Chapter: 5

Conclusion

The analysis of the select novels is based on Gayatri Spivak’s Subaltern theory and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. The researcher has taken into account Antonio Gramsci’s concept of subaltern as he is the first one to develop the concept in social context. The researcher also studies Foucault’s concept of power to examine the social structure in the select novels of both the writers. As in the title of the research the researcher has used the phrase ‘Speaking Subaltern’ the research deals with the ‘voice’ of subaltern. To understand the dominant discourse and the voice of resistance the researcher compared writers with biological difference; a male writer and a female writer. Both the writers belong to the colonized countries. The study helps to see the relation between the colonizers and the colonized as well as it also helps to examine the power relation between a man and a woman. The research finds out that how the identity of a subaltern is created and how a subaltern constructs his/her language to oppose the dominant discourse. In the present research work the researcher studies the subalterns as speaking subjects by putting them at the centre as the dominant discourse has given birth to the discourse of resistance and opposition.

The researcher juxtaposes Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and Buchi Emecheta as it gives a good opportunity to compare the works of a male and a female writer. It also provides a broad area to see how they resist against dominant group. The first point of comparison between Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and Buchi Emecheta gender difference between the writers. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, in African literature, has gained a superior position and he is considered as a canonized writer in African literary tradition. In comparison to male writers the practice of writing by female writers was a new thing. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o was a well established male writer in African literature and Buchi Emecheta was struggling female writer; a writer who was trying to make a space for herself among other male writers. It can be said that the voice of Buchi Emecheta is the voice of a subaltern woman. Women were/are not supposed to be intellectual and if they are, it creates a sense of surprise in men. This feeling is reflected in her novel Double Yoke in which the
professor, to the great surprise of students, is a woman. Though the writers belong to different
countries, they share a room in the line of African literature; literature especially written in English.
There is a commonly accepted view that male writers are knowledgeable and they are superior to
women writers as they talk about the current issues of their society, of their nation. Traditionally
it is believed that writings of women writers is limited to the domestic walls, they talk only about
familial issues. The researcher views that tradition is the creation of patriarchal power and it is
the story of the winners. An ideology has been set or established so the people have been trained
to see men as winners. From this perspective it can be said that the dissenters have been excommunicated, torched, castrated, exiled or imprisoned from the central position. Being a
woman writer Emecheta somehow faces the same problems. Emecheta’s fictions are the
representation of African Women in literature and challenge the hegemony of male authors. By
changing the perspective if one studies the works of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and Buchi Emecheta in
relation to the colonial power they share the common problem of banishment from the centre.
The notion of white as powerful has been created by the white culture. On the world’s map the
myth of white as powerful is created and the world is divided between the West and the rest. The
‘First World’ nations rule over the ‘Third World’ nations so the literature coming from the ‘First
World’ nations is at the centre. The writers coming from the colonized nations look at the centre
from the below and write back in an aggressive mood. The novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and
Buchi Emecheta reflect the painful experiences of the writers as well as of the nation. In this
context the nation is imagined as an imagined community and the imagination is profoundly
gendered. Both the writers have expressed the spirit of dilemma of an entire culture via female
characters. In this regard colonization of a nation and rape of a woman can be linked. Ngugi’s
female characters are exploited by men in their culture. They are aggressive and at some extent
not ideal. On the other side Emecheta’s women characters are forced to be passive. This can be
seen as the force by the colonizing nation to the colonized nation. Emecheta’s women characters
struggle to educate themselves. Education is a sign of awareness and a source of knowledge. This
can be connected with the colonized nations’ desire to articulate their standpoint. So from the
colonial perspective or from the feminist perspective the novels are the mirror image of hierarchy
in the culture. The fictions of Ngugi and Emecheta give expression to the aspirations and
problems of Black people.
Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and Buchi Emecheta’s novels cover the time of colonialism and Neocolonialism. The time is just after the freedom when the nations (Kenya and Nigeria) faced new problems. Both the writers write about the problems of new emerging nations. The research reveal that the study of the social background of the novels sounds that both the writers are looking back to find out what went wrong in the past. The research helps to find that the novelists are haunted by the sense of the past and they felt that turn to fiction is an important way of clarifying the confusions created by the past. So the novelists have put themselves at the place where the context and text meet. Foucault’s concept of power and Spivak’s subaltern theory helps to study (1) how under the colonial power the colonized were objectified and (2) under the patriarchal power how women were muted. The subalterns, colonized men before the colonizers and women before the colonized men and the colonizers, were forced to become docile and passive. The colonized others are possessed by the colonizers. To establish power, possession of natives’ property was a main thing. Possession can be physical or mental; possession of human body, land, culture, or nation. Ngugi and Emecheta have presented their culture in their fictions. Their stories are about simple village life but they are very complex. Their novels are the microcosm of macrocosm as they include the very critical issues of the black culture.

In his novels Ngugi has picked up the issue of land. Land, in Ngugi’s fictions, becomes a political and social issue. Land was the property of the native people but it was taken away by the colonizers so the colonizers became the new masters of the land. The land was the first and the foremost issue in peasants’ lives. As it is related with the identity of the peasants, the peasants revolted against the dominant group to get their land back. The native people are the owners of the land and the white settlers also want to possess land. The natives were forced to emigrate from their land as the colonizers took the charge of it. The research helps to see that in the fictions of Ngugi the land emerges a docile female figure. The possession of land is just like the possession of a woman. A woman is a living being. She can speak but she is not given speech. A woman’s fate is in the hands of men. The same way whatever happens but the land cannot speak, it remains mute. The way a woman’s body is exploited the same way the land is exploited by the native as well as colonizers. A woman has to yield herself to men and the same kind of submissiveness is expected from land. Land has no choice to reject masters the way a woman is mastered by men. So in Ngugi’s novels land is the major silenced figure. Before colonialism the land was owned by the native people and then the land had new masters in the
form of white people and after freedom the new masters were replaced by the old masters. As the land is seen and treated from the feminine perspective it cannot speak and it cannot be free. So the land is doubly marginalized. The same way black women were suppressed by their men and exploited by the colonialists.

