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Who speaks for her?

The Indian women's voice in Anne Cherian's

A Good Indian Wife

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled: Who speaks for her? The Indian Women's Voice in Anne Cherian's *A Good Indian Wife*. is my own work and that all the sources I have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

DEDICATION

I express my gratitude to Allah for giving me the power and the ability to finish this dissertation.

This dissertation is proudly dedicated to:

- *My beloved mother “**Boukebbal Louazna**” due her unconditional love and unwavering belief in my potential through times of struggle made it possible for me to keep going. Her listening to me and her understanding make me stronger. To my friend, teacher, and mother, I love you, always and forever.*
- *My father “**Messaoud**” who taught me that the best sort of knowledge to have is what is realized for its own particular purpose. To the man who inspires me to be the best version of myself, to follow my dreams and achieve more without any fears because he was like mountain behind me*
- *To my precious sister **Djehane** who were always there for me and never left me aside.*
- *To dearest brother **Idris** and precious older brother **Ahmed** and his wife **Samra***
- *To our little angel **Kaiss***
- *To my beloved friends **Amina, Djouhaina, Omayma, Shams and Hadjer***

“Thank you all for being part of my life”

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Abstract

The system of patriarchy is rooted in Indian nation, where men are known for their superiority while women are known for their inferiority. The traditional image of women, as householders and nurturers which is assigned to them at birth, oppresses their rights, dreams and hopes. Women were always acting as silent and passive character in their society, without defending themselves due to their social believes and cultural practices. This work is about the subaltern Indian women in postcolonial Indian novels, and how Indian female novelists examine this subject. The study aims at examining the status of Indian women in the institution of marriage and how family and social' expectations enforce them to act as silent figure, and how Indian novelists reflect this issue through their works. The study is about examining the discourse of subaltern women, and how they work to change their submissive status in order to achieve their agency. The novel of Anne Cherian's *A Good Indian Wife* is chosen as a case study to be analyzed through Spivak theory of subalternity, in which the female protagonist shift from being subaltern and silent to be an independent woman who speak for herself and defend her rights.

Key words: Subaltern Women, Women' Agency, Spivak Theory of Subalternity, Women in Postcolonial Indian Novels

ملخص

النظام الأبوي المتجذر في الأمة الهندية هو عبارة عن تفضيل الرجال عن النساء بحيث وضع الرجال في مكان عالي بينما قام بجعل مكانة مرأة أقل من الرجل. إن الصورة التقليدية للمرأة ، بصفتها ربة منزل ومربية ، التي يتم تخصيصها لها عند الولادة ، تضطهد حقوقها وأحلامها وآمالها. بحيث المرأة تتصرف دائماً كشخصية صامتة وسلبية في مجتمعها ، دون الدفاع عن نفسها بسبب معتقداتها الاجتماعية وممارساتها الثقافية. إن هذا العمل يدور حول النساء الهنديات التابعات في روايات ما بعد الاستعمار البريطاني للهند ، وكيف تدرس الروائيات الهنديات هذا الموضوع. تهدف الدراسة إلى فحص وضع النساء الهنديات في مؤسسة الزواج وكيف تجبرهن توقعات الأسرة والاجتماعية على التصرف كشخصية صامتة، وكيف يعكس الروائيون الهنود هذه القضية من خلال أعمالهم. تدور الدراسة حول فحص خطاب النساء التابعين، وكيف يعملن على تغيير وضعهن الخاضع، و من أجل القيام بهذه الدراسة تبنينا نظرية سبليفاك حول التابوع و علاقته بالمرأة، و كأساس لهذه الدراسة اعتمدنا رواية أن شاريان بعنوان الزوجة الهندية الجيدة . حيث هذه الرواية تحكي عن فتاة تحاول تغيير تبعيتها ، فتنحول البطلة من كونها تابعة وصامتة إلى امرأة مستقلة تتحدث عن نفسها وتدافع عن حقوق.

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General Introduction

Subaltern is a term that denotes a certain class of people; people who suffer from multiple types of hegemony in different sectors. The use of the term “Subaltern” developed through history; first it was used to denote a subordinate officer, then working class and racial minorities. But during the 1980s the term took a new definition which is people who suffer from colonization and from their social elite such as farmers, tribes, minorities, and women. Subaltern studies group is a collection of Indian and south Asian critics and intellectuals who work on defining the problems that face those oppressed people by analyzing the binary relationship between ruling class and subordinated class. The claim of this group is that the history of independent was created by those subalterns not only by the elite who manipulate the history. So they establish their group of study to defend and to reconsider the voice of those subalterns.

By the end of the 1980s, Spivak an Indian intellectual publishes her essay “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*”. In this essay, Spivak defines the term subaltern as the oppressed subject or people who are generally in inferior rank. She adds also that the true subaltern is women, especially if they are a part from third-world, since they are under double colonization by being part from patriarchal society who was under colonization. To her, women are deeply in shadow; since women in patriarchal society are raised to act in certain way to follow traditions and social beliefs, even if that believes oppresses their lives. Spivak’s work relies on the cultural tradition “Sati” which is burning widow alive next to her husband body. She claims that women remain silent not because they want to, but their society obliged them to do so.

Female subaltern are created by their society since they live in a society where men are the superior who hold the ultimate power with much more privilege than women. The freedom

of women in patriarchal society is limited to household. They are restricted by their social norms, values and beliefs that devalue their position to a degree where they have no voice to defend themselves. Women, in native nations such India that was once colonized, suffer from both colonial legacy and from their men who are considered as the superior based on some beliefs while women as the inferior.

Literature is a mean that reflect reality and imagination so the world can receive it. People get advantage from this tool by reflecting their ideas and their realities like people who were once oppressed and marginalized. This type of people wrote to depict their harsh reality and their sufferance from their society. Subaltern literature is a type of literature that reflects themes like oppression, subjugation, women disregard, class and gender discrimination and marginalization. It is the literature that portrays the life of voiceless people like women. Women all around the world have been changed and get advantage from literature as a way to express themselves. Especially Indian women who suffer from their societies that subjugate their ranks, they use literature to depict their harsh lives. Like Anne Cherian in her novel *A Good Indian Wife*, in which she describes the sufferance of Indian woman from arranged marriage and the social beliefs like honor toward this institution.

This work seeks to explore the subaltern elements in Anne Cherian's *A Good Indian Wife* and the struggle of the protagonist to find her voice and her agency so she can defend her rights as a wife and as an equal partner in her marriage not as inferior one. In this novel, Anne Cherian explains the way Indian female character deals with her subalternity so she can transcend it and achieve her agency.

In order to achieve the research subject matter; the descriptive and analytical method is going to be used. The research contains the historical development of subaltern and how it is related to female. It also contains the definition of Subaltern or subalternity which is a theory that tends to study the consciousness of voiceless people, and what are the elements that create those people. Subaltern and postcolonialism are two disciplines that study people who suffer from multiple forces of oppression like colonialism, or in case of native women such as Indian, who suffer from their patriarchal society beside to colonialism.

A Good Indian Wife is a novel that reflects themes of subaltern literature like oppression, marginalization and women disregard. The issues of subaltern in this novel is related to the view of Indian society toward Indian women before and after marriage and how they are considered as an elements to fulfill social beliefs.

The motivation that brought us to deal with the topic is:

- The issues of women in all around the world, especially in third-world like in India, and how the figure of woman disappears between colonialism and patriarchal system.
- Along with the raise of awareness and the development of literature, women get advantages from literature to show their realities and their need to change their submissive situation and their sufferance from class and gender oppression.
- Behind selecting this novel “*A Good Indian Wife*” is: the novel portrays the life of the female character before and after marriage and the view of the society toward her, and how she move from being silent to an independent and agent woman.

This study focus on the issue of subalternity in Indian novel, and how the female character acts to achieve her agency. In order to fulfill the research, there are three questions to be answers:

- What is subalternity and how this theory developed to tackle women issues?
- How the issues of subalternity are portrayed in Indian novel?
- How is the Indian women depicted within the postcolonial Indian novel?
- What are the subaltern perspectives in Anne Cherian's *A Good Indian Wife*? And how the female character reacted against her subalternity to achieve her agency?

First chapter is devoted to the theoretical framework and historical backgrounds toward subaltern as a term and as theory. It also includes the subaltern discourse and how it is related to women. And in which way the term subaltern associated with the female character.

Second chapter will focus on postcolonial context and the subaltern issues in the postcolonial Indian novel and how women are portrayed in.

Third chapter is the practical part; it will be specified for studying the case study *A Good Indian Wife* from subaltern perspectives. It will include a critical analysis of the case study. Then it will shed light on the issue of subalternity within the novel and how the female character deals with her subalternity in order to transcend it and achieve her agency so she can speak for herself and defend her rights, dreams, and hopes.

Chapter One:

Historical Background and Theoretical

Framework

Introduction

Postcolonial studies view third-world women as victim since they were under double colonization. Double colonization is a phenomenon where native woman like Indian one suffers from exploitation by both colonizer and indigenous power, and they are regarded as subgroup and voiceless people. In general, women are always regarded as inferior to men but to third-world women, they are doubly inferior; by being woman and oriental. Postcolonial studies focus on analyzing the discourses that are produced by the colonial to construct the Other, but to woman, these discourses represent her as sexual machine that never speaks for herself or expresses her emotions.

According to postcolonial critics and subaltern studies, what is important to previous colonized people is: understanding and analyzing the colonial discourse and the process of oppression and discrimination. The understanding of these problems will help postcolonial people to transcend the colonial legacy in order to change their situation and regain control on their own life. And it is the same to third-world women, if they want to change their submissive situation, they should first understand the problem of being doubly colonized and being the subaltern character in their society. Women need to understand what does it mean a subaltern and how this term describe their status.

To third-world women, colonization and patriarchal system were two problems that need to be understood very well, so it could be solved. In order to fight for their rights and improve their lives, women need to understand their situation and the problems that are facing them. To some postcolonial critics, the female subaltern is much more miserable; when her life, hopes, dreams and basic rights are threaten by multiple forces of oppression, which considered as a serious problem that need to be solve. So being a female subaltern was much

difficult to third-world woman to live under such a condition. Like in India, women did not suffer from British colonization only, but also from their own men.

Since literature is the voice of everyone and a reflection to reality and imagination, women get advantage from this tool to present their real life and their sufferance with men. But to third-world woman, literature was a mean to explain her situation as subaltern female and as doubly colonized character, who has no voice to defend herself. So women use literature to present women's common experience of oppression through presenting the discourse of those subalterns and their suffering with society. Like Spivak with her theory of subalternity, when she explains how Indian women suffer from social and cultural tradition beside to the British colonization that abuse their desires and their life. Moreover, literature did not highlight these problems only, but rather propose solutions to show woman's agency and give her voice. And one of those literary works is *A Good Indian Wife* by Anne Cherian.

Anne Cherian through her work illustrates woman suffering with arranged marriage through showing her passivity in accepting an arranged marriage only to avoid the society view that she is maiden, and the fact that she is married to unfaithful man. But later with the advance of the novel, the protagonist starts showing her agency and protesting and refusing anything that prevent her from achieving her goals, dreams and her rights as a woman and as a wife.

