

Psychological Exploitation of Women in the Novel of Zoe Fairbairns**Smt. Usha Pradeep Pawar**Shripatrao Chougule Arts and Science College, Malwadi, Kotoli
Taluka Panhala, Kolhapur**Abstract**

Exploitation of women is a universal problem and it is reflected in literature all over the world. The basic reason behind physical and psychological exploitation is patriarchal mind set of people in the society especially men, women writers throughout the world have given major contribution in tackling the issues that women face at every level. They explore women's psyche their quest for identity and social political cultural background which create barriers in their search for identity and their extraordinary adventurous and unique nature to survive.

Introduction

In the novel "stand we at last" the writer Zoe Fairbairns has depicted four generations of women who has passion for life, love and justice. Through lives of five women characters we see the poverty degradation, imprisonment, the battle for vote, sexual freedom and its disastrous effects on the lives of women. Their courage to accept the reality and adaption to the new situation their struggle to accept challenges and at last they stand. They are accomplished.

The story opens in 1855 in ruler England where Helena, Sarah and their parents lead simply life on a farm. But with their mothers death everything is collapsed. Their house also has to be sold to meet their father's business debts. However Jonathan Croft a business associated at their father proposes younger sister Helena and marries her but Sarah the later wiser sister decides to go to Australia and live with uncivilized Dugget brothers. They are so uncivilized still she struggles to settle there and tries to develop their farm, improve their lives. The kind of life she lives that is totally different from her London life but she accepts the challenge as she is born tough. She wants to prove herself. She doesn't want to live at the mercy at her sister and her husband. Years later she returns to London to her brother-in-law. Sarah recognizes the plight at women and joins the suffragettes.

The life of Helena is quite different from that of Sarah. Her husband Jonathan Croft treats her as a small middle class village girl. He provides everything to her and exploits her physically. She was not allowed to discuss and complains about what happened at night. She is always confused about her status in the home as he takes the decision without consulting her. He is dominating. Helena is very much under pressure as she thinks if Jonathan will regret marrying her. People thought of them as a happy couple. But she is emotionally and physically collapsed. She has some droughts' weather Mr. Croft was having extra marital relations. At last Helena dies. Jonathan explained to Sarah that she was suffering from depression.

Sarah came to know about Jonathan's extra marital affair with Lizzie and had daughter Pearl. Jonathan had promised at his ailing wife. But Sarah disclosed the truth that Helena had died before four years. Lizzie is shocked to listen to the news and she drives away Jonathan from her life. This is the tragic turn in her life. She decides to go to Colchester to work at an inn. Lizzie is representative of women who want to live an independent life, work hard and bring up child on her own but here again, she has to face challenging situation. Pearl, her daughter accidently goes to meet her friend Jake, who was in the army but Police caught her and sent her to the hospital where they checked her and declared her registered prostitute of the city of Colchester. She is called Queens's woman who is to lead life of prostitute. A girl only 10years has been declared as a prostitute without any fault of her only because of socially and emotionally apathetic doctors and policemen. Late in order to save her

from social stigma she was sent to Sara and Jonathan. Lizzie leads a lonely life and hides her identity from the society and declares that she is dead. She wants only secure life for her daughter. Sara takes care of her as her daughter. Jonathan also accepts her and wants to give her a comfortable life. Jonathan has planned to marry her off to his faithful servant but she is in love with a baker. She runs away and marries him. Jonathan is so angry with her that he disowns her and gives all his property to that servant boy. Pearl now leads a very pathetic life in a small house. She gives birth to 5 children. She and her husband work hard to manage the big family. After Jonathan's death Sara once again supports Pearl. She helps Pearl in bringing up children. Here we get the picture of women who have to work day and night for the family. They don't have any time to take care of their health and other interests, after marriage their life becomes dull and monotonous. One more woman character in the novel is Ruby. Ruby is Pearl's daughter. She is decisive girl who is not interested in family business. She doesn't like discrimination between her and her brothers regarding the household chores. She wants to realize her dreams of independent life. She starts working as a typist and falls in love with a poet but soon she is disillusioned and fails to get her true love. She is practical minded girl. She marries a man with fortune and settles in India. She is ready to do compromises to lead a comfortable life, but after the death of her husband, she returns to England puts her children in boarding school. Her daughter Emma is in love with a butcher's son. Once her friend's father sends her some pork for Christmas so she is in a happy mood to enjoy the dinner but her mother's friend takes objection for eating that meat and asks her to return that. She is very frustrated that mother didn't support her. She goes to return that gift but unfortunately gets killed in bomb explosion during World War. Now Ruby a lonely life but still she is a strong woman. Her son Randolph and his wife Helen live in the house given by Helen's father. Randolph is handsome boy. Helen foster only married him as they were childhood friends and she had crush on him. He works as a sales representative but doesn't have a steady income. Zoe Fairbairns depicted Helen as another woman character in a pathetic condition due to financial constraints Helen has to maintain her big dusty homes without anybody's help. All the time she only thinks about household chores. She is aware that her husband is not interested in her. He always finds excuses to be away from home. She is overjoyed when she learns that she is pregnant for the sixth time. She hopes that this baby will bring her husband close to her and both of them, will lead a happy life. But she has to undergo an abortion as they can't afford another baby. But when she comes to know about the affair of her husband with a young lady and knows about their plans to desert her, she takes a shocking decision and wants to start a new life. Here Zoe Fairbairn has shown how a simple woman can sometime become strong enough to take big decisions and shapes her own life. The last woman character, Zoe has portrayed is of Jackie, Jackie is Helen's daughter she has special relationship with grandmother Ruby, She shares everything with her she is fond of her father. She knows about the secret affair of her father. She is aware of her own rights. She always takes pity on her mother. She decides to go to America for higher education. When she is in America she falls in love with a boy and without taking any precautions enjoys sex as she is ready to take risks but she is again the victim of male dominated society when she comes to know that she is pregnant, her boyfriend refuses to take any responsibility, her parents also reject her but she decides to give birth to the child. She is the representative of a modern age who doesn't want to bend but stand and face the challenges she has dream now to become a teacher and teach girls, women's history and make them realize there is a future.

Conclusion:

A critical study of Zoe Fairbairn's novel reveals that situation of women in India or any other country was similar. The major obstacle in their development is their submissive nature, their brooding male domination, prejudiced views of the society towards women. Self-centered attitude of

men is root cause of all the suffering of women. Treating women as an object discouraging them, to lead independent life makes life of women pathetic. But we can conclude that women character in Zoe Fairbairn's novel as late silent sufferer as generation passes. From Helena to Jackie, Helena is submissive silent sufferer whereas Jackie takes boulder steps and takes her own decision and shapes her own life.

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