

**Caste, Gender and Domestic Abuse in Select Novels of Meena
Kandasamy and P. Sivakami**

Mahalakshmi R
(21PEN009)

A Thesis submitted to
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women,
Coimbatore 641043.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

May 2023

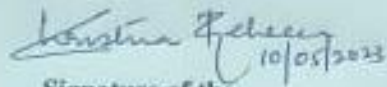
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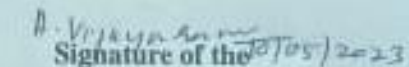
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DECLARATION

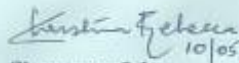
I declare that the thesis entitled "**Caste, Gender and Domestic Abuse in Select Novels of Meena Kandasamy and P. Sivakami**" submitted by me for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.) is the record of work carried out by me during the period December 2022 - May 2023 under the guidance of Dr. (Mrs.) S. Christina Rebecca, Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other titles in this University or any other similar institution of higher learning.

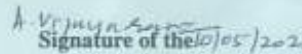
R. Mahalakshmi
10.05.2023
Signature of the Candidate

CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE

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Head of the Department

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Researcher thanks the Lord almighty for the abundant blessings showered on her during the study period.

First and foremost, the Researcher expresses her gratitude to Dr. S.P. Thyagarajan, Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for all the good wishes towards the successful completion of the thesis.

The Researcher would like to acknowledge her heartfelt thanks to Dr. (Mrs.) Bharathi Harishankar, Vice Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her constant motivation towards academic performance.

The Researcher would like to thank Dr. (Mrs.) S. Kowsalya, Registrar, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for extending full support for the successful completion of the thesis.

The Researcher would like to thank Dr. (Mrs.) M. Manonmani, Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her encouragement throughout the thesis.

The Researcher records her gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) A. Vijayarani, Head and Associate professor, Department of English, and Dr. (Mrs.) Chitra Sivasubramaniam former Head and Associate Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for extending her support for the successful completion of the thesis.

The Researcher would like to thank Dr. (Mrs.) A. Jayasree, Tutor, Assistant Professor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for extending her full support for the successful completion of the thesis.

The Researcher would specially like to express whole hearted gratitude to the Research Supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) S. Christina Rebecca, Professor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her meticulous guidance, and suggestions towards the successful completion of this thesis.

The Researcher would like to extend her heartfelt thanks to all the members of the staff of the Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for their support and help for the successful completion of the thesis.

The Researcher expresses her gratitude to all the members of the staff of the Library of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women for their support, and help for the successful completion of the thesis.

The Researcher would also like to thank her parents for their constant support throughout the project. Above all, the researcher expresses her warm gratitude to all her well-wishers and the members of the family for their valuable support, suggestions during the period of the study.

S.no.	Contents	Pg.no.
1	Introduction	1
2	Powerless to Empowered: Cruel Realities of Modern Marriage	21
3	Muffled Voices: Grief, Pain and Subservience	49
4	Conclusion	71
5	Works Cited	80

Chapter I

Introduction

Literature is an extremely powerful tool that allows a human mind to venture into the past, cogitate about the present and envisage the future. Besides socially and culturally informing the readers, it presents the complex realities of human existence and experiences. It has such an empowering effect on the human psyche that through the literary portrayal of the characters, an individual understands other's behaviour, socio-cultural values, and one's reaction in a particular situation.

As it exposes the covert truths, kaleidoscopic experiences, and complex emotions, it has the ability to alter how an individual or society view life and the world. It serves as a mirror that reflects the virtues and vices of society. The effectiveness of literature, particularly in the context of violence against women, lies in the fact that, in contrast to social sciences, it goes beyond theoretical arguments, tells the story behind the statistics, and presents situations and reasons that lead to violence against women, as well as the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of victims. Literature goes beyond facts, numbers, or statistics, and describes the plights of a rape victim, the justification for a man's violent act, how the perpetrator acts towards the victim, how the public responds to the act of violence, and how the victim is affected in the days and years that follow. It is essential for changing and enhancing a society.

The contemporary Indian women novelists depict the true picture of the atrocities committed against women in Indian society. They show the mirror in the face of hypocritical people who only talk of women empowerment but are still regressive in their attitude towards their women because the ground reality of the

patriarchal Indian society is that, violence against women increases day by day in all possible forms.

The female authors, particularly the novelists, have chosen themes that are distinctly female-oriented, putting the challenges that arise in a patriarchal society's predominate atmosphere front and centre. The writings of women also addressed numerous issues pertaining to the individual, society as a whole and emphasise how many Indian women have long been denied their rights and freedom of choice. Krishnaswami and Varghese assert that assumptions about women are universal in that they are viewed as inferior and helpless in every culture, regardless of their religion, country of origin, race, or the time period in which they reside. Yet, a large portion of women's work focuses primarily on evaluations of social justice and equality in patriarchal societies. K.S. Ramamurthy in his work *Rise of the Indian novel in English* states,

The emergence of women writers ... merits the birth of an era which promises a new deal for the Indian woman. The zealous social reforms effected by William Bentinck and Raja Ram Mohan Roy have brought the Indian woman emancipation from the tyranny of the ages and from cruel customs like Sati. The advent of English education with facilities for higher education for woman had again its impact on the status of woman in society and the Indian women who for ages had to be content with playing only a subordinate role in the social life of the country now had opportunities for playing many new roles. (66-67)

When highlighting the difficulties and struggles encountered by women in Indian society, women authors at first are incredibly sensitive and careful. But through

time, individuals have gained the self-assurance to express their anger at the terrible social situations they find themselves in. Indian women novelists have gradually revealed a sense of estrangement, suffering, and a mission for the new Indian women through their tone and themes.

Many authors describe the ways in which women have been repressed and taken advantage of, as well as the courageous ways in which they have challenged the prevailing patriarchal systems. Their worry prompted them to look into the processes that allowed women to survive the experience and to reveal these processes in their works from a female perspective. Thus, a literary platform for the inner self and experience of the woman is found.

The global movement for women's liberation gave female novelists way to reflect modern women who have realised they are not defenceless. According to them, a woman is just as skilled as a man. Women are no not only limited to take care of the household but also denied from doing things of their interest. In their writings, Indian novelists portray how modern women think differently from earlier generations. From youth to womanhood, Indian women writers explore the feminine subjectivity.

Indian women writers like Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Githa Hariharan, Kishwar Desai, and others like them, through their works, reveal the complex realities of being a woman in a patriarchal society like India. They use their works to communicate the true meaning of women's rights. Women's emancipation, according to these female authors, means putting an end to all forms of silent gender repression. Indian women's literature places a lot of emphasis on educating readers about the status of women in the Indian context. As a result, women's writings pay particular attention to the varied roles that women play and what is expected of them

in the context of traditional Indian society. It is a reflection of the plight of women in the Indian setting as well as a response to it.

Gender-based discrimination and exploitation are severe problems because they prevent half of the human race from reaching its full potential. Numerous attempts have been made to close the gap that seems to be growing wider and wider due to the widespread attention given to this issue. In many countries around the world, achieving women's access to political, economic, and health-related opportunities is still a long way off. Violence against women is one of the biggest obstacles to their progress. It keeps happening and becomes worse. This violates the rights of women.

There are several factors that contribute to violence. Power dynamics, authority disputes, and the desire to rule and destroy the other are the major reasons for violence. The occurrence of violence violates both the individual's right to freedom and the right to tell his or her own story. Male dominance leads to violence against women and produces and reproduces an ideological relationship that transforms difference into inequality. According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India, reported incidents of crime against women increased 6.4% during 2012, and a crime against a woman is committed every three minutes. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, in 2011, there were greater than 228,650 reported incidents of crime against women, while in 2015, there were over 300,000 reported incidents, a 44% increase.

In traditional Indian society, there were more social injustices against women, which had a negative impact on women's status in society. Child marriage, Jauhar, sati, purdah, widowhood, female infanticide, and forbidding widows from remarrying were

the main social ills of ancient Indian culture. The widows had two options: they could choose to sit on their husbands' funeral pyre in accordance with the sati custom, or they may have to struggle and depend on other family members for their remaining life. Widows were required to lead a stern life since they were not permitted to enjoy or live life independently. The difficulties of a widow's awful life included sleeping on the floor and not having access to good meals.

The predominant idea of male dominance in Indian society has a big impact on the issue of violence against women. India's patriarchal system has given males in society a dominant position. Additionally, it involves the general subordination and empowerment of women. According to UNICEF's "State of the World's Children-2009" report, 47% of India's women aged from 20 to 24 were married before the legal age of 18, rising to 56% in rural areas. The report also showed that 40% of the world's child marriages occur in India.

