

WOMANIST PERSPECTIVE ON INTERSECTIONALITY IN WALKER'S 'THE COLOR PURPLE'

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this study is on Black feminism and how this specific type of feminism addresses intersectionality. Intersectionality plays a major role in shaping the experiences of different women. The focus of this research is on different elements of intersectionality highlighted in *The Color Purple*, which attempts to recognize the status of women in the patriarchal society of their time. This study consists of three problems to be analyzed. The first is, "How does womanist perspective offer understanding of intersectionality in *The Color Purple*?" The Second is, "What are the womanist principles reflected in the novel through female characters?" and the third is, "How can a womanist lens be applied to male characters in the novel to understand intersectionality?". This research is qualitative and the data collected for this research is also qualitative. The primary source of data for this research is the novel 'The Color Purple' and the secondary sources of data are also used to conduct this research, which includes academic journals and theories on Womanism. By analysing this literary work, this study helped to understand how women of the black community face challenges due to their race and gender's intersection. It highlights the importance of intersectional feminism discourse.

Keywords: race, gender, Womanism, black feminism, the color purple, status of women, race, patriarchal society, gender intersection, womanist perspective.

INTRODUCTION

This study is directed towards novel *The Color Purple* to find out the element of intersectionality with the womanist perspective. The focus of this study is how the protagonist of novel has to face the discrimination due to intersection of different social factors which becomes a reason of her unique experience of gender discrimination and how protagonist of novel stands for herself against the societal norms. The protagonist of novel *The Color Purple* is a black woman. She is facing discrimination based on gender because she is woman but with that she is also a black woman which becomes a cause of compounded oppression. A black woman is more victim of oppression because she faces oppression based on sexism and racism as well so, the protagonist of *The Color Purple* Celie is a victim of oppression due to the intersection of these factors which shapes her life experiences. Womanism

which is also known as black feminism is a specific kind of feminism started for black women and other women of color. Throughout the history women have always been treated unjustly and are treated as subordinates to men. Men have always been given a degree of superiority to women in every field of life and feminism addresses this issue and advocates for equal rights for women. However according to the perspective of Womanism not all women have similar experience due to intersectionality there are several other factors which also have an impact how a woman is being treated. These factors decide whether they will have a degree of privilege or will be discriminated. These various factors include race, class, gender ethnicity and they shape our experiences and behaviors. It is a theoretical framework. It recognizes that social factors like class, race, gender, ethnicity, nation are connected to

each other. These aspects of identity of a person have an impact on their personal experiences. An individual does not have only one identity. White people have a degree a privilege over black people but there are several other aspects of their identity for instance a black person who belongs to an upper class will have a degree of privilege over a white belonging to a poor family. These factors of identity shapes different experiences of a person which are different from other people. Accomplished.

Novel has a historical time period and context but it addresses the stereotypical gender roles which were expected from the women. The Color Purple is set in early 20th century. Protagonist of novel belong to Black community and have her own experiences of discrimination based on her gender including being a black woman as part of her identity. Alice Walker is black writer and she has her own experiences of sexism due to intersectionality and examining their novel one can understand how different is the narrative of a black woman writer. She belongs to late 20th century but the novel is about early 20th century. The Color Purple's protagonist is a black woman and she also belong to a lower class family. This intersectionality of race and class shapes her experiences of sexism which are different from other woman who belongs to different class and race. Feminist movement is still active even after so many years and Womanism is also known as black feminism.

Research Objectives

- to understand womanist perspective of intersectionality in the novel
- to find out womanist principles are reflected in novel through female characters
- to apply womanist lens on male character in the novel to understand intersectionality

Research Questions

1. How does womanist perspective offer understanding of intersectionality in *The Color Purple*?
2. What are the womanist principles reflected in novel through female characters?
3. How can womanist lens be applied to male character in the novel to understand intersectionality?

Significance of the Study

This study is pointed in the direction of the novel *The Color Purple*(1982) by Alice Walker. The novel is primarily based totally at the struggle of black women living in early twentieth century. Novel has a different context and time period. By evaluating how black women are portrayed in the novel this study gives an idea how women coming from background where they belong to a community of color expected to act through the history. This study offers an understanding of womanist perspective of the novel. Womanism helps the world to understand the issues being faced by the women and how intersectionality shapes the experience of sexism of different women. This study also offers an insight on how intersectionality not only impact black woman but men as well.