This chapter deals with the term subaltern and its definition and how it is related to woman. This chapter tackles also to the discourse of subaltern and how woman used it to show her agency in order to find her voice.

1. Postcolonial Subaltern Studies

The term “Subaltern” was first introduced by Antonio Gramsci to refer to people of inferior rank with no class consciousness. The term is generally used to determine people who are subordinated in term of class, cast, gender, and age; i.e. people from oppressed classes. The subalterns are generally minorities like tribes, dalits, and illiterate women and men who are marginalized from being part from the socio-economic system. In India, the tribal people represent 8.2% from the total population, where they live in mountains and forests because of their strong affinity with nature. The struggle of tribal people starts because of British exploitation of Indian natural sources to fulfill industrialization, development projects, and the economical needs in Britain and in India. So they protest against those policies, but British colonialism named them as criminal tribe as result for their resistance. After independence, the Indian government and the bourgeoisies continued depriving the poor adivasis¹ and their lands through following the western economic system. Tribal people and minorities depend in their lives on nature and agriculture but the Indian government policies and choices concerning economic system resulted in destroying forests and agriculture because of the industrial projects, which caused many environmental issues to Indian nature like soil erosion, global warming, and scarcity of rain. (Rathod 49-50)

Tribal people depend on nature and agriculture in their life but the Indian government marginalized them from their houses and motherland through destroying their lands and forests, in order to extract natural sources to fulfill the new socio-economic system needs. Subaltern people are the one who suffer from oppression and marginalization like tribal people.

¹ is the collective term for tribes of the Indian subcontinent, who are considered indigenous to places within India wherein they live

Subaltern studies emerged in 1980s by the Indian intellectual Ranajit Guha and a group of scholars to challenge the writing history that written by the elite. The aim of subaltern studies group is to rewrite the national Indian history through focusing on the struggle of subaltern people like peasant in creating the national Indian independent, but their roles was out of history that were written by the Indian elite who oppressed the subaltern' consciousness and marginalized them from history through claiming that Indian history was written by the elite only. When this group of study emerged, it was about reconsideration the history of subaltern people but later it turn to a global phenomena that study the consciousness of oppressed people all around the world. (Jani 271)

Subaltern studies began as a specific and focused intervention in the academic discipline of Indian history, but later this discipline gets associated with postcolonialism which is an era that is based on writing history of previous colonized countries. Subaltern studies start in Sussex University in 1970-80s through the inspiration of Guha Ranajit from the Indian history. Subaltern studies start as debate to the writing of Indian modern history, when they discuss that the national Indian modern history has been manipulated by colonial and national-bourgeois elitism. Till 1988-89, Subaltern studies were based on analyzing the Indian and south Asian society, through the work of Guha and some other scholars through publishing a series of volumes and edited books. But when Guha retired those series of volume go beyond India and south Asia interest and subaltern studies start to be wider discipline. The expression "subaltern studies" after 1992 became more general designation and not just a field of study that refer to Indian history, but a field of study that refer to the history of all marginalized and oppressed people, mainly it would refers to the history of third-world countries or countries that were once colonized. Subaltern studies became field of studies that is more relative to postcolonialism. (Chakrabarty 191)

Subaltern studies group emerged to define and defend voiceless and oppressed people in Indian and rewrite the national history through their eyes in order to give them the opportunity to speak about their experiences and about themselves. The aim of subaltern studies group was to make the voice of subaltern people accessible to the world.

The term subaltern gained more prominence with Gayatri Spivak's essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak*". Through this essay, Spivak spotlights on the problems of third-world women, when she opines that subaltern people, in the colonial context, have no history so they cannot speak. To Spivak, the subaltern as a female is deeply in shadow and much more oppressed than subaltern men. Spivak an Indian literary critic, writes to reflect the background of women's struggle and the problem of oppression in third world. (Adkoli 101)

Spivak extended the meaning of the concept subaltern to native women, when she discussed through her essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak*" the anguish of Indian women with the traditional practice "Sati" and how women were considered as inferior and incapable in making any type of thinking or expressing their emotions.

Spivak is an Indian critic who uses the term "Subaltern" to refer to silent people; people who have no voice and they find it difficult to speak for their rights. Also, they are just those individuals who failed to be subject for political representation. In her essay "*Can the Subaltern Speaks*", Spivak argues that political representation is occupied by the privileged people of the society. And she insists that the subaltern should be responsible for his voice, and he should not depend on other to represent him whether politically or in any other field. To Spivak, the subaltern need to find his voice, and when he finds it, he is no longer a subaltern. (Binebai 208)

To Spivak, the expression subaltern is more associated with indigenous women and their struggle with colonialism and patriarchy. In her view, women are the real subalterns since they fight multiple forces of oppression.

Postcolonial tend to study the effects of colonialism on newly independent nations like India, but subaltern studies specified in studying the consciousness of oppressed people and minorities who are marginalized from holding any type of power. Postcolonial study all social class consciousness from the elite and the superior to minorities and people with inferior rank like women. But subaltern studies focus on studying the alienation and marginalization of subaltern people, and study the factors that lead to create them like capitalism and the elite' hegemony on politic, history, culture, and economy.

2. Subaltern

Subaltern refers to any low rank person or group of people in particular society. People who have no political or economical power like poor people. Subaltern is a person who suffers from the domination of his society's elite, where those elite oppress his basic rights. Subaltern was a military concept that refers to a junior officer. But later, the Italian Marxist political activist Antonio Gramsci uses the term "subaltern" to refer to some particular group of people far from military in his article "Notes on Italian History" which appeared later on as part of his book *Prison Notebooks* written between 1929 and 1935. When Antonio Gramsci uses this term for the first time, he intends to refer to the worker class and peasant who were at that time suffer from the oppression and the discrimination of the national Fascist leader, Benito Mussolini. Gramsci was interested in studying those subaltern people consciousness and culture in order to propose

solution and give them voice to defend themselves and their rights, so they can present themselves by themselves instead of relying on their society elite. (Louai 5)

When Gramsci uses “subaltern” to refer to peasants, he inspired a group of scholars and critics in south Asia, in particular India to trace the history of peasants during colonialism. Later those critics under the instruction of Ranajit Guha, they established the subaltern studies in 1970-80 at the University of Sussex in England through publishing several volumes that investigate how historians distorted the role of those subalterns during anti-colonial struggle. To Guha, subaltern people are the subordinate group in Indian society in terms of class, caste, age, and gender. The subaltern studies group is a branch of postcolonial theory that came to study third-world countries or any marginalized groups in any society. This group of study focuses on defining the term “subaltern” and all kind of subordination. Guha and his colleagues take the responsibility to spotlight subalterns and their struggle in building the Indian national history and break the colonial discourse and the hegemony of the elite classes that control the writing produced about the national history of India. (Ezzeldin 105)

“*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” by the Indian-American post-colonial feminist critic, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was primarily influenced by the work of both philosophers Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. She uses their theories about the relationship between desire, power and knowledge and how they are used as a form of social control. She also uses post-structuralism and deconstruction in reading colonial and postcolonial discourse that represent subaltern. Spivak reconsidered the problems of subalternity are brought by capitalist politics of undermining revolutionary voice and divisions of labour in globalized world. She also criticizes the subaltern group idea that the subaltern can be defined since there is a distinctive difference between subaltern group and dominant indigenous. Spivak refuses the idea that the subaltern groups know

themselves and they are given voice when they are represented by the elite or intellectuals, because they didn't even know that they are subalterns. When she argues in her essay that: "For the 'true' subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual's solution is not to abstain from representation." (Spivak 80). To Spivak the term "subaltern" is situational, and it is more appropriate and useful in classifying the Other, since it was primarily used by Gramsci to refer to certain class in military. In her essay Spivak uses the term not only to refer to workers and labors, but she shifted the issues of subaltern group to gender in particular Indian woman, When she discusses the situation of Indian women during Britain colonization through analyzing Sati women practice. (Louai 7)

3. The Female Subaltern

Spivak' question "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" refers to the silent Indian women and their struggle over history. Spivak was the first who propounds the term subalternity which is linked to Gramsci' notion inferior, the term defines "oppressed subject", who are excluded from being politically and socially represented. In her essay, Spivak thinks that the real subaltern is woman not peasant, since they cannot raise their voice to speak for their rights, so she focuses on female struggle in gaining power in order to transcend patriarchy hegemony and Britain colonization that control and weakness them. (Khan 249)

The female subaltern is denied and marginalized by multiple forces of oppression, when she occupied the lowest position in the social ladder, especially in third-world society, when women considered as an element to enforce men superiority, and what makes it worse was colonialism. So the female subaltern lost her voice because of patriarchy, colonialism, racism,

classism, and imperialism. And that what Spivak explains in her essay “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” 1988, she argues that women are the real subaltern when they lost their voice between the imperialist/ colonialist object-constitution and the nationalist/ patriarchal subject formation, and she declares that in her essay: “Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the ‘third-world woman’ caught between tradition and modernization.” (Spivak 102) through this quote, Spivak argues that native women are much more oppressed through being doubly colonized, in particular, Indian women who were doubly inferior in their society due to colonialism and patriarchy.

Native women’s struggle, to gain their rights and power to speak for their own without the need to be represented by other, is much more difficult since they are subject to double abuse. Women in colonized society suffer from double exploitation from both indigenous and colonized power. The term double colonization refer to a phenomenon that resulted when women were subject to both general discrimination as colonial subjects and local discrimination as a member in patriarchal society. In that context, postcolonial studies put much more emphasize on third-world women and gender roles, especially in dealing with the outcomes of colonial process on women. (Ensieh Shabanirad 24-25)

Sati woman means a good wife and the word Sati refers to a traditional practice where Indian woman burns a life next to her husband dead body. To Spivak, Sati woman means subaltern woman and that was the basic case of Spivak’s essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* When she analyzes Indian woman’s voice and status in their societies under colonial rule and how colonialism affect her life from several perspective. Spivak’s assumption was that Sati women are lost between two contradictions: the British humanist discourse calling for individual freedom

of sati women, and the Hindu native policy calling for voluntary participant in the ritual. The conflict between those two positions resulted in two discourses: white men are saving brown women from brown men, and the second discourse is that Indian women actually want to die. Here Indian women are the real subaltern since they lost their chance and voice in making reasonable and consciousness decision. Third-world women disappeared between tradition and modernization, between patriarchy and colonialism since both groups tries to represent her through certain appropriating that suits its subjectivity. (Louai 7)

4. Subaltern Literature

Subaltern studies began in India and south Asia as a field of study to analyze peasants and low cast consciousness and status in their societies, beside to study their contribution in making national history. But in the end of the 1980s, subaltern studies became more associated with postcolonial studies since both highlight problems facing third-world countries. In postcolonial studies, the term subaltern denotes oppressed and subordinated people or any social group who are marginalized from the hegemonic power structure. The term subaltern became widely used by different disciplines, and one of these disciplines is literature. Subaltern literature is one of the postcolonialism subdivisions, when it deals with themes like oppression, gender discrimination, marginalization, and subordination of low caste, workers, peasant, and women.(Subaltern Literature: a Survey 37-38)