In Foucauldian term body is made an object and Spivak’s theory of subaltern sees women as inferior to men. Here also the target is body. Body and sexuality are related as body suffers because of repressive mechanism the power of sexuality. This mechanism of power controls the body. The control gives birth to the conqueror and the conquered. The body of the conquered has to provide pleasure to the conqueror. This type of relations can be seen everywhere; political relations or social activities. This theory can be applied to judge the relation between the colonizers and the colonized. The body of the colonized is tortured. The research helps to fix the human body and the land in the concept of the body as both have been used and manipulated by the dominant group. The body of the colonized has to give pleasure to the colonizers. The colonized others have to serve the Imperialist government. The land has to make the colonizers prosperous so the land is also conquered. The land can be taken as a very strong and effective metaphor to show historical struggle between colonizers and the colonized. The concept of the ‘colonized other’ includes both, male and female. The women were raped by the colonizers. In his novels Ngugi shows that how African women were made a sex object for the colonizers and tourists. The body of the women was used to earn money. In Foucauldian term the female bodies were made docile and passive at the extent that at the initial level women were forced to be submissive and they became obedient to the authority. They were asked to decorate the bed of tourists so that the generosity of the black women could be praised by the tourists when they go back to their nation. Ngugi shows the commodification of female body as it became a source of income.

Docile and passive bodies of women symbolically throw light upon the docile and passive mentality of African men. Their women were made victims by the colonizers and they could not do anything for them. The colonized men were forced to do labour for the white men. The repetition of performance paralyzed their mind and their body became passive. The imperial government established power over the colonized nations. This relation was based on the majority and minority. Black people were considered as minority and among black people
women were considered as minority. In the colonial system the body of the other was controlled. This relation works on gender politics, masculine gender and feminine gender. This classification is social. There is a difference between sex and gender. Sex is natural and gender is created. Power plays a major role in the creation of gender. The nation of the colonizers comes in the category of masculine gender and the colonized nations are made feminine. All the differences are the result of this idea.

The researcher has applied the idea to study the characters of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o. After the establishment of the Imperial government the African men were decentred from their position. The black men who enjoyed the rights and ruled over women were suddenly thrown out and were put in the margin by the colonizers. Men try to be powerful and they became more aggressive and suppressive. In Ngugi’s *Weep Not, Child* Ngotho scolds his wife and tells her that he wants to be a man in his family. It is not only the problem of Ngotho but all men suffer from the same problem. One of Ngotho’s sons Boro joins the Mau Mau as he fight to regain their rights and land. Gikonyo in Ngugi’s *A Grain of Wheat* is unable to fight with the powerful people and in distress calls his wife Mumbi a whore. In Ngugi *Petals of Blood* the characters of Munira, Karega, and Abdulla represent the victimized youth. They have come to Ilmorog but they are imprisoned in the city life. They failed to find out a new direction. In Ngugi’s *Wizard of the Crow*, the protagonist Kimathi becomes the wizard. He uses the device of disguise and changes his identity over the course of time to fight with the odd situation of the nation. It sounds that the male characters are paralyzed before the colonial power. The researcher also throws light upon the female characters of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s novels. The comparison between the male and female characters helps to find out that the women characters are stronger than male characters though they are victimized by the male characters. Mumbi from *A Grain of Wheat*, Wanja from *Petals of Blood*, Wariinga from *Devil on the Cross* and Nyambura from *Wizard of the Crow* are very powerful women characters. They raise their voice against the patriarchal and imperial colonization. They are the speaking subalterns, speaking in a high pitch tone for their voices to be heard. Mumbi is the wife of Gikonyo and the mother of Karanja’s child, Wanja becomes a prostitute, Wariinga is deceived by The Rich Old Man and becomes a murders and Nyambura freely enjoys the relation with Kimathi. These women characters are in very critical situation. They are helpless and victimized and people may put them in the category of fallen women. The researcher finds that they are not fallen women rather they are very strong. The fault lies within
the system. If these women are fallen and if they are prostitute then the question arises that how come they became prostitutes? Their reaction is very normal. Wanja is unable to find job so she is very happy to get the job of a barmaid. Wariinga becomes the killer as she could not find out any other way to get the solution. So whatever happens but from a feminine perspective their reaction is natural and normal.

