write. Virginia Woolf is quite unsatisfied of this situation she raises question about this precarious situation. She says:

The most superficial enquiry into women's writing raises a host of questions. Why, we ask at once, was there no continuous writing done by women before the eighteenth century? Why did they then write almost as habitually as men, and in the course of that writing produce, one after another, some of the classics of English fiction? And why did their art then, and why to some extent does their art still, take the form of fiction?

(33)

Feminist content was the basis for the censorship of publications. Women needs and interests were ignored and neglected. In a patriarchal society, the law, constitution and the executive body were bias against women. These institutions were male-oriented and from these institutions females were oppressed and suppressed. Male defined woman as other. Because of male-structured society, woman had no from voting of right, to the right of expression.

Tong sensed the hierarchy between male and female because of biological difference. She sees domination and restriction upon women by male culture and male oriented society. She finds women as an object for pleasing male. In such a miserable

women's existence, she feels necessity to deconstruct male made culture and male oriented society in order to be free from any type of bondage. She writes:

Feminists have explicitly articulated the ways in which men have constructed female sexuality to serve not women's but man's needs, wants, and interests-what women must do [...] is to reconceive female sexuality, this time in the image and likeness of women. Although this reconception is difficult, it is potentiality empowering. Liberted from the Procrustean bed of male-defined and male controlled female sexuality women are discovering the richness and diversity of the female body sensing within it the power of what some formal "women spirit rising". (72)

Marie Bashkirsev also stresses the importance of liberty. She says, "Since the women lack liberty, their participation is negligible in society" (567). In *Women and Human Rights* (1995) Katering Tuomas Evski has demanded human rights for women. She writes: "Women indeed do not enjoy the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled by the mere fact that they are human" (9). She has presented in the view of societies on the topic of " why women and human rights? " women's rights are allowances that societies have made for motherhood, not for their womanhood' Tomassevsk quite disagrees with the social notions and says, "Not all women are mothers. More important those who are not mothers only they are also workers, electors medical doctors, political prisoners, trade union leaders, immigrants, soldiers or refugees" (9). The writer here demands equal human rights which should be protected for possible women's advancements.

Feminists are alert of their existence. They desire that women should also be a part of history, and emphasis upon equality or legal reform for women's rights. In this concern, Tomasevski says; "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 and outside the home" (34). Thus feminism awakened women with the new idea to struggle against the male dominated society to free women from the male trap. By enlightening the female, feminist advocated for emancipation and equality.

### **The Role and Importance of Female Awakening**

Because of the patriarchal structure of society women have been involved in an age long pathos of identity crisis. Women's identity crisis has been the issue of several women writers all over the world. The bias society oppressed and suppressed women bitterly and obliged women to internalize their inferiority. But feminism a political movement awakened them to dismantle all the disciplines of patriarchal society to address the absence of women in various academic areas by uncovering women's achievement.

Kate Chopin is a female novelist from America who has delved into the depth of women's psycho-social realities and has scrupulously examined women's body, soul and mind. Her novel *The Awakening* demonstrates a woman's self-realization that shocked the patriarchal world and awakened desire and vigorous longing for freedom. Female awakening is an important and exciting experience that introduced new ways of seeing both the world and one self along with placing women at the centre stage in the learning process, challenging both the content and form of education of male made.

Feminism as a political movement, awakened women to bring a change in a society for women's right of liberty, equality, property, education and so on. This female awareness movement helped to change the condition of women. Similarly it inspired women to publish their books and articles to challenge the old assumption that prevented women to be a writer and created new territory where women will have the equal space like men. In a patriarchy, women were constrained by society and culture. But female

awareness encouraged women to challenge what it means to be female in a male governed society.

Female awakening discloses the sexual discrimination occurring perpetually and also shows how women have been empowered to speak of their rights in the recent era and have cultivated awareness among them. Rosemaries quotes, "As Dally sees a patriarchy, oppressive gender roles will be deconstructed as a result of a revolution that, she predicts, will begin with dissident women" (102). That awareness has not remained limited to voicing out of the women's rights and sexual equality in the public and to create a political propaganda Kate Chopin explores how a woman tries to redefine the traditionally accepted patriarchal norms advocating freedom.

Female awareness tried to dismantle the conventional patterns to establish nonsexist ones. The issues like identity self individuality and freedom became the common features for feminists to awaken women. Female awakening made women to choose a female protagonist to explore her psychological turmoil in a patriarchal socio-cultural frame. Through the female protagonist feminists waged a psychological, social and intellectual war against the patriarchal systems and tried to come out of every bondage: marital, social, and cultural to demonstrate her search for identity.

Most of the societies since the remote past have been built upon the patriarchal foundation that therefore men defined the world and society. They defined every aspect of society and culture from their perspective and depicted that in the works of art and literature. The ancient mythologies have attributed some peculiar characteristics to women in the form of goddess. Apollo represents wisdom, knowledge and supremacy while Venus and Eros represent beauty, sensuality, and Jealousy respectively. Bible is also the discriminated holy book as it portrays women as credulous and deceiving. Women are described as to have been created from a rib of a man. The description has

pushed women into a degenerate and subordinate position. But being awakened about the miserable existence of women, feminists questioned all male based definition against women, and male oriented religion that marginalized women in order to create a new definition and religion where female and male will be equal.