Subaltern literature is a body of work that portrays low cast and workers, but no one considered it as subaltern literature. Till the beginning of subaltern studies in 1970-80s, subaltern literature sees the light as discipline when series of edited volumes were published by a group of critics and historians under the tutelage of Ranajit Guha. The main aim of this group is to criticize

the nature of historiography prevalent at that time which was based on the work of British colonial and bourgeois-national. The work of elitist was manipulated, when they glorifies a certain group of elite and their contribution in making the Indian national history. These forms of history claim that the anti-colonial struggle and the nationalist politics were made by few elite, who were trained in western educational institutions that set up by the British in India. Guha and his group criticize these forms of history for not portraying the real struggle of subaltern people, low cast, workers, and peasant and their contribution in making the national-independence. So Guha and his group write and edit volumes of books and journals to highlight marginalized people contribution in anti-colonial struggle, and criticize the lack of being represented in history. (Chowdhury 1)

Dalit is a term that refers to silent people, who are oppressed by social tradition, political, economical and cultural factors. So Dalit literature is literature for representing oppressed, voiceless and marginalized people. Subaltern literature and Dalit literature are almost the same, since both focus on people resistance and their struggle. This type of literature spotlight the bitter life of those subalterns like low cast, scheduled tribes and women. Dalit or subaltern literature is the voice for the voiceless and subordinated people. The aim of this type of literature is seeking justice and equality for those Dalit people through portraying their struggle and resistance against oppression. Subaltern literature intends to depict the pain and suffering experienced by subalterns in their daily life. Dalit male writers can write about their resistance and their struggle and portray their anguish, but they would not reflect the real struggle of the female subaltern's struggle because women suffer more than man due to some cultural and social tradition. So to represent a female subaltern clearly through literature, it should be written by woman and for herself till she can depict her real life and real anguish. (Jajoria 206-207)

The term subaltern gains more prominence with the publication of Spivak's essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" when she shifts the problem to gender subaltern. In her essay, Spivak focuses on problems facing third-world women as being doubly colonized, since third world countries never discussed women's problems and their struggle with society. She based her opinion on the fact that under colonial context, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, so female subaltern are more voiceless, deeply in shadow and more subjected to oppression more than men. Spivak's writing reflect the struggle of native woman and being unable to represent or express herself, her opinions and her problems. Through literature, Indian women portrayed as inferior and incapable to think or represent her thoughts. Many literary texts denote Indian women or native women as "Subaltern" or "Other", also, as marginalized, voiceless and oppressed. Writers like R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao discussed in their works the harsh conditions facing women in their societies and daily life and how they are characterized by the society as voiceless and unable to think or speak. Other writers like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Kamala Markandeya have depicted women's concern and daily problems. (Adkoli 100-102)

Subaltern literature is for the subalterns and voiceless people, as window to introduce them and their problems to the world.

5. Spivak's theory of Subalternity

In subaltern postcolonial studies, the subaltern postcolonial theory is primarily designed to analyze subordinating, silenced and oppressed people discourse in postcolonial societies. The aim of this theory is to examine the voice of the subaltern character. The theorists and critics of the subaltern postcolonial studies work on defining the term "subaltern" in order to provide ways

in which those marginalized people can be identified, and can earn their voice. Scholars define the subaltern class as the people who are marginalized and subordinated by hegemony, when those individuals and minorities are subjugated by the dominant world-view and excluded from holding power whether in their societies or on themselves. The term “subaltern” was primarily used by Gramsci to refer to workers and their anguish in having their rights, but later, Guha and his group of scholars use the term “subaltern” to refer to peasants and marginalized people in India and south Asia, who help in liberation movement and create the national history of their nations, but unfortunately their government did not give them any credit. (Binebai 207)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an Indian-American postcolonial feminist critic. She is known for her contributions on contemporary cultural studies and critical theories. In her works, Spivak criticizes and challenges key terms in several field of studies like Marxism, Postmarxism, Feminism, and Poststructuralism. From a feminist perspective, she focuses on capitalism, imperialism, and labour and gender exploitation. Spivak spotlights in her most works on marginalized people and their status in globalized world, nationalism, ethnicity and their representation in postcolonial discourse. (Lemmerich 1)

Spivak was born in Calcutta west Bengal on the 24th of February 1942 from solidly metropolitan middle class family belonging to the Hindu caste of Brahman. She belongs to the first generation of Indian intellectuals after independence, when she graduates with first class honours after receiving her undergraduate degree at the University of Calcutta. Later in 1960 she borrowed money to go to the USA to make her master in English at the University of Cornwell. She is known for her translation and preface of Derrida’s work “De Grammatologie1967”. (Lemmerich 1-3)

She born and raised in Calcutta west Bengal before independence by five years and finished her studies in USA. Spivak witnessed the series of crimes and discrimination between Muslims and Hindus during and after independence, while she spends her youth in foreign country like USA during the 1960s when black people still suffering from racism. From her reality, Spivak get her inspiration, when she adopts in most of her work themes like silence, oppression, subordination, racial discrimination, and marginalization.

“*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” 1988 by Spivak is an essay that based on several theories like deconstruction, structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Marxism. Spivak opens her essay by addressing the link between power, desire, and interest, beside to Deleuze’s reference to workers’ struggle, and how this struggle is located in desire in order to blow up power. Through Marx’ works; Spivak explains that Workers’ struggle starts with global capitalism and how this new system ignores the international division of labors and the status of agriculture in global economy. (Spivak 66-67) In general through the opening of her essay, Spivak uses Deleuze and Foucault works about reproducing ability for the workers so they can manipulate power, and representing oppressed workers such peasant in global economy. She also tends to refer to Marx and his work in reintroduce the individual subject through studying class’s consciousness and how capitalism exploitation effect those individuals’ mode of life and their interest.

Spivak in her essay “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” Criticizes the west as subject and all what is coming from it especially knowledge, claiming that western knowledge, that is exported to the third world, is not innocent since it support western economy and politic. Spivak criticizes western academic thinking based on the work of several western writers and thinkers such Marx, Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze. To Spivak, all what is produced by western academic thinkers such science, ideology and law are to support western economic interests in the third world. She

claims that even western knowledge is just a type of commodity to be exported to the third world or colonized countries. Spivak argues that western knowledge is a mean to enforce colonial desire for subjectivity in colonized countries. (Spivak 75)

Spivak states that western knowledge is just a way to justify their conquest of the third world and enslave their cultures. In her essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" Spivak mentions in the beginning the idea that western knowledge was manipulated to portray imperialism as the best version in history. Through this manipulation colonialism will be justified and the number of subaltern people will be increased, especially women who will suffer from both colonialism and patriarchy.

The history of subaltern starts with the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and his work on subaltern classes, his work was based on subaltern consciousness and cultures, beside to the role of intellectuals in analyzing their political and economic movement in reaching hegemony. Next step in studying the subaltern was with a group of thinkers and intellectuals from south Asia under the leading of Ranajit Guha. Those thinkers establish subaltern studies group to correct history that was manipulated by imperialism project and spotlight the role of subalterns such peasants and low rank people in creating the Indian history, and refusing the idea that the modern Indian history was written only by colonial and indigenious elite. The aim of the subaltern studies was to rewrite the political Indian history through the eyes of subalterns and their consciousness. (Spivak 78-79)

The real case of Spivak's essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" is third-world woman and her relationship with silence. In the postcolonial context production, historiography considered subaltern as a figure with no history and they cannot speak, so the subaltern as a female is even

more deeply in shadow (Spivak 83). Spivak shifts the issues of subaltern to deal with gender' problems relying in that on analyzing the case of Sati woman practice under British colonial rule.

The question of a subaltern seems to be much more problematic concerning woman especially if she is poor and black, in other word, women who belong to the third world. In postcolonial context, the term black lost its significance unlike the first world who formulate this term "black" or "of color" to make distinguish between them and third world. The historians tend to study subaltern woman's consciousness in both third and first world, in order to make this subaltern speak rather than listen to or being represented by other. But the history of postcolonial discourse did not give the subaltern woman that much interest, and that what make it a subject to western criticizes. (Spivak 90, 91)

Spivak through her essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" offers the sentence "White men are saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 92) as an interpretation on the relationship between the colonizer 'Britain' and the colonized 'India'. The sentence is based on double origins, one is the abolition of Sati or widow sacrifice in 1829 by Britain and the other is related to the Hindu tradition. The sentence, that Spivak offers, describes the relationship between Britain and India, or the relationship between the imperialist subject and the subject of imperialism. (Spivak 93)

Sati means a good wife, the wife who fulfills her duties towards her husband and her religion, even if she is obliged to sacrifice her life. So the Indian nation called the widow sacrifice, which is considered as religious tradition, Sati since the widow sacrifices her body and soul for the sake of her husband. In parallel, Anne Cherian's novel "*A Good Indian Wife*" the protagonist Leila sacrifices her job as a teacher, in order to get married and satisfy her parents and the society.

Leila also sacrifices her dignity through accepting the fact that she is married to unfaithful man, and she did not ask for a divorce, so her sisters' reputation cannot be destroyed and they can marry decent men.

Spivak's analysis of the case of Sati was based on the fact that those widows are acting passively, and they accept their destiny without questioning, they were silent and act as subaltern characters in their society. They even want to die as a part from religious practice. In *A Good Indian Wife* by Anne Cheriau, Leila was silent with no reaction against her traitorous husband. She even continues her life next to him, lest that the society will not accept her if she asks for a divorce, besides that they will blame her for not keeping her marriage sacred vow.

When Spivak analyzes the case of the Sati that was prohibited by Britain in 1829, she states that white men are saving brown women from brown men. In this statement, the British considered themselves as saviors to the Indian nation especially women who were suffering from their patriarchal system that abuses their rights. To the British Empire at that time, prohibition of the Sati rite was like a justification for colonizing India and South Asia. But to the Indian women, that was not saving, but rather a desecration of their sacred religious beliefs. (Spivak 93)

After prohibition of the Sati rite, women were even more silent, since they were not asked if they really want to practice Sati or not. Indian women were considered as subaltern, since both Britain and Indian men did not listen to Indian women. The first, the Indian men did not ask if those women want to die or not, or to practice Sati as a religious belief or not, they just obliged them to do it without listening to them. While Britain prohibited the Sati rite through their view when they considered it as a crime against widows, without seeing the Sati from the Indian women's view as a religious belief and they actually want to practice it and die.

Spivak's subaltern theory was build to denote the female subaltern in Indian society during and after colonization, and the status of woman in her society and how imperialism and patriarchal system affect her voice.

6. The Subaltern Discourse

Subaltern study starts as a field of study that would define and defend the voiceless people. Subaltern study is group of intellectuals and historians whom work on restudying the Indian and south Asia history during and after colonialism in order to help silence people to find their voice through finding their identity far from being a subject in a binary relationship with the dominance or the elite. Also, they tend to reveal the importance of the subaltern and their contribution in making their nation' independence. Those intellectuals beside to Spivak appropriate the term subaltern to refer to low people who suffer from racism, subjugation and subordination because of colonialism and nation's elitism.

The aim of subaltern studies group is to help the voiceless and oppressed people to gain the power and courage to speak for their own without the need to be represented by other. Those intellectuals work on analyzing the discourse of those subaltern people based on their culture, literature, and believes in order to recover the voice of subaltern people and reveal their consciousness, although, most of the records and discourses are done by their social elite.

