

**FIERCE AND FEARLESS: DEFYING DOMESTIC TYRANNY IN
*WHEN I HIT YOU, A WOMAN IS NO MAN, AND LESSONS IN
FORGETTING***

Dissertation

*Submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the
award of Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Literature*

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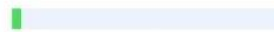
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I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Fierce and Fearless: Defying Domestic Tyranny in *When I Hit You, A Woman Is No Man, and Lessons In Forgetting*** is a bonafide record of research done by **Asna Ismail** (Register Number AIAWMEG008), has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Fellowship or other similar title.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Feminism begins by recognizing that its core lies in understanding the deep-rooted challenges women face, stemming from their constant marginalization in society and enduring unfair treatment simply because they are women. Additionally, feminists actively work to bring about significant changes in how society operates, advocating strongly for reforms across social, political, and economic spheres.

The main goal is to break down existing barriers and fight against the widespread discrimination faced by women. This collective effort is fueled by a shared dedication to creating a world where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive equally. It's about building a global community that values justice, where the principles of gender equality are not just upheld but celebrated. This journey represents the culmination of countless individual's tireless work, coming together in various movements and establishing supportive organizations that are unwaveringly committed to advancing the rights and empowerment of women at every level of society.

The chapter delves into the multifaceted theory of feminism, tracing its roots in historical contexts and highlighting its evolution over time. It likely discusses how it has been acknowledged and recognized across various periods, from its early beginnings to the contemporary era.

In today's context, feminism continues to be pivotal in exploring gender equality and challenging entrenched systems of oppression. It may examine how modern feminism addresses not only overt discrimination but also more subtle forms of inequality, aiming to dismantle barriers and create a more equitable society for all genders.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. Second chapter discusses the novel *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* by Meena Kandasamy. The Third chapter is about the novel "Lessons in Forgetting" by Anita Nair. The Fourth chapter explores the novel "A Woman Is No Man" by Etaf Rum. The Fifth chapter, that is the final chapter gets into the conclusion.

There is a statement in the article "Feminism and the Women's Movement in India-A Historical Perspective" by Rekha Pande (2009),

Feminism comprises a number of social, cultural and political movements, theories and moral philosophers concerned with gender in equalities and equal rights for women. In the pre-independence era, the Women's Movement began as a social reform movement in the 19th century. During this era, our educated elite were internalizing the western principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity through their study of English and interactions with the West. This adoption of western liberalism was applied to women's issues, leading to the development of a social reform movement.

This quote emphasizes that feminism encompasses a wide range of efforts aimed at achieving gender equality and women's rights as a precursor to social reform in India. It suggests that the integration of Western principles such as liberty embraced by educated Indians through English education and exposure to Western culture, played a role in advancing women's rights. Ultimately, it highlights the importance of understanding the historical context and global influences in shaping India's feminist movement.

Feminism is like a bustling marketplace, filled with energy and activity, where people gather not just to exchange ideas but also to share their personal stories and

beliefs about making the world fairer for women. In this vibrant community, there are all sorts of people from passionate social activists to ordinary individuals who deeply care about addressing gender inequalities. Shared dedication brings together equal rights and opportunities for women, much like their counterparts. It's a space where conversations are lively, and there are wide range of perspectives. But despite their differences, everyone in this community is driven by the same goal to build a society where equality prevails for all genders.

This strives for gender equality in society by valuing and respecting each individual's unique experiences, regardless of their gender. It highlights the significance of recognizing different challenges faced by men and women due to their gender and disparities through opportunities there than favoring one gender over the other, feminism seeks to level the playing field so that everyone has an equal chance to succeed based on their abilities and efforts. Ultimately, the goal of feminism is to create a world where gender does not limit a person's potential, and where all individuals can thrive without being hindered by outdated gender guidelines.

Feminist theory acts as a tool for understanding the complexities of gender roles in society, offering a framework to assess how these roles are created, enforced, and continued. It illuminates the power dynamics and inequalities between genders, serving as a guide to address and rectify these issues. By navigating the political and sociological aspects of gender, it dissects the societal structures that uphold gender distinctions. It also examines how various forms of oppression intersect with gender, race, class, sexuality, and other identity factors, providing insights into the versatile nature of inequality.

Through critical scrutinizing feminist theory aims to challenge and dismantle patriarchal systems that perpetuate gender-based injustices. Ultimately, its goal is to

establish an impartial and more diverse society where individuals of all genders can thrive without facing oppression.

Feminist movements globally have committed themselves supporting legal protections that maintain women's rights. These endeavors have played an important role in securing essential rights such as property ownership, voting privileges, and access to reproductive healthcare, including abortion and reproductive rights.

Moreover, they have been leading the charge for the safety of women and girls, vigorously combating prevalent issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape. This also extends to workplace rights, where they make policies like maternity leave and equal pay, aiming to eliminate various forms of gender-based discrimination in professional settings. Through grassroots activism, lobbying efforts, legal battles, and public awareness campaigns, feminist activists have advanced significantly in enhancing women's rights and protections. Their collective efforts have paved the way for a more just and equitable society where all individuals can live without fear of oppression based on their gender.

Throughout history, white women have articulated their viewpoints and lived experiences through the written word. The formal inception of Western feminist theory is often credited to Mary Wollstonecraft, whose writings emerged in the late 18th century, establishing her as a pioneer in the liberal tradition. Despite the fact that the terms 'Feminism' did not achieve widespread recognition until the late 20th century, they were already being employed by ordinary individuals long before then.

Plato's pioneering support for women's rights, occurred over 24 centuries ago, highlights his remarkably progressive thinking. He envisioned a society where women enjoyed political and social equality, actively participating in governance and defending their rights. Plato firmly believed that women should hold positions in the

highest social ranks and have the right to govern, demonstrating his deep commitment to gender equality. This forward-looking perspective challenged standards of society that the time and remains a source of inspiration for modern feminist movements, emphasizing Plato's lasting impact as a champion of gender fairness and societal harmony.

During the late 7th or 8th century, the narrative of Andal, a respected Tamil saint known for her exceptional literary abilities, presents a captivating story. In spite of communal expectations. She bravely chose to wed Vishnu, a divine partnership that exceeded traditional norms. This marriage signified a courageous declaration of feminism, granting Andal liberation from the restrictions of typical marital obligations. Through her defiance of societal standards and acceptance of this divine bond, Andal embarked on a path towards self-discovery and empowerment.

Across history, movements promoting gender equality and liberation frequently discovered champions within middle-class Caucasian women originating from Western Europe and North America. Motivated by an impassioned quest for integrity, these women led the charge in challenging societal mores and endorsing transformation. Their leadership was instrumental in sparking initiatives aimed at breaking down oppressive structures and promoting gender parity.