Literature Review

This section of the article deals with the review of previously written literature how women have been portrayed in literature has been a subject of ongoing analysis and debate specifically in the context of gender dynamics and feminist discourse. It explores how women are represented in classic novel “The Color Purple” by Alice Walker. Novel portrays black female characters and the societal norm of their time. Since the start women have been victim if inequality. . The self discovery of Celie The Color Purple put emphasis on how women supporting other women, sisterhood is very integral part of feminism (Davis, 2011).

Womanism also known as Black feminism is a type of feminism which put emphasis on the issues of black women. It addresses the unique experiences faced by black women of different society. It began to rise in late 1960s and early 1970s. Womanism is a related to feminism the same way purple color is related to lavender (Walker,1983). The Color Purple is a novel which portrays the struggle of a black woman named Celie. Alice Walker is black writer who wrote about the struggle of black women. She introduced the term ‘Womanism’ which focuses on the black women and their struggles. Womanism is all about acknowledging the strength of black community’s women and how they contribute to the society (Hudson,2023). Womanism movement provides a solution to the problem of the black women. The demand of women is to transfer the movement of feminism to a movement which has acknowledgement of the struggles of women of color

and not only the white middle class women(Guy-Sheftall, 2011). It gives the deserving status to the African and African-American women(Hudson,2023). It also includes intersectionality. Limitations of feminism are addressed by the Womanism and it addresses the issues like race, gender, class of a person in an intersectional way(hooks, 2014). A black person will be more victim of oppression as due to racism black people are considered lower to white and other people of color and black women is treated even more inferior than the men. Womanism is all about recognizing the struggles of women of color and its emphasis is on the unity and empowering each other (Lorde,2007). It also depends on which class you belong to if a woman who belongs to a lower class she will face gender based discrimination more as treatment with her due to her class will be second rate. "The patriarchal power, the power men use to dominate women, is not just the privilege of upper middle class white men, but the privilege of all men in our society regardless of their class or race" (Hooks, 1981, p.87). Womanism helped the women of color to come forward and to be able to speak about their own unique experiences of gender discrimination which have the context of the cultural background and community. Womanism takes us to another side of feminism by making us understand the struggles and experiences of black women(Collins,2002). The movement of feminism initially did not address the issues of black women and the women of color and its focus was only at the white women so, Womanism came to acknowledge the struggles of black women and other women of color, it also challenges the society to understand the intersection of race, class and gender and how the intersection of these social factor create a unique experience for different women. It puts stress on how important is it for the community to come together and address the challenges faced by the women of color (Harris,1984). Black community is also very much diverse and if we include the other women of color it even becomes more and more diverse. There are different hierarchies in the black society as well. A black women who belongs to an upper class will have different experience has compared to a black women who belongs to lower class or middle class family. It shows the black women living in a society may not have similar experience to each other which is the focus of Womanism is to address the unique experience of different women with different

backgrounds. Culture is a major reason behind the experience of discrimination based on the gender of women because culture is considered to be superior and also it is considered that everything which is said in a culture should be acted the same way and women are considered

Black female writers has always been the voice of intersectional theory because their own black identity creates and shape their unique experiences. There is a need to acknowledge the diverse range of identities to have the complete understanding of problems present in the society(Lorde, 2007). Kimberle Crenshaw who is the author of this term intersectionality has given detailed input on the intersection of different elements of a person's identity. Intersectionality uncovers how different forms of oppression and discrimination are connected to each other(Crenshaw,2018)

"Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting, oppressions for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation. Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice."(Collins, 2002, p.18). Intersectional feminism address this particular issue. "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (Lorde, 2007, p.138). Intersectionality is a complex term because the experiences of people are shaped due to many complex identity markers related to them. Not only the identity of a person intersect to shape his experience but power relations also have an impact on it(Simpson, 2014). There is an increasing sense of understanding these complexities among the people around the world now because of thw world becoming a global village. To understand the different pieces of oppression it is important to understand the intersectionality(Davis,2011). The protagonist of novel *The Color Purple* is not facing a discrimination just based on her gender. If we dive into a deeper picture there are many other factors which overlap to shape their experience which are unique and different from each other. Intersectionality makes us dive deeper to understand the multiple identity markers which create a unique experience (Anzaldua, 2017).

