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POSTCOLONIAL CONFLICTUAL NATIONALISM CAUSING GENDER VIOLENCE IN PAKISTAN AND SRILANKA ANALYZED THROUGH FATIMA BHUTTO AND NAYOMI MUNAWEERA'S SELECT FICTIONS

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Abstract:

Nationalism, although a celebrated ideology, is observed as suffocating and detrimental to feminist individuality in certain regions of post liberated Pakistan and Sri Lanka wherein aggravated sectarian and ethnic conflicts have led to gender-based violence which has demolished feminine sexual purity forever. Since independence, both nations have undergone national crises as Sri Lankan citizens lived in trepidation for almost a decade because of the Sinhala-Tamil dispute whereas minority Shias and other deviant sects of Pakistan live in a constant threat of violence from radicalized and orthodox religious nationalist groups. The self-proclaimed nationalist Sunni and Sinhala groups peculiarly target women who apart from their role as reproducers and nurturers, participated equally in the anti-colonial liberation struggle only to be rewarded with ethnic and sectarian violence conflated with gender violence.

The research article aims to present a literary exploration of Shia and Tamil women's grievances and resistance through Fatima Bhutto & Nayomi Munaweera's select fictional works and highlights the postcolonial political privileging of masculinity through nationalist ideologies and strategies which, despite structuring a brave new world of equality, attempts to silence women forever. At this point, the fundamental flaw of nationalism i.e. creating rift based on inequalities of ethnicity, race, culture, religion, and gender divisions within a nation becomes evident which not only conspires to push women back from their struggle for equal gender rights but also deprives them of social acceptance forever.

Keywords: Sexual violence, Nationalist ideologies, Ethnic conflict, Shia women, Tamil women

1.0 Introduction:

Nationalism, although a celebrated ideology, sometimes appears to be suffocating and detrimental to feminist individuality as observed in certain regions of post liberated Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The post-independence period in both nations has witnessed aggravated sectarian and ethnic conflicts leading to gender-based violence which demolished feminine sexual purity forever. It is said that the unified citizenship of a nation is provided by nationalist discourse that aims to create social cohesion. The select post-colonial South Asian nations i.e., Pakistan and Sri Lanka share identical as well as differential nationalist structures. Both are third-world countries once colonized by British imperialism, both gained independence after fighting a long battle for

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freedom and thus are identical on the grounds of post-colonial nationalism. Since independence, both nations have undergone a national crisis as Sri Lankan citizens lived in trepidation for almost a decade because of the Sinhala-Tamil dispute whereas minority Shias and other deviant sects of Pakistan live in a constant threat of violence from radicalized and orthodox religious nationalist groups. These postcolonial nations are constantly struggling to maintain homogeneous national identities and a peaceful social cohesion based on the unique nationalism. However, it is disappointing to analyze how unique as well as diverse nationalisms of these two South Asian nations tend to prove detrimental to citizens of opposite sects, religions and races specifically women who bear the unprecedented loss of individuality and are robbed of their dignity in multiple ways. Hence, this research article aims to textually explore coercive gender trouble, sexual abuse, and feminine oppression during postcolonial intranational conflicts in the above-mentioned locations.

The postcolonial conflicts causing trauma to women subjects of northern Pakistan and Sri Lanka is skilfully depicted by Fatima Bhutto in *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* and Nayomi Munaweera in *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* respectively, proclaiming how the national identity of individuals, especially a woman, becomes inconsequential when racial, ethnic and religious hegemonic structures overpower. Fatima Bhutto belongs to one of the most popular political clans of Pakistan and has closely witnessed biased nationalist policies engendering collapse in civic order. In her fictional tale, she completely negates the glorified narration of political dynasties and attempts to familiarize the world with the rebel, insurgents of the northern region, and the episodes of disgraceful gender violence enacted by the dominant nationalist army. Nayomi Munaweera, a Sinhalese herself, also portrays the wartime atrocities of her native land by narrating traumatic feminine experiences and gender violence enacted during violent ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Both novelists implore that in the power play of a nation as a unique ethnic group, women, the so-called biological reproducers of these nations are propelled to seismic violence due to their multiple racial, religious, and regional divides. During the anti-colonial struggle, the nationalism of these nations necessitated equivalent contribution of all citizens irrespective of class, caste, or gender as, “the nation has been symbolically figured as a family.” (Mayer, 2002; pp.14) But the immediate post-colonial period witnessed a faulty notion of nationalism based on masculine hegemonic structures dividing the unified nation on the premises of xenophobia, religious fundamentalism, and fanatical militancy engendering sexual violence and further forfeiting feminine individuality and identity forever, “Sexual violence is an expression of ultimate nationalism” and “women’s bodies remain the site where power is enacted.” (Musikawong, 2011; pp. 179)