Andal's narrative serves as a powerful testament to the deep impact of personal decisions. Choosing to marry Vishnu, she courageously challenged public guidelines and asserted her autonomy, preparing the way for others to question ingrained gender roles and seek fulfillment regardless of peer influence. Her story highlights the significance of challenging the present state and embracing one's true self, even amidst resistance. It remains a timeless reminder that true empowerment originates

from within, fueled by the bravery to defy expectations and pursue one's aspirations boldly.

The leadership of women's rights movements has mostly been held by middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America. However, an important shift occurred after Sojourner Truth's influential speech to American feminists which marked a turning point in the struggle for women's rights. Her impassioned words resonated with women from varied racial backgrounds, uplifting them to join the movement for gender equality.

This trend gained momentum and a period marked through the Civil Rights movement in the US and the global wave of decolonization. Amidst these transformative events, women from various backgrounds began to unite, forming a solid and powerful global feminist movement. Together, they sought to dismantle barriers and patrons justice for women worldwide, irrespective of their ethnicity. This era witnessed the convergence of different struggles and the emergence of a shared commitment to feminist ideals.

Tonny Odhiambo and Faith Mbeneka Mutuku (2022), in their research article titled as "History of Feminism", they mentions about different waves in feminism that is,

According to Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker, the history of feminism can be divided in three distinct phases: the initial wave occurred during the late 1800s and early 1900s, followed by a resurgence in the 1960s and 1970s, and a contemporary wave spanning from the 1990s onward. Feminist ideology evolved from these movements, permeating various fields including feminist geography, feminist historiography, and feminist literary analysis.

In the mid-nineteenth, an extraordinary movement promoting women's rights surged globally, driven by the courage of trailblazers like Tahiri in Persia and the relentless endeavors of activists worldwide. This era marked a crucial juncture in history, illuminating the universal pursuit of gender equity. Suffrage campaigns emerged in multiple countries and each echoes the impassioned plea in favor of gender equality and empowerment. Nevertheless, it was in the United States where a significant breakthrough occurred with the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting Caucasian women the privilege to vote. This fundamental triumph not only represented a victory for American women but also served as a source of enrichment for women's rights proponents globally.

Thus, the mid-nineteenth as evidence of the persistent scope for women's rights across varied cultures. It underscores the unyielding resolve and solidarity among activists who battled steadfastly against civil conventions and legal obstacles to secure parity for women universally. This epoch serves as a reminder of the importance of fortitude and cohesion in confronting challenges, as the ongoing fight for gender equality continues to shape contemporary society.

The second-wave feminists of the 1960s and 1970s were not only focused on rights in the political and legal realms but also on addressing deeply ingrained cultural inequalities and discrimination against women. In Chicago, disillusionment with the New Left movement prompted women to take matters into their own hands, leading to the release of influential "Voice of Women's Liberation movement" in 1968. This marked the emergence of a vibrant liberation movement that galvanized women across the nation.

One significant outcome of this uprising was the remarkable increase in female enrollment in universities, as women sought to empower themselves through

education. This increased the establishment of academic courses and entire departments dedicated to women's studies, which provided a platform for exploring and analyzing women's experiences, histories, and contributions to society.

The integration of feminist perspectives into various academic disciplines challenged traditional customs, fostering a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of gender disparities. This educational transformation not only empowered women intellectually but also laid the framework for broader community change by daunting patriarchal structures and facilitating greater gender equality.

Third-wave feminism emerged from the frustration of young women who felt previous movements hadn't fully addressed their concerns. It aimed to be more holistic and intersectional, challenging the prevalence of white and middle-class perspectives in second-wave feminism. Instead of just legal and political rights, it focused on broader social structures shaping gender and sexuality. This made debates on whether gender roles are socially constructed. These discussions reflected the evolving nature of feminist thought in response to changing social landscapes.

Fourth wave feminism is considered as this era, even though it's not officially labeled as such. There's been much of recent progress and alterations in the feminist movement, especially with how technology is being used to address various issues.

Nowadays, feminism isn't just about one thing, it's about confronting a whole range of topics that affect marginalized groups. For example, a big focus is on providing support for individuals after having an abortion. It's about recognizing the emotional challenges they might face and ensuring they have access to counseling, healthcare, and other resources to help them through that tough time.

There are other important issues like clashing for transgender rights, accepting sex work, promoting body positivity, and even embracing male feminism. It's a

dynamic and embracing movement that's evolving to handle the complex hurdles of today's world.

Feminism is made up of various strands, each with its own principles and goals. These varied types of feminism have developed and grown over time, reflecting the diverse range of perspectives within the movement. While they may center on distinct issues that they all pursue a mutual objective that is challenging gender inequality.

This chapter explores radical feminism and its powerful insights into gender neutrality. Early radical feminists argued that decisions like marriage should be based on reason rather than simply conforming to community expectations. It's fascinating to see how these ideas have shaped and continue to shape our understanding of gender dynamics.

As we conclude the feminist theory and its evolution, it is evident that the quest for gender parity continues. Presently, feminists persist in their efforts, confronting emerging challenges and promoting unity. Though there have been improvements made, issues such as backlash and the maintenance of intersectionality. However, the dedication to equality lasts by driving us towards a future where every individual is respected and empowered.

Chapter II

Echoes of Suppressed Strength: Fighting for Identity

Violence against women is a major issue that impact globally. It includes different types of harm such as physical, mental, sexual, and financial abuse, based on someone's gender. These hardships can lead to loss of self identity. It's like a heavy weight that affects individuals from all walks of life, regardless of where they come from or who they are. The impact runs deep whether it's someone suffering in silence at home or dealing with intolerance. This not only threatens the safety and happiness of women but also continues cycles of fear and sufferings.

Challenging themes of marriage and abusive relationship is depicted in Meena Kandasamy's novel *WIHY* by showing complex issues of domestic violence in a relationship, also observes why women are forced to remain in these horrible situations by facing all the hardships and concludes through the empowerment of women to break free from these relationship.

Domestic violence doesn't choose its victims based on how much education they have or how rich they are. It can hurt women from all different backgrounds, even those who are strong and educated. No matter what they've achieved or believed in, these women can still end up stuck in relationships where they're being hurt emotionally, physically, or mentally. It's crucial to grasp that this can happen to anyone, no matter who they are.

Many people mistakenly believe that instances of violence are rare phenomena, yet Kandasamy and fellow feminists vehemently challenge this misconception. They argue that violence is pervasive, particularly targeting women and marginalized communities. The core of the issue lies in the failure to recognize acts of violence, which only exacerbates the problem further.

Feminist activists are unwaveringly resolving this by espousing for augmented awareness regarding the severity of violence and the urgent necessity for immediate intervention. Although, women continue to undergo deep suffering at the mercy of men, facing mistreatment not just from strangers but also from those who vowed to cherish and safeguard them indefinitely. This underscores the pressing necessity for continuous effort to combat gender-based violence and cultivate environments characterized by safety and respect for all individuals.

In this highlights the challenges faced by women which are often familiar to us. This novel portrays how the married woman, the protagonist, encounters violence and mistreatment that persist without limits. The novel doesn't merely conclude with showing the abuses and the protagonist's hardships in social isolation it takes a further step to express the desire for liberation from marital violence and to escape the chains of brutality and aggression.