### **Female Awakening and Literature**

In the past “women’s literature” has been a pejorative term. Women were prevented to be a writer or their works were ridiculed and mocked by the male-oriented society. Just as culture, society, myth, religion, power and politics were out of access for women in the same way literature could not remain exception. Literature also became a tool to oppress and suppress women. It also limited women within a four walls of a house. So before women’s awareness literature was male centered. It subordinated women and never represented women as dominate or as superior rather it treated women as a part of men.

Feminism awakened women about the precarious women existence in male-made literature. So they began to question such phallogentric literature in order to secure women’s participation equally like male in literature. bell hooks argues for the feminist movement. According to hooks, "Feminist centralized the experiences of all women especially the woman whose social condition have been least written about studied, or changed by political movements" (27). In the past literature was an approach for male to marginalize the women as the other. That literature claimed that Adam was created by god and woman was created out of Adam’s rib. Feminism, a political movement, made conscious to the women about their subordinated condition of women in literature so the feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Emily Bronettee, Elizabeth Janeway, Vergina Woolf, Doris Lessing, Simone de Beauvoir, Silvia Plath,



Charlotte Bronte, Gertrude Stein, Kate Chopin, Katherine Anne Porter and so on protested the male-made literature with a goal to form their own literature.

In the time of Jane Austen, George Eliot and Mary Wollstonecraft to advocate for women literature was a great problem because sincerity, sacrifice and devotion were considered natural virtues of women. At that time men used to treat the feminist as an enemy because the feminist clearly spoken against the patriarchy. Feminists like Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, and George Eliot presented women protagonist in literature ignoring traditional women's roles and attempting to establish female dignity like Miss Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*.

The purpose of feminists in literature is to study and restudy well known women authors. Likewise women literature aims to discover the neglected or forgotten women writers and thus to forge an alternative literary tradition as Eline Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) provides an overview of women's literature. Similarly Rosemarie Tong declared what Beauvoir said in *The Second Sex*:

In a chapter summarizing the writings of five male authors about women, de Beauvoir demonstrated the ways in which each of these authors depending on his own specific self-image, and constructed for himself ideal women. "Montherlant, the solar spirit, seeks pure animality in her; Lawrence, the phallicist, asks her to sum up the feminine sex in general; Claudel defines her as a soul-sister; Breton cherishes Melusine, rooted in nature, pinning his note on the woman-child; Stendhal wants his mistress intelligent, cultivated, free in spirit and behavior; an equal. (205)

What is common to these distinctively different ideals of women is that in each case the ideal women is urged to forget, deny, or in some way negate herself. History is largely responsible for the plight of a woman in literature when awareness arose in

women they began to hate male writers and male literature which excluded women while, at the same time they searched to achieve maleness. The self-aware women in their writing described their dependence on man; second, their anger at their situation and at the same time their rebellion feeling. Vergina Woolf speaks for woman that a woman can not fulfill her literary ambition in the shortage of social and economic support. She discloses the reality in her essay, *A Room of Ones' Owns*, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (4). Money and freedom is, therefore, the essential thing for woman for a successful writing.

In *Northanger Abbey*, women characters are close to life. They are also independent and ambitious. Both Austen and Miss Catherine help to raise the consciousness of passive women in their respective societies. Through *Northanger Abbey* Austen introduces herself as a feminist writer who is interested in social welfare. The female protagonist of the novel establishes herself as a feminist by being awakened of improper education and male's humiliation upon women of the patriarchal society.

### III. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: CATHERINE'S AWAKENING IN *NORTHANGER*

#### *ABBEY*

Austen's novel, *Northanger Abbey*, examines the unconscious and miserable existence of women along with improper education, physical and mental torture upon women and their absence in economic right through the depiction of Miss Catherine, the protagonist of the novel. On one level, the novel exposes the protagonist's gradual awakening from the improper educational system imposed upon women by the male-oriented society; on the other hand, she realizes the women's absence in economic right, marriage making decision and ill-treatment of male upon women.

Miss Catherine Moreland, Isabella Thrope, Miss Tilney, Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Moreland are the female characters of the novel, *Northanger Abbey*, through them Jane Austen uncovers the women's precarious existence in a male governed society of her time and then she leaves a message to the whole women of the world to awaken from the male structured society in order to reform existing norms, values and culture so that women can be equal to be male by giving the examples of the awakened lady, Catherine Moreland, the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey*.

*Northanger Abbey* begins from description of Catherine Moreland through the painful realization of the protagonist about women's subordinate and submissive role and ends with a happy married life of the protagonist. Catherine Morland, gradually awakens from the male-oriented society with the development of the novel, she becomes an enlightened woman. So her marriage with Henry Tilney at the end of the novel is not a submissive marriage but an equal to men.

The focus of this novel is on the idea of a heroine. The novel begins with an emphasis that Catherine is sure to be a heroine, "She grows up and begins to curl her hair and read the books that encourage a girl to behave like other girls" (5). That means she

represents conventional femininity, a romantic heroine. As Catherine Moreland becomes a heroine by growing up, Austen here makes the point that social and literary conventions collaborate with biology to construct femininity.