Men have the advantage of being superior to women in patriarchal societies because of the unequal power distribution between men and women. The ability to rule and make decisions is a privilege given to men in society. The patriarchal system, which divided the values of men and women, has moulded the social structure since it was first established. Traditionalists hold that male hierarchy in society has persisted from ancient times and will do so for years to come because men are socially constructed from birth to dominate women. Maria Mies the author of *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* states, "Peace in patriarchy is war against women" (19).

Women have long experienced oppression in India due to male supremacy. Women of carry out numerous rituals for the wellbeing of the community. She

observes a fast for the longevity and security of her husband and carries out numerous religious duties for the well-being of her family. Despite the fact that a husband and his wife have equal authority in the home in most cases it is the men who hold the power. The patriarchal society prevailing in India, causes the females to suffer, and their suffering is made holy by this rule. They have all restricted themselves to playing the usual role that has been given to them. Because of this, they act as agents of patriarchal values. They give in self-righteously while ignoring their psychological anguish.

Girls receive preparation for the responsibilities of wife and mother from their in early childhood. They are unaware of how profoundly deceptive and robbing of their identity and dignity this passive, unselfish position that has been assigned to them is. They develop a terrible sense of dependence around their lives, which negatively impacts their self-concept. Self-concept is the firm basis on which a person's existence is constructed. A healthy self-concept is essential if we wish to reach our maximum potential; the prerequisite for a successful existence. This opportunity to create one's own identity is cruelly denied to women. This is where psychological aggression against women, such as narcosis, insanity, dejection, and crazy, originates.

The patriarchal system oppresses women physically, sexually, socially and psychologically. In many cases husbands mistreat their wives physically and emotionally when they are angry or irritated. Men with patriarchal ideals often behave well in public but exhibit an entirely different character when at home. In a patriarchal society, women are subject to stringent limitations on the kinds of acts and activities they can engage in. Men with patriarchal ideals see

women as inferior to them and they repress these women them in the name of custom and culture. Since the beginning of time, women in our culture have suffered abuse from both their husband and father who treats them as their property. Women are supposed to be obedient caring and loving. It is a commonly known fact that women, who are physically and psychologically capable of performing equal with men. They have always been denied existence as full human beings and denied the chance to express their feelings, thoughts, and sorrow. Sushila Singh has stated:

Human experience for centuries had been synonymous with the masculine experience with the result that the collective image of humanity had been one sided and incomplete. Woman has not been defined as a subject in her own right but merely has an entity that concerns man either in his real life and in his fantasy lire. In spite of the educational opportunities and economic independence women are surrounded by domestic injustice and the crude customs of our society. They give birth to children and bring them up. (7)

Women in society are supposed to act in a specific way, and according to the norms outlined in the book Manusmirti, a woman is to revere her husband and treat him as if he were the Almighty. Men are taught to maintain control over women because women are thought to be passionate and unfaithful in Manusmirti. Women who live under the dominion of men and don't rebel against social norms are regarded as outstanding. In the patriarchal society of India, a woman receives her identity from her father and husband. After marriage, she is referred to by her husband's name and lacks her own identity. Therefore, it has been exceedingly

challenging to accurately assess the state of women from ancient to current times. There are still some customs that dominate women in the twenty-first century and hold them in a fetter-like grip while suppressing their souls. Even now, the ego causes conflict and hopelessness in the minds of women who fight for independence. As Rashida Gull and Aneesa Shafi state: “Despite the acceptance of the principle of equality between men and women, its implications were not fully worked out. Women continued to be the victims of several forms of discrimination in and out of the home in independent India” (46).

One of the most important, yet poorly understood and acknowledged factors contributing to the issue of women’s marginalisation is the frequent and brutal violence against women. Gender violence may take many different forms, including female foeticide and infanticide, sexual abuse, incest, molestation, sexual harassment at work and on the streets, marital rape, and domestic violence in the form of abuse woman battering. Culture-specific types of violence against women do exist in some regions, such as female genital mutilation in some African nations and harassment, murder, and beating for dowry in India. Domestic abuse is still the least acknowledged and often tabooed kind of violence that women experience.

The most severe infringement of a woman’s fundamental rights occurs when she is subjected to domestic abuse by members of her own family, who live with her in her own home. Data and in-depth research conducted by numerous members of the women’s movement have consistently highlighted the myriad issues related to domestic abuse. In fact, a number of recent studies, including the National Family Health Survey and the National Crimes Records Bureau³, have highlighted the home as the scene of violence against women and female children.

Even though the family is aware of the violence, the family does not appear to step in to stop it. Family members frequently believe they have little power to stop the violent husband. Victims, for their part, are unwilling to discuss domestic abuse because they believe doing so would make their spouses behave worse. They very seldom communicate with or ask for assistance from outside sources since they have been raised to carry the family honour. Because of this isolation, the victim's initial acts of domestic violence, which are often performed in the victim's home and by a person on whom they are reliant both financially and emotionally, cause them to suffer from feelings of humiliation, guilt, fear, abandonment, and pain. Accepting the reality of domestic abuse would be extremely embarrassing and uncomfortable for society, as it would reveal the vulnerability and danger of one of its most prized institutions.

There is little doubt that the societal construct of the ideal "good woman" establishes boundaries for acceptable standards, beyond which verbal and physical abuse is seen as violence. If a woman does not fulfil her "wifely" obligations, such as preparing meals on time or providing her children with proper care, then hitting her is not considered an excessive response. A prevalent misconception that violent acts are an expression of love and are only intended to make the target a "better person" complicates things further.

In her own home, where what was formerly considered as a shelter of love, compassion, and warmth is now converted into exploitation, attack, and violence, a woman's inherent rights are most severely violated. Unfortunately, women's lives have been miserable while being admired and cherished.

Domestic abuse can take many different forms, including physical assault, sexual assault, emotional abuse, intimidation, restriction of resources, or threats of violence. It

may also involve psychological abuse or coerced sexual involvement in addition to physical assaults such as beating, shoving, and punching. Indirect physical violence can take the form of pets being harmed, object destruction, or hitting or hurling things close to the victim. Spousal abuse frequently includes verbal threats of physical violence against the victim, oneself, or others, including children, ranging from explicit, detailed, and imminent to implicit and ambiguous in terms of both content and time frame. It can also include verbal violence, such as threats, insults, put-downs, and attacks.

Nonverbal threats can be conveyed by gestures, looks on the face, and body language. Economic or social control may also be a part of psychological abuse, including denying the victim access to money and other resources, forbidding the victim from visiting friends and family, intentionally undermining the victim's social ties, and isolating the victim from social interactions. Another type of abuse that could take place is spiritual abuse. There are several dimensions, such as mode (physical, psychological, sexual, and/or social), frequency (on/off, occasional, chronic), severity (psychological or physical harm and need for treatment), and severity (mild, moderate, severe, up to homicide). The most severe and enduring anguish, according to abused women, is not one-off violent acts but rather a pattern of abusive conduct. According to AIHRC's database, a total of 1120 cases of verbal or mental violence against women have been recorded which makes that 32.2% of all cases of violence recorded by AIHRC in the first ten months of 2020.

In January 2019, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) Questionnaire reported that 24% of Indian men had committed sexual violence at some point during their lives. About 65% of Indian men believe women should tolerate

violence in order to keep the family together, and women sometimes deserve to be beaten.

The traditional and foolish social belief that women are emotionally and physically weaker than men is one of the factors contributing to high prevalence of domestic violence. The number of reports of violence against women is substantially higher than that against males, despite the fact that they have demonstrated in nearly every area of life that they are equal to men. The most frequent reasons for women being stalked and beaten include being unhappy with the dowry and using women to get more of it, fighting with the partner, refusing to have sex with him, neglecting children, leaving the house without informing the partner, not cooking properly or on time, engaging in extramarital affairs, failing to care for in-laws, etc. A family member may physically abuse a female who is infertile in some situations. Domestic violence against women is typically caused by a spouse's drinking, dowry avarice, and longing for a male offspring.

Arguments that women cannot adequately care for themselves and their children, including attention to their children's education and care, if they are often harassed by their spouses. The right to education for young girls and boys is limited as a result of domestic abuse. Since education also serves as a barrier against domestic abuse, this is of the utmost importance. Men and women are less likely to commit violent acts and experience violence as a result of increased education.

Researchers have shown that stresses might increase a person's vulnerability to both physical and psychological issues, such as anxiety and heart disease. A feeling of being overburdened, feelings of anxiety, general irritability, insecurity, nervousness, social withdrawal, loss of appetite, depression, panic attacks, exhaustion, high or low blood pressure, skin eruptions or rashes, insomnia, lack of sexual desire (sexual

dysfunction), migraine, gastrointestinal problems (constipation or diarrhoea), and for women, menstrual symptoms are among the symptoms that may be present. Additionally, more severe illnesses like cardiac issues might be brought on by it. Additionally, data linked to stress and its harmful effects on the body were seen in experimental study that was conducted on animals. The beginning and growth of some cancers within the body have been demonstrated to be influenced by stress.