Ngugi has created an image of ‘woman’ in his novels. Women, in neo-colonial countries, were used as means of income. Ngugi shows that women were raped by the new black masters as well as tourists in a more so called dignified manner. His has much talked about female body. His women characters are sexually oppressed by men. Mumbi from A Grain of Wheat, Warringa from Devil on the Cross and Wanja from Petals of Blood are the victim of male oppression. Mumbi is a connecting link in A Grain of wheat. She is a town’s beauty and an image of an ideal or pure woman. Her purity is deconstructed by Karanja who is the rival of Gikonyo in the race of winning Mumbi. Mumbi is the mother of Karanja’s child. The child carries the mark of Mumbi’s exploitation and can be taken as the sign of Mumbi’s betrayal to her husband. She has been called a whore by her husband. Childbearing and motherhood was a curse for Mumbi but she accepts that curse and takes the responsibility of her child. The presence of the child in Mumbi’s lap makes Gikonyo weak as he feels that he is a coward. Karanja owns the position of Head in the village so Gikonyo is in subordinate position before Karanja. Karanja has the power and he uses it to dominate and oppress Gikonyo. Gikonyo, oppressed, dominated and insulted by Karanja, feels that his self-respect as a man is hurt because his wife has allowed another man to enter in her body. Moreover Karanja has the power but his power is limited to Black people only because in actuality he serves the White man’s army. And Karanja plays with Mumbi because he was defeated by Gikonyo to win Mumbi’s hand. So the text of the novel reveals that whatever happened but Mumbi is not responsible for anything. She is sandwiched between two men. She simply had been used by both the men two wound each other. Gikonyo is frustrated and calls Mumbi a whore because he failed to protect his wife. Wanja and Wariinga are the image of a fallen woman. Wanja takes us back to her childhood experiences. Her past helps the readers to understand her mentality. Wanja fails to get a job in the city. Wherever she goes for a job she is asked to give her body to the master. She surrenders to the demand of men and gives herself to them but the promises given by the men turns out to be fake promises because she is still jobless. In the city she gets a job and she is happy for that job. It is irony because the job is the job of a
barmaid. Wanja criticizes the new political system of the country and raises her voice against the plight of women. In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi shows the poor condition of the nation. In the newly freed nation women were used as a medium to earn money which is a sign of disrespect for any nation. The tragedy is that black men arranged this kind of things for the white tourists. So the prostitution was made legal by the business men. Ilmoroge was not safe for women. Wanja is also a subaltern woman speaking but her speech remains voiceless though there is voice in it because there is not a change in the condition of women. Her voice remains unheard by the authority. The same way Wariinga is exploited by the Rich Old Man. She becomes pregnant by that rich old man but he refuses to take the responsibility of the child. But Wariinga is courageous and gives birth to the baby girl. She loves Gutuiria and he turns out to be that rich old man’s son. Wariinga kills that rich old man and she also kills Kihaahu and Gitutu. Wariinga tried hard to make herself free from the shackles of cruel male mentality but she could not do it successively so she becomes a murderer she is going to be punished by the law. The grave reality is that there is no law to save women from men. There was no law when she was seduced by men. The system of law failed to protect women from the exploitation. This is applicable to the select novels in this research. Law did not work when Muthoni was circumcised, law could not save Wanja from becoming a prostitute and law failed in Wariinga’s case also. Njeri, Ngotho’s first wife, Nyakobi, Ngotho’s second wife, and Mwihaki from the *Weep Not, Child* remains speechless. Njeri and Nyakobi are given domestic roles. When they talk about political matters their views remain within the domestic boundaries. Mwihaki is educated but she is weak. She lacks the power of Wanja and Wariinga. Ngugi’s women characters suffer from double marginalization as they are exploited by Black and White men. So it shows that as women were not allowed to speak they became aggressive in their action.

The colonized men and women suffer as the problem is of difference. The discourse of resistance is resulted from the racial as well as gender difference and language helps to see these differences as it helps to understand the psychology of the people. The construction of discourse is based upon the psychology of people. The differences have produced the ideological effects and it is one of the reasons of chaos in black culture. Ngugi and Emecheta have tried to show the unequal power relations between the different social groups. Both the writers struggle to show these inequalities. The text of the novels reveals that it has emerged from the painful experiences of the “self”. Both the writers share the subjective experiences of the colonized other.
ideological effect of the power is reflected in the language of Ngugi and Emecheta. From the postcolonial perspective there is not a difference between Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and Buchi Emecheta. The psychological condition of the writers overcome the biological difference as both are colonized others and treated as second class citizens.

Another point is that both the writers have raised the issue of body and sexuality. As it is common in any culture the female body is manipulated. The relationship between man-woman can be analyzed from the Marxist perspective as master-slave. From Spivak’s perspective women are subalterns as they are oppressed by men. There is not any type of logic that biological difference between men-women put women in subordinate position but it is the fact of women’s position in society. Women’s body is the first and foremost reason of their exploitation. The select novels reflect the same situation of black women. Motherhood and childbearing is a crucial issue in Emecheta’s works. Women are forced to bear children. The power of gender politics is present at domestic level in the works of both the novelists. The idea that men are superior and women are subordinate to men has become an accepted myth in the patriarchal society. Men have the lust of power. In men-women relationship men are the conqueror and women are conquered. Feminine behavior has become a force for women. The repetition of feminine behavior created an image of woman in society. This image was considered as an ideal image. Wife-beating in the select works of both the writers has become a common practice and it is sanctioned by the law. The action of child bearing and motherhood has become an accepted practice. This performance is repeated in a masculine society. Women became the victim of sexuality. On the other side both the novelists show that the neo-colonial nations are not safe for women. Women were raped and exploited by black and white bourgeois. Here the female body became a centre of gaze. Foucault’s concept of gaze helps to understand the power relations particularly between members of majority and minority groups. The concept of gaze is the concept of being looked upon and observed by the powerful group. If we analyze the male-female relations from these perspective women are looked upon by men. In The Slave Girl by Emecheta Chiago expresses how she had been looked upon by Pa Palagada and his son Clifford.