The narrator fell in love with a professor and they got married. She is a smart lady and loves to write, and he seems to understand her well. But after they got married, things started to get worse. He started controlling her, being mean to her, and making her feel trapped. Eventually, he started hitting her and even forced her to do things she didn't want to do. This terrible situation became a part of her everyday. She's drawn to his passion for revolution, but their marriage becomes a nightmare as he uses communist ideology to control and abuse her, turning their home into a re-education camp where he subjects her to physical and sexual violence, ultimately threatening her life.

Pinaki Baksi (2017), in his research article which is titled as "Domestic Violence: A Feministic force from the viewpoint of Meena Kandasamy" he says,

She has captured the reader's mind by beautifully explaining the landscapes of connection between males and females, concerning the profundity and insufficiency of language, regarding the boundless diversities of affection, regarding the bond between guardians offspring, regarding communism and capitalism and the grey areas in between how we get used to and normalize violence within our family, about how one would go to any lengths to save a marriage, about silence and speech and how sometimes silence is louder than speech, about the rare words which describe beautiful things which are unique to a particular language and culture.

Even though the writing expresses dark and sad emotions, it's still beautifully written. The words flow smoothly, like a calm river, and paint vivid pictures of lovely things. This style of writing reflects the smart and thoughtful mindset of Kandasamy

The concept of marriage is portrayed as a societal construct where the husband holds dominance and authority over his spouse. Husband dominates and oppresses the wife, restricting her freedom and autonomy. The violence against the protagonist in the novel doesn't begin with verbal abuse, or rape. Instead, it emerges gradually through normal behavior.

"I need to understand that a Socialist woman is considered with parity and esteem by fellow members in public but might face physical abuse and derogatory insults in private. This is dialectics" (Kandasamy, 34). This quote means that a woman who supports communism might be dealt with justly and respectfully in public by her fellow supporters. But in private, she might face violence and insults, showing a contradiction or conflict in how she's treated. This idea is described as dialectics.

The protagonist whole life revolves around her husband, who controls her completely. She has to do everything he wants, like styling her hair and dressing a certain way, just to please him when he comes home from work. The setting of the house adds drama to the difficult situations she faces. He threatens to isolate her from the outside world, including her friends and family, and to control her access to communication and social media. This behavior aims to strip away her sense of identity and independence.

The protagonist's husband holds a strong hatred for writers whom he perceives as belonging to the lower class. Kandasamy parallels the sociology of violence against women between colonial and post-colonial India. He consistently mocks his wife for her profession, using derogatory language like 'slut', to degrade her.

Despite his attempts to oppress her, she considers using her writing as a type of revenge against his abuse, much to his irritation. She turns to writing poems as a means to express her suppressed anger, but she begins to understand that she will eventually use this experience as fuel for her future writing, preparing to confront her struggles through her work.

I am the wooden cutting board banged against the countertop. I am the clattering plates flung into cupboards. I am the unwashed glass being thrown to the floor. Shatter and shards and diamond sparkle of tiny pieces. My pelvis and thighs and chest and rear. Unchangeable crashing noises, a delicate view of shatteredness as a minor despot revels in an authority journey. Not for the initial occasion, and not for the last. (Kandasamy 131)

These describe the experience of someone enduring abuse. It compares the violence to objects being smashed, like a cutting board or plates, and highlights the physical and

emotional pain through imagery of shattered glass and body parts. It depicts the abuser as someone enjoying their power over the victim.

“This rape whose aim is to make me understand that my husband can do with my body as he pleases. This is sexual assault as possession. This violation embodies a spouse's fury towards all the males who have handled me, towards all the males who might handle me, towards all males who might have coveted me.” (Kandasamy 174)

When a man feels like he's losing control over a woman, he might start being mean to her mentally. If that doesn't work, he might start hitting or even raping her to show he's in charge and scare her into obeying him. It's all about making her feel small and powerless.

“Your cunt will be ruined, he tells me. Your cunt will turn you so wasted, so useless you will never have the capacity to offer yourself to any man.” (Kandasamy 168). He aimed to diminish her value and worth by causing her harm and making her feel insignificant or powerless.

When they can't settle arguments, he uses another tactic that is threatening to kill her, which makes her incredibly scared. The story isn't only about the harshness and cruelty a woman endures, but also about how she stands in this situation with survival tactics.

She is faced with the choice of fighting or running away, she hears her inner voice urging her to leave this marriage. However, she doesn't want to let down her parents or be criticized for making a quick choice. This highlights her feeling of helplessness, as she feels trapped in the relationship due to her concern for her parent's emotions and expectations.

“The rebellion, the malice. The enthusiasm to apply the salt on his injured dignity to regain my territory, my entitlement to compose.” (Kandasamy 88). Despite

her husband's dislike for writing, she feels compelled to do it. She starts writing letters to an imaginary boyfriend but erases them by the afternoon. To get back at him, she repeatedly writes the word 'lover' This shows her defiance against her husband's wishes and her desire to express herself through writing, even if it's in secret.

"I turn my kitchen into a combat zone, making sure that my cooking secures my and my womb's liberty."(Kandasamy, 201). The meals she prepares for him often calm him down and trying to convince herself of a false reality. It's the only aspect where she feels like she has some control. When her husband pressures her to get pregnant to delay pregnancy, every meal, every piece of fruit she chooses is filled with anxiety about miscarriage. She adds secret ingredients like raw green mango pulp to the food she cooks. This reflects her desperation to avoid pregnancy while still appeasing her husband's desires.

The main character doesn't choose to end her life, even though she's a victim of her partner's abuse. She doesn't seek sympathy either. Kandaswamy, with powerful poetry, answers why women stay in abusive relationships. It's because of family pressure. Even though parents love their children, they're afraid of what society will think. Her father believes marriage involves compromises and advises her to exercise patience and tolerant. He says if something goes wrong, she'll have to deal with the consequences. Her mother believes that change takes time and that her husband will eventually change too. This challenges those who doubted her ability to commit and shows her feelings of both fear and hope.

Women are strong and can endure a lot of pain, even forgiving things that seem impossible to forgive. The main character doesn't quickly decide to leave her husband, even though he hurts her. Even when it gets really bad and her parents tell

her to just put up with it to avoid shame, she knows she's the sole individual who can make things better for herself.

She doesn't want people to think she's making rash decisions, so she plans carefully. She sees her home as a place where she has to fight for herself and plans how to escape. She pays attention to what her husband likes to talk about and what makes him angry. She acts like she's someone he can trust. She realizes that she can use his violence against him to protect herself.

This shows how she's trying to take control of her life and make things better for herself. She turns her feelings and thoughts into art. She uses her words to protect herself or fight back. Sometimes, she uses words to stop him from being violent, and other times, she uses them to challenge him. In doing this, she's trying to find a path to freedom. It's her way of expressing herself and defending herself from harm. It's also a way for her to stand within her husband's jurisdiction and take control of her life. Through her art and words, she's working towards a future where she can be free from fear and live on her own terms.