Subaltern discourse is collection of literature and historical records that focuses on social discourse between the subordinate and the superior, and how the presence of subaltern people was hidden by their elite. Subaltern studies work on analyzing the struggle of low ranked people such as peasants, vassals, and women, and their relationship with the elite of their societies who obstacle them from achieving power and being responsible for making his or her destiny. One of

the beliefs of subaltern studies is that the dominant politics such as the British colonial legacy and hierarchy system that was occupied by the elite increase the marginalization of subaltern groups in Indian society. The subaltern studies group became aware that what make people silent is being far away from elite nation and isolated from the state institution, and not being able enough to touch power, and they could not survive with new adopted social system like capitalism. (Jeffryes10-11)

Dalit literature or the literature of oppressed people and resistance is another sample that is used by subaltern studies historians as a record to subaltern population lives, and as a reflection that portray the harsh reality of caste system in India and south Asia that put the power in the hand of the elite. This type of literature considered as the voice of marginalized people when it adopt themes that demand for equality and justice. The representation of subaltern character in literature by several authors, and making him and his struggle with life the center of their work became a tool to show those oppressed people agency through recording their daily issues and their resistance, next to proposing solutions for their anguishes with life. The subaltern consciousness produces the literature of subaltern based on their experiences, when they are characterized by the author as the victim of their society systems, next to their fail in making change. (Jajoria 206)

The analyzing of subaltern discourse was a difficult task for the subaltern studies group since there were rare records that report subaltern people's daily life. So to establish the subaltern's voice and consciousness, subaltern studies group turned to analyze documents in disciplines like sociology, anthropology and human geography. From their analyzes to several documents from several disciplines, they came to a result that silent people are created by their

societies since law and constitutional frameworks were controlled by the elite who tries to keep subaltern under control, so this elite can enforce their power.(Jeffryes12)

A Good Indian Wife by Anne Cherian is a body of work that represents the discourse of subaltern character like the protagonist Leila who struggles because of her social norms and beliefs that characterize her in a way that she should be silent and obeyed girl. In this novel, the author tries to portray the image of woman in Indian society and their anguish with the tradition social beliefs. But through the progress of the novel, the protagonist Leila fights to achieve her agency as a part from the society, in order to find her voice as wife and as independent female who depends on herself.

7. Women's Agency and the Employed Discourse to Show it

Woman's agency is woman's ability to express herself, her thoughts and being represented by her own voice and action without the need for other to speak for her, and it is also the amount of her capacity in making personal choices and actions. Agency is a term that refers to concepts like freedom, autonomy, and moral authority. The term agency generally means an adult sane human being, excluding women, children, natives and insane people. Through this definition, theorists tend to put women in the same degree with insane people and regarding agency as an exception that characterizes individuals who success in standing out without collectivity and society. Agency is a hallmark that differentiates individuals who transcend the world obstacles and who impact the world through their actions. (Bronwyn 56-57)

Agency is the freedom to achieve whatever the person chooses in his life, or his capability to act based on his desires and his target goals. Also, agency refers to the ability of people in making change in power relationship, and in regular behaviors based on their decisions.

Agency can be achieved by any person, if his actions, in any level whether economically, socially, or politically, change the surrounded environment. So in order to achieve agency, the person is in need to understand that he must sets goals based on his values toward a particular issue or issues, also he need to believe that he can achieve those goals and he is able enough to accept the outcomes of his achieving goals. Agency can be exercised also in individuals own activities, and making decisions related to work place or household. Achieving Life' choices and improving the person opportunities are related to agency, since both are about being free and responsible in making decision. (Donald et al. 4)

When most of women, and based on their harsh reality and because of their social and cultural norms, were obliged to leave the school earlier, beside they were not allowed to work out of the house. The improvement of women's agency was difficult to achieve, since most of women were not allowed to make decisions for their lives, due to some social and cultural norms of their societies. As a solution for women's issues, critical discourse analysis considered as a mean that would define women's issues through using language to discover the real source of those problems. Language, text, and talk are among the ways that are used to construct reality, and by using those ways people unlimitedly can express themselves, their dreams, their problems and issues. The use of words and discourses, to portray reality freely and challenge some social norms that may obstacle some people from achieving their desires, is a way that can improve human's agency and in particular women's agency.

From the second half of the 20th C, the world start to address women issues starting by challenging the social's value and belief that force women to be at the lowest level of society. The increasing level of women awareness and the growth of women association and organization that demand for equality to women in their society help the world to notice women's issues, and

the world became more accessible to women concerns and interests. In order to protect women's rights and their status in society, women start to protest through creating groups that help them for demanding their rights, like voting. Voting considered as a political right that protect people voice and interest in their societies. But in third world societies, Even if women can receive their right as voters and being recognized in their society, but the lack of education's opportunities and being illiterate that may prohibit them from achieving their concerns. (Janks 75)

Based on the analyzing of woman discourse, the woman's opportunities in better life rely on increasing her chances in education and economy, but those opportunities are limited to several factors including the fail of national policies of equal education and economic opportunities in addressing gender and class issues, since most of education policies are produced by men. The strong belief of women in education, as a tool to incorporate in economy so they can be self-reliance in order to improve their life, appears in the analysis of their discourses. When those women sacrifice to provide their children with education opportunities, because they believe that higher education means better life through being self-reliance and being much more access to economy. (kiluva-ndunda 155-156)

In order to help women to achieve their agency, the researcher need to cite evidences from history where they discover and argue the real problems that devalue women. Among the problems that face women through history are colonialism and patriarchy, and how they decrease their status and reduce their role in society. Literature considered as a way to record history, fact, and how women suffer from the values and beliefs of their society like the sufferance of Indian women from the Sati.

A Good Indian Women is a body of work where the author portrays the silent woman who has no word upon her life and cannot made her own choices, and cannot even make a reaction against her traitor husband. But later the protagonist starts to show her agency by involving in organization that help women and in particular foreigner one. Also the female protagonist Leila publishes book for children and starts new friendship with several people and change her cloth styling as a kind of rebelling against Indian social norms.

Conclusion

The subaltern is the silent member in his society, the person who is considered as subordinated, subjugated, and oppressed. It is often that native people, peasant, children, and women who regarded as subaltern people, since they occupied the lowest rank in their society. But the case to native women is much more difficult because they are under the control of elitism and colonialism since most of native nation were once under colonialism. The emergence of subaltern studies in the 1980s helps those silent people to find the real issues that make them act passively and reduce their status in society, the analyzing of those problems will help to find solutions to subaltern so he or she can find his or her voice and defend his or her rights. Among these solutions, there is literature which a tool that is used to record history and facts, and to propose solutions for the subaltern especially women who suffer from their tradition and social values.

Chapter Two:
The Representation of the Silent Women
in Postcolonial Indian
Novel

Introduction

During and after the British colonialism, Indian women suffer from multiple forces that oppress them and their lives. But with the rise of women awareness, they start demanding for their rights in better life through protesting while using several means including writing; Writing articles and novels that reflect their harsh reality even after independence, and their sufferance with the Indian patriarchal society. In those writing, women adopt themes like oppression, marginalization, women disregard, class and gender discrimination, and subjugation of lower class to show their struggle with their societies. Oppression woman was a result of some Indian beliefs and traditions toward women.

The Indian patriarchal society characterizes women as silent figure that should obey without arguing, and as an element to fulfill Indian cultural believes and norms. Since their birth, Indian women suffer from all type of oppression even after marriage, when woman move from being under the control of her father to be under the control of her husband. So most of Indian female write to clarify the problem of male-domination and patriarchal, in order to emancipate women from this domination and highlight their importance in the society.

This chapter deals with postcolonial Indian novels and the reflection of postcolonial context on the writing of the Indian novelists. Also it includes the representation of Indian women in Indian novels and how those female writers use their novels as tool to portray male dominance and women struggle. This chapter also discusses the subalternity of Indian women.

1. Postcolonial Indian Context

Postcolonial is a term that refers to countries that were once colonized by European imperialism. While postcolonialism is a discipline that studies the colonial legacy on newly independent nations in sectors such culture, politic, economy, and social tradition. (Abirami 165)

Postcolonial Indian context reflects the situation of the Indian nation after the independence in 1947. When it describes the political and economical changes in the history of India and how the west influences the Indian history and culture. It also focuses on understanding the new independent India' situation and what are the necessities that India need to establish its new nation. In postcolonial era, India put mush interest in studying the legacy of Britain colonialism and its effect on building the new India. Because the Indian intellectuals think that to form a new Indian nation, it needs first to understand its problems like the colonial legacy.

After the establishment of India as an independent nation on 15 August 1947, the era was very disillusioned because of the privileged and hierarchal system that characterizes the Hindu leaders and most of sovereign states. During the partition of British Indian into India and Pakistan, the violence level of Hindu India's new citizens who present 80.5% arises against religious minority and others communities such Muslim 13.4%, Christians 2.3%, Sikhs 1.5%, and against all women from different background. The violence that mark the early days of India's postcolonial era was because of the need of this nation to free itself from its neighborhoods "Pakistan and Bangladesh", so India can establish to itself a social, economic, and political infrastructure that would allow it to engage with other nations in the global community. The postcolonial Indian context destroys by hierarchies of sexuality, religious, and class that favors some human being and marginalizes other. After few years and decades, and because of many

liberation movements and the need to be part in several organizations that pay attention to human rights, gradually India starts to withdraw hierarchies. (Rajan, Om Prakash 2)

The Indian government's choices, in postcolonial era concerning socio-economic sector, failed in solving the Indian nation problems in term of improving life conditions in all sectors, and that lead to the increase of Indians' marginalization, when their government subordinates ordinary Indian instead of making them the center of their concern. Adopting economic liberalization and lay a huge recognition on industrial sector and ignoring agriculture and its important on local and international levels lead the nation to a failure in achieving development and improving the life of Indian nation and solving problems such ethnicity, cast, and region. But rather make it worse because of the bourgeoisie's hegemony and their privileges that were increased due to new socio-economic system. (Amin-Khan 148-149)

In postcolonial era, Indian nation face several problems because of their government's choices concerning political, economical and social life, beside to the rise of violence against minorities such as women. Those problems were the main themes and the centre of the postcolonial Indian novels, when Indian authors write to portray the reality of Indian nations and its problems that were caused by colonial legacy and patriarchal system. Among those problems was oppression and subjugation women, writers believes that women problems remain the same even after independence because of the Indian social view toward women. So they write to emancipate Indian women and emphasis their importance.

2. Postcolonial Indian novels

Postcolonial Indian novels are a body of works written by Indian men and women who were once colonized by Britain. Those novels are produced in order to restore the true Indian

identity and to challenge the legacy of Britain colonialism on Indian nation, and its hegemony on Indian culture, social norms, politic and economy.