From the perspective of Discourse on Body it can be said that motherhood or childbearing is more concerned with the identity of men and the identity of men is related with the possession of the phallus. So to prove the power of the phallus women have to become
pregnant and a woman is a woman simply because she lacks the phallus. This ‘lack’ puts woman in a negative situation and associates her with the passive body. So women are presented as an object of men’s desire but they are denied from becoming autonomous individuals. Marriage has become an oppressive and exploitative system and marriage reinforces sexual inequality which binds women to domesticity. From this perspective in the select work of Emecheta the masculine strength is shown by making women pregnant for many times. Aku-nna is an innocent girl but her death is caused by child birth. Adah is a very strong girl from her childhood. She manages for her education and gets married. Before twenty-one she becomes the mother of three children. She is forced to be pregnant for her husband. She learns to use birth control equipments but she is caught by her husband and Adah becomes the victim of domestic violence. At the end of the novel her husband, Francis, denies to take the responsibility of children by saying that he is not their father. Men think that they possess power but it is a mere illusion. In The Joys of Motherhood, Nnu-Ego’s first marriage fails because she could not produce children for her husband. After her remarriage with Nnaife she has given birth to nine children. The title of the novel is ironic as the joys are limited for men only. Here we can relate the issue of clitoral dichotomy. The removal of clitoris abandons women from having pleasure during sexual relation. Women are expected to behave as a wooden doll during the relation. It means that women do not have right to be happy. They simply have to become mothers of children for their husbands. They have to bear children and go through painful labour pain and everything is only for the joy of men. Chiago in The Slave Girl becomes the mother of Pa Palagada’s children. Wariinga in Devil on the Cross becomes the mother of the Rich Old Man’s child. Just like Francis the Rich Old Man also denies to take the responsibility of the child. Mumbi is exploited by Karanja and she becomes the mother of his child. It is thought that happiness and protection of women is always with her male counterpart but the research helps to see that most of the women characters are sad and they suffer the most because of men. Most of the feminists refute this belief and claim not for this so called happiness but liberty in true sense. In a male-centred values and beliefs it is difficult for women to create a unique female identity. Women are always connected with the others and feminists argue that sexual difference is a consequence of cultural condition of women and society has created woman as other. In masculine society assimilation of women at equal level is impossible. So women need to identify themselves and assert their difference. It can be said that there is not a difference between the female characters of Ngugi’s
novels as Emecheta as a female writers. She has also tried to break the chains of tradition as writing is an action she tries to speak through her works.

Emecheta as a female writer struggles to assert her identity among the esteemed African male writers. Coming from a colonized country and being a woman writer, Emecheta’s novels reflect the pains and woes of a woman in Nigerian society. At some extent Emecheta’s women characters reflect her subjective experiences. By writing about the disadvantages done to women due to gender difference Emecheta has also created an image of women. Emecheta has fixed her women characters between tradition and modernity. Emecheta’s women characters are from simple village girls to university educated modern girls. But the research reveals that they have to carry the yoke of tradition even in modern Nigeria. They are not ‘free’.

It was the time when the native people claimed for freedom from the colonial clutches. During the time women were doubly marginalized and Buchi Emecheta writes about victimization of women in Nigeria. Stereotype gender roles for women are created by the patriarchal system in which women suffer a lot.

Buchi Emecheta’s writings go with the part of feminism in which feminist critics consider the works written by women. If we examine her works, her focus is upon the body of women with social problems. If we enter through de Beauvoir in Spivak’s Subaltern theory and analyze Buchi Emecheta’s works we come to know that she has brought back the issue of the body and motherhood. For Emecheta marriage is a system of economic arrangement in which women are oppressed and exploited. The system of marriage reinforces inequalities and bind women to domesticity. Women is thought to be happy and protected under the care of her male partner has become a myth in patriarchal society. Through motherhood a woman continues to produce the next generation for the future in a purely animal way. By producing the next generation a woman immortalizes man and makes their future secure but they are excluded from the pursuit of knowledge. Their liberty is limited and defined and it is granted by the male counterpart which is in no sense a freedom at all. Emecheta presents a strong female point of view in registering her disgust at male chauvinism and patriarchy’s satisfaction with an unfair and oppressive system towards women. Emecheta, through her writings tries to enter into male-oriented system. But her female characters are not fully free or successfully enter into the patriarchal system. The language and structure of her novels is on pure basis patriarchal. She has
put her women characters within the boundary of domestic sphere. None of them are fully able to
deconstruct the patriarchal premises. They all are treated as the second-class citizens, the title of
Emecheta’s novel which is very much appropriate to all her women characters.

Buchi Emecheta’s novels are the negotiation between colonial and patriarchal spaces and
personal desires. Within the space Emecheta’s women characters try to claim piece of time and
make it glitter. The study of Emecheta’s women characters reveals that she has developed her
own sense of feminism as she called herself a feminist with small ‘f’. She believes in the notion
of womanism which according to her differs from European feminism. In her novels The Bride
Price and The Slave Girl Emecheta challenges the false notion of tradition and colonialism
strongly emphasizes on the constrictive effect of tradition on the female subject. In these novels
Emecheta deals with the issue of bride price. Giving bride price is a tradition in Ibo community.
The people believe that if the bride price is not paid the girl would not survive her first child’s
birth. The Bride Price shows that young, educated boys like Chike also believe in the so called
tradition. On the other hand when money is paid on a woman she becomes a property of her
husband. In The Slave Girl Ojebeta’s brother says that women become happy to see how much
they cost. The system is such that it makes a man the master in the society. In Emecheta’s The
Joys of Motherhood Nnaife tells Nnu Ego that he has paid her bride price on her so he possesses
all rights on Nnu Ego. Like Ngugi Emecheta has also talked about the commodification of
women patriarchal society. As gender is socially created and gendering is in social formation,
Emecheta uses language as a protest against this situation. Emecheta’s novels are double voiced
discourse as her works reflect double consciousness of hers. She is an African novelist living and
writing in England. She bears a double significance and that is why her characters mediate a
diffident attitude towards the home culture. Her works are the imprints of misidentification and
marginalization of the centre in the colonial history. In The Joys of Motherhood Buchi Emecheta
interrogates the institution of motherhood alongside gender discrimination. In The Joys of
Motherhood gender is attached with the cultural values and female subjectivity. The Joys of
Motherhood presents contradictory picture as it presents contrasted positivity of patriarchal
ideology within the traditional culture. Her novels become metaphors of female slavery in the in
the documentation of the lives of the protagonists. The fictional world of Emecheta shows the
rise of urban environment. Her narratives have feminist tone of voice, the voice which questions
male dominance. Her female protagonists are victims of colonial or neocolonial domination but
more than that they are the victims of patriarchal colonialism. In *The Joys of Motherhood* Nnu Ego prays to the God to create a full woman, in the absence of men.