"I slip the words between his ribs like the stiletto knife." (Kandasamy 211). As the protagonist struggles to survive violence, she feels like she's losing who she is, becoming smaller and less herself but using her skills as a writer, plans her escape from a marriage marked by abuse and succeeds. She manages to break free from her oppressor, overcoming the challenges she faced. As a result, she emerges victorious, reclaiming her freedom and taking control of her own life. Her bravery and determination serve as an inspiration to others facing similar situations, showing that it's possible to escape from abusive relationships and find a path to happiness and safe. In the end, she emerges as a representation of resilience and hope.

One big misunderstanding about domestic violence is that alcohol and drugs cause men to be violent. But saying that substances are responsible is just a way of avoiding blame. It's like making an excuse and not taking responsibility for what happened. Instead of facing the real reasons behind violence, this myth renders it more difficult to deal with and stop domestic abuse.

Another myth about domestic violence is that it's confined to poor families. However, the truth is that any individual, irrespective of their financial status or social position, can become a victim of abuse. Domestic violence doesn't discriminate against someone's lives or how much money they have. This dispels the notion that only those experiencing financial struggles are vulnerable to such abuses.

Third myth is that stress and a short temper are the main causes of domestic violence. However, this oversimplification overlooks the fact that women also face stress but don't resort to violence against their partners. The real issue lies in the perpetrators' desire to control women, exploit them for personal gain, and assert power and dominance within the relationship. This underscores the significance of understanding domestic violence as a multifaceted problem rooted in gender inequality and power imbalances, rather than simply attributing it to individual personality traits or external stress factors.

In light of difficult situations like domestic violence, it becomes crucial for a woman to acknowledge her inherent value. This means understanding that without self-love, it becomes increasingly challenging to express love to others and interact positively with the world around her. Therefore, it becomes essential to engage in self-reflection, discovering one's purpose and recognizing the unique traits that define her identity.

Embracing the idea of living with a 'life arsenal' involves equipping oneself with the necessary skills and inner strength to navigate through challenges and create a satisfying life. It entails uncovering one's purpose and using it as a motivating factor for personal development and happiness, despite facing obstacles along the journey. This process of self-exploration and empowerment allows women to take control of their lives, fostering resilience and a feeling of fulfillment amidst life's trials and tribulations.

Chapter III

Quest for Renewal: The Journey Beyond Sorrow

Rebelliousness against the traditional role of women is seen when they say, 'No' to what society expects from them. It's about standing up and saying, we want to make choices. Instead of following old rules about how women should act or what they should do, they push for freedom. This rebellion can show up in many ways, like speaking out for equal rights, choosing their own careers, or living life on their own terms. It's all about breaking away from the old ideas of what women 'should' be and embracing the power to be themselves. This is about those women who stand up against what others expect from them and make their own paths in life. This portrays their brave journey together.

Literature shows our past and how culture and politics have changed over time. This chapter shows the journey of women's hopes and struggles through the novel which shows characters striving for a fresh start and redemption.

The chapter aims to explore how dreams and challenges empower people to overcome obstacles and shape their own sense of self. It explores the oppression, domination, and betrayal within relationships, along with the dreams, challenges, and in search for independence experienced by women in today's society.

Even as women strive for progress, they often face the overpowering grip of patriarchy, their struggles and frustrations often overlooked. That many end up compromising and succumbing to male dominance. Anita Nair, a well-known Indian author, shines a light on feminist issues in her books, offering a witty yet insightful commentary on the challenges women face in Indian society. Through her characters, Nair explores different aspects of women's lives, especially focusing on modern relationships and sexual dynamics. Her novels challenge traditional views of Indian

women, portraying characters who defy conventions, including having affairs outside marriage.

In Anita Nair's stories, marriage is portrayed as something that can make the characters feel confined and restricted. They might feel like they can't fully be themselves or follow their own dreams because of the expectations and limitations that come with being married. It's like they're stuck in a box, unable to break free and live their desired manner to. Instead of being a source of happiness and support, marriage transforms into a font of frustration for them.

In society, women often encounter conflicting demands, being both lauded for their education and grace, yet pressured to prioritize household duties over their professional aspirations. Their skills and ambitions, women frequently find their value assessed based on traditional marriage norms rather than their personal accomplishments. This contradictory situation sustains an inherent inequality that restricts women's freedom and independence.

The notion that women require consent or authorization to pursue their own aspirations within marital unions highlights a deeper issue of imbalance and power dynamics. It reflects a public standard that diminishes women's control and reinforces patriarchal systems dictating their roles and limitations. This intricate network of expectations and constraints not only obstruct women's personal development but also perpetuates a cycle of gender disparity hindering progress towards a fairer society. Acknowledging and confronting these conflicting expectations is essential in moving towards a future where women are appreciated for their skills, ambitions, and personal achievements, rather than solely for conforming to traditional gender norms.

Meera, a character in the novel, faces notable challenges after her husband leaves her early in their marriage. She finds herself overwhelmed by the sudden

responsibility of caring for her family alone, which becomes too much for her to handle. Eventually, Meera reaches a point where she feels unable to deal with the idea of living independently. Consequently, she chooses to suppress her rebellious nature and resigns herself to her circumstances.

“Meera never aspired to lofty goals. She had no interest in high-end fashion, jewelry, or extravagant vacations.... Just enough to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. Enough to preserve their dignity and avoid seeking reluctant assistance from distant relatives. Enough to maintain their way of life.” (Nair 41).

Meera, resides in her family's historic Lilac House, where her mother and grandmother lived. Despite initially enjoying a content and happy life, the death of Meera's father thrusts them into hardship, forcing them to adapt to a simpler lifestyle. Throughout the narrative, Meera exemplifies contentment with life's necessities, highlighting the value of simplicity in the face of adversity.

Meera's life takes a turn when her ancestral home is preferred for a photo shoot. Giri, a member of the crew, falls in love with Meera upon meeting her and admires her family. They marry, but their relationship faces instability due to Giri's pursuit of wealth. Despite having two children together, Giri's ambitions overshadow his love for Meera, highlighting the importance of dedication, sacrifice, and respect in relationships.

“He wished for us to trade the house for sale., but I declined, so now he's retaliating against me. His leaving us is an act of immature spite.” (Nair 110). Giri's desire to launch his own enterprise leads him to convince Meera to sell their ancestral Lilac House to fund his venture. Regardless of Meera's reluctance to part with their family home, Giri vanishes from her life, leaving her to care for their two children on her own. Following Giri's departure, Meera encounters financial and emotional

hardships simultaneously she was also managing her household and caring for her children. In response, she resolves to seek employment to support herself and her family.

Meera accepts a position as a research aide. Meanwhile, Giri seeks a divorce and moves on with his life. Feeling abandoned by Giri, Meera decides to leave her old identity behind and embraces a new life. She realizes that Giri is stuck in the past and finds solace in her interactions with others.