Therefore, the repercussions of unequal feminine citizenship and biased masculine nationalist attitude are systematically explored in this research paper. In section II, we will try to understand the emergence of the ideological discourse of nationalism and its reduction to xenophobic domination in select nations. A brief review of feminist contradictions to historical ideology suggests the possible dangers of patriarchal nationalism causing trouble to multiracial women of select nations. In Section III, the paper explores nationalist motivated violence against women inflicted by internal and external forces and analyses repugnant experiences of multiracial women from these disparate locations based on literary examples. The paper concludes by referring to invisible colonization in this post-millennial era as detrimental to feminine empowerment.

2.0 Conflictual Nationalism Causing Gender Violence in Pakistan and Srilanka:

The critical analysis begins with a brief review of previously discussed triad concepts of nation, nationalism, and feminism leading to the understanding of a deteriorated form of nationalism that seems to encourage gendered violence.

The “**imagined community**” of a nation (Anderson, 1991) attains sovereignty from nationalism, an exclusive form of patriotic devotion, and a strong ideology capable to make people love, die, and kill for the nation. (pp.11) Smith and Connor also consider the entire nation as a glorified **unique ethnic group** whose members find themselves emotionally attached to a specific geographical territory whereas nationalism involves a struggle for land or an assertion about land rights. (Connor 1978, Smith 1981) Contradictory to the male version of unique homogeneity, the feminist interpretation considers the political doctrine ideology of nationalism gendered, as it draws on socially constructed ideas of masculinity and femininity to shape female and male participation in nation-building, as well as how the nation is embodied in the imagination of self-professed nationalists (Banerjee, 2003; pp. 167). The feminists further insist that the historical construct of nationalism in its attempt to glorify ‘men-the protector’ seems to negate ‘women- the reproducer’ conveniently forgetting that if women refuse to reproduce, the nation will cease to exist. (Davis, 1997) However, the feminine disappointment continues along with post-independence male politicized discrimination neglecting feminist concerns and ultimate betrayal in providing equality. (Herr, 2003)

An examination of feminist discourse along with nationalism demonstrates that an extensive theoretical epistemology already exists on the feminist positionality in the historical construct of nation & nationalism during colonial and postcolonial politics in the third world nations wherein most of the time feminists have expressed their anger and dissatisfaction over treacherous policies of the post-liberation nationalist male politics. The present research neither discusses nationalism as an anti-colonial strategy to unite citizens nor post-liberation dissatisfied feminist concerns of equality, rather it concentrates on a conflictual status of ‘nationalism’ within a nation, national hatred towards minority groups, and subsequent ethnic and sectarian clashes leading to gender violence.

As mentioned earlier, gender violence in Pakistan and Sri Lanka heightened due to deconstructed sovereignty of ‘celebrated nationalism’ wherein certain specific ethnic and sectarian groups proclaim the nation ‘personal sectarian/ethnic space’ and nationalism ‘personal agenda.’ For instance, the religious nationalism of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan aimed to construct a unique Islamic State with complete applicability of Sharia-based on the Quran & Hadith foregrounding Islam as the National culture providing a unique identity to all citizens,

“There can be little doubt that Pakistani state-nationalism derives from the Germanic type of cultural nationalism. Since Pakistan had been created in the name of Muslim nationalism, its identity was inextricably bound to that cultural factor. Soon after independence, the ruling elite in Pakistan decided to include Islam in the elaboration of national identity...Under all circumstances, however, Pakistan as an Islamic state- moderate or fundamentalist-constitutionally and legally discriminate between the primary Pakistani nation constituted by Muslims, or rather by Muslim men, and other categories of lesser citizens. Women of all categories, non-Muslims, and ‘deviant’ sects are subjected to legal and constitutional disadvantages. Consequently, its national identity is exclusive as it does not include all the bona fide permanent residents of Pakistan as equal citizens of the State.” (Ahmed, 2008; pp. 58)

The Islam Republic of Pakistan accentuates mandatory *pure Islamic identity* wherein the majority of pure Sunni Muslim nationalists proclaim detrimental constitutional and national ideological constructs against non- Muslims (Hindus, Christians, Sikhs) and ‘deviant’ sects causing much harm to ingenuous citizens. Hence, nationalism encouraged sectarian conflict in Pakistan is between extremist Sunnis and minority Shias due to religious and political-ideological differences.