*The Slave Girl* and *The Joys of Motherhood* can be read in continuation as the story of *The Slave Girl* ends with Ojebeta’s permanent slavery by having a new master, her husband and the story of *The Joys of Motherhood* starts with Nnu Ego’s birth and ends with her failure. Not only these two protagonists but Adah and Aku-nna also fail. Even with the feminist tone of voice Emecheta has not shown the victory of her female protagonist and that is the appropriate example of patriarchal structure. Being a woman writer she has to work within the codes of masculine society. In her history-based fictions Emecheta tries to create feminist characters to carry her ideals. She has also woven the affairs of nation in her female characters’ voice. Emecheta’s narratives are full of tension and her female characters speak through opposing forces. In Emecheta’s works tension is caused by the African woman’s struggle to come to the tern with the world. Emecheta successfully gives voice to the tension as an African and as a woman. In writing back Emecheta has promoted the voice of African women through her fictions. Women characters of Emecheta are pathetically aware about the traditional and western way of life as both the world is beyond their reach because they cost high for them.

Emecheta’s women characters are physically and psychologically treated as inferior to men. They have been abused and denigrated by men. They are not treated rationally equal to men just because of biological difference. In *Second-class Citizen* from her childhood Adah’s ambition is to study. Her dream is to go to UK. As she has no one to support, she struggles alone fights for her dreams to come true. She studies and gets a chance to go to UK. Adah is equally or rather more intellectual than her husband but she is the victim of domestic violence. She learns the tricks of birth control but she is not allowed for that. She suffered from forceful pregnancy. Her husband had all rights to play with her body and when it is done she was forced to go away from the bed. The same way Nnu-Ego was forced to bear children for her husband. Her first marriage failed because she could not become mother of her first husband. It was because of this reason that she was tagged as a barren woman. Her remarriage brought to her the boon of motherhood and she gave birth to nine children but the tragedy is she died alone, in the absence of her children and her husband. We can put Ojebeta and Chiago in the same situation. Both these women were the victim of men’s cruelty.
The comparative study of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and Buchi Emecheta’s select novels reveal that both of theirs women characters are treated as others in their society. The study of the works reveals that the voice of women is ‘muted’ in patriarchal structure of society. The research brings in light that under the power of colonizers the voice of colonized men is silenced. The colonized other, men and women struggle to decolonize themselves from the colonial clutches. The researcher finds out that both the writers have fought against the colonial power in their own way. The very interesting point is they not only struggled against the dominant group but also fought with the hidden enemies, the problems lying within their culture. For example, Ngugi has dealt with the major issue of clitoral dichotomy and Emecheta has dealt with the issue of child bearing and motherhood. Female circumcision is taken as a ritual in Gikuyu community which is according to Ngugi an abnormal idea. He is concerned with the harmful effect of female circumcision which causes death of young girls. As the ritual formed by men women cannot escape from it. They are forced to pass through that painful ritual just to be accepted and welcomed by their men. Here also the matter is of a man’s choice and women are not treated as an individual human being. By dealing with the issue of clitoral dichotomy in his works Ngugi has taken a very powerful stand against the so called tradition and the harmful effects of the rituals. Moreover clitoris can be considered as a pure sight of pleasure. By removing clitoris the joy or the pleasure is taken away from women. This can mean that they are not allowed to enjoy sexual relation and they are forced to behave as a wooden doll. If a woman is active during the relation, it is considered as a bad thing. In a masculine system this privilege of pleasure is only for men and they dominate women. Men do not see any difference between women and animals. Child bearing and motherhood is also mutilation of women’s body. Women are forced to bear children. Everything is for the pleasure of men. In her novels Emecheta has written that during the pregnancy period women carry a knife. At the time of child birth women themselves used to cut the cord. This is very dangerous for women’s lives but the thing was taken very lightly in their culture. Many women died during child birth. The patriarchal society expected women to bear children for men but never cared for their health and life.

In The River Between the death of a young girl named Muthoni is caused by female circumcision. She went for circumcision because she wanted to be a perfect woman. There a definition of perfection as perfection is a myth only. But this type of so called concept of being perfect is created by men. So the discourse of Muthoni is male-centred as it exposes the reason
why she wants to be a perfect woman. She wishes to be a perfect woman. Perfection, in this context, means to be a virgin on the bridal bed because virginity is the sign of purity and a woman must be pure. The second point is that a woman must be an obedient wife and the third is, she must be a caring mother and apart from this she must give birth to sons as they are going to make the father’s name immortal. Women suffered from this otherness because of biological difference. Muthoni’s wish to be circumcised and her death is the example of patriarchal power as there was not one Muthoni but there were many Muthonies whose death was caused by this strange ritual and the death cries of the young, innocent girls remained unheard. Muthoni’s sister Nyambura was not circumcised and the community had objection on her marriage with Waiyaki. People asked many questions to Waiyaki about his commitment to the community. Nyambura was not welcomed by the community people as she did not go through the ritual and people would not pay bride price for the girl who is not circumcised. People celebrated the ritual and the celebration can be said that it was the celebration of death, death of young girls. Circumcision can be compared with sati practice in India. Spivak raised her voice against self-immolation of women in India. The practice of sati also was celebrated in India. Sometimes women were ready for the self-immolation. A woman who is willingly ready for the practice of sati and becomes sati is considered a pure woman. Behind the sati practice works the patriarchal power. Whether it is circumcision or sati practice, the question of black or brown women but the condition of women was the same. They were helpless victims as women were oppressed by their men and colonizers, both. The colonizers were not interested in improving or saving women from this ritual of death but they also took disadvantage of women. The way Ngugi has dealt with the issue of circumcision in his novel The River Between Emecheta has presented the issue of motherhood and childbearing in her novels. She has criticized the phallocratic image of women which was created by society. In patriarchal society women are expected to be happy with their husbands, and by becoming the good mothers.