Dalit women were made to stay uneducated and to cut themselves off from all sources of self-realization, self-improvement, and positive development. After then, Dalit women were treated as slaves, willing to act in accordance with the whims and wants of the men in their community. The patriarchal social structure allowed males complete rights while relegating women to the role of men's wage slaves. It is a multifaceted splendour that women have been oppressed and devalued in the patriarchal societal structure for a very long time. Even though nature has established that men and women have equal rights, they have unnecessarily remained the defenceless victims of the patriarchy. Due to the power and socioeconomic privileges that dominating men in a patriarchal culture were born with, Dalit women are now in a subordinate position.

Patriarchy gives all rights and authority to males which leaves women at their mercy. Like members of the higher caste, all males generally subjugate women by relegating them to the fireside and the baby cradle. Freedom and independent subsistence were denied to women. Castes created distinct standards of behaviour for Dalit women in patriarchal societies by creating sacred texts and rituals. Dalit women barely have the chance to discover who they truly are. They are unable to have the

same opportunities for a free life as men or to enjoy social equality. The men in positions of authority, not they, defined them:

Gender within caste is defined and structured in such a manner that the manhood of the caste is defined both by the degree of control men exercise over women and the passivity of the women of the caste. Accordingly, demonstrating control by humiliating women of another caste is a certain way of reducing the manhood of those castes. Dalit women are thus the worst sufferers of patriarchy. (254)

Caste-based pride and dominance are made public on the body of a Dalit women. The lone quiet victim of patriarchal conceptions of male dominance is the Dalit woman. Dalit women make up a smaller portion of Indian society and are perceived as “other” by their own people. They also experience additional difficulties due of their gender. As Sharmila Rege in her acclaimed work *Writing Caste Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonies* points out, “There was thus a masculinization of and a savarnisation of womanhood, leading to a classical exclusion of Dalit womanhood” (18). Dalit women and girls are particularly vulnerable because they are subjected to gender and class discrimination, which traps them in a cycle of exploitation and marginalisation. The oppressive traditions, beliefs, and patriarchal system of Dalit males affects Dalit women the most suffering. Dalits experiences gender discrimination right from their childhood. In Dalit families’ female members are never provided with nutritious meals to consume. They must provide their husbands and other male family members with wholesome meals. They are forced to consume the leftover meals of men to satisfy themselves. The guidelines set forth by

society serve to define them. Both the males in their society and the upper castes see Dalit women as unclean.

Their hardships come as a result of discrimination and gender inequality that they experienced on many levels, as well as due to the unfair treatment overall. These include the practise of widow system, child marriages, weddings performed against the will of the couple, the dowry system, the forced confinement of women to private places, preventing them from receiving an education, and exposing them to the public. The patriarchal system undermines a Dalit woman's sense of self-worth and convinces her that she is destined to be inferior. The negative image that socialisation gives women they internalise it.

Dalit women have to deal with more challenging situations. Poverty, unemployment, and caste violence in both the public and private spheres has more impact on them. Nevertheless, they lead hard lives. Women are forced to dwell in slums near drains and nallahs, where rats bite their sweat-soaked toes. Women are in charge of managing their houses, caring for their children, and caring for the elderly in these circumstances. In other words, the patriarchal grip on women's life have not altered, and they still have to deal with the double oppression of being exploited as both housewives and employees.

During (1995), a large group of Dalit women's organization was formed under the title NFDW (National Federation of Dalit Women), which recognized the triple oppression of Dalit women based on caste, class and gender. A joint study by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, the National Federation of Dalit Women and Institution of Development Education, Action and Studies (IDEAS) was undertaken during 1999-2005, based on 500 in-depth case studies. The study examines the forms and

manifestations, frequency, caste and social status of preparations, causes, effects and responses to violence against Dalit Women over the study period. Twelve major forms of violence constitute the basic of this study, nine being in the “public” sphere – Physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and assault, rape, sexual abduction, forced incarceration and medical negligence – and three falling within the “private” sphere – female foeticide and infanticide, child sexual abuse within the family and domestic violence. Among the frequent forms of violence were verbal abuse (62.4%), physical assault (54.8%), sexual harassment and assault (46.8%), domestic violence (43.0%) and rape (23.2%). As far as causal factors are concerned, in most cases of violence in public sphere the perpetrators belonged to dominant caste. The key cause for violence was identified as gender-caste-class status.

Women suffer abuse from their own family members in their own community just because they are women. Even their own mothers are clueless about their health. They were handled like property. Patriarchal hegemony both inside and beyond the community, is shown in Dalit fiction. Dalit writings explore a new realm of experience that is uncharted to the world and reflect the severe and unpleasant situations faced by Dalit women. In their writings, Dalit women describe the abuse they suffered at the hands of their husbands and other family members, including their father, brother, brother-in-law, and father-in-law. The major responsibility of Dalit women was to care for household duties and bear children; they were viewed as machines for creating offspring.

Dalit women have little choice but to be politically active, but not always in the traditional sense of being unduly involved in political affairs but rather in the daily fight to change caste and patriarchal societal awareness. The widespread belief

that Dalit women are different is the condensed result of centuries of alienation brought by patriarchal and Brahmanical values at all levels of society, which in turn contributes to the high levels of exclusion, invisibility, and structural and domestic violence that Dalit women experience. Wherever Dalit women have run for office, they have come up against fierce resistance and have even been brutally assaulted. Despite this, they have made significant contributions to the development of India by their sheer labour and diligence. Dalit women, who have actively contributed to the welfare of both their family and the community as a whole, have the right to be respected. Dalits are triply marginalized based on caste, class, and gender.

The present study traces the sufferings of Dalit women in selected fiction of Meena Kandasamy and P. Sivakami. The novel *When I Hit You or Portrait of the Writer as a Young a Wife* focuses on the sufferings of a Dalit married woman living in modern times. The novel *The Taming of Women* traces the pains of Dalit women through generations.

Ilavenil Meena Kandasamy. One of the most well-known Indian authors of our day is Meena Kandasamy, whose works have won important accolades and garnered attention across the globe. She is the first Indian woman to create Dalit poetry in English and uses her works to highlight her worries about sexual politics, gender inequality, and caste. Meena Kandasamy's works show a nearly utopian desire for humanity to advance to a stage where equality, based on embracing differences, is the guiding principle.

In her writings, women and oppressed people are not portrayed cowardly or as less-than-human individuals. In almost perfect world, she believed that gender and caste would not be problematic categories, but rather one of many connected factors

that influence one's perspective. Her writings include a wide range of subjects, and the themes she uses show that she can organise her thoughts and approach a subject with maturity.

Her first poetry collection is *Touch*. It contains 84 poems. In The pan-Indian poetry competitions, this collection of poems has taken home first place awards. The second poetry collection, *Miss Militancy*, is named after the Kannagi, a mythical Tamil woman who serves as the main character in the South Indian epic *Silapathikaram*. She is considered as a goddess who fought against injustice.

Her third book, *The Gypsy Goddess*, which was released in 2014, is based on a real-life historical incident in which Dalit agricultural labourers from Kilvenmani village in Southern Tamil Nadu, India, who were burned alive for claiming the pay that the dominant castes owed them. A real and authentic portrayal of Meena Kandasamy's abusive marriage can be found in her fourth book, *When I Hit You or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*, which was published in 2017 and made the Women's Award for Fiction shortlist. This novel is a brilliant, portrayal of conventional marriage in modern India. It serves as a moving representation of a woman's innermost thoughts and survival difficulties.

Exquisite Cadavers, a recent book by the author that was published in 2019, is an inventive novel that alternates between horrors from Indian politics and personal life in London. In 2023 Meena Kandasamy has published *The Book of Desire*. It is translation of the third part "Kamattuppal" in *Thirukural* written by Thiruvalluvar. Through her writing she organised 250 kurals in separate headings "The Pleasure of Sex", "Renouncing Shame", "The Delights of Sulking". She is shortlisted for Women's Prize for this book.

An Indian Tamil author named Palanimuthu Sivakami also brings out the sufferings of women especially in Dalit society. She is one of the most well-known Dalit authors in India, who is an IAS officer. Sivakami is against the caste system because she believes it has killed the creativity of those from lower castes, particularly those people who are termed as untouchables. The author, Sivakami, details how the Dalits are mistreated and exploited by the higher castes. *Puthiya Kodanki* was a political magazine that Sivakami herself edited for fifteen years. Social issues and their linkages with gender, class, and caste are examined in the magazines.