Similarly, the ethnic nationalism of Sri Lanka focused specifically on the racial and ethnic homogeneity, the lack of which led to a decade-long civil war between Sinhalese; the Aryans, and Tamils; the Dravidian. The indigenous nationalist Sinhalese initiated the power game by declaring Sinhala, the sole official language of Sri Lanka through the ‘Sinhala only act of 1956’ which was an attempt to marginalize Tamils linguistically and culturally as Robert N Kearney quotes, “Sinhalese

nationalism was largely generated by two explosive political issues: the official language issue and Buddhist discontent.” (Kearney, 1964; pp. 125) The violence began with the burning of the Jaffna library, an attack on Tamil culture by burning their ancient manuscripts, and the ethnic conflict heated to the extent of extreme bloodshed and resulted in a violent massacre labeled as ‘Black July’ in Sri Lankan history wherein Tamils were looted, killed and uprooted from their motherland. The Tamils’ prominent North part of the island was isolated from the rest and captured by Sinhalese soldiers turning it into a marginalized ‘postcolonial island’. Here began a three-decade-long civil war between nationalist Sinhalese soldiers and racially marginalized Tamils’ self-proclaimed army i.e., Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) wherein, “Tamils collectively were being targeted as the enemy-whether they were separatists or nationalists, militant or politician, young or old, man or woman.” (Heidemann, 2017, pp. 6)

The above-mentioned brief analysis demonstrates that initial post-colonial decades in these nations witnessed a gradual deterioration in the idea of the nation as a ‘spiritual family’ based on ‘a spiritual principle’ (Bhabha, 1990) amid the eruption of sectarian and ethnic clashes. Therefore, the original unique connecting force of nationalism which is ‘a universal urge for liberty and progress’ (Chatterjee, 1986, pp. 2) transformed into a violent wave of ‘mindless chauvinism and xenophobia’, also categorized as ‘patriarchal nationalism’, ‘local form of domination’ and one of the scattered hegemonic structures (Grewal and Kaplan, 2002; pp.19) further stimulating gender violence. The unique joining force of nationalism propelled by insider/outsider feel during colonial times disintegrated as xenophobic patriarchal nationalism causing gender violence against weaker sex, appropriately asserted by Theresa, “women’s bodies were the battlegrounds across which communities and the states fought and continue to fight.” (O’ Keefe, 2013; pp. X)

The post-independence national policies of Pakistan seemed to perpetuate deep-rooted phenomena of gender-based violence through discriminatory laws and their application marginalizing specifically women of northern Pakistan who seem to be victimized by state legitimized unofficial gender violence, Taliban militants’ threats and forced non-consensual marriages simultaneously, “living in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), the homeland of the Pukhtun ethnic group whose stark views of women’s place are distilled in their ominous saying: “Women-either the house or the grave.” (Hegland, 1995, pp.67) Rukhshanda Naz, a feminist, human rights lawyer, resident director of Aurat Foundation, and also UN Women head for the tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa narrates real-life experiences of survivors of extreme violence presently staying in her women shelter:

Naz also had with her a 22-year-old woman from Kabul whose father disappeared into Taliban hands for having worked with the United Nations. The woman had been beaten, kidnapped, and sexually assaulted for refusing marriage to a Taliban member. Women hidden in Naz’s shelter are relatively safe, but outside its walls, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has high incidences of “honor”-based violence. Last June, a *jirga* (typically all-male tribal council) ordered the “honor” killing of a 13-year-old girl for “running away with men.” At least 180 cases of domestic violence were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2017, according to [Human Rights Watch](#), including 94 women murdered by immediate families. (Su, 2019)

The predicament of northern Pakistani women demonstrates that colonization is not always foreign; colonizer authority may transpire within national, societal, and familial boundaries proficient enough to dominate and marginalize the minority citizens.