Female characters apart from Catherine, have been marginalized and made them to internalize their inferior status in this novel. Mrs. Allen, a woman from a rich family, leads a life of romance. She accepts male culture and values without questioning them. Instead of proper education, equal right to male she is fond of fashion and she has interest in the issue of marriage and in the place of labouring hard to be a critical thinker of social issues she has a passion to have a wandering life. Austen writes:

Mrs. Allen was one of that numerous classes of females, whose society can raise no other emotion than surprise at their being any men in the world who could like them well enough to marry them. [...] In one respect she was admirably fitted to introduce a young lady into public being fond of going everywhere and seeing everything herself as any young lady could be. Dress was her passion. She had a most harmless delight in being five. (10)

Austen here apparently points out that women in her age internalize the role of submissiveness by accepting the role of male created culture through Mrs. Allen's desire for wandering life and passion for dress.

Isabala Thrope is another female character of the novel. She is the first introduced girl to Catherine Morland. At Bath, she is also the pathetic and victimized female of the patriarchal society. She is fond of reading the kind of Gothic novel in surface. This suggests she internalizes the social structure of male governed society and plays the role to make Catherine to be a prey of patriarchy by encouraging her to read and

acknowledge the sentimental novels. Thrope encourages Catherine to read more and more sentimental types of novel. As Isabella describes:

But, my dearest Catherine what have you been doing with yourself all this morning? Have you gone on with *Udolpho*? [...] How delightful! Oh! I would not tell you what is behind the black veil for the world! Are not you wild to know? [...] Dear creature! *Udolpho*. We will read the Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you. (30-31)

Because of the blind faith in the improper educational system of a male oriented society, she becomes the victim as a result she can not distinguish between right and wrong, reality and fantasy. Isabella Thrope, therefore, fails in love with James Moreland and fails in friendship with Catherine Moreland. So the patriarchal imposed sentimental education inferiorized and subordinated women and it made them failure in the world.

Eleanor Tilney is another female character. She is friend to Catherine Moreland and daughter to General Tilney. She becomes the victim of the patriarch society. Miss Tilney has a fearful life because her father is cruel and ruthless along with greedy and selfish. Miss Tilney to some extent realizes the male dominance upon women since she is an educated lady but she cannot raise her voice and question against this male oriented society even at the critical period for deciding a boy to her and at the time to order Catharine Moreland to leave General Tilney's house without explanation.

Mrs. Morland and Mrs. Thrope are also the women characters of the novel, *Northanger Abbey*, who represent the conventional female role. Mrs. Morland is mother to Catherine Moreland. She engages herself to cultivate her daughter by traditional education that is suited and fitted for male benefit. Thus, Jane Austen through *Northanger Abbey* endeavours to protest male oriented education that marginalized

women in order to bring a change in the existing male made educational system so that women can awaken from their precarious existence.

The male characters in this novel have occupied the limited space than female characters which suggests that Austen is a feminist who leaves the message through this novel that woman can do what men can do. By selecting, Catherine Moreland, the protagonist of the novel, Austen challenges the patriarchal society that inferiorized the women from past and, here; most of male characters represent the evil sides of society.

General Tilney is sexy. He enjoys Catherine's physical attractions. He appreciates the elasticity of her walk. The general invites Catherine to Northanger Abby since he is misinformed that she is an heiress, he means to marry her to his son. He is an unsuited father because his children are afraid of him.

Similarly, John Thrope, another male character who also represent the villainy role. This man one-sidedly falls in love with the protagonist, Catherine Morland, but when he becomes sure that Catherine loves some one else he constructs a plan to break Miss Moreland's love affair by disclosing the reality about Catherine that she is from middle class.

James Moreland has also the patriarchal attitude. He endeavours to apply his influence upon his sister, Catherine Moreland, to determine her marriage with John Thrope in order to survive his love affair with Isabella Thrope. Instead of wishing a bright life of his sister, this man tries to fix her life for his petty interest. By sketching the motif of James Moreland, Austen encourages women to awaken from the male dominated society to create a feeling in their mind about the need to be a free and independent human being from raising the position of a male controlled object.

Most of the influential characters of *Northanger Abbey* are women. Their relations among themselves are emotionally intense. Among the crowd of women,

Catherine Morland is the most significant character. She is quite opposite from other female characters in her perspective of defining society. She is an unconventional girl. She is an entirely self-sufficient woman who is ruled by herself rather than by the expectations of society.

The other women characters are also important for shaping the theme of conventional womanhood by being silent and obedient to patriarchal decision like Miss Tilney who does not dare to question to her father even in her own marriage affair and like Isabella Thrope who leads emotional and sentimental life in the place of rational and intellectual . Catherine Moreland's awakening makes visible her position in patriarchal society. Her new consciousness makes her worry for the limited female roles and gives her desire to seek alternative roles from social restraints that makes women free, Independence, and equal to men.

In *Northanger Abbey*, all females are important with their own types of individuality. Among them Catherine Moreland is the chief one. She seems to have more moral sensibility than others. Despite this, she is humiliated. Because male dominated values overwhelm her efforts.

Austen by presenting Catherine Moreland as an awakened girl, amidst the patriarchal society claims the fact that women too are intellectual beings and their participation makes the social life more effective. She likes to present the appropriate role for female in literature. So she chooses the female protagonist in her famous novel *Northanger Abbey*.