Postcolonial Indian novels are produced as resistance tools against colonial legacy that dominate Indian culture after independence, through covering the effects of imperialism and colonialism on Indian cultures. Postcolonial Indian writers intend to appropriate English language since it is accessible and use it against the colonizer, to portray Indian nation misery that caused by colonialism through adopting themes such ethnicity, racism, cultural identity, alienation, marginalization, hybridity, and gender discrimination in their novels, in order to rectify the damages created by Britain colonialism on Indian people and on Indian sectors such history, economy, and culture. (Abirami 166)

In postcolonial era, Indian writers produce novels to illustrate social sufferance from colonialism, and portray hierarchy and its consequences on ordinary Indian. In those novels, women are portrayed as excluded and marginalized characters due to some cultural and social practices that are rooted in those Indians writers. After independence and because of the ability to speak, write and publish, women find their own weapon which is writing and publishing to subvert and destroy patriarchy and colonial legacy that dominate them, their voices and their rights. Indian writers argue that the exercised oppression such as racial, ethnic and class oppressions by colonial power lead to alienation and discrimination of subaltern people such as minorities and women by the elite in postcolonial era. The Indian novels portray several problems that face the postcolonial Indian nation, and among those problems were opposing the idea of depicting women as voice-less and victims. (Sinha 7-8)

Most of Indian novels in postcolonial era target themes like oppression, social disregard and marginalization, themes that reflect Indian nation misery and illustrate their daily life and sufferance with colonial legacy and hierarchal system. Another concern of those novels was finding identity and the aspiration for races, classes, castes and gender equality. In postcolonial era, the Indian writers wrote in English since it is more accessible to Indian and others like Britain citizen. When they adopt and appropriate colonizer language and hybridize it in order to attack anything that was remained by the colonizer in their motherland. (Ganapathy-Doré 24)

Postcolonial Indian novels are written by Indians in postcolonial era to portray their lives after independence and how the legacy of colonialism effect sectors like politic, socio-economic, and cultural traditions where some of their social believes resists while other were destroyed by Britain like Sati practice which is an Indian tradition where widows burn a life next to their husband bodies. Those Indian novelists write to challenge and to criticize the western hegemony in order to restore their identity. While female writers write to challenge both western hegemony and Indian patriarchal system in order to defend women and their rights, and emancipate them from male-domination.

Postcolonial Indian novels, written by Indian women like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Bharti Mukherjee, focus on women's quest for identity. In her novels, Anita Desai portray social life and the sufferance of women with their harsh world that dominated by men. While Shashi Deshpande illustrates the Indian middle-class and their view towards women, she also focuses on the silent female figure and how the woman identity became silenced because of the social norms and the orthodox traditions of patriarchy. Bharti Mukherjee writes about independent women who are influenced by modernism and westernization, and how they are building their identity far away from Indian social believes. (Vyomakesisri 19)

3. Subaltern in postcolonial Indian novels

In postcolonial era, the term subaltern refers to people of lower rank. So Subaltern postcolonial Indian novels means bodies of works that are produced by Indian writers after the independence of Indian nation in 1947, when those writers write about subaltern characters that are oppressed by multiple forces like their social believes and cultural traditions. They write also about subaltern themes such oppression, marginalization, women disregard, gender discrimination, subjugation of lower classes. Those novels focus on the people who are exploited on political, social, cultural and religious ground, to express their sufferance to the world.

The term subaltern was first used by Gramsci to denote people of inferior rank, people who are marginalized because of race, class, gender, ethnicity or religious. While Ranajit Guha use the term subaltern to establish a group of study that would focus on the history of oppressed people and their contribution in creating the Indian national history. But Spivak has expanded the meaning of subaltern to colonized people, oppressed generation, working class, and black or native women, when she stressed on native women like Indian who are doubly oppressed by colonialism and patriarchy. Intellectuals use the term subaltern to refer to people who are in need to be organized and be aware of their political positions and develop their consciousness. So the subaltern literature refers to articles and novels that cover themes like deprived, dalit, and oppressed classes, it also focused on the resistance and the struggle of marginalized people. (Dharmaraj 36-37)

Patriarchal' hegemonic influence women consciousness in the false way in which they are characterized as subjugated and unequal to men. In Indian English novels, the figure of women portrayed as an element to enforce socio-cultural traditions, when those novels show how

patriarchal institution beside to capitalism and imperialist dominate women lives and determine it in a way they achieve nothing except for fulfilling the social believes. They also write to compare between masculine and feminism, tradition and modernity, reality and illusion in order to show the inferiority of women in their societies and how their voices disappear because of traditions. In Indian English novels, writers write about harmful customs such as child marriage, dowry, and widowhood rites. They also write about men' supremacy that neglect women's rights, and how Indian women are victimized by their patriarchal families, but still they cannot deviate from their social norms. (Dhand 314-315)

Some authors write to spotlight on subaltern people on general like minorities and women. For example Mahasweta Devi writes about the live of poor and indigenous Indians and their culture and how the new socio-economic system exploits their lives through exploiting their lands and their culture. The new economic system and the industrializations projects that exploit natural sources lead to the alienation of tribal people who live in those lands. They were obliged to leave their homeland and their origins, and they migrate to villages and Indian towns to work as labourers. The government' greedy and its exploitation of natural sources lead to the destruction of tribal people socially and culturally. The work of Devi focuses on the conditions of "subalterns" or "the Other" and how their civilization was destructed due to the rise of industrialization, like the civilization of tribal people. (Rathod 51-52)

The Indian writer Anita Desai writes in English language about Indian women status in India, she focuses on the psychological conditions of oppressed Indian women. In most of her novels, Anita spotlights on the sufferance of women from the social believes like in her novel "*Fasting, Feasting*", she write a comparison between the unmarried Uma who has no previledge to get proper education or holding power or freedom and how her feelings are not paid any

attention by her family since she is a woman and she is beyond marriageable age, and between Uma' brother Arun who gets proper education in USA and he holds the ultimate freedom and power only because he born as man. In this novel, Anita show how the Indian male enjoys much powers and previledge even in food, when the father or the son can eat only the best while the mother and daughter can take the rest after men finish their meals. (Volná 2-3)

Anita Desai, in general writes about like any Indian female about the struggle of women with traditions and the superiority of men and how the male hold much more previledge like freedom and power. Anita Desai illustrates through her novels the Indian social believes that shape women consciousness in a way that she accept her reality as oppressed person without making any effort to change her submissive situation.

4. Double Colonization of Indian Women

Patriarchal system is a kind of colonization, in which men colonize and victimize native women. Women, from nations that were colonized like Indian women, suffer from both colonization and indigenous power structure. Indian women' problems centre in fighting double colonization and double exploitation of patriarchal domination and British colonialism. Double colonization is an expression that explains the situation of native women who are a subject to both colonial discrimination and patriarchal discrimination. Third-world women or native women are victims of colonial ideology where colonizer oppresses and devalue women because of their race and culture, and victims of patriarchal ideology where native men devalue native women because of their sex. In patriarchal society, women are regarded as subgroup by their own men, and are seen only as element to enforce social believes and cultural traditions. (Shabanirad, Marandi 24-25)

Postcolonial Indian novels focus on the consciousness of Indian nation in postcolonial era where, when those novels tackle colonial legacy and all what is inherited by the British colonization. Writers like Amitav Ghosh write about the issues of the west and British colonial legacy and its effect on the consciousness of Indian women. Through *Sea of Poppies*, Amitav Ghosh draws the various effects of British colonialism on Indian society, particularly Indian women who suffer from both the patriarchal ideologies predominated within their own motherland and from Britain the imperial colonizer. Double colonization of Indian women is phenomena where women experience various oppressions imposed on them by different forms of power. *Sea of Poppies* is a novel that highlights the struggles of women from generation to another, when they have to tolerate multiple forces of oppression; male-domination and Britain imperialism.

Indian women are considered as subaltern when they lost themselves and their voice due to patriarchy system that marginalized them in term of sex and the British colonizer that subordinate their rank. All that oppressions lead the figure of women to disappear, when she became as sexual machine and as an element to enforce male power.

In the essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak*", Gayatri Spivak opines that native women like Indian one are lost between colonialism and patriarchy, when Indian women are subordinated by Britain colonialism and Indian male. (Spivak 102) She highlights the problem of male-dominance next to British colonialism and how these affect the voice of women from several perspectives.

The effects of double colonization on Indian women remain even after independence where women were exploited by their society in terms of race and sex. After the Indian independence, women' status remain the same, when they were act as subaltern because of the inherited ideologies from colonialism that was rooted in Indian men. Indian women were deeply

in shadow, powerless, and voiceless because of the adopted western socio-economic system and their local beliefs and traditions.

5. The Representation of Women in Postcolonial Indian Novels

Literature is considered as a reflection to the reality when it allow to the writers and the readers to access to nations cultures and social traditions beside to recording history. Among literature genres there is the novel which is a long narrative fiction. Novel is a literary genre that introduces the readers to social conditions of ancestors, so they can compare those conditions to contemporary social condition, like women's conditions and how they were presented in the past and nowadays. Most novels portray women as properties, victims, and passive in their societies due to the patriarchal system that rules most of third-world societies, which design to woman a system of life where she supposes to be silent and act passively. Indian novelists such as Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and R.K. Narayan, start to write before independence of India, when they express their opinions about women' problems with their society, that draw to them their lives path even before their birth. Those writers write to protest against patriarchal system that devalues the statutes of women, claiming that women need more respect and more rights to improve their positions in the society. For example Kamala Markandaya writes about the position of women in traditional time and in modern time with industrial improvement, Kamala argues that even with the development of technology and the world changing, women' live remain the same and their struggle became worse.(Pundir, Singh 137-138)

R.K. Narayan (1906-2001), is an Indian writer who wrote fourteen novels, a number of short stories and articles. His novel "*The Dark Room*", considered as first step in woman

liberation, when he target the theme of marriage and how this social institution can decisive women. Most of his works tend to illustrate the sufferance of subordinating people who are oppressed and marginalized in case of race, gender, or culture. Narayan is a writer who writes about relationship among elite and non-elite in colonized country and how the subaltern born: sometimes he born as a subaltern, sometimes he became a subaltern due to some factors and sometimes he chose to become a subaltern. To Narayan society, culture, and history go hand in hand in oppressing women and make them subaltern, and he expresses this idea through his characters Rosie in *The Guide* and Bharti in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. To him woman is a silence character because of her lack power in sectors such economy, society and politic because those sectors are dominated by men. (Mulajkar 3-4)

Indo-Anglican fictions are collection of novels that written by Indian men and women in English language, when those writers use their work to reflect the Indian life, culture and society. While female writers write to portray women position in Indian society and their important in Indian culture, although she stills caged by her family and traditions. Indian novels attempt to clarify women problems in order to emancipate them from being suppression subordinated and marginalized by Indian believes. Several authors such Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Ruth P. Jhabwala, and Shashi Deshpande centered their works on women and their struggle. Those authors write about the superiority of men and the struggle of women with their families and with the institution of marriage, beside to the conventional norms of behavior which enforce them to behave in certain way and patriarchal system that dominate women voice. Female writers write about women's harsh reality to draw the world attention that women are ill-treated and dominated by men exploitation. Later those authors adopt the theme of the changing role of women in modern society and her position in the conflict between modern and tradition. In postcolonial era,

Indian women writers mainly wrote to emancipate woman and appreciate her roles in preserving Indian culture. (Bhosale 2-3)

Indian female authors write to emancipate women but to do so, they need first to understand women' status in her society and her position in the past before, during and after colonialism. According to some historical records women were always seen as wife, mother and sex object, due to some social restrictions. Indian society is based on patriarchal system where women were to be only ruled over but not a ruler. The idea that women can express her thoughts and feelings or act as an individual thinker, was not accepted by their societies because they were unrecognized, and not physically strong to hold any power or authority, so the Indian society regarded them only as sexual machine that amuse their male counterpart. Authors in postcolonial era write to challenge the Indian society for subordinating and oppressing women status, in order to defend them. Defending Indian women start during colonialism with Raja Ram Mohan Roy who advocates the rights of women and spotlights the importance of women in society, later after independent female authors write to subvert the male-domination and defend women and their importance in society. (Brahmane 29-30)

Anne Cherian, through her novel *A Good Indian Wife*, portrays the struggle of the protagonist Leila after an arranged marriage and how this social institution illustrates woman as a passive silent and calm character who should obey her husband without speaking for her own even if that husband oppresses her rights. The novel tend to explain how much the institution of marriage can suppresses women, especially with the social view and expectations toward women, and power being in the hand of man.