Since term subaltern is related with postcolonialism, from the post-colonial perspective Ngugi’s male characters can be viewed as if they are womanized. In post-colonial theory the colonizers are viewed as masculine power and the colonized nations are considered as subordinate to them. Men of colonized nation were ruled over by the colonizers. Colonized men are banished or decentred from their position in their own home. They were forced to serve the master. Ngugi himself belongs to the once colonized nation and experienced discrimination in
the masculine world of the Empire. Men of the ‘Third World’ were disadvantaged under the grounds of race, social class, religion etc. In the works of Ngugi and Emecheta we can see feminization of the colonized men. They are made weak and submissive under the power the Empire had produced. The male characters of both the writers are very aggressive so they struggle to prove their masculine power to preserve their identity as men. The nationalist movements and parties to oppose colonialism was the result of such aggressive masculinity. Women were excluded from the political movement and hence they were marginalized both by nationalist political activities and the colonizers. The colonized men struggled to stand up as the definitive citizens of the new nation. In *The River Between* the male protagonist Waiyaki failed to bridge the gap between the two communities and his vision of ideal society is broken. He failed to save Muthoni’s life. He loved Nyambura but could not marry her as she was not circumcised. He failed to change the rigid mentality of his people. Moreover his father Chege wanted him to join missionary school. Waiyaki was expected to learn White men’s rules to break down their rule from his community. But at the end of the novel we see his vision fading. He could not prove himself a strong man to fight against the white settlers. His education did help him to make a distinctive identity of his own. In *Weep Not, Child* Njoroge remains child throughout the novel. Like Waiyaki, Njoroge also goes to school to study as he thinks that education is the only key to success, to win the battle against colonialism. *Weep Not, Child* is an account of the feeling of Mau Mau era. Njoroge is the youngest son of the family but his brothers are the members of Mau Mau nationalist party. In this novel Ngugi shows the youngsters involved in the strike, strike against the government. The novel is about the tension and despair in neo-colonial Kenya where the situation is worse. Ngotho, Jacob, Boro, Mwangi, Njoroge all these men are dispossessed peasants. They were the owners of the land but now the land is no more theirs, it is owned by the white masters. Boro, Ngotho’s son is always angry upon his father because he thinks that his elders have done nothing to save their land. The strike and the aggressiveness show that these men try to speak from the margin to regain and reconstruct their identity. *A Grain of Wheat* starts by giving the mood of the protagonist Mugo. When the novel begins Mugo is nervous. Throught out the novel Mugo remains in a bewildered state of mind as he carries the burden of secret and never speaks with anyone. On the other side if we observe the characters of Gikonyo and Karanja, we can say that they also behave as subaltern. Munira, Abdulla, Karega from *Petals of Blood* struggle to get fixity in neo-colonial Kenya. They were
subalternized by the dominant power system. They live in frustration. Ngugi deals with the life of peasants and land and in these select novels of Ngugi his peasants are dispossessed from their home. They are powerless and victims of the colonizers as they land had been taken away by white settlers. In post-colonial theory the ‘First World’ nations are seen and thought of as having masculine power and the colonized nations are looked at as feminine. The ‘Third World’ nations are victimized by the ‘First World’ nations.

The research reveals that in Ngugi’s novels the law is a system formed by patriarchy in which to get justice for a woman is difficult or rather impossible. Men possess the power, they are the rulers so women are not safe when they go to the court because the fact is that the patriarchal system would give justice in favour of men only, there is not a space for women. Moreover law is a part of political system. In a neo-colonial country the very political system was corrupted and in Ngugi’s novels women were excluded from the politics.

Though Ngugi and Emecheta belong to different countries but they look towards education having the same hope and expectation. Many of the characters of their novels are eager to study, to get admission in the university. If we put both the writers in the category of subaltern they see hope in education as they thought that education was the only key to get freedom. They also learnt the language of dominant class to express their views about their culture. They used English as a tool to criticize the white culture. In The River Between Chege inspires Waiyaki to go to white man’s school and learn the rules of white men to overpower them. Njoroge was inspired by his father Ngotho to study in Weep Not, Child. Mwihaki also goes to school. The same way, Adah and Francis, in Second-Class Citizen want to study. Francis’ aim is to be a successful man and create a safe place for him. But Adah’s wants to study because she wants to break the rules of patriarchal society. She wants to be an independent woman, a new woman who is free to have her choices in life. She earns a very handsome salary and goes to UK to fulfill her dreams. In Double Yoke Ete Kamba, Nko, Akpan, Isa and others are university students. In this novel Emecheta has covered up the atmosphere of the university campus. Here we see that students are provided enough facilities and apart from that we can see that education has not helped to improve the condition of women in the patriarchal structure of society. Education remains patriarchal and could not help any of the character to improve their condition. Waiyaki fails to reform his society. He could not save Muthoni’s life and failed to create a safe place for
Nyambura. Njoroge remains weak and a child throughout the novel. In Njoroge’s case education failed to save his family. Francis is dependent upon his wife but he is not ready to accept the reality. Adah wanted to fulfill her dreams but even after getting education she remains chained and carries the yoke of a traditional woman and new woman but at the end she unwillingly returns to her husband. It means Adah is unable to make herself free with the help of education. Adah’s earning goes to her in-laws and they are benefited not Adah. On the other side Ete Kamba in *Double Yoke* is interested to study and earns a scholarship for university education. He is a leaned man but his views about women are common. The same is applicable for his so called learned friends. Education could not help to improve the condition of women. Nko is the victim of the so called religion and pious, Prof. Ikot. To get degree and good marks she had to surrender before the Professor. For women there was no difference whether the nation is colonized or free because they were the permanent slaves of male mentality. So it becomes clear that however the writers try to improve the condition in their respective society it remains the same as they face new problems, new hurdles in the neo-colonial nation.