### **Issues of Female Awakening in *Northanger Abbey***

Austen has been considered one of the greatest novelists whose novels are interesting for their social message. Austen through her novels has endeavoured to shake the foundation of a patriarchal society. There are both male and female characters in

*Northanger Abbey*. Though she presents the male character in the novel, still Austen focuses on female characters making their role weighty. Catherine Moreland is the most significant character because she represents the feminist or powerful woman of the novel. Catherine has many roles and she succeeds in all because of her awakening and sensibility towards her roles.

The issue of female awakening along with other social reforms has become the focus. During the course of her “awakening”, Catherine faces and experiences the precarious existence of a woman because of male-oriented educational system and male made tradition. The protagonist, Catherine Moreland, of *Northanger Abbey* gradually awakens from the sleep of convention to consciousness experiencing a new sense for women identity. This experience of awakening arouses in her a kind of longing for equity between male and female by bringing a change in patriarchy social components. By the reason, she increasingly moves toward a new vision of female awareness; exploring and examining the existence of women in male controlled world.

Catherine Moreland is a centre of *Northanger Abbey*. She has the awareness to identify herself as a human being. She understands her education and culture well with all its patriarchal rules. To exist in the society, one must be awakened about one’s existence. So Austen has chosen Catherine Morland as an aware young girl who can comprehend her existence. So Catherine a perfect and illuminated girl has become able to expose Gothic and romance conventions as illusory.

### **Female Awakening from the Improper Educational System**

Austen in *Northanger Abbey* connects Catherine Moreland and other female characters’ failure to think with the fact that they have never been taught to think. The problem is not individual incapacity but the lack of education. Catherine is stupid and



she is made stupid by a male oriented society which fails to honour female members and their intelligence.

Austen depicts in *Northanger Abbey* the failure of female characters to develop their innate ability to understand the text in depth since they were taught by the female especially by their mothers who had no capacity to provide rational type of education. So the pattern of female folly reproduced over generations. Instead of endeavouring to make women reflective, the female characters were encouraged to be a heroine. As the novelist writes:

Catherine who had by nature nothing heroic about her [...]at the age of fourteen, to books – or at least books of information – for provided that nothing like useful knowledge could be gained from them, provided they were all story and no reflection, she had never any objection to books at all. But from fifteen to seventeen she was in training for a heroine; she read all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations which are so serviceable and so soothing in the vicissitudes of their eventual life. (5)

Mrs. Moreland herself has no proper education so she cannot instill the valuable knowledge to her daughter; therefore, Catherine Moreland never attempts to capture the sense of text in depth. She only reads for the sake of enjoyment. She says, “I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it” (31).

Catherine Morland and Isabella Thrope both are the product of male dominated society. Both of them have become the victim of male education. In the place of endeavouring to receive rational and intelligence type of education, they are fond of reading more and more sentimental novels. As Isabella says to Catherine, "I will read you their names directly: here they are in my pocket-book. Castle of Wolfenbach,

Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries. Those will last us some time" (Austen, 31).

Jane Austen is very cautious of her time about the inferior type of education that was given to female she was quite unsatisfied to it. Austen is sure that this inferior type of education made women unthinkable and made them unable to distinguish between life and literature. The protagonist, Catherine Moreland, of *Northanger Abbey* walks with Henry Tilney around the Beechen Cliff, the noble hill of South France. She has already read about the Beechen Cliff in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. So she describes the Hill to Mr. Tilney without being critical about the difference between real Beechen Cliff and the imaginative Beechen Cliff. When Henry questions her about her presence in *Beechen Cliff*, She replies, "Oh! No. I only mean what I have read about. It always puts me in mind of the country that Emily and her father traveled through, in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. But you never read novels, I dare say?" (104)

The age of Austen is the age of male. So male created and defined every institution making them beneficial to male. Male always wanted to keep women emotional and sentimental. Female internalized it. As Catherine says, "The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel must be intolerably stupid" (104).

Miss Catherine is defective in reading and thinking from the beginning. She takes everything as truth what she reads in fiction. She has already read the murder of maidens by their male partners in Gothic novels; therefore, she generalized the sudden death of Mrs. Tilney by the hand of her husband. Her potential lover Henry Tilney reprimands Catherine for her sin for guessing his father as a murderer of his mother. He abuses, "Dearest Miss Moreland, what ideas have you been admitting" (198). He, then, convinces her by saying, "Her death is by natural disease" (198). Thus, the distinction

shown her by Henry Tilney between reality and literature awakens her from the defects of women's sentimental and emotional type of education in a male governed society.

### **Female Awakening in Love and Marriage**

During the period of Jane Austen, the English society was conservative and it was controlled and moved by male. Austen in *Northanger Abbey* observed the issue of love and Marriage carefully there she finds these two issues, love and marriage, as the components to entrap women into social limits. The issue of love and marriage were the means to inferiorize the women.