Similar exposition is perceptible with Tamil womanhood when teenage girls and women were constantly harassed, abused, abducted, molested, and sometimes even murdered brutally by paramilitary forces during decade long national civil war in Srilanka,

“Stories concerning the rape and mutilation of women are well-known among Tamils; Krishanthi Kumaraswami’s death is particularly infamous. Kumaraswami was an eighteen-year-old Tamil student who was arrested while passing through a Sri Lankan Army checkpoint in 1996...An hour later, they gang-raped Krishanthi and buried her.” (Manoranjan, 2010; pp.141)

In most instances, sexual assault survivors were isolated and ostracised by their own families and community members. The notion of personal suffering and hegemonic national oppression pushed these victims to join hands with Liberation Tiger Tamil Ealam which eventually “[was a] liberating act, promising them more freedom and power.”(142) The subservient Tamil women subjugated and suppressed by family, society, and nation-state, “expressed their desire to fight for the liberation of both their ethnic community and also their subservient position in Tamil society.” (142) Somehow, the in-charge position at training, politics, public relation, audio-video section, and various other wings provided them with a sense of liberation and empowerment. We see the gender violence incorporated by nationalism motivated Sinhalese transformed the ever-muted and oppressed Tamil females into fearless ‘agents of liberation’ trained in shooting, shelling, and even suicide bombing.

The above review demonstrates that the post-independence emergence of unique colonial Sunni and Sinhala power structure announced minority Shia and Tamils of the northern region of both nations as antinational groups peculiarly targeting women who apart from their roles as reproducers and nurturers, participated equally in anti-colonial liberation struggle only to be rewarded with ethnic and sectarian violence conflated with gender violence. The literary exploration of Shia and Tamil women’s grievance and resistance through Fatima Bhutto and Nayomi Munaweera’s fictional tales highlights the postcolonial political privileging of masculinity through nationalist ideologies and strategies which despite structuring a brave new world of equality attempts to silence women forever.

3.0 Literary Exploration of Gender Violence Through Fictional Incidents:

Gender violence refers to the deprivation of basic amenities, moral rights, legal justice, and physical & psychological torment subjected to women due to their subordinate status and expected submissive roles imposed by society and culture, “According to the 1993 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, violence against women refers to ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’ (UNGA, 1993, art. 1).” (quoted in Karp, Marwah & Manchanda, 2015; pp 2). Fatima Bhutto and Nayomi Munaweera in select fictional works trace multiple forms of gender violence perpetuated towards Shia and Tamil women of Pakistan and Sri Lanka by internal forces i.e., family or community as well as external enemies i.e., the nationalist state legalized policies and even through masculine politics of liberation movement.

The first encounter of gender violence is apparent in the patriarchal northern family structure of both the nations which seems to restrict feminine movement within domestic boundaries and the situation becomes worse with the arrival of nationalist army forces in these marginalized sections. The Northern women of Pakistan are deprived of post-secondary level education, though, Fatima’s protagonist Samarra protests silently, continues the home study, and convinces the elder ‘to attend the local university, provided she stopped after a Bachelor’s degree.’ (Bhutto, 2013, pp. 15) However, in *Mir Ali*, the nationalist army seems to conflate with patriarchal forces in its project of violating education rights by practicing unwanted interrogation, unannounced lockdown, and sudden dismissal of classes with an agenda to promote illiteracy. Similar situations are spotted in the deteriorated condition of Tamil populated schools running with negligible resources. Nayomi’s female, character Saraswathi, named after the goddess of learning who, “loves the glide of pages between” her fingers and “the stroke of pencil across paper,” (Munaweera, 2012, pp.124) is not able to achieve her dream of becoming a school teacher due to terrible atrocities of nationalist army men and social isolation by family and community. The omnipotent patriarchy violates feminine rights

in the name of ensuring vaginal purity and nationalist army men violate feminine sexuality to emasculate the entire masculine community.

Another heinous implication of gender violence is visible in the strategies of nationalist armed forces which are deployed in troubled regions with complete power to employ desired excessive force & ruthless interrogation beyond legal repercussions and constitutional principles. The militarized structural violence subjects multiple women to sexual assault, shame, and coercive suicide without any questioning authority. It becomes difficult for women to escape imperative gender trouble and we find both Samarra and Saraswathi becoming targets of nationalism-sponsored violence.