P. Sivakami was the first Dalit woman to publish *Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum*, a full-length, semi-autobiographical Tamil novel. It illustrates the disparities between the races and the denigration of Dalits. first book, was later translated into English by Sivakami as *The Grip of Change*. *Anantayi*, her second book, was published in 1992. The second book by Sivakami that Pritham K. Chakravarthy has translated from Tamil into English is titled *The Taming of Woman*. From a feminist standpoint, it thoroughly reveals the suffering of the peasant women. She depicts a life that is both familiar and foreign. Anandhayi is married to a womaniser called Periyannan. He is not satisfied with the income his farms offer him. Periyannan never stops attempting to subdue them. Periyannan finds it challenging to manage two families and his official work after his small kid passes away at home.

1997's Pakaakuin is her third book. *Karukku Vettu*, her fourth book published in 1999, is a psychological investigation into the hypocrisy of Indian marriage. This book depicts the struggles faced by Dalit women as well as all women in patriarchal society. Three volumes containing her collections of short stories, *Nalum Totarum* (1993), *Kataici Mantar* (1997), and *Katailwl*, were released (2003).

The main objective of the study is to understand how women are prone to violence especially within their home. It brings out how Dalit women suffer due to triple marginalization. It also focuses on how education plays a significant role against the domestic violence faced by women. The purpose of the study is to bring the reality of modern society which holds Dalit women under male domination.

The second chapter locates the contested position of marital rape in Indian public sphere through Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: or, A Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife*. The novel is about a young writer who marries a college lecturer and ends up getting abused, assaulted and eventually raped by him. The novel traces the unnamed narrator's journey who tries to follow the patriarchal guidelines to survive the marriage but her commitment is rewarded with the most brutal beatings and sexual violation. The chapter calls into question the undeniable impunity provided to the husband in the marriage which in this case, is misused in every possible manner. The study also investigates the reasons behind not only excluding marital rape from the mainstream space but also not even criminalising the vicious crime.

The third chapter deals with the novel *The Taming of Women* by P. Sivakami portrays the trials and tribulations and the miserable plight of the women and how they are treated by men in patriarchal Indian society, it is the dual stress of caste and gender which places women in a state of utilization by the men. She is reduced to a mere body, to the place of a mere sexual commodity. P. Sivakami positively explains all ages and generations of women who are made to endure physical assault, sexual exploitation and gender inequity. Women are subjected to violence and ill-treated because of the age-old patriarchal society in which men are always upper hand and control the women irrespective of the class, background and the predicament of the women. All the women

characters are shown as trapped in the authority of men. They are forced to suffer all kinds of oppressions, all through their lives and they accept fate which cannot be erased. They lack basic rights and easily face brutality in their day-to-day life. The caste, class and gender factors all join to compress women's identity. Both the novels show women characters as easy prey to atrocities by rich, upper-caste landlords and the men of their communities.

The last chapter deals how women in both novels undergo domestic violence because of their gender and caste and how education helps them to rebel against the violence.

Chapter II

Powerless to Empowered: Cruel Realities of Modern

Marriage

Gender-based violence mainly focuses on violence against women. Harmful behaviours are always directed to females. It includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse such as forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, marital rape, dowry, selective malnourishment of female children etc. Domestic violence or intimate partner violence is one among them which should be given special focus. Domestic or intimate partner violence is violence against married women by their partners. This violence affects both physical and mental health of women. As a result, their life turns traumatic and many women isolate themselves from the society. Physical and sexual abuse have the immediate risk of having wounds and infections on their body. Verbal and psychological abuse scar the minds of victim, which remains for a long time. From the past to the present, women have remained victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence.

Though women are educated, economically independent and play a vital role in society, they are under male-dominated society. Society always wants women to be shut in their homes, take care of their families and please their husbands. Women's thoughts, feelings, opinions, and decisions are not respected. Patriarchy marginalises all women in society. Culture is constructed in a such a manner where women are oppressed, and men always occupy higher societal positions. Though many policies are implemented to uplift women, they do not benefit much from these policies. They still remain in the darker part of society. They are unable to lead their life according to

their wish. They are unable to achieve their dream. This theme is portrayed in Meena Kandasamy's autobiographical novel *When I Hit You or Portrait of a Writer as A Young Wife*.

The novel focuses on how marital rape is prevalent even in the 21st century. Ilavenil Meena Kandasamy, a poet, translator, feminist Writer and activist, is from Chennai, Tamil Nadu. *The novel When I Hit You or Portrait of a Writer as A Young Wife* is written in first person narrative form which talks about abusive marriage. The novel was shortlisted for the Women's Prize for fiction, the Jhalak Prize, and longlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize. The novel talks about the sufferings of an educated woman trapped in an abusive marriage. Society generally supports and propagates the idea that a husband has the power and authority to control his wife. It is seen that women in modern society can hardly take up their choice of career without their family's support. Meena Kandasamy breaks this myth in her novel *When I Hit You*. The unnamed protagonist encounters the problem faced by an educated woman. The narrator undergoes violence and faces trauma every day. She gets completely isolated within four months after marriage. Her husband abuses her physically, sexually, verbally, and emotionally. The novel attempts to show how women get into isolation or self-destruction when they transgress the role of "perfect wife".

Urvashi Bahuguna a poet and essayist from India in her blog, states "the novel is more than just a narration of abuses. Meena Kandasamy's visceral, precise storytelling takes the readers deep into the narrator's strategies for survival." Traditional women accept the superiority of males without asking a question or raising any voice. In contrast, modern women refuse to accept male superiority. They

start challenging the authority of men which results in frequent conflicts between men and women.

The novel focuses on the position of women in a marriage which is male-oriented and gets regulated by male-defined social and moral codes. The narrator's world revolves around an abusive husband, a father who feels ashamed of his daughter's divorce, and a mother who asks her to be silent and advises her that time will heal everything. The novel presents the psychological perspective of all married women who undergo domestic violence.

The high intensity of domestic violence or intimate partner violence is highly directed towards women. Various studies prove that women are highly prone to physical injuries because in most cases men who are the perpetrators of violence are physically stronger than women. The primary reason for domestic violence against women is men's perspective to have women under their control. This patriarchal idea makes women an easy target of violence. Patriarchy promotes the need for female submission and male dominance. Male partners dictate what is to be done and not to be done. Here the conflicts get triggered, and women are forced to submit to men.

The effects of domestic violence on women widely vary. While certain women opt for a divorce other are beaten to death or infected with fatal injuries. According to UNICEF, intimate partner violence is "the behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm". An intimate partner's abusive behavior would ruin the victim's life. In most cases, the victims are women who have lived in abusive and violent relationships for years and are filled with fearful and painful memories. It also affects their psychological and physical

development. Meena Kandasamy tries to convey that intimate partner violence or domestic violence is not a private family problem, it is a social issue.

The novel portrays how men abuse their wives because they feel jealous or insecure. Thus, by attacking their wives, they try to regain control. The narrator's husband feels insecure. He is suspicious that his wife might have other relationship. So, he starts attacking her physically and asks her to prove her loyalty,

He kicks me in the stomach. "Prove it!" he yells as I double over.

"Prove it to me that you are my wife. Prove it to me that you are not thinking of another man. Or I will prove it for you." My hair is gathered up in a bunch in his hand now. He is lifting me by my hair alone. All my blood is rushing to my head, my thighs fight to feel the hardwood of the chair. I am in pain. He drags me from the table and into the bedroom. (163)

The narrator's husband thinks he owns his wife, her body and her life. The narrator is forced to be silent and be isolated to escape the violence, "I climb into incredible sadness of silence" (161). Another primary reason for physical abuse is the general thinking of men to consistently win their arguments. When arguments are unsolved, or it runs out of men's hand, they start to attack their partners. In the novel, the narrator's husband always wants his wife to obey his words. He physically attacks or threatens her when she refuses to follow his words.

Most of the physical violence happens because of anger, aggression or irritation the abuser has on the victim. Similarly, the narrator's husband gets irritated when the narrator is unable to drink bottles of water to take a scan for her pregnancy, "Faster, he orders, lifting the bottle to a sharper angle. Faster. Halfway through, I

wrench the bottle away, gasping for air. I tell him I cannot take anymore, that I'm going to drown. He slaps me in front of everyone. The people in the waiting room either watch or avert their eyes" (199). Having a child becomes a strong reason for men to keep women under their control. The narrator, as a wife, who stays in her husband's house endures mental torture, and works at home the whole day, and her sufferings are the price for marriage.