The research brings in light that Ngugi has written about nationalist discourse. In his novels he deals with the problems of nation. He had covered up the time of colonialism and Neocolonialism. The structure of his novels reveals the disturbance in social life. The tension is reflected through the characters. On the other side Emecheta’s main concern is to focus upon the plight of women but she has also woven the emergency during war. In *The Joys of Motherhood* Naife is taken away by the government into the army. That episode shows that the Black men were forced to join the White men’s army during the war. They had no idea about the opposite army but they simply had to fight. In *Weep Not, Child*, through Barber’s narrative reveals what happened during war? When the Black men were taken away by the White men to fight White men’s war they had no idea about whether they will return to their home or not but they could not resist as they were Blacks and were empowered by the White men. Black men had to choice so they accepted whatever they had before them simply to save their lives. So the nationalist discourse reveals the exploitation of Black men by the dominant political party. We see them helpless. When these Black men came back to their home they became angrier upon their wives. It can be said that it was their frustration because at home, before their wives and children they wanted to hold their position as men, very powerful men. In the novels of Ngugi and Emecheta all types of discourses are mixed up we just need to change the angle to read the text.
The research helped to find out how biologically different writers resist against the power. They both are involved in the same struggle but somehow the issues they are concerned with differ. It is written that the colonial power made the colonized man womanized. Ngugi’s presentation of his characters reflects his *anima* personality that he could not create strong male characters. Ngugi female characters are stronger than Emecheta’s female characters. Emecheta has given voice to her emotions and has to write by remaining in the patriarchal structure. By presenting the real situations the writers’ wish is to create a comfort zone. Weak and nervous characters are an act of self-subjugation. This is very common in the subaltern theory that self-relegation gives the sound to the voice of the subaltern. As subalterns both the writers write in angry mood. As the biological difference between men and women does make some difference in the psychology of them but they also share some common experiences. The pain of being other and the torture they have suffered is reflected in their works. They have not given the solution of the problems but they have simply raised the issues. Emecheta’s works are phallocentric so in her novels the message is encoded within the text. The language she has used is male dominated but within the layer she has expressed her views about her culture and the condition of women. As the title of the research is speaking subaltern, the writers here speak through their novels, through literature but whether they are heard or not is the question. Both the writers present the grave reality of their nations.

Ngugi and Emecheta are painfully aware about their self so they struggle hard to create a space for themselves. The characters of their novels are not happy or having a very sound and easy life. They fight with the external as well internal forces of life. The neo-colonial nations are in the well of problems. None of the writers have given a solution of the problem but they simply have raised and issue only. They have left it for the public, for the readers to solve the problem.

The research helps to see that how the colonized other are displaced from their position. The language helps to know the truth. The discourses in the novels of both the writers resist the power of the colonizers. Their language is shaped by social structure and power relations. According to Foucault in discourse the effect of power can be seen but discourse can also be used for resistance as an opposing strategy. Ngugi has used language to oppose the colonial power. Being a woman Emecheta has raised her voice against the colonial and masculine power. In Foucault’s view we were born male and female but the concept of masculinity and femininity
is created by the power relations. The same way black and white are natural colours but the

differences based on the colours are created. The differences are artificial but behind the
differences work a particular ideology. The writers try to set a new ideology, the ideology which
can help them to regain their place in their society. The discourses of the writers prove that there
exists power relation. The power from the below means the power of the subaltern group has
taken a very strong stand. Our style of using language situates us in our gender and class. It is
through the effective use of language the subject is made into a social being. The fact is that the
speech does not make us free from the ideological constraints of our culture. Critics relate the
development of language in a child’s consciousness with the use of language by women. The
social entry in into patriarchal culture is made in language, through speech. There is a
relationship between the acquisition of subjectivity through language and the recognition of the
social nature of female identity. How men and women speak, how they see each other through
speech, the social taboos on speech for children and women, all these relations bear upon the
way in which new symbolic identifications and relations are created. Language is placed in a
cultural and political context. Language is used for labeling and categorizing. The research
reveals that the experiences of poverty, racism, gender, and the colonized others are taking
different forms and having different meanings for men and women. Ngugi is concerned with the
political freedom and Emecheta raises the issue of liberation of women from patriarchal
colonization. Another point is in the context of black culture Ngugi Wa Thiong’o is superior,
superior to women writers also, perhaps. But before the colonizers he is also labeled as an ‘other’
means his identity before the colonizers is feminine. Just like Emecheta he also shares the
experience of a second-class citizen. From the colonial point of view the development of
language in both the writers is of the same level. The way women, through speech, enter into the
patriarchal culture Ngugi also enters in the dominant culture through the medium of speech. That
is why male and characters of Ngugi and Emecheta share bitter experiences. Both the writers
struggle hard to decolonize their mind and for them language as an effective medium of
resistance.

Resistance is the result of realization. The writers realized their position in their culture,
and a wish to dismantle dominancy is but natural. The theory of deconstruction becomes a
valuable instrument for the marginalized and voiceless. Both the writers dismantle logocentrism
and hierarchy by challenging the authority and supposed centres of power. Showalter’s concept
of *wild zone* is helpful to understand the revolutionary action of Ngugi and Emecheta. According to Showalter *wild zone* is a female space, truly feminine. It can make silent subaltern speak. It gives expression to the repressed experiences. In postcolonialism *wild zone* can be used for both male and female. The writers try to find out a space which can give them expressive power to express their suppressed voice.