Bhutto portrays feminine innocence and masculine cunningness appropriately through Samarra's staunch patriotism and her lover Aman's escapism resulting in the 'custodial gang rape' of Samarra by army Chief Colonel Tarik Irshaad and his men. Samarra in her attempt to contribute to the cause of Mir Ali, works as an inconsequential shadow courier service, furnishing food, money, and solace to commanders' mothers during their hideouts whereas Aman chasing his utopian American dream provides secret information to the colonel which leads to Samarra's abduction, interrogation, and heinous rape incident. The most ridiculous part is that during interrogation colonel simultaneously called her 'Zama lur' (daughter) as well as utters obnoxious remarks leading to physical brutality and slapping her so hard that she is, "blown off her chair. She would never hear out of her right ear again." (Bhutto, pp. 164) The custodial interrogation which continues for seven hours includes blowing her off, standing on her hair, pressing her cheeks against the floor with ox-blood boots, and finally her sexual molestation which is considered as a requisite exercise to restrain national defacement,

"As Samarra lay on the floor...the man stood up. He unbuckled and unbuttoned something...He stood on her hair in his standard-issue ox-blood boots...Her cheek was pressed against the floor and her skin was red and torn from his hand. He stood up again and dug one of his ox-blood boots into her face...he pulled her off the ground, her neck straining...Having lifted Samarra, the army man held her against the wall, his palms against her forehead, her neck. She promised herself that she would not cry...

'Bring the boys in.'

He issued the command and released her." (167)

Similarly, Nayomi's fictional characters suffer the militarized assailants' eve-teasing, sexual assault in custody, and entailed suicide, "The soldiers always lean over the sandbags, call to us in halting Tamil learned on the battlefield. "Why always in such a big hurry?" they say, "Come and talk to us, we won't bite," and smile baring their wolfish teeth. If you are a girl, there is always the chance that the soldiers will spoil you or that people will say that they did." (Munaweera, pp.136) Parvathi, the first victim of custodial nationalist approved rape by a Sinhalese soldier experiences intense trauma and shame, "People stopped talking to her as soon as it happened, but they never stopped talking about her." (136) Parvathi, double marginalized Tamil female, mutilated physically due to her racial identity and ostracised by her community espoused death as only expedient,

"She jumped into a well...her face was bloated and waterlogged...her arms were bent at crazy angles...later when they burnt her body, only her mother and two sisters were there. Even her father refused to go. She was my friend. But now, I dare not even speak her name." (137)

The textual analysis of Nayomi's protagonist Saraswathi, also exhibits excruciating encounters with the rapacious disposition of nationalist Sinhalese soldiers who aspired only to gratify their concupiscence under the banner of nationalism. Saraswathi, a sixteen-year-old adolescent girl, incognizant of forthcoming misfortune, dreams of becoming a school teacher and getting married one day, "When I get my teaching certification, I will live in the small house behind the school and maybe I also will have someone who looks at me (135)." All her dreams disintegrate due to the

nationalist propaganda of Sinhalese to ravish Tamil females and impair the entire Tamil circle. The soldiers break into her house, incarcerate her and molest her while constantly abusing her as 'Tiger Bitch',

"I try to fight but the dress Amma sewed so carefully is ripping, exposing knees and thighs, my breasts, my nipples. Tiger Bitch...My wrists and ankles are caught in their iron grip. Tiger Bitch. I am pulled apart, uncovered, exposed...They tear me open with their nails, bite me with their fangs, their spittle falls thick across my breasts. They break into me. Break into me. Break me...Until this body is no longer mine. Until I am only a limp, bleeding, broken toy. Tiger Bitch! Tiger! Bitch! Tiger! Bitch!" (145)

Nayomi in *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* narrates another incident of 'Black July' where nationalist Sinhalese contrive a full proof plan to showcase ultimate nationalism by assaulting Tamil females mercilessly,

"At the far side, a particularly jovial mob gathers. Reaching high above their heads the men pull a woman out of the small side window. They catch her sari pallu, pull, jumping, and climbing on each other's shoulders...the woman's open mouth, her arms flailing in the most exposed and air-bound uncertainty between the bus and the men. A long streak of red bisects her forehead, and then like a cork out of a bottle the woman is dislodged. She falls into the circle of men, streaming to earth, sari fluttering like a parachute. A roar of delight drowns the woman's screams." (pp. 87)

Similarly, the horrific custodial molestation of Shia and Hazara females of Waziristan and Balochistan incorporated by the Pakistani nationalist army often goes unreported:

"Not so many years before, they'd read in the papers of women doctors and secretaries raped in Balochistan's Sui gas fields because they had spoken too loudly of the state's pilfering. A consultant who had been hired from her southern city to come and put together a report on the gas fields was raped and beaten in her official bungalow, the home let to her by the government, and left for dead one November. But she survived and accused one of her superiors of ordering and orchestrating the twenty-three hours of abuse that ought to have killed her questioning spirit. She was later admitted to an asylum for the infirm and insane. Her rapists never made it to court." (Bhutto, pp. 165)