The Identity which one person is assigned at the birth can shape his future experience can decide his future life according to intersectionality power and privilege can decide social status of a person

(Ahmed,2012). Since women around the world were not satisfied from the movement of feminism because it spoke only for white middle class women so intersectionality came in and it became a voice of people around the world. Concept of intersectionality enforces us to have a look on how oppression around the world connected to understand and analyze the voices which are marginalized(Mohanty,2003).

There are fewer researches done on novel 'The Color Purple' and they have drawn different conclusion. Novel address intersectionality in different way even though the time period in which novel is set the movement of Womanism didn't start yet still protagonist of novel and other black women set an example for other black women in their community. The key themes of novel The Color Purple are identity, empowerment and the power of storytelling (Coward,1987). In 'The Color Purple,' Alice Walker highlights the intersectionality faced by African American women the novel highlights how they are double marginalized due to their race and gender. The character of Celie makes reader to rethink about how racism and sexism can become a combined reason of injustice and novel addresses the individual and collective liberation of women(McKay, 1986). The protagonist of novel The Color Purple is a representation of black women. This work of Alice Walker is not just about the struggles of African American women but it also talks about the strength of the women(Samuels & Harris, 1984). The struggles of black women are not similar to the black women and to show this black writer's community has a great contribution in the literature.

Even though the oppression is a combination of different social factors and identity markers but the main reason of the oppression of the every society around the world has always been the dominance of men which leads to the discrimination against women. The male characters of The Color Purple are also the reason behind the experience of oppression of the protagonist and other side characters of the novel. The husband of protagonist of the novel The Color Purple is a representative of patriarchy and novel dives into the fact that how it impacts the women around such men(Wade-Gayles, 1990).

Research Methodology

This research design employs a qualitative approach. This study uses the qualitative research methodology to understand and investigate the topic Womanist perspective on intersectionality in

Walker's The Color Purple. This research is done through a Womanism lens. This study is qualitative so it does a textual analysis on the selected work to find out the elements of intersectionality. The Primary source of data for this research is novel The Color Purple(Walker,2011).Secondary sources of information are the books and journal articles published related to study. The method of literary analysis is used to analyze the novel The Color Purple which helped to examine the key themes of both novels which are related to the gender, intersectionality.

Theoretical Framework

This research is guided through the perspective of Womanism which is also known as 'Black Feminism'. The main focus of mainstream feminism was on the issues which were relevant to the white women and due to this African American writers felt the need to start a movement which addresses the issues of black women and that's the reason why Alice Walker used the term Womanism which is specifically for black women and it is also known as Black feminism. One of the major issue which is addressed by the Womanism movement is racism. Issues which are faced by the women of color are different from the white women because with the discrimination based on their gender they also have to face the racism coming from people around them. Feminism is a movement which was started by the white women so its emphasis was not at the issues of women of color. A black woman has to go through both sexism and racism. Womanist do not separate themselves from the movement of feminism but it is actually considered a part of feminism. It is a type of feminism which specifically speaks about the issues of race, gender and class while the focus of feminism is specifically on the gender related issues which includes discrimination based on gender. The movement of Womanism addresses the shortcomings of feminism. The struggles of black women are distinct from the white women. They constantly face discrimination in the society no matter whether its their work place or at their homes. Due to the racism they may have less opportunities as compared to white women. A black lady may not be able to avail a job opportunity because of racism which can be easily accessed by a white woman. It not only addresses the Issue of black women but the other women of color as well which also includes the brown women as well. Community of women of

color is very diverse so their issues are also very diverse and Womanism recognizes these different cultural background and due to this recognition it strengthens the bond of women of color who have a different background. Womanism addresses this complex issue of racism and its purpose is to create a safe environment and society where black women and other women of color can live freely and break the shackles of racial oppression. Intersectionality is also a part of Womanism because the main Idea of intersectionality is that personal experience of a person is shaped due to the intersection of different aspects of his identity which can include his or her race, class, gender and ethnicity or nation and black feminism focuses on how women of color are more discriminated as compared to the white women and they have a unique experience.

Textual Analysis

The novel *Color Purple* is a story of a black woman named as Celie who is a victim of abuse. There are few other black female characters in the novel. Through the lens of Womanism to find intersectionality in the novel the researcher examined the novel to do its textual analysis and found how woman characters in the novel are representing intersectionality. The *Color Purple* is a novel written the forms of letter which is also known as epistolary novel. In the novel the protagonist of the novel writes letter to the God to complain and share about her struggles.