In general, women in Indian novels are portrayed as a silent figure with no rights, when their patriarchal societies oppressed their voice and their position. But in postcolonial era, Indian female writers took advantage from their pens to write and clarify women' misery and struggle, in order to defend them and their rights and show to the world the importance of women in society.

Conclusion

Postcolonial Indian novels' themes are linked to the legacy of British colonialism and what are the major changes that happen after independence. Postcolonial Indian writers write about the social live of Indian people and the effect of westernization on socio-economic, politic and cultural sector. They write about the oppression of minorities like tribal people and how they lost their identity due to industrialization and the new adopted economic system that lead to the destruction of their culture and civilization. Because of industrialization, minorities like tribal people were obliged to live their motherland, when they migrate to villages and cities to work as labourers. Due to this migration, those minorities became subalterns because they lost their voice and their identity.

While Indian female writers write about the struggle of Indian women from the patriarchal system that dominate woman's rights and her voice, and how the Indian social believes and cultural traditions subordinate the status of women. They also write about the sufferance of Indian women from double colonization which is a phenomenon in which Indian women experience double oppression by Indian patriarchal system and British colonialism. Even after independence women suffer from this double oppression because of the colonial legacy that was rooted in the Indian male.

Chapter Three:

The Voice of Indian Woman in

Anne Cherian's *A Good Indian Wife*

Introduction

A Good Indian Wife is a novel that would introduce the world to arranged marriage in Indian society and the difficulties that face people after an arranged marriage. The novel tells the story of Leila and Neel' arranged marriage, and how Leila would face her new life next to a betrayer husband. The novel also contains other women stories and their struggle with the institution of marriage, and how they would act to keep their sacred marriage vows to satisfy their social beliefs and expectations, instead of looking for their rights in having a good life and fulfill their desires.

The third chapter focuses on the case study; Anne Cherian's *A Good Indian Wife* an Indian novel. The study will analyze the novel through subaltern perspective, and analyzing the protagonist Leila actions and reactions to find her voice, her power and her agency so she can transcend her subalternity.

1. Critical Analysis of *A Good Indian Wife*

1.1 The Context of the Novel

Anne Cherian is an Indian female writer that felt disillusioned by her Indian patriarchal society that oppresses the voice of women and subordinate their status. Through her novel *A Good Indian Wife*, she portrays the harsh reality of Indian women in their patriarchal society, and their struggle with the institution of marriage. The novel explains the context of Indian patriarchal society and arranged marriage during the eighties. Although the novel was published in 2008, but the setting is in the eighties in which India at that time was witnessing a huge development in all sectors especially political and economical sectors. The development that happen in India during

the eighties did not affect the Indian patriarchal society that oppress the voice and the status of women, which Anne Cherian explains it in her novel *A Good Indian Wife*. Anne Cherian illustrates the social norms especially honors and cultural traditions that subordinate the position of women in their societies, when they are supposed to be silent and absent.

The novel is about arranged marriage and the evolution of Indian emigrant couple's life in America, and the importance of honor and marriage sacred vow to the Indian families. The novel tells the story of Leila an Indian girl who is beyond marriageable age and her struggle with the Indian society view towards woman. Later when Leila gets married, her misery was doubled when she discovers that her husband betrays her. But she was strong enough to face her betrayer husband, and her silent and weakness to incorporate with the American society and build a new life for her and achieve her goals and dreams.

Anne Cherian challenges through her novel the Indian patriarchal society that portrays women as a silent figure. Through *A Good Indian Wife*, Anne Cherian tries to change the submissive situation of Indian women in their society especially in the institution of marriage.

1.2 A Good Indian Wife' Plot Overview

A Good Indian Wife is a novel that portrays the reality of Indian patriarchal society and Indian norms and traditions concerning marriage, it also illustrates the difficulties that face Indians especially women after marriage. The story is about Leila Krishnan who teaches English literature at college, and the successful anesthesiologist Suneel Sarath who lives and works in San Francisco USA. He is thirty-five years old, and he is rich enough to have a home of his own and an expensive car. He also has a blond American girlfriend Caroline who loves him and fulfills his sexual desires. The story starts when Suneel or Neel, as he prefers, bought a ticket to India, after

receiving a lot of letters and calls from his mother, who want him to back to India to marry and see his dying grandfather or as he calls him Tattappa. So Neel went to India to see his sick grandfather with no intention to marry and he was sure that he will resist his family desire, like he did in his last trip to India, to make him get married to a good Indian wife of their choice. But when he arrives the family drama start and he ended up engaged to marry Leila who meets her once.

Leila is thirty years old, and lives with her parents and another two younger sisters Indyra and Killa. Leila is witty, tall, beautiful, well-read, and kind, but she is aware that since she has no dowry to offer, she cannot marry. Leila knew that she is beyond marriageable age and she will be rejected by those men, but and due to scandalize situation with Muslim boy years ago, she was not able to reject seeing those men because her mother insist on making her meets those men who rejected her over and over. Till she was arranged to meet Neel who meet her only once to satisfy his grandfather, but Neel surprises her and accepts the marriage due to some circumstances.

Neel and Leila get marriage in a traditional Indian wedding, after the wedding the two went to Ooty for honeymoon. Where Neel barely touches her or involves in conversation with her. After the honeymoon, Neel was sure that Leila will stay in India since her papers were not ready yet, but his family surprised him and prepare everything to send her with him. So Neel and Leila went to USA together and the dilemma starts. Neel when he backs to San Francisco continues living his life, like he never gets married, as doctor with his lack-education girlfriend Caroline, leaving his wife alone and under a chock. When Leila went to USA; she was living in a cold house with a husband whom she barely knows and who works late most nights. But Leila boldly claims her new life in San Francisco although she receives cold and poor treatment from Neel, who used to make fun of her every opportunity, even in front of his friends.

When Leila discovers that her husband betrays her with his blonde secretary Caroline, she was disillusioned and disappointed from her family that enforces her to marry him. But she was afraid to ask for a divorce, because she knew what will happen to her family and her younger sisters if she did. Leila faces an inner struggle between her personal desires in asking for a divorce and between her family and social expectations in keeping her sacred marriage vows. Leila represents the subaltern figure that is oppressed by social norms and cultural traditions; because she knew that the society will accused her for causing shame for her family, if she asks for a divorce. In Indian society, the divorced woman is a mark of shame to her family and this shame will destruct the whole family not only the girl, and the society will disregard them. So she was in storm between remaining silent and live with a betrayer husband and between asking for a divorce and be free woman and back to India and to her family. Those two options were not available to her because she cannot bear the consequences, especially when she remembers her younger sisters who will be ashamed and they will not going to marry because people will not propose to a girl who has a divorced sister. So Leila remains silent and chooses to live with Neel, although he betrays her with another woman.

When Leila decides to stay in America with Neel and live her life the way she wants, instead of returning to India, she surprises herself and her husband by making a new life for her through making new friends and exploring her neighborhood and the whole city by her own without the need for Neel to guide her. Because in India women are not supposed to go out alone, and if they went out they need a companion. Leila restarts thinking in writing books for children, because when she starts writing those books years ago her mother scold her that she is wasting her time and she should learn more about house work to be a good wife. Leila forgets about her mother reprimanded and starts achieving her dreams through writing books for children with

dreams to be published. Leila also involves in local women's shelter, when she help foreigner women who suffer from life in new country. She also volunteers to teach immigrant children English language to help them access easily to American society.

Leila was the example of a good Indian wife; she is loyal, loving, determined, steady, good cookers, beautiful and well-educated woman. The fact, that Leila was a good Indian wife with other qualifications that suits the American life beside to her strong personality when she remained true to herself and her Indian values while being open to new experiences and new styles and moods of life in new country, astonishes Neel. Neel starts swinging between his gorgeous Caroline and his wife who surprises him day after another. Neel became under huge pressure, and he starts to compare between his blonde ill-educated needy mistress who satisfy his sexual desires, and between his wife who is well-educated, well-read, who works on improving herself day by day, good cookers with a unique personality that help her intermixing with other, even with his friends. Leila was educated girl who has always a lot to say about everything; about life, city, India, friends, new events and daily issues. The fact, that Leila was sharing Neel's daily life not his bed like Caroline, was something new to him. So Leila with her unique personality attracted Neel. Sharing life issues, daily events, the same Indian background and believes, and get into deep conversation make Neel notice his wife' witty beside to her beauty. All that leads slowly but surely to change Neel's mind about his wife.

Neel starts to change toward Leila, when she starts to change herself and achieves her life's goal and pursuing her desires instead of thinking of what people would think or say especially her mother. Leila was affected by her new life and her power and independent, and that make her changes her view toward divorce. One night after a deep conversation and a long night together in sharing their condo, Neel and Leila became a real husband and wife. That night

change Leila's opinion about Neel and instead of asking for a divorce, she was thinking to face him about his affair and make everything clear between them so they can start a new life together. Neel tells Leila the whole truth about Caroline, and how he ends his affair to be with her. Things between Leila and Neel start to get better, especially when they receive a call from India that his grandfather was dying, that phone call make Neel and Leila much more closer, when she consoles and calms him down about his grandfather who die later after the joyful visit of Neel who tells him that he is going to be a father.

The story of *A Good Indian Wife* ends by both Neel and Leila at the hospital checking their unborn baby's health.

The novel is about the struggle of the woman from arranged marriage, sacred marriage vows, and social traditions that enforce and put a pressure on powerless people like women who born to satisfy social expectation. *A Good Indian Wife* is about the importance of honor, cultural tradition and social beliefs in the Indian society, and how younger people deal with those social norms especially with the institution of marriage and its sacred vows.