At the time of Austen women were deprived of choosing their boy friends. If they dreamt any man in their life, it was quite impossible to turn the matter into reality of deciding their bed friends because the patriarchal society had only given the right to male to select a girl for love and marriage. As the narrator says:

No lady can be justified in falling in love before the gentleman's love is declared, it must be very improper that a young lady should dream of a gentleman before the gentleman is first known to have dreamt of her. How proper Mr. Tinley might be as a dreamer or lover had not yet perhaps entered Mr. Allen's head. (20)

This extract reveals that in the issue of love and marriage to determine in the time of protagonist for women was out of their access. This extract clearly creates hierarchy between male and female. They were taken as the objects of men to please, to play and entertain them by dancing and singing for male. As Catherine says, "I should be glad to have you dance" (13).

John Thrope is the male character of the patriarchal society. He has male ideology of love and marriage. He never values the feeling and wish of girls. Mr. Thrope one sidedly falls in love with Catherine Moreland. By hooks and Crooks, he endeavours

to receive her without understanding her sentiments. He forcefully compels her to fall in love with him though she does not have any wish of love with him. As their conversation clarifies:

Come, Miss Moreland, be quick, for the others are in a confounded hurry to be off. They want to get their tumble over.

What do you mean? Said Catherine, 'Where are you all going to?'

Going to? Why, you have not forgot out engagement! What a head you have! We are going up Claverton Down.

But really I did not expect you, said Catherine. (55)

Miss Catherine gradually awakens about love and marriage in a patriarchal society. To receive her love, she is deceived by John Thrope. He tells her lie about Henry Tilney's affair with a beautiful lady in order to break Catherine's wish to be Mr. Tilney's girl friend. But his lie becomes exposed to Catherine when she sees Miss Tilney and Henry Tilney's Coming towards her house. She becomes angry with John Thrope. She begins to hate him and she desires not to be present before his eyes. As she says to John:

How could you say, that you saw them driving up the Lansdowne Road?

.... I would not have had it so for the world. .... They must think it so

strange; So rude of me! to go by them too, without saying a word. You

do not know how vexed I am. .... I shall have no pleasure at Clifton, nor in

anything else. How could you say, you saw them driving out in Phaeton?

(83)

This extract reveals that Catherine Moreland's beginning to awaken about her existence in her society. Though she is aware now to be a female in a male dominated society still she does not have courage to struggle against the male governed society.

As Catherine begins to hate John Thrope, then, he brings Isabella Thrope to bridge their gap with a letter. Isabella tries her best to persuade Catherine to fall in love with Mr. Thorpe but already aware Catherine pushes her proposal aside by making their issue clear:

You must be convinced, by my having no collection of it that I never thought, nor wished for anything of that kind from him. Indeed it has been quite unintentional on my side; I never had the smallest idea of it. Pray undeceive him as soon as you can, and tell him. I bet his pardon – that is – I do not know what I ought to say – but make him understand what I mean, in the proposed way. (14)

In Catherine's time, to walk with male and to dance with male by female was a preventive matter. If they had to walk or dance with any male, women had to take permission from their father. Catherine's father gives permission to his daughter to walk with John Thrope but Catherine after a bit awakening ignores the father's consent. By reminding Catherine about her father's consent, Isabella pressures Catherine to rethink the case of John Thrope, "it was the day your father's consent came and I am pretty sure that you and John were alone in the parlour, sometime before you left the house" (141).

These all incidents of the novel make us clear that women's self in Austen's society was constructed by patriarchy – by the will of males in society. Catherine and all other female characters do not have, at the beginning of the novel, their own selves. Their identity and marriage are fixed by the patriarchal society. They remain as the society wished from them. The female protagonist of this novel emerges as an awakened human being by her experience of precarious women existence in male structured society.

Catherine becomes a completely awakened girl when she gets the order of General Tilney from Miss Tilney to leave his house without any explanation canceling the potential marriage between Catherine and his son. This order makes Catherine shock and anguish. This shock and anguish experienced by the protagonist awakens her completely about women's existence and marriage in a male-dominated society.

The novel ends happily by the marriage between Catherine and Henry Tilney when Henry Tilney goes to Catherine's home to propose to her by disobeying his father. Therefore, Catherine's wedding with Henry Tilney is not her submissive but equal to him. By marrying Henry Tilney, Catherine teaches the value of ideal marriage. Ideal marriage is the marriage which develops an understanding between the husband and wife. It helps increase similarities between male and female.

### **Female Awakening from Sexual Discrimination**

To women at the beginning of nineteenth-century ideology of expression and attainment and all other doors were shut. They had been largely deprived and been kept isolated in homes for domestic works because of biological differences. The male-constructed norms, culture, and education benefited men to discriminate against women. Sketching such a condition, Austen in *Northanger Abbey* explores how women are discriminated and what obstacles the protagonist Catherine Moreland encounters in her male-dominated society because of sex differences.

Sex difference had determined the role of women as complementary beings of males. Almost all women characters in *Northanger Abbey* internalize the male-constructed ideology of sex difference. They are made to remain being feminine. Therefore, they are interested in dancing and singing, as well as they are fond of dress and beauty making. These female characters have become the victims due to their biological

anatomy. But Catherine by her experience of miserable existence of women awakens her male created sexual differences; therefore, her behaviours are not of the feminine trait.