Anita Nair's portrayal of women ranges from traditional and marginalized to modern and liberated perspectives. She explores redefining women's roles and rebellion. Her narrative delves into the complexities of love, dependency, and betrayal, offering insights into real-life experiences, second chances, and new beginnings.

“At the age of forty-four, Giri, it's not appropriate for me to dress as if I'm in my twenties. With a daughter who's almost twenty herself, it would seem ridiculous for me to dress in a similar manner.” (Nair 107). The story of Meera highlights the evolution of women's aspirations, particularly in response to changing circumstances. Meera's decision to abandon her old identity symbolizes her resilience and adaptability amidst divorce. Her refusal to dress modern reflects her maturity and acceptance of her stage in life. Here the importance of adapting change over time to navigate societal expectations and challenges.

Meera excels in her professional endeavors, demonstrating self-sufficiency and independence in her actions. She confidently manages tasks without relying on others and gracefully attends social gatherings alone, without feeling any discomfort. The novelist observes this with admiration, highlighting the importance of self-reliance and confidence in navigating life's challenges independently.

“A solitary woman at a party resembles a solitary man.”(Nair 188). Smriti, a prominent character bravely challenges the injustice of female infanticide in her village, Minjikapuram. However, her act of rebellion is met with exposure by the men in the community. This highlights the courage required to confront societal norms, even in the face of adversity and potential backlash.

“In defiance of legal restrictions, women and their families continue to seek methods to determine the gender of unborn babies. If the fetus is female, they opt for abortion. Eventually, there might arise a time when the female population diminishes entirely.” (Nair,285). With only a single hospital located within the village, there's a large crowd of people gathering for various check-ups. While there, Meera encounters several pregnant women who are eager to learn the gender concerning their forthcoming children, despite it being against the law.

It's against the law! Smriti exclaimed loudly. But it happens here, the woman whispered. That's why we came here. The ultrasound doctor isn't local; they bring him in from elsewhere, and he reveals the gender if asked. Just look around, she continued. All these expectant mothers come from different areas of the district. Do you believe there are no hospitals where they reside? It's all because of the ultrasound doctor. And if desired, they'll perform abortions here too. (Nair 292)

Smriti decides to fight against female foeticide. She plans to raise awareness to stop this problem. She wants women to understand that girls should be afforded an opportunity to live, and that having daughters too can bring happiness.

"These men behaved like beasts, savagely assaulting the girl. The louder she screamed, the more they seemed to derive pleasure from it. The scent of blood only fueled their excitement.” (Nair 317). When Smriti's rebellion against female

infanticide was revealed to the men in the village, some of them joined forces by using sexual violence as a means to silence her protests. Despite the awareness among villagers of the injustice perpetrated against her, none dared to stand up in support due to the overwhelming power wielded by men to oppress women in the community. Smriti's courageous stand against female infanticide ultimately brought her harm instead of aid, highlighting the harsh actuality of violence based on gender and the deep-rooted inequalities in society.

The writer portrays how differences in culture and upbringing within families this contributes to the subjugation of women within society. Smriti, who grew up in the United States with more gender equality faces various obstacles upon her return to India. This emphasizes how cultural norms and family backgrounds shape women's lives, emphasizing the ongoing fight for gender parity in diverse social settings. When Jak encounters a government physician to inquire the doctor 's remarks on the incident.

The issue lies with individuals like you. NRIs fail to grasp the importance of mature girls staying close to their mothers. You treat it as if it's America. You return your daughter back home, instilled with all the liberal concepts from the West, and then fault India when things go improper. (Nair 54).

Kala Chithi, another female figure, symbolizes the conflict between conventional and contemporary views on women's sense of self and goals. Despite her education, Kala Chithi is troubled by the weight of her long hair, causing her discomfort. Although she desires to trim it, her father forbids her, illustrating how her hairstyle is controlled by male expectations, stripping away her independence.

“My hair shaped me into a reserved girl initially, then into a reserved woman. I was the daughter who brought joy to my father, and later, a wife who brought joy to my husband.” (Nair 193).

Ajay Kumar (2017) wrote an article “Anita Nair's Lessons in Forgetting: A Portrayal of Women's Aspirations and Struggle “that, he tells,

By portraying Kala Chithi's character, the author highlights societal awareness of women's challenges and struggles in everyday life. Even in matters as basic as retaining one's maiden name after marriage, women face obstacles. Every decision is dictated by the male head of the family, leaving women like Kala Chithi subject to this societal hierarchy. Upon marriage, Kala Chithi adopts a new identity as Vaidehi, a name synonymous with Seeta, a character in the Ramayana representing loyalty and humility as a wife to Lord Rama..

The story of Kala Chithi highlights the challenges women face in their daily lives, such as losing their identity after marriage and having decisions made for them by men. Kala Chithi's transformation into Vaidehi reflects societal pressure for women to adhere to conventional roles. This challenges gender inequalities and oppressive social norms that limit women's freedom and autonomy but after being married for seven years without having a child, her husband chooses to marry someone else. Kala Chithi leaves him and lives with Sarada, finding happiness in each other's company. This shows Kala Chithi as a confident and an self-reliant, educated, and capable woman making her own decisions. Education is shown as a strong tool that can empower individuals in society.

“Indeed, the worn-out saying about time's healing power holds true. My daughter rests in a solemn silence, her presence a memory. As I sit here, seemingly

finding solace in the horizon, I wonder: is this contentment or guilt? Perhaps it's simply embracing the wisdom of accepting life's circumstances." (Nair 145)

Here human journey of women striving for their dreams and freedom. Each character embodies aspirations facing their own societal and personal challenges. Despite enduring turbulence their resilience and patience guide them through adversity.

Ultimately, the novel beautifully illustrates how time, as a healer, aids in their journey of redemption and growth, emphasizing the profound humanity within each character's struggles and triumphs.

She mainly writes about women and their struggles in modern Indian society. Her goal as a writer is to depict women as complex individuals, acknowledging both their weaknesses and strengths, navigating through societal expectations. She explores how her female characters courageously confront or reluctantly accept life's challenges. While she often explores the theme of troubled marriages, her novels also feature a variety of other female characters. Overall, the message conveyed is about the complexity of women's lives and their resilience in the face of adversity.

In many societies, men unfairly wield authority over their spouses, citing factors such as ownership of assets, religious convictions, or concerns regarding fertility, leaving women to confront adversity independently. Even with enduring hardships, women display exceptional resilience and resolve to navigate through challenges and rediscover contentment. Author Anita Nair skillfully depicts the emotional turmoil endured by her female characters, vividly portraying the depths of their anguish and hardship.

Nair also highlights the fortitude and inner strength of these women, illustrating their journey towards reclaiming autonomy and seeking fulfillment.

Through her evocative storytelling, Nair not only brings attention to the injustices faced by women but also imparts a message of hope and empowerment, motivating readers to acknowledge their own resilience and capacity for overcoming adversity.