2. Subaltern Issues in *A Good Indian Wife*

Subaltern is a term that refers to certain group of people who are oppressed by multiple types of hegemonies, and marginalized from holding power or expressing themselves. Subalterns are the consequence of social categorization, which mean that they are the weakest and lowest class in each society like the Indian one. Subalterns are the subordinated and the inferior who are used by their social elite to increase their power. The colonized people who were once under the ruling of other nation considered as subaltern, but colonized women in patriarchal society are the

true subaltern, since they are constructed in a way that they should be silent or absent. (Guleria 3-4)

Subaltern novels reflect various themes including oppression, subjugation, gender discrimination, subjugation of lower class, racial discrimination and women disregard. In *A Good Indian Wife*, subaltern themes are related to women including women disregard, gender discrimination, oppression, marginalization and exploitation of women on the basis of social and cultural ground. In Indian society, most women remain as silent toward her rights only to satisfy their social believes and cultural traditions.

Subaltern means silent, naivety and it is a term that refers to powerless, oppressed and marginalized people who are under previledge. In *A Good Indian Wife*, Anne Cherian shows the silent woman who follows tradition over personal choices. She also portrays the Indian society view toward women, which disregard them and see them as an issue. When Cherian proclaims that in her novel: “But Amma was no different from the other mothers who viewed their female issues as obligations from the moment they were born.” (cherian 34) The protagonist Leila’s mother represents the social view toward women; when she clarifies that female since the moment of their birth represent an issue for their parents. So Leila’s mother and other Indian mothers began to search for son-in-law as soon as their daughters reach puberty.

Anne Cherian argues that physical shape of women can cause trouble for them, when she said “Leila blamed only herself. She had grown too tall, and every proposal had been withdrawn because of her behavior”. (cherian 35) Another issue that faces Leila was the social belief in women physical shape, when her mother blames her for grown too tall more than the usual tall of women. Her mother blames her that being too tall will make any man refuses her because there is

no man who accepts to marry woman who would be taller than him. Leila remains silent for the blame of her mother, she even blames herself believing that being too tall was her mistake although it is not.

In Indian society, women are born to fulfill the social traditions like marriage. “Daughters were not meant simply to desire marriage; they were supposed to do everything in their power to help their mothers bring it about” (Cherian 35) even if that woman has no desire in marriage, she should get married to fulfill social traditions or she will be considered as shameless and failure. The social view toward women is so cruel when they are considered as an element to fulfill their social beliefs even if it is against their desire. So Leila’s mother enforces her to meet all men who proposed to her even if it is against her will, so Leila cannot refuse or argue, because she is supposed to be silent and follow her social expectations to marry as soon as possible as she can.

Leila is the protagonist of the novel; she is the woman who is forced to marry the unknown Neel, whom she meets him once, only because he accepts to marry her. Leila cannot argue or questioning her parents’ choice since she was beyond marriageable age and she was in need to marry anyone even if he is not good enough to her, so her younger sisters can receive proposals. “Leila did want to marry; she just didn’t want to be ashamed of her husband. She wasn’t like some girls who didn’t care who they married as long as they acquired the “Mrs.” label. But she knew that if the man agreed, Amma would force her into the marriage.” (Cherian 35) Leila was not like any Indian girl who wants to marry regardless of whom she would marry; Leila wants to marry someone whom she wouldn’t be ashamed of. But in case one of those men who proposed to her agrees to marry her, her mother will enforce her into the marriage even if it is against her will.

Indian women considered as an issue to their families because of some social tradition like giving dowry so they can marry. Leila's family was too poor to offer dowry, and when she knew that Neel is coming to propose to her the first thing she asked was about dowry. ““Amma, do they know we can't afford a dowry?” Leila asked.” (cherian 36) Offering dowry is one of the social traditions that oppress women's rights in getting marriage, especially poor one. Usually in this situation, women ask about those men background, their jobs, their age, and about their family. But Leila was afraid from her poverty and she will be refused again, if she cannot offer a dowry.

Teaching English literature in colleges in some country like USA considered as successful career that is not easy to acquire, but in India it is not the same because people see women who work as college teachers as women who fails to marry. “People cruelly—and correctly—deduced she taught English only because she wasn't married. Everyone knew that colleges hired single women as cheap labor.” (cherian 36) The Indian colleges abuse women power and their situation as single women and make them work for small wages. In Indian society, the marriage institution is much more important than making a successful career like teaching in colleges, even if women want to chose teaching over marriage, they cannot refuse, because being marriage is much important to society. So social beliefs over personal desire.

“Girls were like cows, their pedigrees discussed openly and parts checked out.” (cherian 57) Girls in Indian society considered as cows during proposal when people checked them out and discussed their physical details like they are commodity which is offered for sale. The social view toward women is like dehumanize, and women are supposed to accepted it and act silently and fulfill social's expectations.

When Neel agrees to marry Leila, her mother was so happy but Leila was afraid from Neel and the marriage. “Although she was afraid, but Leila could not tell her fears to her mother, so she remained silent and accept her fate and this marriage.” (cherian 82) The way, of raising Indian girls to be submissive and do whatever other asks them to do, is very harsh and cause difficulties to their lives and their awareness. Leila realized what is going to face her with the unknown groom, but she could not do anything to stop the marriage or make a move to protect herself. Because if she did, the groom may end the marriage and if he did, her failure will inflict the whole family. Leila cannot express her opinion on whether to accept or refuse the marriage.

Leila married Neel and went to USA, but the moment she was there in his expensive Condo, she was shocked. Based on her social background, she did not know that this house is much more expensive although it was very small. But in USA, they care about the location and the view rather than the size of the house. So she thought, he was lying on her and their marriage will fail but even if the man lies and cheats, it is always the woman who suffers. “She felt as if she were neither living nor dead and knew nothing.” (cherian 124) Leila thought that her marriage will end before it starts so she was afraid from her failure. In Indian society, the failure of the oldest sister in her married means the failure of all family. When the parents will be accused by their society for not raising their daughter very well, and younger sisters will face problems in getting any proposal because society will see the failure in their gene. So Leila was supposed to accept her fate for the sake of her family.

After marriage and because of her loneliness in foreign country in foreign house, Leila was afraid from calling and asking her parents to come and rescue her from this unknown fate, “She wished she could call Amma and Appa to come rescue her. But that would be admitting defeat—again. Besides, they had married her off and expected her to stay put. They would offer

no comforting words, just a firm, “You must to stay with Suneel.””(cherian 129) Leila realized that she cannot tell them her fears. Because her parents married her off and expected her to stay there next to her husband. Then she realized that her parents will not offer her any comforting words, except enforcing her to accept her new life and her husband with his flaws without arguing, or she will disgrace her family.

After marriage, Leila at certain situation wondered how Tattappa will react if he were in her place, but she remembered that Tattappa is male who has power, which is the automatic right of male in Indian society. (cherian 129) The different between Leila and Tattappa in any situation is a kind of gender discrimination, and there is no chance to compare between them. In Indian society being a man means power and being superior even if they are full of flaws, while born as a female in Indian society means being inferior, silent and subaltern.

Leila starts thinking in having a divorce, but In India the social beliefs toward divorce was like the mark of shame, even if their daughters are miserable with their husband. “Indian family usually will not keep their divorced daughters because it is expensive and shameful.” (cherian 201) Women cannot protest or speak for their right to have a decent life even if she gets a divorce, so they remain silent and accept their fate without questioning.

Rekha is Leila friend who is originally Indian but her character is totally americanized, Rekha criticizes the Indian society toward single women or divorced women by stating that “We Indians belong to a culture that does not respect a woman without a husband” (cherian 233) her critic came after her and Leila meeting with an Indian woman who lives with an abuser husband who beats her, but unfortunately she cannot ask for a divorce and return to her parents and India, because she was afraid form her social view toward divorced woman. Indian society disregard

single woman or divorced one because they see divorce as a mark of shame. So Indian women accept their fate without questioning otherwise they will be accused by their society for not keeping their sacred marriage vows. Divorce is not an option for Indian woman even if she is miserable with her husband who beats her, abuses her and cheats her. She cannot ask for her right to gets a divorce and lives a decent life far away from him or with another man who respects her otherwise she will be accused by her society. In this case Leila wants to help this Indian woman who suffers from her husband, but she realized that this woman situation is the same of her situation and both of them cannot ask for a divorce and return to India.

Leila finds out that her husband was cheating on her with Caroline; the woman who keeps her picture in his desk. But unfortunately, she cannot accuse him or face him. So once again Leila was forced to be silent and act as blind so she can keep her marriage sacred vows and fulfill other expectations to be a good Indian wife. “Leila swallows her shame and like the dutiful wife of her mother and social’s expectations went back with Neel to San Francisco.” (cherian 218) Leila was ashamed in front of her friends, because she knew that they knew about Caroline and in the same time she was ashamed from facing Neel, because she was raised to stay silent and do what she was raised to do which is remaining silent and accept her fate (cherian 222) Leila true desire in divorce and be free from her betrayer husband was oppressed by her social beliefs and her cultural traditions.

Leila was in front of two options: whether to face Neel for his cheating or stay submissive as she was raised. Facing him means disappoint her mother and cause failure to her younger sisters while remains silent will cause harm for her. Leila keeps thinking of what her mother would think or react to her misbehavior and how she will be accused by everyone.

(cherian 228) Because in Indian society no one will suffer from social beliefs or from cultural traditions except women.

A Good Indian Wife is a novel that portrays the life of two people Neel and Leila after marriage and the consequence of their arranged marriage that happen because of their families. But deep inside the novel, it is about how honor, social traditions and beliefs obstacle and control individuals life. The novel characterizes the difficulties that face especially woman in the institution of marriage, and how she should act to make it work. Mostly the Indian society enforces woman to act in passivity, and be always silent without arguing or she will be accused that she is shameful. *A Good Indian Wife* considered as a subaltern novel since it portrays the life of Leila and other females, and how they should be silent and accept their realities even if it is a harsh one.

In Indian society, most beliefs and social traditions abuse women rights and true desires, because they enforce women to keep silent and be submissive to her society.

3. The female character's perspective toward her agency

Woman's agency is her ability to define goals and act based on those goals and work on achieving them. Agency means freedom and power, and woman's agency means acquiring the power to act freely and do what she wants through following her dreams and desires.

When Leila obliged by her mother to accept the marriage, she decided to make the ceremony suits her as a type of rebellion like choosing where the wedding should be and what she wears and what colors for her wedding saree would chose, instead of doing the usual ceremony and follow her mother's orders. She even decided to not follow her mother instruction to keep her eyes on her feet, and act like shy Indian bride. (cherian 98)

Alone in new country and new house, Leila waits for her husband who were always out or late. The long she waits the long she thinks how to achieve her happiness and made her life worth to live. Suddenly, she stopped waiting for Neel and realizes that she needs to do something except for waiting a liar husband to come back to her arms. “She decided to walk to Union Square” (cherian 138) after picking the guidebook of San Francisco, Leila decided to make a tour around the city alone, which is something new to her. Because in India, it is not allowed for women to go out alone and Leila was always accompanied by her father or one of her sisters, so going out by her own was a new experience to her.

She decides to enjoy her time instead of waiting for her husband “She spent her days walking around San Francisco, looking through the newspaper for a job, trying to enjoy all this time she suddenly had, so different from her busy teaching days.” (cherian 175) Leila wants to depend on herself instead of relying on Neel so she starts looking for a job and at the same time exploring the city and do what is not allowed to her in India which is walking alone in streets.