Mrs. Allen accepts the patriarchal ideology. She does not endeavour to be sensible and intelligent woman like man. She likes to introduce the young ladies in public. In the novel she is described, "Dress was her passion. She had a most harmless delight in being fine" (10). Similarly in the beginning of the novel Catherine is also not exception. She is like other female characters. She is exposed to us as, "While she talked to Miss Thrope, their conversation turned upon those subjects of which the free discussion has generally much to do in perfecting a sudden intimacy between two young ladies: such as dress, balls, flirtations, and quizzes" (23).

*Northanger Abbey* displays women characters who do not dare to think, argue and rebel beyond the parameters assigned to them. Catherine is unable to understand the texts in depth, Isabella is fond of love making, Mrs. Allen has passion in dress and Miss Tilney can not question her father of his order to leave Catherine his house immediately though she is unsatisfied with her father's command. Catherine with Mrs. Allen set out her adventurous journey but she can not envisage whether that will be a safe or doom. All the female characters in *Northanger Abbey* have become the victim of a male governed society because patriarchy could not digest individual thinking of a woman. We can lie how deeply gender discrimination has been seated in male psyche. Woman is not supposed to show any dissatisfaction Mr. John Thrope's forceful endeavour to receive Catherine, Mr. Captain Tilney's pretence love with Isabella and General Tilney's order to Catherine to leave his house when he knows the dowry will not be sufficient from Catherine's parents reveals the sexual discrimination between male and female in Austen's age.

How a woman's self respect is doomed and she is relegated into insignificance sans name, status, and identity and how she is supposed to be a possession of male, can be pictured from John Thrope's treatment to Catherine and General's order to Catherine to leave *Northanger Abbey*. John Thrope regards Catherine as if she is his possession. He invites her to walk with him. But Catherine denies his proposal. In return he shouts with male hegemony to James Moreland, in front of Catherine Moreland to oblige her to visit with him. "you croaking fellow!" Cried Thrope, "We shall be able to do ten times more. Kingsweston! Aye, and Blaize Castle too, and anything else we can near of; but here is your sister says she will not go" (80). Mr. John Thrope's speech here comes automatically from his ego as a male and he considers himself authorized of Catherine as he had received the consent from her father for walking and dancing together. He is not happy to see Catherine's walk with a boy, Henry Tilney. In order to break her relationship with Henry Tilney he says, "I saw him with a girl" (118).

Similarly, General Tilney's order to Catherine to leave his house immediately shocks her. She returns at her birth house with the anguished experience without knowing the real attitude of General Tilney. The anguished Catherine is awakened by Henry Tilney who goes to meet her and her parents. She is revealed by Henry about the greedy attitude of his father. He informs her that his father had expected the amount in high degree from her parent's as dowry. But he is exposed by John Thrope that she is from poor family in London, then, and there he made up his mind to dismiss Catherine from his house, *Northanger Abbey*. The novelist further clarifies the women's victimization because of their sex differences in a male governed society. As the narrator says:

She was guilty only of being less rich than he had supposed her to be.

Under a mistaken persuasion of her possessions and claims, he had



courted her acquaintance in Bath, solicited her company at Northanger, and designed her for his daughter in law. On discovering his error, to turn her from the house seemed the best. (247)

This extract reveals that to be a daughter of a poor family is not the guilty of a girl but they are made escape goat in a patriarchal society. The protagonist of *Northanger Abbey* realizes the bitter existence of a girl in male governed society when Henry reveals her dismissal by his father.

### **The Issue of Powerlessness of Women**

Jane Austen has developed the theme of powerlessness to characterize her women characters in her novel *Northanger Abbey*. Most women, in this novel never intended to be in power nor did they have the idea to exercise the power. As a result, they were prevented from the political right through human rights to the right of property. These all female characters have become the victim of male oriented culture and society. They internalized the male value. They never understand the value of power nor do they question on it. If any women realized the male's violence upon women still they could not question because they were out from the realm to exercise power.

Austen, in her writing, has reflected the society of her time. She was quite unhappy towards her society because it was bias against women. That inferiorized women and made woman aloof from power to sensibility. They were motivated to be sentimental and emotional in order to please male. Austen through *Northanger Abbey* depicts her dissatisfaction against the society that compelled women to lead a powerless and pathetic existence.

Mrs. Thrope is a shallow woman who has only passion for dress. Isabella is a flirting lady. She is emotional and sentimental. She is not a wise girl. She fails in love and life but she does not learn a lesson from her failure. The protagonist herself is

powerlessness. She does not have the power to comprehend the implied meaning of the text nor does she have the power to resist General Tilney whose order generates shock and anguish in her mind.

The female characters are out from the realm of politics. They never talk about politics nor are they in politics. They have been sentimental and emotional by reading emotional type of novels such as *Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Mysterious Warnings*. So they have been interested in talking emotional conversation. As the narrator says: "They were always engaged in some sentimental discussion" (67). But the male characters like Mr. Allen is interested in politics. He reads newspaper and talks with men about politics. As the narrator says, "Mr. Allen, after drinking his glass of water, joined some gentlemen to talk over the politics of the day and compare the accounts of their newspapers; and the ladies walked about together, noticing every new face, and almost every new bonnet in the room" (5). This quotation reveals the dichotomy between male and female of Austen's time where women are interested for decoration and beauty but male have interest in politics.