The above mentioned are a few literary narratives of militarized structural 'custodial rape' and gender violence in northern Pakistan and Sri Lanka which transpired multiple times without any official recording in the historical narratives. However, Samarra and Saraswathi, both beaten but not broken, emerge to decolonize the traditional perspective towards rape victims who are generally propelled to embrace death due to societal embarrassment. Rather in the narrative of both fictional tales, the exercise of sexual traumatic violence creates defiant and belligerent insurgents of patriarchal nationalism. Initially, the seven hours of 'custodial rape' distressed Samarra but Aman's betrayal and Hayat's encouragement, "drove her deeper into movement...she reported right back to duty and wasted no time in exacting her revenge...she had become in the short time...a leading figure in the battle of Mir Ali." (181) Samarra, mettlesome and unflinching, pondering over her experience deduces that if she could endure those seven hours of physical hegemony of those army men, what worst they could do now, only extending time limit, "fourteen hours? Twenty-one?" (182) and this realization made her fiercely indomitable, "There was no one Samarra loved enough to protect from the consequences of her actions. She had cut those ties and loosened those attachments. This made her dangerous. Samarra never suspected this was a battle she could not win. It made her reckless." (183) Samarra's resolution to be an anarchist and her determination to assassinate Chief Minister demonstrates how detrimental nationalism manufactures undaunted threatening females.

Saraswathi repudiated by clan members, "You have to go from here, my daughter. We can't keep you with us anymore (Munaweera, pp.152)" refuses self-immolation and resolves vengeance by joining LTTE, "I am becoming slowly but surely a jungle cat (174)." She, a ferocious terminator of native Sinhalese designates herself as, "the predator" (176) and eventually joins the Black Tiger squad, "She is a ghost from a different time and place (201)" homicide national subjects, "Lord Shiva is watching and I am dancing, swirling and stamping...I am in motion. Unstoppable and

Immaculate.” (206) Saraswathi’s fascination for martyrdom and her suicide mission in the form of ‘maternal mimicry’ becomes, “mere cannon fodder to the masked hegemonies of Sri Lanka’s gendered nationalisms in which women who are victimized sexually are doubly victimized not only by the rapist(s) but equally by the order to commit a suicide bombing from the male hierarchy of their very own community.” (Heidemann, 2017, pp.11) An exhaustive understanding of Saraswathi’s exploitation in the gamut of the nation’s expropriation by Sinhalese substantiates that sexual racial discrimination inadvertently gives birth to revengeful and racially rebelled females who ultimately end up dispensing more trauma and chaos to themselves, to the society and the so-called nationalistic nation.

Though we see that masculine-run liberation movements promise futile liberation to women as both protagonists are betrayed by a male accomplice in the ultimate suicide mission, these chivalrous women refuse to accept victim status rather consent to embrace ‘immortality’ by avenging the perpetrators.

Thus, fictional intervention into Saraswathi and Samarra’s interior life reveals that their final actions (to be suicide bombers) remain deferential to multiple structures: the conventional community they are born into, the nationalist opponents which break into them, and ultimately the self-acclaimed movement that encourages their participation in patriotic militarism with a promise to avenge their indelible pain.

4.0 Conclusion:

To conclude, one can say that nationalism, a highly celebrated idea, is gendered and biased, which provides status & hegemonic rights to men who project valor during a crisis but at the same time not only conveniently negates the patriotic contribution and aggression of women against colonial oppressors but also puts them in a dilemma to face dual enemies i.e. external imperialists and internal patriarchal society. In the post-millennial era, the invisible colonizers appear in the form of opponent race, sect, religion, and ethnicity dominant groups fostered by biased nationalist policies eager to traumatize and colonize minority sections. As obvious, the nationalist-inspired violence and aggressive nationalist racial militancy explicitly consider women as passive victims sans idiosyncratic voice, and sexual abuse towards women is an act of portraying ‘masculine desire of power’ more than ‘masculine desire for sex’. At this point, the fundamental flaw of nationalism i.e. creating rift based on inequalities of ethnicity, race, culture, religion, and gender divisions within a nation, becomes evident which not only conspires to push women back from their struggle for equal gender rights but also deprives them of social acceptance forever

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