Anita Nair's writing serves as a potent instrument for empowering women to challenge traditional roles and assert their individuality. Through her stories, she illuminates the struggles women endure in breaking free from societal constraints, particularly patriarchal oppression. Despite their unwavering determination, women remain bound by limitations imposed by religious, cultural, and civil rules, often unaware of their rights and freedoms. Nair's work emphasizes the critical necessity to empower women through education, enabling them to confront male dominance and advocate for their rights. Ultimately, her narratives advocate for gender equality and liberation from discrimination, emphasizing the transformative potential of education in empowering women to shape their own destinies and contribute to a more equitable society.

Chapter IV

In the Shadow of Tradition: Navigating New Paths in Life

Oppression means treating others unfairly by using power or authority to mistreat, ignore, or take away their rights and freedom. Women's oppression is the widespread discrimination, and marginalization that women have endured in different societies and cultures. They have been unfairly denied their rights, opportunities, and freedoms. It includes access to education, jobs, political involvement, and autonomy over their own bodies. This is because of patriarchy that takes many forms, such as violence against women, paying them less than men for identical tasks, denying them reproductive rights, and excluding them from positions of authority.

In this the struggles of Arab-American women against oppression and their defiance of the patriarchal structure are depicted in Etaf Rum's novel *AWINM*. This portrays the obstacles encountered by women and their efforts to stand against oppression within the story of the novel. The study aims to explore the various varieties of hardship faced by women and their courageous acts of resistance depicted throughout the storyline.

In Palestinian society, women face oppression because they are not allowed to exercise as much authority over their money and are restricted by cultural rules. They can't join in public activities outside their own community, and they're often discouraged from being financially independent. Arab-American women are taught to follow Arab cultural norms because their family's image is important in society this keeps women stay under men's control, which stops them from being free that women often have to rely on men due to lack of same freedom as men.

Women lack mastery of their own lives which allowed men to have complete power to treat women as if they were things or belongings, leading to violence against

women. In the past, it was widely believed that women's primary role in life was to become mothers because of the capacity to give birth. This notion greatly influenced society's views and the duties assigned to women, placing significant emphasis on their responsibilities in motherhood and as caregivers. Women were often judged on whether they could have babies. They were forced to put their family and home duties before anything else. This perception reinforced the idea that a woman's identity and value were only linked to her roles as a mother and caregiver, rather than recognizing her as an individual with unique dreams and ambitions.

AWINM is a compelling exploration concerning the experiences of individuals. Palestinian women spanning three generations. The novel delves deep into the complexities of their experiences, particularly their struggles with tradition, culture, and their profound longing for autonomy. At the core of the narrative are characters like Isra and her daughter Deya, who grapple with societal pressures and the weight of oppressive traditions. Throughout the story, as hidden truths from the past gradually emerge, these resilient women are compelled to confront the norms that have dictated their lives for generations.

Nonetheless the formidable challenges they face, they display remarkable bravery and determination as they embark on a journey of self-discovery. Their quest is not merely to liberate oneself from the constraints imposed upon them but also to shape their own destinies and reclaim their voices in a society governed by patriarchal standards. In doing so, they challenge entrenched norms and strive to carve out a space for themselves in a world that has long marginalized them. AWINM is a poignant testament to the resilience of females and their unwavering pursuit of freedom and empowerment confronted with adversity.

F. N. Salvianny and Eka Nurcahyani (2020) wrote an article “Women's Resistance Towards Oppression in Etaf Rum's a Woman is No Man ”this shares the details about author,

The author of the novel, Etaf Rum is an Arab-American immigrant who wrote this novel to speak on behalf of herself and women in her community that have the same experience of being oppressed. As a debut novel, this novel has successfully become a worth-to-read novel that has been listed as Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Best Fiction and Debut Novel of 2019, one of Cosmopolitan's Best Books by POC for 2019, a Washington Post 10 books to read in March 2019, an Electric Lit 20 Best Debuts of the First Half of 2019, a The Millions Most Anticipated Books of 2019, and a New York Times bestselling novel.

This statement beautifully captures the complex struggles faced by Palestinian women as portrayed in Etaf Rum's 'A Woman Is No Man'. The book fearlessly explores the lasting impact of violence resulting from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, vividly illustrating the deep humiliation and suffering endured by those living amidst armed soldiers and checkpoints, as well as the harsh reality of life in refugee shelters. These painful experiences, deeply etched in the collective memory of Palestinian communities, continue to cast a shadow over the lives of characters like Isra.

Isra's character embodies the quiet resignation and acceptance often born from years of oppression and trauma. Her hardships serve as a catalyst, paving the way for a transformative moment when the next generation of women find their voices and challenge the existing condition.

Through their newfound sense of autonomy, the story offers a glimmer of hope, suggesting that in spite of encountering entrenched patriarchal norms and systemic oppression, there exists the potential for positive change and liberation. Rum's portrayal of these intertwined struggles not only celebrates the enduring strength of Palestinian women but also emphasizes the pressing need for societal change and the empowerment of marginalized voices.

The novel recounts the experiences of three generations of Arab-American women who endured oppression because they were unable to express their thoughts freely. As the eldest generation in the family, Fareeda feels compelled to preserve their cultural heritage. Consequently, she forces them to arrange marriages for her children and treats her daughter in a distinct manner compared to her son. She imposes strict regulations on Sarah, her daughter, including expectations regarding appearance, women's household duties, and the tradition of arranged marriages.

Apart from Sarah, Fareeda's eldest son Adam married Isra. She faces similar oppression that she had a hope to find freedom by marrying Adam and moving to the U.S. However, she finds that there is no discernible difference in treatment between living in Palestine and the U.S. Women continue to be subjected to control and are anticipated to fulfill their traditional roles of marriage, domestic duties, and child-bearing.

Fareeda's granddaughter, Deya is going through a tough time too. She's being pushed to meet Nasser because Fareeda has already decided that they should get married. But Deya doesn't desire to get married early because she wants to chase her dreams. However, Fareeda is against this because she's worried that it might affect the family's status.

There is a crucial role of consent in marriage, emphasizing that it must be freely given without any external pressures. It stresses that consent transcends mere acknowledgment, requiring a clear and enthusiastic affirmation from both parties. Additionally, it acknowledges that forced marriages aren't exclusive to children but also affect adults coerced into unions they don't want, often due to societal or familial expectations.

Conservative and patriarchal forces exploit concepts like "love jihad" to maintain control over marriages and reinforce traditional power dynamics. By raising awareness about these issues, the statement advocates for protecting individual autonomy and eliminating forced marriages, promoting a culture of respect for individual preference and autonomy within marital relationships.

Eventually, she'd need to consent to a suitor. She could resist temporarily, but prolonging it might tarnish not only her reputation but also her sisters'. She could imagine their neighbors' voices echoing in her mind that the young lady was in trouble. She lacks respectability. Surely, there must be something amiss with her. (Rum 35).

The societal pressures can sometimes force women to make choices like agreeing to arranged marriage to avoid bringing shame to their families. It shows that it's important to respect individuals' choices and not to judge them based on traditional expectations.