Similarly, *Northanger Abbey* talks of property where only the male have the right to be ownership of parental property. The property of father is handed down to their son. Daughters have been prevented from inheriting the property. As the narrator says, "A living, of which Mr. Moreland was himself patron and incumbent, of about four hundred pounds yearly same was to be resigned to his son as son as he should be old enough to take" (131). This extract clearly states that James Moreland is the successor of his father and Catherine is outside from having any right in the property of her father.

Similarly by the discussion between Catherine and General Tilney we know that General Tilney has also disqualified Miss Tilney to be the owner of his property. As he says, "The house stands among fine meadows facing the south – east, with an excellent

kitchen-garden in the same aspect; the walls surrounding which I built and stocked myself about ten years ago, for the benefit of son" (174). The remark of General Tilney clearly shows that he is a partial father who is only worried about his son to make him rich but ignores his daughter in the matter of property. By studying *Northanger Abbey*, we come to know that the female characters have no power in property. They have been marginalized in the issue of priority by patriarchal culture.

Just as *Northanger Abbey* explores the theme of women's powerlessness in politics and property in the same way it depicts the theme of right of expression for women in male dominated society. Here the voice of women has become silence or made silence. Catherine and Miss Tilney are the aware female characters. They know the exploitation of male upon women but they do not have power to resist the male domination upon their life. Catherine is powerless to speak before General Tilney. She can not deny the invitation of General Tilney to dine together because it is out of her power. As the narrator says:

After sitting with them a quarter of an hour, she rose to take leave, and was then most agreeably surprised by General Tilney's asking her if she would do his daughter the honour of dining and spending the rest of the day with her. Miss Tilney added her own wishes. Catherine was greatly obliged; but it was quite out of her power. (100)

Similarly Miss Tilney cannot speak before her father. She does not have the power to resist her father's inhumanity and atrocity. When Miss Tilney gets the order of her father from London to dismiss Catherine Morland from his house immediately without explaining the reason of her dismissal. She is aware about this atrocity of her father upon an innocent girl but she is obliged to inform Catherine about the dismissal order as she can not do anything against the will of General Tilney. She says, "Dear, dear

Catherine, in being the bearer of such a message, I seem guilty myself of all its insult: yet, I trust you will acquit me for you must have been long enough in this house to see that I am but a nominal mistress of it, that my real power is nothing" (226). This extract reveals the precarious existence of female characters in a male governed society where they know the male exploitation upon woman; they know the violence of male upon female still they do not have power to rebel against them. Austen by depicting such melancholic existence of women, tried to awaken them in order to understand their own feeling and experience instead of accepting male's superiority.

Throughout the novel almost the female characters are unknown about themselves. They only adopt the roles that were given to them by the patriarchal society. They never feel the need to establish the identity of women like men. Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Morland and Isabella Thrope are happy with male oriented tradition. Miss Tilney is aware of the evil inside her father's mind but she can not dare to protest him. She knows the atrocity of her father when he sends message to dismiss Catherine soon but she is obliged to say Catherine that she is innocent but she cannot help her going against her father's will. As she says, "Tomorrow morning is fixed for your leaving us, and not even the hour is left to your choice; the very carriage is ordered, and will be here at seven O'clock, and on servant will be offered you" (226).

In spite of the patriarchal surrounding, Catherine and Henry Tilney have become bold to challenge their society that restricted them from marrying to each other. Henry Tilney is a male of a patriarchal society. He is prevented by his father from meeting and talking with Catherine. In a patriarchal society, father becomes the head of the family. He is respected and obeyed by the rest. The family members can not dare to protest him like miss Tilney. If any members of the family disobeys him he or she is punished. They can be ousted from the house. So father's decision becomes the final decision. Miss

Tilney obeys to General Tilney according to the patriarchal laws though she is unhappy in heart of General's decision. Captain Tilney is obedient to his father. He accepts every command of General Tilney.

In a male governed society, women do not have any right to question to men about their morality. If they do any wrong, their folly is forgot. Catherine is quite unhappy with Mr. Captain Tilney. She regards him the sole responsible in the breakage between Isabella and James in their love affair. She explains her anger against Captain Tilney with Henry Tilney and Miss Tilney. Though Miss Tilney is aware about irresponsibility of her brother, she comes out from the house to welcome him when Captain Tilney returns from London to his residence, *Northanger Abbey*. As the narrator says, "she hurried down to welcome him" (223).

The protagonist of *Northanger Abbey* Catherine Morland inspite of the forceful dismissal from General Tilneys house, dares to marry with the same person's son which threatens the value and culture of a patriarchal society. Her marriage with Henry Tilney makes us know that Catherine has become a bold lady when she feels the humiliation by General Tilney's order. The humiliation awakens, Catherine about the violence of male against women in her society.

The awakening shocks and anguish, experienced by the protagonist makes her to have a bold decision which shakes the patriarchal structure of the society.

Henry Tilney inspite of male by sex is a feminist character in *Northanger Abbey*. He knows the reason of women superficial reading of text and their emotional and sentimental behaviour because of male benifitial type of education. He becomes worry to reform the women's unconscious state of their miserable existence. As he says:

Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own observation of what

is passing around you - Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing: where every man is surrounded by a neighborhoods of voluntarily spies, and where roads and newspaper lay everything often? (197-198).