Alice Walker portrays the character of Celie as a black young woman who belongs to early twentieth century of African American Society. The story revolves around the Celie who face several kinds of oppression and discrimination based on her identity. The oppression which is being faced by the Celie is due to intersection of various identity makers of her identity. It is not just because of her being a woman. During the first letter she complains to the God about the situation of her mother, how she is being raped by her husband when she is half dead. The Harassment faced by Celie's mother not only has to do with her gender but also with her race. The setting of the novel of early twentieth century of African American Society. During this time black people were treated worse than anything. They didn't have the right to speak for themselves because they were considered inferior to white people. Black community on the whole was a victim of racism but black women were more victim

because the had to face discrimination from the society and from the black men as well. Mother of Celie is facing all of this but she can't speak for herself because being a black woman she does not have the rights like other white women because public facilities and many other things were segregated from black community. The character of Celie represents the harsh realities of a woman of color who goes through a series oppression due to intersection of her several identity markers.

The protagonist of novel *The Color Purple* introduces her as a fourteen year old girl who is being assaulted by her step father. She belongs to a poor family and her real father is dead. She is telling her story of assault by her father during initial letters to God which leads her getting pregnant and giving birth to the children of her step father. Researcher analyzed the text and character of Celie through the lens of intersectionality with context of sexism which resulted in understanding of how there are several social factors and personal identity markers of Celie lead to the oppression against her. First she is black woman who belongs to such society which does not stand for her rights and does not protect her which leads to endure abuse towards her and her mother. Secondly she is a poor girl who belongs to a lower class family due to which she does not have any resources through which she could get herself out of this situation and also her father who could have protected her against the abuse is not their in the world so her being an orphan also leads to this situation of her. An intersection of racism, classism and her being a weak orphan girl leads to this situation in which she gets assaulted by her step father and gives birth to his children.

After the death of Celie's mother when she gives birth to the children of her step father he sells those children to someone for money. She also has a younger sister named as Nettie. The step father of Celie and Nettie had an eye on Nettie after Celie. During her complaint letter to the God she says that she will take care of her sister. Celie's helplessness towards this situation is not just related to one factor. She is not facing sexism just because of her gender. The father of her children selling their kids for money shows that she belongs to a very poor family which has no money. She along with being a woman is facing a severe issue of classism due to which she is unable to stand for her and being a woman of color adds to this because society also does not supports her.

The sister of Celie also had a boyfriend who is around the age of her father. He is referred as Mr. ___ in the novel and his name is Albert but he is not mentioned by his name in the novel instead he is only referred as Mr. ___. Mr. also has three kids and their mother is dead due to which he wants to get married to Nettie. This is a general sexist behavior of the society towards woman that a woman should be the one taking care of children instead of a man. The interaction between Mr. and the step father referred as Pa represents the intersectionality because when Mr. asked the hand of Nettie in marriage Pa offered Celie instead of her younger sister and the reason behind it is that Celie is portrayed as an ugly woman in the novel and when Mr. looked at her he also described her as an ugly woman on the other hand Nettie is prettier than Celie. Celie being an unattractive woman and her being called ugly, black and poor shapes her experiences of sexism. She is already a victim of racism and classism and being less attractive adds to her experiences of discrimination because everyone looks down upon her because of her looks. Men around her treat her badly because of her looks and comparatively her sister is prettier due to which her experiences are not as bad as Celie.

Celie also likes to study and she is called smart by her sister Nettie. Celie is very much insecure about her looks but still she feels happy about her sister calling her smart. But Pa doesn't let her get educated and get her married to Albert. During one letter to God Celie referred back to an incident where Mr. called her a cow. There is a lot of emphasis put on the physical appearances of the women in the novel. Nettie and other characters of the novel like Shug Avery who is described as the lover of Mr. are portrayed as attractive women but Celie is called black, ugly and cow in the novel by men and women around her which adds to her experiences of sexism due to intersection of all these elements of her identity. Beauty of other women is a privilege for them but her ugliness becomes a reason for her to be discriminated by everyone around her specially by men throughout her life. She also complains about it to God that she doesn't like men and isn't attracted towards them due to their behavior towards them and comparatively women are nicer towards her. She is discriminated by the society based on her race, class, gender and her physical appearance.