When the narrator tries to consult about the physical violence she turns, to her parents, they try to console her. They did not support her or give her the courage to fight against the violence she faces. Her father asks her to put up with him, "The marriage is a give and take. Listen to him. He only means well. Do not raise your voice. Do not talk back. Yes, I know. It is difficult. But remember, only if you respond he is going to talk back and things escalate" (157). When she shares with her mother, the person who needs to give her moral support fails to support her. This shows how women in a patriarchal society fail to support or voice out for other women. "The first year is worst year. Tell me about it. It is maddening, it will drive you to suicide. You will be wondering what you are doing with him. I survived it. It was not easy, but over time you forget all the sadness" (157). This shows how society normalizes violence against women. When the narrator realizes that there is no parental support, she gets to silence and feels isolated.

This shows how women feel unsafe on complaining about the sufferings she faces in their marital life. This makes the perpetrators act more abusively, which hurts the victim. In the cultural system, men are considered to be superior. Indian marriage considers women as an asset of men. This perception makes men behave more violently against women. Men always try to take advantage of their physical power.

They always try to prove it through their violent behavior toward women. The narrator describes how abusive her husband is. She explains how he behaves in the kitchen as,

He is channelling his anger, practicing his outrage. I am the wooden cutting board banged against the countertop. I am the clattering plates flung into the cupboards. I am the unwashed glass being thrown to the floor. Shatter and shards and diamond sparkle of tiny pieces—my hips and thighs and breasts and buttocks. Irreversible crashing sounds, a fragile sight of brokenness as a pretty tyrant indulges in a power trip. Not for the first time and not for the last. (131)

The narrator gets distress at the sight of various objects in the house, like the tools of assault. She gets to know the lessons of brutality, copes with it, and presents herself as a perfect wife. Her husband views marriage as a contract of ownership. The narrator's husband attacks her violently when she uses the washroom after a physical relationship with him.

The narrator's husband, who is in a higher position in society as a professor, treats his wife well in public. He takes care of her and speaks softly with the narrator. He almost treats her like his comrade. But in private, he attacks her physically, sexually, verbally and psychologically. The narrator says, "I must learn that a Communist woman is treated equally and respectfully by comrades in public but can be slapped and called a whore behind closed doors" (34). He not only gains respect in public by respecting her but also from her parents,

But he plays the role of dutiful son-in-law to my parents. He weeps over the phone to my father. He begs my mother to tell me to be more

obedient. He tells his relatives that I do not feed him properly. He hints to the only neighbours around that I'm anti-social, that I'm one of the intellectual types who prefers her own company. . . . To men, he peddles the story that I'm jealous, that I do not tolerate his female students. (183)

Reality indeed hits the dreams and expectations of a women. The narrator and her husband meet in an online campaign. She, who has leftist ideologies, wants her future husband to believes in communism which will liberate society. She gets fascinated by his ideas in an online campaign. She considers him to be a true revolutionist. The earlier days of marriage were fine, but later she understands the reality where his communist views apply only to society and not to her. The husband becomes the teacher and the wife becomes the student. She learns how the love life she imagined turns into a re-education camp. She says, "Marriage became a Re-education camp. He transformed into a teacher, and I became the wife student learning from this Communist crusader" (32).

The narrator successfully presents her husband's hypocrisy. He promotes equality in society whereas denies at private sphere. The narrator describes his hypocrisy as, "He can be kind, I know he can, I've seen how tender he is with the homeless boys in the town, but with me I know he will always choose to be cruel" (138). It seems he suddenly enters into a patriarchal society once he gets married. He crosses all limits of cruelty to impose his powers on her body. The condition of narrator's feet says how abusive the narrator's husband is. The narrator's mother says, "You should have seen her feet,' she says. 'Were they even feet? Were they the feet of my daughter? No! Her heels were cracked and her soles were twenty-five shades

darker than you could tell that she did nothing but housework all the time. They were the feel of a slave” (4).

Unlike their western counterparts, Indian women are more oppressed socially and psychologically. In the male-dominated social set-up, they are sexually colonized and biologically subjugated. The novel *When I Hit You* by Meena Kandasamy captures the marital rape that the narrator experiences in her abusive marriage. Marital rape, also known as spousal rape, is the act of sexual intercourse with one’s spouse without the spouse’s consent.

The narrator questions how differentiation can be made between the dignity of a married and unmarried woman. Meena Kandasamy, through her novel, tells that irrespective of women’s marital status, every woman has the right to say no to non-consensual sex. She questions how non-consensual sex can affect the dignity of an unmarried woman, whereas how it does not affect married women. In an interview with Deepa Soman, Meena Kandasamy says that “the novel attempts to prove that it is important for women to claim autonomy over their body, to talk about their pleasure, to talk about their rights. When oppression seems to build on the edifice of controlling women's bodies, I think dismantling oppression has to begin there too” (4).

In Indian society, marriage is considered as a license of security for the woman, but for a man, it becomes a license to have sex. Women cannot openly complain about their marital rape because there arises a question of why they got married if a married woman says no to sex. This shows that the freedom of an individual has not yet evolved completely. In reality, women suffer because they are supposed to fulfil a man’s physical and emotional needs. They are not given space to

lead their way of life. The narrator expects mutual love from her husband and not merely lust.

It is seen that a male has the privilege to have physical relationship at any time to satisfy their desires, regardless of the female's feelings and interests. Most women feel they cannot decide independently because they do not know their rights. Biology becomes the main reason for women's oppression in this patriarchal society. Margret Atwood believes that sexuality is one of the aspects of women's oppression and exploitation. The novel portrays how the narrator cannot claim rights to her own body, pleasure and interest during intercourse. She refers forced intercourse as "rape" (102)

The man who rapes me is not a stranger who runs away. He is not the silhouette in the car park; he is not the masked assaulter; he is not the acquaintance who has spiked my drinks. He is someone who wakes up next to me. He is the husband I have to make coffee with the following morning. He is the husband who can shrug it away and tell me to stop imagining things. He is the husband who can blame his actions on unbridled passion the next day while I hobble from room to room.

(167)

Throughout history, sexual assault has been used as a weapon during the war to defeat the opponents. It is used to punish, destroy and terrorize the opponent's army. At times, commanders reward their soldiers, by allowing them to abuse women sexually. Sexual assault, used as a tactic of war, creates gender inequalities. Thereby, sexual violence has been normalized against women even after the end of the war.

Even today, the female body is degraded and objectified. Society considers the body of women as the core identity of a female. In the Indian marriage system, men

and women's relationship is based on domination and subordination. Unfortunately, in India, marital rape is considered legal. This is evident in Meena Kandasamy's work *When I Hit You*. The narrator's husband starts raping her when he finds that he could not control the space and body of his wife. The narrator describes this as "I never understood rape until it happened to me. It was a concept of savagery, of violence, of disrespect" (167).

The narrator tells how sex is used as a weapon by her husband to bring her under his control. Her husband always dominates her, "Sex, actually rape, becomes his weapon to tame me. Your cunt will be ruined, he tells me. Your cunt will turn so wasted, so useless you will never be able to offer yourself to any man. It'll be as wide as a begging bowl" (168). Sometimes the narrator's husband uses sex to punish her when she is silent or refuses to obey him, "A rape is also punishment. Sometimes, the punishment for saying no. Sometimes, the punishment for a long-ago love story" (168).

The primary reason for sexual assault is determining the women's identity based on sex. The novel portrays how women are seen as erotic objects. Men believe that once the woman lose their virginity to her husband, she has no other option left. She has to endure all the assaults, violence and trauma after marriage. The narrator says, "that is the aim of all his rapes, all this rough sex. Not just a disciplining, but a disabling. He believes that after him, I will have nothing left in me to love, to make love, to give pleasure" (176).

Women's feelings, interests and pleasure are not given important as men's. The narrator compares the physical relationship with her husband to death in the following way, "Sex with this man is the death of spontaneity. Sex is the opposite of

intimacy because the more he worries about the noise-question, the more he obsesses about the gardener, the less and less aware I become of pleasure itself” (153). Her husband also demands not to moan during the physical relationship. When she does, he assaults her verbally. The narrator says, “In his rule book – sown by patriarchy, watered by feudalism, manured by a selective interpretation of Communism – a woman should not moan. That is how history steals her voice” (154).

A child is an essential part of marriage. Unfortunately, women are often blamed for being childless. Women are respected and accepted as a member of the family only if she gives birth to a child. Childless women are not given importance and are disrespected by their family members. Society views childlessness as the end of women’s life. So, it becomes essential to have a child in the Indian cultural system. The cultural system makes necessary to have a child after marriage. But ignores the negative effects of having a child in abusive marriage.

National Violence Against Women Survey says that around 1.5 million women are abused by their intimate partners. It also states that women with children are at higher risk because it is true to accept that children become a barrier for women to come out of abusive or toxic relationships. A child’s life becomes the driving force for women to survive physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. So, men take advantage of having children. It becomes another weapon for men to tame women and keep them under their control.