In the library shop, Leila meets Rekha an Indian girl who born and raised in USA. When Leila invites Rekha for a cup of tea and both of them involved in a long conversation about endless topic, she realized that she is building a new friendship. She makes a new friend with her own choice, a friend that was not chosen by her mother or her father, or determined by her type of school or her background. Rekha was a friend that Leila chooses based on her taste not based on other selections. “All her friends back home had been pre-selected—by her school, their background, or her parents.” (cherian 177) In Indian society, families choose for their daughters everything based on their background and cultural tradition from friends to grooms to design their whole life. But when Leila selects her friend without the need of her parents’ approval, she realized that she is creating her new life based on what she wants.

Leila knew that she is married to unfaithful man, but she stays next to him not because she wants to. But she realized that there is no place for her in USA or in India if she asked for a divorce. So she decides to stay with him and live based on her desires and rules not Neel's rules. She cooked what she wants not what Neel wants, and by this she realized that she is disappointing her mother and break her expectations to be a good Indian wife. When she started to change, Neel also starts to change toward her; toward his wife, the wife who shares with him life. Leila wants to keep her sacred marriage vows but in the same time she wants to live her life as she wants for this she stayed with him.

Leila's busy days and new events that happen to her recently make her full of life. Neel was excited to share his wife's life and her daily events, because she always has something to say about her days or about English literature, since he was interested in literature. Leila was something new to him, unlike his needy blonde girlfriend who speaks only about materials or offers her body to him. Deep and endless conversations, between the two Neel and Leila, reduce the gaps between them. When Neel realizes how much his wife is cultured, educated, brave, calm and sweet, he starts notices her beauty and falling for her. But Leila reached a point that she turned to her life to herself and her dreams. Leila's dream was writing and publishing children book, and to do that she need first to finish them. "She picked up the loose pages on which she brought a gray-haired cat called Annigma to life" (cherian 184) So Leila picked the draft of her story about the gray-haired cat to continue it.

Leila was moving so fast to make her new life in USA, she starts driving lessons, join to the library, finish her books, looking for a publisher and search for a job. (cherian 196) Leila build to herself a life in USA without the need for her husband, she was finally herself, free to do what she wants and achieves her desires and dreams, unlike what her mother raised her to be "a

dutiful wife”, or follow the Indian social values and traditions that designed once her life back in India. Leila became powerful enough to live like she desires.

Leila volunteers to teach emigrant children English language to help them incorporate in American society. (cherian 203) Leila continued her career as a teacher, although she was only volunteering. But at least she was doing something she liked; something she knew will upset her mother if she knows. Because she will simply order her to stay home and be the wife she was raised to become, instead of working outside the house. Leila knew that will annoy her mother because she will claim that she sends her to USA to become Neel’s wife not a teacher.

Leila unlike other Indian who travel abroad and when they return to India, they became different and claim that the Indian life do not suits them anymore. Leila was open to new experience in America but she keeps her Indian values and personality. (cherian 213) Leila has a strong personality; she would be open to experience new things and do what would make her suits the American life. But at the same time she will not abandon her Indian roots.

Leila already knew her husband was cheating on her, but she could not ask for a divorce because of the Indian social view toward divorced women, but when she experiences her freedom in USA. She starts considering divorce as an option not like she used at the first time when she discovered her husband cheating. (cherian 229) Old Leila would not even dare to think in divorce, but after experience this new life and access to the American society, she realizes that her life belongs to her and she would do what she wants. And for the first time, Leila considered divorce as an option and think about herself and her life, without thinking in other opinions or what they expect from her to do.

Leila became a new person; she does what she wants, when she went to the barbecue against Neel wish. She also wears saree to a wedding against Neel instruction that she will ashamed him. (cherian 239) Leila was making herself to Neel that she will do what she wants. This new Leila impresses Neel, who wants to become much closer to her by sharing life not only house.

During her driving lessons, Leila finds that her instructor was a racist against emigrant, Leila reported him and he was changed by another one. (cherian 260) Back in India, if Leila meets a racist instructor, she will accept his fact as a racist and remain silent without arguing. But after experience her new life, she became much powerful to defend herself. So Leila reported the instructor, she even demands the agency to change him and asks for another instructor who would respect her origins.

Neel was comparing between the two women Caroline and Leila. Caroline was ill-educated needy woman with no desire to improve herself, while Leila was brave woman, well-read and educated woman. Leila was beautiful, elegant, sweet, and wise and open for new experiences. Neel realizes how lucky he is to marry such an amazing woman. So he broke up with Caroline and backs to Leila seeking for her love. Leila was already in love with him but she wants to build a new relationship with Neel after making thing clears between them. For the first time Leila realized that she wants to be Neel's wife because she wants to, not because she was in need to keep her sacred marriage vows or take consideration of what her society will think. So she decided to face him about his affair so they can restart their relationship far from cheating and lying. (cherian 279-291)

Leila asks Neel several questions about Caroline and his affair with her. Neel answers all those questions because he realizes that he needs to be honest and make everything clear if he wants to restart his life with Leila. But when Leila told him that she is pregnant, he gets mad and wants her to get rid of the baby, because he was not ready to be a father. But Leila was brave to argue him and expresses her desire to keep the baby even against his will. Leila said that she will leave Neel if he does not want to be a father, and she will leave him to live with her baby far away from Neel. All this anger disappears when they receive a call from India that informs them that his Tattappa will die soon. Neel went to India, but he kept thinking in Leila and the baby and what will happen to him and to his life, if Leila left him. Neel realizes that he is loves with his wife and he will be miserable if she leaves him so he decides to do what she wishes and accept the fact he will be soon a father. (cherian 318-330)

Leila transferred from being obeyed girl and silent one who do whatever her society ask, to an independent woman who achieves her desires and dreams, and defends her rights and speaks for her own without the need for other to express her.

Conclusion

In *A Good Indian Wife*, Anne Cherian portrays the reality of Indian society and their harsh view toward women. She tackles the arranged marriage problems and how it inflicts the life not only the one who are going to marry but their families and society. Anne Cherian focuses on Leila, an Indian woman who suffers from the abuse of her society because she was not marriage and she was beyond the marriageable age. So she was obliged to accept any groom who accept to marry her, even if she did not like him. When Leila married to satisfy her family and society, she realized that she live based on other rules, and she lives to fulfill the society beliefs and traditions.

The fact that Leila was married to an unfaithful husband, made her realize that she needs to fight for herself, and do what she wants even if it is against her social beliefs.

Through narrating the story of Leila, Anne Cherian could manage to tackle different issues that face Indian women in their patriarchal society, and how the institution of marriage oppresses the voice of woman. When she describes the details of the protagonist Leila's daily life's issues before and after the marriage and how she could manage to change her submissive situation from a silent girl that fulfills others' expectations to a woman who fights for her rights so she can achieve her own hope and dreams.

A Good Indian Wife is a novel that depicts the Indian daily life, and how honor and traditions make Indian women's life much more difficult. The novel tells the story of the protagonist Leila and her struggle before and after marriage. Anne Cherian focuses on Leila's subalternity and how she works to change her subordinated status to be an independent woman who relies on herself and defends her rights as a wife in her marriage, and as a strong woman in social life.

This novel depicts the change of the protagonist Leila from being a subaltern to a strong, independent and agent woman, who defends herself and her rights without the need to others to do so. Anne Cherian through this novel tries to challenge the Indian social norms and beliefs toward women, so she can defend them and their rights and encourage them to speak for their own.

General Conclusion

This study explores the real image of subaltern within the life of Indian women, when she lost her identity and her voice to enforce the position of men and fulfill the social expectations. Through presenting the issues that face women in their daily life and how they are oppressed by several powers, in a way that make them silent and obeyed to their social norms, values and beliefs, although most of those social traditions oppress the female figure.

The research discusses how subaltern is related to women, and from which way the term subaltern identifies women. By starting with the historical background and definition of the term subaltern and the theory of subalternity, and how it developed from Gramsci notion on military to Spivak reference to woman. The study includes the importance of understanding the position of woman, and how the social values characterize and shape the mentality of woman in a way that her existence is only to enforce the man's power.

After the definition of the term subaltern and how it is related to postcolonialism, literature and to women, the study investigates Spivak theory of subalternity and the subaltern discourses that employed by the elite of those subalterns. In most records, the discourse of subaltern are made by their social elite or by the colonizer, since those subalterns are marginalized from holding any type of power even the power of recording their daily life and issues. The problem of women' subalternity is much deeper, for this the research includes the definition of subaltern discourse in order to help women to understand the term subaltern and how it reflects their realities, so they can realize the importance of making a change toward their submissive situation.

If subaltern woman wants to speak for herself and transcends her subalternity, she needs first to understand her problems and issues, so she can improve herself and her life and achieve her agency. So Indian women write about their submissive situation and their sufferance with everything from colonialism to patriarchal next to the social believes and cultural tradition. When Indian women write about their problems, they express to the world their harsh realities and how difficult the life under those rules. So Indian women write to depict their lives and demand for their basics rights.

In postcolonial era, female Indian writers tend to portray their harsh reality through their novels by adopting several themes of oppression, women disregard, social and gender discrimination. Since most of Indian women are seen as inferior and passive due to their sufferance from the contempt, abasement, and the marginalization of their societies. Indian women writers take on their shoulders the responsibility of expressing other Indian women struggle with the societies in order to gain respect and gratitude for them.

Anne Cherian in her novel *A Good Indian Wife* tries to depict how society view women who are single, even those who are married. Anne tells, beside to the protagonist Leila story and her struggle with society and her marriage, other stories about women who suffer from the institution of marriage and how they remain silent in most cases. Anne Cherian reflects the reality of Indian society through subaltern perspectives, and how society characterizes women as inferior and as an element to fulfill Indian traditions.

Through the novel, the issue of subalternity appears in the discourse of the female protagonist Leila, and how she remains silent in most cases. But with the development of the novel, she realizes her reality and her inferiority toward her husband who acts as superior. In the

moment that Leila understands her submissive situation and how her silence violates her personality and her dreams, she starts thinking how to improve herself and build her life in the way she wants not in the way Indian society oblige her to do so.

Leila new character and strong personality makes Neel, her husband, changes toward her.

When Leila improves herself and achieves her dreams and agency, she realized how Indian society oppressed the figure of women. The Indian society with its cultural tradition and values that depict the figure of women as silent, passive, absent and only an element to enforce the superiority of men and fulfill other's expectations. In India, women's freedom and rights are limited to their house and their duties as daughters, wives or mothers, so Indian women orientation is created by their society. In this novel, Anne tells us the struggle of Indian women with their orientation and how they resist against those social norms.

Indian women writers depict the reality of society and tradition in devaluing the situation of Indian women. Women writers play a vital role in making the voice of those oppressed female reach to the world, and awaken women consciousness toward the fact they are subaltern, and they need to fight for rights and dreams so they can gain more respect and gratitude in their societies.

Women, till now, still under the role of men whether her father, her husband or her boss in the work because of multiple reasons like traditions. But in some cases, women accept their fate and they remain silent because they want to, not because they cannot. So the problem came from those women themselves for being submissive, and unconsciously they give the opportunity to men to oppress and control them. So the role of intellectuals relies first on addressing the consciousness of those silent women to clarify for them their submissive situation in order to emancipate them.

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