After Celie's marriage to Albert the sister of Celie also runs away from her house to protect herself

from her step father who is referred as Pa in novel *The Color Purple*. She took refuge in the house of Celie where she is living with Mr. and his children which Celie finds out after marriage that they are four in number instead of three. While Nettie's stay over Celie's house Mr. is always praising about the beauty of Nettie which shows how he is still attracted towards Nettie. It also represents the society's thinking that how the society discriminated the women based on their looks not just based on their gender. Nettie's beauty becomes a reason of other people's liking towards her but Celie's unattractive feature becomes a reason for her to face discrimination throughout her life from the men around her due to which she is not attracted towards the men. She also had to face domestic abuse by Mr. and being a financially weak woman who cannot stand for herself she has to bear all of this. Her social class and socio economic status is a major reason behind the discrimination she is facing because she is dependent on men around her and they use it against her to take a charge over her.

Nettie has her own struggle which are different from her sister Celie. She may have some privilege because of her looks but also had to face a lot of discrimination due to her race and class. Nettie and Celie both are orphan and belong to a poor family. Nettie ran away from her own house first and then she ran away from the house of Mr. to protect herself from the men around her. Being a woman of lower class who has no protector she had to run away because society treats people of lower class worse because they have no authority and specially a woman. A woman is already a weak entity and has very less rights in the society specifically the society in which Celie and Nettie are living and additionally they also had to face racism of the society because both are black women and black people were generally considered inferior and were not given their rights due to their race. The setting of the novel is of early twentieth century. It is the time of first wave of feminism. But during that time feminism didn't focus on unique experiences of women around the world like the women of color and lower class women. Its focus was only at the issue of white middle class women so black women were continuously being discriminated based on their unique identity markers. There are several letters in which Celie describes the domestic violence against her that she is beaten by her husband Mr. ___. Celie being silent towards the domestic violence and

abuse against her has to do with her class because she does not have any other place to go and she does not have that position in the society that people would listen to her.

There is another character named as Sofia in the novel who has to go through sexism because of her race and class. She is girlfriend of Harpo who is son of Mr.____. Black women are more victim as compared to black men because they had to face racism and sexism both at the societal level and also at their homes where they face sexism from men around her as the character of Sofia. After getting married to Harpo he and her father tries to abuse and beat her but unlike Celie she is portrayed as a physically strong woman who can defend herself due to which she saves herself from domestic violence. Even though both are black ladies living in same home but Sofia physical strength gives her privilege to make herself safe from violence and abuse which Celie is unable to because she is a weak woman and her social class and race had made her more weak to stand against them. She also belongs to lower class family which adds to her experiences of discrimination due to racism. Society is racist and classist towards her. Sofia's interaction with a white woman leads to her being jailed. There are two white characters in the novel named as Miss Millie who is wife of the Mayor. Both are white character and during that time white were considered very much superior to black people. Black people were treated as slaves because of their race and color which adds to the experience of sexism. Sofia is portrayed as strong woman in the novel but still due to her race she had to undergo discrimination.

Miss Millie who is wife of the mayor of the town is a white woman and upper class woman. Intersection of her identity of being a white woman and also being a rich woman gives her privilege over other people around her due to which she considers herself superior. She does not have to face sexism on the level of what other black female characters are facing in novel *The Color purple* because her race and class is a privilege for her on the other hand the race and class of other woman is not a privilege for them instead it is a reason of discrimination for them.

Sofia is a portrayed as a strong black woman who denies to take any abuse from men around her due to which she left her husband. But deep analysis of novel *The Color Purple* shows that even the people who are very brave and stand against the societal

norm and oppression still have to surrender against the individuals who have more power than them. Sofia is one of its example as she is also belongs to black race which adds to her sexism experience. The interaction of Sofia with a white woman shows how intersectionality of her race and class with her gender becomes a reason for her discrimination while the white woman is privileged due to her race and class. Miss Millie is a woman who belongs to white upper class family and she considered Sofia inferior to her due to her race and class. She asked the Sofia to be her maid and work for her. Even though Sofia was a strong independent woman and didn't considered herself as this low to be someone's maid but due to intersection of her unique identity markers Miss Millie automatically assumed that she would work for her as her maid. Sofia took stand for herself and denied to this offer by saying "hell no". Even though she is discriminated due to intersection of her unique identity markers like her race class and also because of her gender but still she is a representative of feminist view that she went against the stereotypical norms of the society but her position in the society didn't give her privilege as Miss Millie was a white woman which already gave her the privilege and above that she belonged to upper class so she wasn't able to take no from her.