In the Arab community, families play a substantial part in shaping women's lives, especially when it pertains to marriage. Marriage is considered essential for women's sense of fulfillment and preserving the family's honor. Consequently, all women characters in the story feel compelled to accept arranged marriages to avoid criticism and maintain the community's respect.

In the story women feel pressured to follow traditional roles. If they are refusing arranged marriages or getting divorced, results in social rejection and might have to go back to their parents' house. It talks about how society expects women to act a certain way, even if it makes them unhappy and takes away their freedom.

Arranged marriages have been passed down through generations in Fareeda's family. Fareeda, experienced this tradition herself that she decides arranged marriages for her daughter and granddaughter, showing how this cultural custom continues. Mentioning Fareeda's own marriage at fourteen to Khaled highlights how young people often enter into such unions without meeting their spouses beforehand. This shows how arranged marriage customs endure over time, influencing the encounters of females like Fareeda and her family members.

A conflict between Deya, and Fareeda can be seen. Deya desires to pursue a college education and opposes the idea of early marriage, prioritizing her studies instead. However, Fareeda opposes Deya's aspirations, believing that women should not pursue education. Fareeda's stance reflects the societal omission of females from educational opportunities, which serves to perpetuate their inferior status in society.

The concept of "women's education" encompasses the comprehensive growth and empowerment of girls and women, covering aspects ranging from their health and well-being to their educational opportunities at every level. Advancements in global education, around million girls worldwide still lack access to schooling, with a significant portion residing in underdeveloped and developing regions.

Women play a crucial role in the advancement and prosperity of any society, underscoring the necessity for all nations, irrespective of their development status, to prioritize and elevate female education. However, in certain cultures, the importance

of education is overshadowed by the emphasis placed on arranging marriages for daughters.

As a result, many women being deprived of the opportunity to fully comprehend the value and advantages that education can provide, as they are coerced into marriage without considering the potential benefits of pursuing further studies. This perpetuates a harmful cycle where women are unable to actualize their complete potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Disregarding women's education in favor of arranged marriages, societies not only limit individual opportunities but also impede overall social progress and growth. Therefore, addressing this issue necessitates a unified effort to champion and prioritize women's education, enabling them to unlock their potential and actively shape a brighter future for their own selves and their societies.

Women often rely on men for stability because they may not know much about the world beyond their homes. Nasser doesn't say Deya can't go to university, but he doesn't support her getting a job because he thinks he can provide everything she needs. These deliberate choices kept women out of places like schools and workplaces.

Women also experience oppression because society expects them to fit specific beauty ideals to be perceived as desirable partners. The rivalry among women to meet these beauty standards reveals the demanding expectations set by society. It emphasizes how women are often judged based on their looks and marital prospects, rather than their unique qualities, dreams, or personalities. This pressure to meet beauty standards can restrict women's freedom and continue cycles of mistreatment. “Have you seen Hannah’s with a complexion on the darker side and coarse hair. And the individual is barely five feet tall. You’re much prettier”. (Rum 26)

Women are compared based on their looks to see if they're good enough to marry, it's a way to justify controlling them by setting strict beauty standards. This means that women's worth is often judged solely on their appearance, rather than their talents or personality.

In their married life they also faces discrimination in case of gender. As wives, they often feel pressured to fulfill their husband's needs and they should obey the rules. Consequently, if they don't follow her husband's commands, they may become victims of domestic violence.

She could imagine Adam right now, his eyes expanding, his jaw constricting and loosening. She could feel his grasp on her arms, pressing strongly. Feel him propelling her against the wall, pulling her hair, hitting her cheek.

Experienced his hold around her throat, her skin starting to prickle, could discern the room dimming to white. No, she couldn't look him. (Rum 28)

Adam beats Isra frequently. This always pictured the consequences whenever she went against his wishes. Feeling inferior when punished shows how women are oppressed within the realm of power that controls them, making them obedient and closely watched.

Another prevalent belief that leads to gender discrimination is the societal acceptance of a baby's sex. In Arab culture, there is a widespread expectation for the birth of a male child over a female one, as boys are often seen as the carriers of the family's status, while girls are sometimes regarded as an economic liability for the family. Here Fareeda constantly hopes for a baby boy but Isra's inability to conceive a boy has compelled her to become pregnant as quickly. So that the family can have a male heir to continue their family name.

“Simple for you to express. Do you comprehend how challenging it is to raise a daughter in this nation? Do you? Soon you'll be feeling extremely frustrated! You require a male child to assist you. To uphold our family name.” (Rum,32). Gender discrimination is not confined to infancy but spans across all stages of life, persisting and impacting individuals as they grow into adulthood that children are affected by gender stereotypes since their early years. This affects adolescents as it influences their actions, educational decisions, aspirations, outlooks, and beyond. Consequently, numerous girls refrain from engaging in various sports, while women encounter physical abuse at a higher rate than men.

Women can confront and dismantle oppressive structures by actively engaging in actions aimed at liberation. Across history, women have encountered various forms of oppression, including societal expectations, discriminatory practices, and systemic inequalities.

To challenge these injustices women must assert their voices by actively participating in social movements that women can empower themselves and others to challenge oppressive norms and forge a biased society. This importance in women's agency in emphasizing the vital role of women's activism in the pursuit of justice and equality.

The fight against oppression starts when women stand against them. This is really important in going against the control that has kept women down for a long time. So, women naturally have the power to fight against oppression which is a significant component of the effort to become free and empowered. The first step in empowering women to recognize their own value is by encouraging them to appreciate and respect themselves.

In this novel Sarah faces unfair treatment just because she's a woman, so she doesn't have equal possibilities as men. This makes her feel like she's treated disparately from her siblings and her American friends, which makes her feel less sure of herself. To feel better, she tries to understand how important she is. Finally, she finds the strength to overcome gender discrimination by realizing her own value as a woman.

For countless years, she had held onto the belief that if a woman was capable enough, compliant enough, she might be deserving of a man's affection. But now, engrossed in her literature, she was starting to discover an alternative form of affection. A fondness that emanated from within her, one she experienced when she was entirely solitary, engrossed in reading by the window. And through this affection, she was starting to consider, for the initial instance in her existence, that perhaps she was deserving after all. (Rum 43)

Literature presents a range of stories depicting women's challenges and their resilience against oppression. When women engage with these stories that they gain a feeling of authority to tap into their inner resilience which ultimately lead to liberation. Initially, Isra believed that love made her to obey her husband. However, her perspective changed upon reading literature, understanding that love stems from self-acceptance. She realized that self-love is essential for feeling worthy, and it greatly impacts one's self-esteem.

“Yet I coped. I resided with a companion for the initial year until I could manage to reside independently. Later, I leased a modest flat in Staten Island. I held down two occupations to cover the expenses of junior college and altered my surname to evade detection” (Rum,48). Sarah learns that she can be free by taking charge of her own life and making her own choices. By breaking away from oppression, she

becomes independent and builds a new life for herself. This shows us that finding personal empowerment can lead to freedom.