The narrator in the novel *When I Hit You* firmly opposes giving birth to a child. She knows that if she gives birth to a child, she will be trapped in an abusive marriage. So, the narrator chooses her food that prevents herself from getting pregnant.

My skills in the kitchen are summoned forth in my secret plan of foiling Project Baby. The breakfast chutneys for the *dosa* I make no longer contain only groundnuts, green chillies and onion, but I toss a spoon of a white sesame seed. I follow the whispers of teenaged years, when girls with delayed periods, girls who had sex without condoms, and girls who were married early kept motherhood at bay with kitchen ingredients. In my fish curry, the tang comes not from tomato or tamarind – I introduce the pulp of raw, green mangoes into the spicy gravy. (201)

Within four months of marriage, the narrator is expected to get pregnant. The narrator's husband forces her and takes her to the doctor for a check-up. The doctor checks her body and consults everything with the narrator's husband. The narrator is not given space to express her opinion and interest in giving birth to a child. She says, "Having a baby is only a matter of discussion between the doctor and the husband. The woman does not ask me if I want a baby, if I am ready for a baby, if I am happy with my husband if I have problems that I might want to discuss" (197). It shows that women are still being treated as a childbearing machine.

These sexual assaults become an attack on her soul and diminish her freedom. Sexual abuse snatches the narrator's mental peace, alienating her from the society. But she is not the stereotypical woman who quickly gives up. She says, "I am rough, gruff, tough. The one who has written these mad and angry and outrageous poems about life and love and sex. I am not afraid of men; I have fashioned myself in the defiant image of its exact, uncompromising opposite- the women men are afraid of. I am anti-fragile. I've been made not to break" (219).

Verbal abuse is the other form of abuse that most married women face in their life. Verbal abuse is use of abusive language against a woman. Women undergo verbal abuse within home, educational institutions, private places, and workplaces. Most married women experience verbal abuse within their families. Their husbands and their in-laws verbally abuse them. This affects the mental health of women. The abusive words create a scar in their minds. They are poorly affected when they continuously undergo verbal abuse. As a result, they experience various issues like frustration, fear, anger, anxiety, depression etc. They start losing interest in their regular activities and isolate themselves from the environment.

Meena Kandasamy, in her novel, portrays how the narrator's husband abuses her verbally and depicts the psychological trauma she undergoes. The narrator learns the reality of life in the first month of her marriage. First, the narrator's husband threatens her verbally to obey his words. He asks her not to share her phone number with her family and friends and asks her to stay away from social media. When she refuses, he accuses her physically or verbally, "It always starts with a silly accusation, my denial, an argument and along the way, the verbal cascades into torrent of blows" (69).

The narrator's husband uses offensive words like bitch, slut and whore to demean her character. One of the reasons for verbal abuse is anger or aggression that the abuser has toward the person who is abused. Whenever the narrator's husband gets irritated or angry, he uses offensive words at his wife. The novel depicts how women are abused with harsh words which create scars on the minds of the victims. The narrator questions how language can demean the character of women in a large number of ways. The narrator questions how all the swear words in most languages

can target women. She questions how language can be biased. Though many feminists have voiced out on this particular problem, society remains the same. Vijayalakshmi, Associate Professor of Tamil at the University of Kerala, says in her poem, “there is no equivalent for ‘vesi’ or prostitute as if the concept does not exist”.

Secondly, the novel deals with judging and criticizing which is a kind of verbal abuse. Women are judged for every step they take in their life and continuously criticized for their actions. They are criticized for their appearance, career, daily routine, communication, skill, abilities, etc. The novel portrays how the narrator is judged and blamed for her appearance. The narrator’s husband accuses her for her outfit.

Even today, in India, accepting women’s clothing is a matter of question for many and no liberty is given to women in this regard. Society still believes there is a perfect way for a woman to dress, and this idea or belief kills the identity of many women. Clothing is a personal choice of an individual. It should not be determined or influenced by others. Society should stop judging women based on their outfits. Meena Kandasamy captures this in her novel *When I Hit You*. The narrator’s husband does not want his wife to be attractive to the outside world but only to him. So, he always demands her to wear a light-colored dress:

I begin by wearing my hair as he wants it: gathered and tamed into a ponytail, oiled, sleek, with no sign of disobedience. I skip the kohl around my eyes because he believes that it is worn only by screen-sirens and seductresses. I wear a dull T-shirt and pyjama-bottoms because he approves of dowdiness. Or, I wrap myself in an old cotton sari to remind me of my mother. Some days, when I am especially

eager to impress and to escape punishment, I slip into the shapeless monstrosity that is the nightie. (15)

When she refuses his demands, he calls her a prostitute. He also accuses her for using lipstick, “Don’t expect that you will one day earn the trust of the working-class women if you strut around with your lipstick and handbag. They will mistake you for a prostitute” (132). He manipulates her on choosing her outfit. The narrator’s husband criticizes not only her costume but also her profession. He does not want her to continue her writing profession. He always wants her to be the perfect house wife and keeps reminding her about it. He says, “*Should I remind writer Madam that she is also a wife?*” (48)

Thirdly, the novel deals with accusing and blaming. The narrator is accused of her family background and caste. Women from middle class commonly experience this kind of abuse. They are abused for their family’s financial status and for their caste. At times, they also face problems because of dowry. Being financially stable is an essential part of marriage. The narrator’s husband abuses her by using the word “bourgeois” repeatedly (24). The novel portrays how a woman is seen through her family status and caste though she is educated. This affects her self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence. When he calls her by using the name bourgeois, all the efforts she took to come up in her life gets wasted. Every time he calls her bourgeois, she gets deeply wounded which affects her psychologically. The narrator says, “I learn to criticize myself for who I am. I criticize myself for my reluctance about housework. I criticize myself for my choice of clothing. I try to point out the feudal remnants in my behavior. I take blame for the petit-bourgeois mentality that I harbor” (142).

Further, the narrator's husband blames her for all the arguments and problems in their life. He accuses, that it is her feminist attitude which creates a problem between them. Even though she tries to behave according to his wishes, he blames her. He always wants to take control of her and tries to oppress her. He is the one who does not respect her career, education and her opinions. He is always suspicious. He blindly blames her for the feminist thoughts. He says, "Your feminism is killing our love. And, just so you know, I am not the problem. I am not the problem and you know that. You are not the problem either. Your feminism is. . . . 'Your feminism will drive away all the men who come your way. No man stands a chance'" (121).

The narrator's husband threatens her for writing an article for Outlook as,

Nobody is going to save you. The men who are out there, waiting for you to walk out, are waiting for their turn to ride you. The women cheering you to leave me have two intentions- they want to see you ruined, lonely, miserable. Or, they want a drama absent in their own lives. If you're banking on these men or women to fix up your life, you're are making a mistake. (181)

This kind of societal view creates fear in the minds of women and resist them from walking out of the abusive relationship. The novel depicts how society is not concerned about the sufferings of women. Instead, society questions her character. It raises questions like,

Why did she not run away?

Why did she not use the opportunities that shed for escape?

Why did she stay if, indeed, the conditions were as she claims?

How much of this wasn't really consensual? (218)

The same society talks bad when a woman comes out of an abusive marriage. The narrators says, “Sometimes the shame is not the beatings, not the rape. The shaming is in being asked to stand to judgement” (219).

Women are considered Goddesses, but they are not treated as Goddesses. But they are not treated equally. They should be treated equally for the growth of both men and women. Women during early period were given no freedom. They were always expected to be shut with in the four walls. They were not given education. They were not given any freedom that men had. Slowly women started voicing out for them. Gradually, women were given education, and their literacy rate started to increase.

Slowly, women started to enter the world of literature. They first started to write in their pen names and then published in their original names. Their writings reflected the sufferings they faced in their life, and today women writers focus on various themes like refugees, politics, migration etc. The struggle for the empowerment of women was a complex thing. They suffered a lot to voice out for themselves. Today women have set foot in every field. They started to compete with men at every point of life.

At the same time, a part of society still tries to oppress women. Though women are given education, their career becomes a big question. Women are dependent on their partner’s consent to pursue their careers. Though women are well educated, they are still struggling to achieve their goals. Society still tries to keep women within the four walls. These women suffer because of their family members who instead of supporting and encouraging them to achieve their goals try to ostracize

them. This other side of society is portrayed in Meena Kandasamy's novel *When I Hit You*.

Betty Friedan, a feminist writer in her work *The Feminine Mystique* argues that life of women cannot be fulfilled through household chores. Women should not be forced to be in a domestic space. They should be given at least minimal education, if not like men. Men are given various opportunities to understand their life and improve it. Women should also be given a chance to understand the reality of life. Men should not consider that the mere duty of women is to take care of the children, please their husbands and do household chores.