This extract reveals the culmination of Henry's helping to achieve a sense of her. Henry reminds Catherine of her citizenship, of her religion, of English law, of education in order to awaken her to use her own sense.

In *Northanger Abbey*, Henry Tilney gradually helps Catherine to become an enlightened girl by his suggestion, warning and teaching. Catherine makes a mistake by guessing General Tilney as the murderer of Mrs. Tilney. She guesses him as the murderer of Mrs. Tilney only on the basis that she has read the murderer of many maidens in the Gothic Novels like *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Henry convinces the death of his mother by the natural disease. He convinces her the distinction between life and literature which completely awakens Catherine from her sleep. As the narrator says, "The visions of romance were over. Catherine was completely awakened. Henry's address, short as it had been, had more thoroughly opened her eyes to the extravagance of her late fancies than all their several disappointments had done most grievously was she humbled" (199).

Henry Tilney not only cultivates Catherine's thinking but also encourages her to awaken to challenge the patriarchal society by revolt. Henry is quite opposite with his father. He disagrees with General Tilney when he comes to know the atrocity of his father upon Catherine. He is prevented from meeting Catherine by his father. As the narrator says, "his impatient father, hastily informed in angry terms of Miss Morland's

departure, and ordered to think of her no more" (247). By rejecting the father's command, he goes to meet Catherine in order to ask her hands by apologizing the mistreatment of his father. As the narrator says:

Mr. Henry Tilney, with the embarrassment of real sensibility began to apologies for his appearance there, acknowledging that after what had passed he had little right to expect a welcome at Fullerton, and stating his impatience to be assured of miss Morland's having reached her home in safety, as the cause of his intrusion. (245)

This extract exposes the propensity of Henry Tilney upon Catherine and then he reveals Catherine and her family about his father's greedy attitude for dowry is real cause of her dismissal from *Northanger Abbey*.

#### IV. CONCLUSION: FEMALE AWAKENING IN *NORTHANGER ABBEY*

Feminist literature, which has become the crucial subject of great discussion to the feminist critics today, is the outcome of the writers' feminist concerns in their writings. Austen might never have thought of the feminist cult that would so tremendously develop in later years. Her novel *Northanger Abbey* has established the foundation of modern feminism, from the overall study of her novel, it can be concluded that her utmost concern is centered to the women in relation to men and the society they live in. Austen has highly contributed to the women's issues taking the favour of the women. In *Northanger Abbey* she has focused on women genuinely analysing their life problems. Austen's arguments for the women's realm are unforgettable. Through *Northanger Abbey* she has argued and raised the issues of biased education, sexual discrimination, and injustice economic structure and so on.

Catherine Morland, the protagonist of the novel, is introduced to us from the beginning of her life. She is the pioneer woman character who is cultivated by sentimental type of education, therefore, she can not distinguish what is in front of her and what is in literature. Life and literature is same to her. The literature of that period played a role to inferiorize women. Not only Catherine other female characters are also good example of feminine. Their ways of working and behaving is like ancient ones. They have passion for dress, dancing, and music rather than labouring for rationality and intelligence. Her character like Isabella Thrope is inconstant in love. She is diverted and persuaded for love easily. Similarly Mrs. Morland is another feminine of *Northanger Abbey*. She is also a sentimental woman of patriarchal culture. Like Isabella she is a sentimental woman who has passion for dress and keeps interest to introduce new lady in public ceremony. Miss Tilney is another female character. She is a coward girl who cannot protest against her father though she knows his atrocity upon Catherine.



Austen had her own vision of life and her ambition was to raise women's status in society. She knew the value of her age; so her character Catherine has played a variety of woman roles: female, feminine and feminist. As a female Catherine is a young girl of seventeen. As a feminine she socializes with her neighbours and as a feminist she awakens herself from male domination and protests and challenges the patriarchal structure by determining her marriage with Henry Tilney whose father humiliated her by ordering her to leave his house without explaining her reasons behind her dismissal.

During Austen's time, women's conditions were pitiable. They were neglected mentally, economically and physically by society as inferior beings. Their involvement outside was not allowed. The society wanted to keep women as an object to entertain and please male. Austen, the true feminist of the time, created Catherine Morland, an awakened girl, who gradually awakens from the means of domination of male in her society. By creating an enlightened girl in *Northanger Abbey* Austen gives the message to the society that women by nature are not the inferior beings but the existing male oriented culture, value, political system made them inferior. If women get the equal opportunity, they can be equal to male to develop their personality.

Thus Austen has shown great feminist concerns to her women characters to promote them from their general status. Though Austen is not an outspoken feminist to lead a feminist movement, she has tactfully undermined the gender based patriarchal ideology challenging the existing social norm that has mastered men to dominate women. She has also shaken the power-centered males by creating the world of woman 'protagonist' in her novels. She has thus shattered these males' dreams to monopolize the territory of the protagonist. In short, her advocacy for women's social, legal and economic rights is the matters of great feminist concerns in *Northanger Abbey*. As a feminist novelist, Austen has intended to change her women's emotional and sentimental

mentality by awakening the precarious experience of women existence in a male governed society.

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