Literature has given them a zone where the writers as colonized others have expressed their woes and painful emotions. Both the novelists are involved in the process of writing back and their study reveals that how the characters were treated as objects before the dominant class. The research reveals that all the male and female characters of the select works can be put into the same category. The male characters are presented as weak, inferior, feminine, and uncivilized before the colonizers and the women characters of the novels also share the problem of inferiority and marginalization. From this marginal point the writes look back and they look at the powerful people. In postcolonialism men and women share the common problem because their voice remains unheard. The novelists write against the unjust; unjust done from political to domestic to law and language. The discourse reveals the hegemonic relation between different social groups. The research brings in light that within the domestic boundary men rule; they have the power to possess women. But in relation to the colonial government men are treated as inferior and this creates identity crisis in men. They struggle to be men and in this struggle they become violent and treat women as animals. We cannot see stability and healthy mentality of any of the male characters. So before the power the black men are treated as feminine. All the women characters are exploited and conquered by men. Emecheta’s discourse is against the patriarchal power. The actuality is that it is very much difficult to break the boundaries created by power but the novelists try to enter in area of dominant class by using language. The novelists wander in the streets of their cities to see the reality. In *Neocolonialism* in the streets of the nations were left the heaps of the native people. Even after the end of colonialism the black people were ruled. It was very much difficult for the native people to get job and live a safe and secure life. In *Wizard of the Crow*, *Petals of Blood*, and *Devil on the Cross* he shows the disturbance in social life. The native people struggle a lot for survival. The novels show that it is not the end of colonial power but the power is replaced. In neo-colonial time the native people have new masters and the new master is very cruel. So Ngugi is not only writing against the imperial government but he also writes against his own people who have been transformed by
the colonial power. It is the fact that to fight with the internal enemies is very much difficult. At initial level Ngugi talks about political matters but in his political discourse he has mixed up social and feminine discourse. The same way Emecheta’s novels *Second-Class Citizen*, *The Joys of Motherhood*, *The Slave Girl* and *Double Yoke* show modern Nigeria. The text of Emecheta’s works reveal that the entire country was moving towards modernization but the situation of the women was the same. The novels of Emecheta, at major level, are concerned with the plight of women. Her struggle is against the patriarchal colonialism. Emecheta’s educated female characters are not free from the clutches of men. Adah in *Second-Class Citizen* and Nko in *Double Yoke* are educated women but both are victims of men’s cruelty. Moreover Emecheta’s women characters are simple and docile because they are thoroughly governed by men. The way Wanja and Wariinga have raised their voice against the system Emecheta’s women characters remain passive. They are helpless victims. In *The Joys of Motherhood* Naife’s second wife becomes prostitute for the betterment of her daughters otherwise all the female characters of Emecheta are wives and mothers only. Their role, their duty, and their knowledge are limited. Emecheta’s women characters do not go out for job, the only exception is Adah. Whatever happen but Women, in Emecheta’s novels, are not free. Even Ngugi’s women characters are also not free but they are different, they are not submissive. They are merely wives and mothers of someone but they play a very significant role in the political matters also. The research helps to see that the colonized men and women as subalterns try to raise their voice but their voice remains unheard. It goes with the title of Spivak’s critical essay, *Can Subaltern Speak?* Spivak does not mean that the subaltern cannot speak but she intended to say that the subalterns speak but their speech does not make a major difference in improving their condition. So another question the research raises is, can subaltern be heard? Speech is a sign of freedom but what can be done if there is nobody to hear the voice of the speaker. So whether to hear the speaker or not, there also the major role is played by power. Power decides who will be heard or unheard. The novelists have shown that their characters aspire to study. They believe that education is the key of all problems. Education opens a window to the knowledge. Education has become a very crucial issue in the ‘Third World’. Knowledge gives power and it was the monopoly of the ‘First World’ only. For the ‘Third World’ nations to possess knowledge was a myth. They believed that with the help of knowledge they will be able to bring positive change but it is proved as a fake dream only. Everything, each and every move was decided by power and power remains
inapproachable for ordinary people. The reality of neo-colonial nations is that the nations are drawn into permanent slavery. Behind power works a certain kind of ideology and the fact is there is not an ideology which can break another ideology. Another point is Gramsci has used the word humble classes for peasants, servants, villagers and so on. He calls them subaltern classes. To explain Gramsci has given the example of Manzoni’s historical novel, *The Betrothed*. In this novel the upper class does not miss a single point to torture or humiliate the lower class. Only the nobles have inner life but those who belong to lower class do not have deep moral personality. The same problems are faced by the black people. Gramsci is interested in how and why Manzoni portrayed the common people in such a way. Just like Gramsci Ngugi and Emecheta want to get the answers of these ‘why’ and ‘how’. Like Manzoni Ngugi and Emecheta have portrayed the problems of the subalterns. From the post-colonial angel everybody is laughed at by the colonizers and from the feminine perspective men do not miss a single point to humiliate women. In Foucaudian term the body is made the target to laugh at and humiliate. So both the novelists focus upon unequal power relations in her culture.

Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and Buchi Emecheta has presented the post-colonial Africa as hybrid. Colonialism has exposed them to hybrid culture, hybrid economy, hybrid society and hybrid milieu. It is because of this reality both the writers are serious about their roles in post-colonial era.

The interpretations in the research work may be problematic but they are based on the theories like Subaltern Studies, Discourse Analysis, Deconstruction, Feminism and facts from the novels by these writers. The research works have been done in the field of postcolonial theory and literature but the comparative study of the writers of different gender was a new dimension to study the use of language and culture as a whole. The field is open for study as there are scopes to apply different theories.