Though the characters are unnamed, the narrator has brought out the sufferings of educated women. The narrator undergoes intimate partner violence. The narrator is affected emotionally when her identity in writing gets robbed. After her marriage, she moves from Chennai to Mangalore with her husband. Surrounded by new places, and new people she finds Facebook as the only medium to communicate with the outside world. This is a technological age where everyone makes their life easy with technology. But it also becomes a weapon for some men to take control of their partners.

According to US Norton Life Lock's survey, which was released on 2 February 2020, 46% of women admit to stalking by an ex or current partner online by checking in on them without their knowledge or consent, 29% were checking their current or former partner's phone, 21 % admitted to being reviewing their partner's search history on one of their devices without their knowledge or consent, 9% men created a fake profile to check on their ex or current partners on social media, 8% tracked their physical activity via their phone or health app, 10% admitted to being

using an app to monitor an ex or current partner's text messages, phone calls, direct messages, emails and photos. This is depicted in Meena Kandasamy's novel *When I Hit You*, which portrays the sufferings of a writer trapped in an abusive marriage. The narrator's husband slowly expropriates her freedom of writing. Initially, he demands to share her mail password and threatens her that if she does not share, he will hurt himself. Next, he forces her to deactivate her Facebook account.

The activities of the narrator's husband are surprising how even now, an English literature professor can stop a writer from pursuing her career. The writing is not only the narrator's career; it is her passion and the only confidant she has in the unknown city of Mangalore. When the narrator's husband stops her from writing she starts losing her identity and gets into depression. His activities prove that though men are educated, they do not come out of patriarchal ideologies. They use their education only to make money and improve their standards of living. No humanity is developed out of their education.

When he forced her to come out of Facebook, she put her last post as she was busy doing her project so that she would take a pause from social media. But she wanted to post it as, "Trouble in Second Week of Marriage: Husband-Moron Insistent I Stay Isolated. Mr. Control Freak Blackmailed Me into Deactivating Account. Writer At Risk! SOS" (53). This shows her troubles in her marriage life. The person who has to support her becomes an obstacle for her.

Being a professor, the narrator's husband shatters the writing passion of the narrator. When he wants to oppress her, he cuts off the connection between his wife and the outside world. The narrator is new to Mangalore, so she only has a few

friends. This became an advantage for him. The only medium she connects to the outer world is through Facebook, so he forces her to deactivate her account.

Virginia Woolf quotes, “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction” in her essay *A Room of One's Own*. She firmly believed that men and women are indeed treated differently. She considered the absence of women's fiction as the absence of talent. The essay focuses on how denying opportunities to women will cause isolation and inequality between men and women in society. This is portrayed in the novel *When I Hit You* by Meena Kandasamy.

The narrator is given three hours per week to access the internet. The narrator's husband always carries his USB dongle with him, saying he needs it to prepare for his lectures. The narrator has no chance to write. The narrator's husband forces her and gets her mail password. Further, he deleted some emails, replayed some of her emails, and at a point, he started to replied his emails using both their names. This is where the narrator feels that she has lost her identity.

As a writer, the narrator has the privilege to write about sex. But the narrator's husband demands her not to write about it for an article in Outlook. He considers that she should discuss those kinds of things only with him. So, he forces her not to write about it and gets the laptop from her. This shows the wrong understanding of the term sex. Sex is nothing but to differentiate between male and female from a biological perspective. But even today, it is seen as a controversial topic to be discussed. He argues why did she agree to write on that topic. He questions, “Why did you agree, he asks? You are a slave of this corporate media. You are selling your body” (75).

In the early days of the struggle for women's empowerment, it was believed if education was given to women, they would increase their standard of life. This would

help them in better understanding of the world, resulting in equality between men and women. Many feminist writers presented this view in their works. For example, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* by Mary Wollstonecraft questions why only men are prepared for professional and why not women. The work shows that lack of education is why women are considered inferior. It says how education and profession are essential for a woman.

Meena Kandasamy's novel focuses on the sufferings and struggles of an educated woman within the family. This proves that though the right to education is given to women, they are still expected to be under men. They are oppressed day by day. The novel attempts to show society that women are provided with education just for their namesake. They are still expected to follow the stereotypes of the male-dominated society.

Her husband entirely robs the narrator's identity. There is no purpose of education seen in the narrator's marriage life. All she needs to do is to cook what he likes, design her attire according to his likes, do household chores and please her husband. When she is forced to stop writing, she calls it "career suicide" (35). This shows how deeply the intimate partner violence hurts her. She also gets psychologically affected.

Many at times, a women's husband and family do not want her to pursue a career of her choice. Married women can't pursue their careers against their family's wishes. Society believes if women get into work life, it will negatively affect the family's growth. The social attitude towards women in India is the most significant barrier that most women face today. Traditionally men did not like their mothers, sisters, wives or daughters to earn money. They think women working with other men

is equal to compromise their purity and safety. They also believe women's participation in work will affect children's well-being and growth.

Men refuse to share household responsibilities. Many women are discriminated because of the unjust division of labour in most patriarchal families. They are unable to cope lot of responsibilities, so they are forced to come out of their work life after marriage. Men cannot be blamed entirely because many Indian women prefer to follow the traditional gender role. They fail to recognize the freedom and independence they get, when they are economically independent. Economic independence helps women in many ways to live their own life. It helps them in placing their opinions, and decision-making within the family. They tend to enjoy some freedom. It is why most men do not allow their women to work. The prime factor of men in marriage is to take complete control over women.

Similarly, the narrator's husband does not allow her to pursue her career. He always suspects her and often checks her phone to know her creativity in writing. He keeps phone calls and Gmail under his surveillance. In this process, the narrator loses her identity. She feels like a house after a robbery. He deletes the history of an email, a book in progress, references etc:

He deletes the 25,600-odd emails from my Gmail inbox. All at one go.

Then to prevent me from writing to the Gmail help team and having my emails restored, he changed the password to something I do not know and cannot guess. He erases everything on my hard disk.

Everything about my life as a writer is gone. There are no contacts.

There is no email conversation that I can return to at a later date. There

is no past. There are no drafts of poems I sent to friends. There are no love letters. There is no history of emails my mother sent me. (139)

After a continuous period of violence, victims face hypervigilance. The violence they endure also leads them to recall the incidents for their entire lifetime, and they tend to isolate themselves. Therefore, this is seen in the narrator's life, where she becomes over-conscious of her daily life, predominantly her afternoons. The narrator fears, "Afternoon are most unbearable time in my life as a wife. They sprawl out and fill me with dread. I have to anticipate his arrival. I have to show him solid proof that I have been busy. I am lost in restlessness lost in time that I cannot will away that I cannot spend. The minutes will swell into formless monsters" (58). Her depression of losing her identity isolates her, and she goes to the state of writing love letters to an imaginary lover.

Her letter to her imaginary lover portrays how she is deeply hurt. She takes revenge on her husband through her words. By repeating the word lover in her letters, she makes him angry and frustrated. In her letters, she questions love and respect are only for women gun-toting rebels. She wonders how they undergo violence by aggressive men in their journey of life. She questions:

Was respect and love something that the radical only reserved for women who were gun-toting rebels, women who distributed pamphlets and designed placards? How did these women survive these violent aggressive men in their ranks? Did they walk out? Did they fight? Did they leave their sexuality behind or did they barter it to make life in the organization easier? (89)

In her letter, she writes about how marriage ruined her life. She says how abusive marriage teaches how beauty can be made crude. She compares her life to a swing on a pendulum of choice, “Alive. Dead. Dead. Alive. Alive. Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead. I do not know if I am alive now. This kind of alive feels dead” (93). She gets the pleasure of writing without his knowledge when she writes the letters, even though they are temporary. The words in the letter cure the wound created by her husband. It heals her and fixes her with courage.

Using her language, she creates a beautiful world where she hides all her pain. The world she created is entirely under her control. To hide the scars on the body she wraps her body with her words which protect her from her abusive husband. She writes poetry, and words allow her to escape the real world. It gives rebirth to the woman hidden inside the perfect housewife. Though she creates a new world which was influential to bury a part of her soul, she cannot forget the words used by her husband.

Though there are conjugal rights, women’s life revolves around violence and abuse. Women remain a victim. Male gain sexual superiority by demanding and through any means possible. The narrator's world revolves around an abusive husband and a father who feels ashamed of her. To manage the situation, she satisfies her husband with a “requisite Humility” that pleases her husband’s mind (19). She becomes an actress, a self-anointed writer and the cinematographer of her role. But this is just a temporary escape from domestic violence. Her role changes daily, every hour and every time she sits and contemplates.