The way Miss Millie gets shocked at the answer of Sofia shows how she herself considers herself privileged over Sofia who is a black lady that she did not expected that she would say no to her. The reaction of her white husband was also similar to Miss Millie. Infact it was much aggressive than Miss Millie. Sofia was also a lower class woman due to which her answer "hell no" was more difficult for them to digest. Mayor who is the husband of Miss Millie is a white man who is also privileged because of intersection of her race, class and also because of his gender. So instead of taking no as an answer from Sofia he slapped her because of his stereotypical mindset he thought that he had the privilege to slap a black person specially a black woman who is weaker than a black man. He is symbol of white privilege and also a symbol of gender privilege. The actions of wife of the Mayor also represents that she is not aware of issues faced by woman of color even though she is also a woman. But character of Sofia does not take it as her weakness for which she took stand for herself immediately and charged over the mayor by pulling him onto the ground. But this incident also represent

how social element of power can give privilege to some and can discriminate the other. Even though the slap and violence was initiated by The Mayor himself but after the Police came it beat the Black woman who belonged to lower class and these factors interested to create discrimination for her. This incident of the novel makes it evident that the struggles of Sofia and other black woman in the novel are not just because of their gender but it is extended beyond the gender. This incident highlights how struggles of women of Color are interconnected. The incident of Sofia, Miss Millie and her husband sheds a light on the issue that there is a need to recognize the interconnected nature of oppression which is being faced by the communities which are marginalized. Even though Sofia wasn't mistaken in this incident she is given the punishment to work as the maid of Miss Millie for twelve years which is a very long duration. The role of Miss Millie shows how privileged women also added to the oppressive experience of the women of Color. Researcher analyzed the impact of racism, classism and sexism on the black women of early twentieth century. Miss Millie and her husband are the characters which represents how privileged individuals add to the intersection of different factors to add to the discriminatory experiences of other individuals. The protagonist of the novel not only faces racism and sexism but she is also a victim of classism because she belongs to a poor family where she has no guardian and even after getting married she is a victim of abuse. Nettie who is sister of protagonist Celie has her own unique journey even though she is sister of Celie and is a black lady from similar community but she face discrimination and harassment due to her unique identity markers. Celie faced more discrimination and abuse because of people around her considering her ugly but comparatively Nettie is portrayed as the pretty sister but it also became a reason for her of facing harassment by men around her. Nettie is also a black woman living in African American Society where white race people are dominant over black race people due to which she also experience racism within that being a woman she is also a victim of abuse and harassment. Racism and sexism intersect to create her experience of discrimination due to which she also had to run away from her home to take refuge in the house of Celie but there she also faced harassment and she also had to run away from there. Nettie is a poor woman due to which she had

to leave her education in between. Through textual analysis of this novel the researcher determined that characters of novel are facing intersectional oppression according to their own unique identity markers which are becoming a reason of their discrimination. Celie who is victim of racism and classism by the society due to her race and class and she is also treated poorly due to her looks. She also had to face severe oppression at her home by men around her due to her gender. The husband of Celie became the reason Nettie ran away from there house. Celie also faces sexism within her marriage due to her husband Mister. He used to abuse her physically and he also hid the letters which Nettie used to write to her sister Celie. This incident of letter hiding indicates how she is oppressed and suppressed due to her gender and it also shows how the societal norms suppress the women. Because in the novel the oppression against the women is accepted and specifically against the black women in the African American Society. Celie is also a woman who belongs to poor family. She has a weak socio economic status plus she is also a victim of racism by the society due to which she has automatically assumed that she cannot do anything for herself. Sexism and Racism against the women in of the novel *The Color Purple* work together to create an oppressive system against them.

In novel *The Color Purple* during one letter Celie also describes about the death of her biological father. The incident of the death of Celie and Nettie's father also represents who intersectionality of identity markers of an individual lead to their life experiences. Pa by whom Celie was assaulted is not the actual father of Celie and Nettie but in actual their father was killed by some white men which they found out later in novel. Father of Celie and Nettie is presented as a store owner in the novel. As Celie describes in her letters to God that he was becoming successful man in his business. This incident provides a lens through which the researcher analyzed the intersectionality. As he was a black man and during early twentieth century the racism against black people was on peak as compared to contemporary society. Even though racism still prevails but it was way more back then. Celie and Nettie are portrayed as women of lower class family. So there father was also a man belonging to a lower class family but trying to become successful. The intersection of his race and class leads to violence against him by white men