Similarly, Isra also finds the courage to escape from oppression and protect her daughters from a similar fate. She refuses to let her daughters endure the same hardships. Her realization of personal empowerment allows her to break free from the role of a submissive woman and take action to secure her family's freedom. The unlocked entrance of the train symbolizes the opportunity for liberation and a new beginning.

Sarah, Isra, and Deya each find their own path to liberation by taking individual actions to resist oppression. Sarah chooses to leave home and live independently, Isra discovers the bravery to liberate herself from oppression, and Deya bravely opposes the idea of an arranged marriage and pursues higher education instead. Their acts of resistance take different forms, but they all lead to a sense of freedom and empowerment for each woman.

The key to resistance is understanding and believing in their own value. This self-awareness is crucial for their journey to freedom, showing that they have the ability to enact change. When women recognize their worth, they feel strong and confident, allowing them to confront and break through the obstacles of oppression. This sets the stage for a future where women can stand up for their entitlements and strive for equality in their own way.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The three novels tell the story of tough times that women went through like abuse, pressure, and restrictions from society. These books bravely talk about domestic violence, cultural barriers, and the endeavor to be yourself. But even in the dark moments, they show how strong women can be, shining bright despite hardships. This remind us that we still need to work for gender equality and change society for the better.

In the first novel WIHY by Meena Kandasamy is about a youthful woman in a terrible marriage suffering from abuse. She tries hard to speak out and take charge of her life, even when society tells her to keep quite. In the second novel AWINM by Etaf Rum narrates the tale of Palestinian women in America facing challenges with tradition, oppression, and their desire for freedom and independence across generations and the last novel LIF by Anita Nair portrays the journey of Meera who struggles through familiy expectations, societal pressures and she faces the hidden challenges and the resolute willpower of women.

Meera, Isra, Kala Chithi, Smrithi etc. are some characters who find themselves trapped by the expectations of those around them in family, community, and cultural traditions that they experience a range of emotions, such as desiring affection and acceptance while also feeling frightened and uncertain. Each day, they strive to seem content while also maintaining their self-esteem. Despite the weight of these pressures, they fight to break free and shape their own destinies, standing up against the forces that try to control them. They honor the courage and strength of women everywhere, inspiring us to stand together and make a world where no woman faces such pain.

These three novels share numerous common themes. In *WIHY*, the main character, a young woman, faces brutal domestic abuse from her husband. Then, she gathers the strength to leave the abusive marriage and regain control of her life. Through her resilience and unwavering resolve, she blossoms into a thriving writer, challenging societal norms and expectations along the way.

Likewise, in *LIF* the protagonist, Meera, struggle with the traumatic incident involving domestic violence and betrayal. As Meera confronts her past she undergoes a change. Through self-discovery, she emerges as a resilient and self-assured woman, breaking free from the constraints of her history to pursue her passions and find fulfillment.

In *AWINM*, the narrative goes into the interconnected lives of three Palestinian women living in America: Isra, Deya, and Fareeda. Each woman contends with the enduring legacy of patriarchy and domestic abuse within their community. Despite the challenges they face, they draw strength from one another and refuse to be defined by societal expectations. Through shared experiences they form their own path to success and fulfillment.

Throughout these narratives, the women protagonists undergo main transformations as they overcome the oppressive forces in their lives. Through resilience, determination, and self-discovery, they emerge as empowered individuals, breaking free from the cycle of abuse and societal constraints to pursue their aspirations and achieve success on their own terms.

The novels are analyzed based on the theory of radical feminism. Feminist activists strongly supported the battle against male-dominated oppression in the campaign. There are four ways described in the novel to fight patriarchy. First step is

to understand oneself better and this involves gaining a deeper insight into one's own identity, strengths, and worth, in defiance of societal stereotypes and expectations.

By embracing self-awareness, individuals can build a foundation for empowerment and resistance against patriarchal norms and pursuing education is highlighted as a vital tool for liberation and also striving to obtain an education, particularly for women, people can face and overcome obstacles in the system with knowledge and skills necessary to challenge patriarchal structures.

Birth control, strategy focuses on promoting reproductive rights and autonomy that increased access to birth control, individuals can assert authority over their reproductive health and challenge patriarchal control over women's bodies and sexuality and at last participating in decision-making actively that engage in political and social spheres as a way to challenge patriarchy. By participating in decision-making processes, individuals can influence policies and systems that perpetuate gender inequality, advocating for change that nurture gender equity.

In the novel LIF, all women are educated except Chinnathayi, who later made wise decisions, were initially denied the chance to choose for themselves, depriving them of the freedom to chart their own course in life.

In the instance of Meera, the protagonist of the story, if she had thought again about her parents' advice and had chosen to be honest with Giri about the lilac house before they got married, she might have stayed with someone who truly loves her, not just for the house. He wouldn't have left her for other women. All these problems happened because her mother as well as her grandmother stopped her from making decisions when she should have. They didn't let her decide things at the right time.

Vinnie, Nayantara, and Smriti are self-reliant women who made wise decisions about their lives and never felt sorry for them, even if things didn't go as

expected. They firmly stand by their choices. Women frequently face challenges in making significant decisions because they aren't initially granted the opportunity to decide their own paths. It's crucial for women to have the autonomy to make decisions in their lives right from the beginning. This ensures that from the beginning itself if they make mistakes they will gain wisdom and make better choices when it truly matters.

In *WIHY*, Kandasamy talks about how marriage strips Indian women, whether married or unmarried, of their humanity. She strongly criticizes the concept of marriage in various ways, which we can see reflected in her own decision to get married. However, she goes further to show that even if someone marries their chosen partner, the relationship can still be harmful. She discusses experiencing rape, something she couldn't fully accept until it occurred to her.

Sumaiyya Naseem's "A Woman is No Man: An intimate portrait of oppression across three generations of Palestinians" in this article states,

The two characters' stories demonstrate that America is just another land where the hold of patriarchy can triumph over females. Arriving or being born in the America does not inherently bestow an individual emancipation, contrary to the prevailing story encircling the nation. Location has no impact on autonomy, as it is a state that cannot be bestowed upon a woman, as she must contend for it.

The statement suggests that despite the perception of America as a land of freedom and opportunity, patriarchy still exerts control over women's lives there. The experiences of the two characters illustrate this, showing that merely arriving or being born in the America doesn't guarantee liberation for women. The idea that geography alone can grant freedom is challenged, as freedom is not an occurrence that can be

bestowed upon women; rather, it's something they must actively fight for. This challenges the popular narrative that views America as inherently liberating, highlighting the ongoing struggle for the rights of women and equality regardless of location.

This shed light on the quiet agony endured by countless women in marriages, often subjected to emotional violence. However, contemporary times witness a shift as women defy societal norms and overcome adversities. With increasing financial independence and economic stability, women are breaking barriers and achieving equality across various domains. This signals a promising path toward a community where women are empowered to assert their rights and live free from oppression.

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