around him. His race was already a reason of discrimination against him but his social class added to discriminatory attitude of society towards father of Celie and Nettie. This intersectionality of social class and race leads to his murder by white race people. Where the race and class of black people is a reason of discrimination and oppression for them on the other hand the race of white people is a reason of privilege for them. It gives them white privilege. This incident also highlights this white privilege. Intersectionality of different social factors and personal identity markers create a very complex system where it becomes a reason of discrimination of some people on the other hand it gives privilege to other people. The white men who killed the father of Celie and Nettie were not questioned by any law. The incident reflects how the white people were not held accountable for their actions against the black people. They took the life of a man without any particular reason and the law never gave justice to Celie and Nettie. It depicts how intersectionality also privilege to some people. The race and class of the murderers of Celie's father gave them the privilege to escape from any legal action against them. This also had a severe impact on the lives of Celie and Nettie because they lost their guardian. It also added to their experiences of oppression. Firstly both of them were woman belonging to black community who were victim of racism plus they also belonged to a poor family and death of their guardian added to their experience of discrimination because it was a patriarchal society. In the patriarchal society women without any men guardian are considered very weak due to which both sisters had to face assault and harassment on several points of their lives. The violence faced by Celie is not just because of her race or her gender. It is not because of one aspect of her identity. It has to do with more than one aspect of her identity which created a complex experience of oppression for her throughout her life. Even though women are mostly more victim of abuse but still after deep textual analysis of the text revealed that black men are also somehow becomes the victim of discrimination due to their race at the societal level. Womanist perspective is to speak for everyone regardless of their class or gender. According to Womanist perspective the Intersectionality is majorly impacting Celie and other women characters in the novel but the male characters of the novel are also somehow facing discrimination due to intersection

of their racial identity. The father of Celie and Nettie is one of its example mentioned in the novel as he was killed by the white men.

Conclusion

This study concludes after exploring the novel *The Color Purple* that intersectionality is a very complex subject. The lens of Womanism helps to understand the struggles of protagonist of the novel and the other women characters of the novel by applying intersectional theory to *The Color Purple*. The novel is set in the early 20th century and takes us back to the African American Society of that time. When the researcher applied the lens of Womanism to understand the element of intersectionality in the novel it revealed the different elements becoming the reason for the struggles and discrimination of protagonist of novel Celie. She is a black woman who belongs to a lower class family without a father figure. The intersection of her race and her being a woman becomes a combined reason behind her struggles. When the lens of intersectionality applied on the novel it highlights that her experiences are not just because she is a woman because it is not necessary that other woman would have similar experience as her. Firstly she is a black woman who is a victim of racism by society, even though black men are also victim of racism but black women are weaker entity than black men so they suppress them and take out their frustration on them. She also belongs to a lower class family due to which she has no support of family so people around her take her for granted and oppress her the way they desire. Celie's early life is an example of struggles related to the gender where she is weak and has no right to take stand for herself. She had to face sexual abuse and she was also forcefully separated from her children. She is a woman living in African American society where she faces racism which combines with the gender and creates intersection of racism and sexism. Plus she also belongs to a family which is poor so she has very few resources. She is not educated because she cannot have this privilege to get educated because of her poverty. So her being poor is looked down by the society. Being a woman and belonging to black community and also being poor intersect to create a complex experience of discrimination. This study also found the element of intersectionality in other characters of the novel as Shug Avery who is a side character in the novel is also a black woman. By diving deeper into the novel this research find out

that even though she lives in the same society as Celie but she stood up herself and challenged the norms of the society. She challenged the sexism of the society. Her resistance also depicts intersectionality because she not only took her stand against the society about the societal expectations which society put for being a woman but also her being a black woman she stood against racism and sexism both. The intersectionality highlights how important is it to highlight different factors which are a reason behind complex life experiences of women. It also highlighted that there is a need of inclusive feminism which addresses the struggles of women and understands how struggles against sexism are connected with other form of oppression. The other women in the novel becomes a reason of self discovery of Celie which shows how important is for a woman to become a support of other women for their liberation. Intersection of Celie's complex identity markers has created a series of oppression and discrimination against her from getting raped by her step father to getting beaten by her husband. But the support of other black women helps her to recognize her worth and she leads to a journey of self empowerment through the help if sisterhood which is a key term if black feminism.

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