The narrator’s image as a feminist, writer and poet gets converted to a battered wife. She erased her memory as a writer when the evening stalks her doorstep. Only

in the kitchen she has the upper hand in her married life. Only in the kitchen can she not be insulted, criticized or can be attacked violently. This is the reality of many middle-class housewives in India. The author describes, “She becomes peg on the clothesline, the gem clips on the table, the coat-hanger in the closet, the woman in the kitchen, the submissive between the sheets” (104). She describes her role of wife as:

Three four

Sweep the floor

Three four

Do the chore

Three four

Come here whore (137)

The narrator is treated like a slave. She is given no freedom. She compares her marriage life to a chess game. Where she tells, “This battle of adversaries is structured like a chess game. Here, there are only two players. The king constantly under threat. I’m the king who can only move only one step at given time. He’s the drama queen. There is no move that he cannot make. The board is empty except for us. He corners me wherever I move. There is no hiding. In the end he always corners me” (150).

The effects of violence vary in form and severity. The results may be even more severe for those at risk due to their physical, psychological, economic, or social circumstances. Those with a history of victimization, then those with access to resources, are in good health, live in favourable environments, and are not subject to

any other significant stressors or health issues. However, anyone can experience trauma from intimate abuse. In certain instances, months or years after the actual occurrence of violence has stopped, the repercussions of earlier intimate partner violence can resurface for the first time or after a protracted period of remission. Violence against intimate partners frequently has adverse psychological effects. Fear, rage, frustration, perplexity, and grief are common emotions.

Intimate partner abuse can drastically harm one's feeling of emotional well-being. A significant effect of intimate relationship violence is physical harm. Any level of injury is possible. Examples are bruises, sprained muscles, wounds, fractured bones, missing teeth, hair loss, dislocations, ruptured eardrums, and permanent disfigurement. Women are more likely to be physically attacked during pregnancy:

I am ashamed, embarrassed and secretive about this actual body of mine. My scars are my secrets. My straight shoulders sometimes slump; I wish my breast would disappear. My hair falls in handfuls, a shame like no other for a woman, one that can barely be admitted to even the closest friends. Every hairstyle is a style to hide. My back hurts from sitting for long hours. I am howling, screaming mess on the days of my period. (239)

Traumatic stress reactions are defined as specific psychological symptoms that are severe enough to affect the daily routine. These psychological effects include increased startle reaction, nightmares, intrusive pictures, emotional numbness, trouble falling asleep, increased irritability, and difficulty in concentrating. These signs are frequently used to identify post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Difficulties with anxiety, depression, alcoholism, and drug dependence often accompany psychological

trauma symptoms. Similarly, the narrator is stressed even after the abuse. Her mother describes how the narrator is worried:

Stress. Stress can have any reaction on the body. Stress is what's making your psoriasis worse. Skin and hair. That's the first level where stress operates. When my daughter was having a bad time-yes in that marriage, you cannot imagine what happened to her. What can I say? Distance yourself from stress. Do breathing exercises. Learn to be relaxed. (5-6)

The narrator gets depressed due to the physical, sexual, verbal and psychological abuse she faces in her marriage. She personifies depression as an insect which kills her body and her soul, "When it is not depression, when it is not this restless insect flying around in my brain and eating all the softer parts that program me to be an obedient wife" (151). Similarly, the victims stop believing in the people around them. They lose hope in their life. It takes a long period for them to come out of the trauma. The narrator also loses hope in her life. She says that she should have stopped hoping for a better future, "The hope that things will change for the better tomorrow. The hope that he will eventually give up violence. Hope – as the cliché goes- is the last thing to disappear. I sometimes wish it had abandoned me first, with no farewell note or goodbye hug and forced me to act" (182).

The novel brings out the cruel realities of marriage in the modern times through the narration of unnamed protagonist. It portrays the domestic violence faced by an educated women because of her gender and caste. The novel depicts the submission of the narrator to her husband to escape from the domestic violence.

However eventually she strengthens and expresses her heatedness through her writing and finally walks out of the abusive relationship.

Chapter III

Muffled Voices: Grief, Pain and Subservience

Domestic violence is typically committed by men who have held positions of trust, intimacy, and power, such as spouses, boyfriends, fathers, father-in-law, siblings, uncles, sons, or other relatives. Most often, violence against women is committed by men. Although women can commit domestic violence, their actions only make up a minor portion of all incidents. Domestic violence begins in household which has severe effects on the victims.

In households, where they should be the safest, women are frequently in high risk. Many women experience violence and horror at home at the hands of someone who they trust. Victims experience both physical and psychological pain. They are incapable of exercising their own judgement or expressing their own ideas, because of the constant danger of violence. Their human rights are violated and their lives are ruined. Dalit women suffer worse than common women. Caste and gender discrimination together result in numerous forms of discrimination against Dalit women.

The patriarchal systems frequently ensnare Dalit women. Due to their status as a woman and a Dalit, they endure horrendous discrimination. Dalit women are the important target of violence and they are consistently denied of individual options and freedom in many aspects of life. The result of seriously unbalanced social, economic, and political power equations is this widespread junction of gender and caste discrimination. Dalit women deserve to be previewed as subjects rather than objects. They have been kept silent and their voices muffled. P. Sivakami through her novel

The Taming of Women traces the pains of a Dalit women. The novel is originally written in Tamil by P.Sivakami and translated by Mohammed Hanif in 2012. The novel deals with caste, gender discrimination, incest, double oppression of women, violence, industrialization.

This chapter deals with the sufferings of Dalit women portrayed in the novel *The Taming of Women*. It deals with physical abuse, sexual abuse, extra marital affair, dowry and how children are affected by intimate partner violence.

Men and women are classified by society according to specific traits. However, this division is primarily psychological in nature. The concept of gender refers how men and women are socially constructed. Men are conventionally conceived as being bold, strong, forceful, independent, aspirational, rational, and logical. Women, on the other hand, are stigmatized as being timid, submissive, soft, reliant, selfless, emotional, and intuitive. Though women are glorified for their inherent capacities, they have been exploited because of the same qualities. Unconsciously, through generations and in the course of daily life women have accepted this patriarchy and prejudice.

Throughout the world women are treated badly due to their gender, caste and economic stability. Women from lower castes are suppressed twice, firstly for being female and secondly for belonging to a lower caste. No matter what role they play in patriarchal society, women are imprisoned in every way. They are abused physically, sexually, verbally and emotionally.

R.S. Khare made a convincing case that Dalit women must also consider their physical safety in addition to personal and social disgrace. A Dalit woman's "home" was often a place of verbal and physical abuse from their father and brothers, rape by

their father-in-law or brother-in-law, forced subjugation to serve their spouses' whims, and domestic and sexual violence. They were underpaid economically, and frequently faced serious risks to their physical safety as well as sexual harassment.

P. Sivakami through her novel *The Taming of Women*, depicts how Dalit women suffer for generations due to domestic violence. Throughout the novel, most of the female characters suffer due to domestic violence. Anandhayi who is the protagonist is often prone to physical assault by her husband Periyannan. He treats his wife violently and worse than a maid. He refuses to give money to her even for her own expenses. He attacks her violently to show his anger. He attacks her, pushes her on the floor even when she is enduring labour pain, "Periyannan, his torso bare, came thundering down the steps. He released the woman from Anandhayi's grip and pushed her aside. Anandhayi crashed to the ground with a loud sob" (4).

They are always expected to do only household chores. They are not allowed to explore things that they need. They are always expected to be under the control of men. In this case Dalit women are affected severely. Sivakami brings this through Anandhayi's elder daughter Kala. She is very fond of riding cycle. But when Periyannan comes to know about this he hits Kala, "Ayah, cried Kala. By now her blood was swollen because of her father's blows" (84).

A woman once married cannot even think about escaping the brutal situations even if her husband was a cruel fellow but the male partners could escape from such bonds and marry as many times as they wish. Women are always blamed for all kinds of stuff that happens in the family. Men fail to take the responsibility of taking care of their family and children. Here in the novel *The Taming of Women* by Sivakami portrays the sufferings of a mother. Anandhayi was also hit badly for Kala learning to

ride a bicycle. Mani, the eldest son of Anandhayai and Periyannan tells, “*Why hit Amma? And scream curses so loud that the entire street hears?*” (85). Thus, the novel portrays how Dalit women suffer more domestic violence. They are not even allowed to learn or given the opportunity to explore the basic stuff in life.

Dalit women are traditionally denied of educational opportunities. In terms of access to educational knowledge, for generations they haven't been exposed to reading, numeracy, literature, and other desirable forms of knowledge and they are likely to be at a disadvantage. This would mean that Dalit women would probably need specialized pedagogical support from the educational system. They are abruptly stopped from schooling once they attain puberty. On the other hand, men are allowed to continue their education. The denial of education becomes a reason for their sufferings, because only through education one can view the outer world. Swami Vivekananda insists that women should be put in the position of power to solve their own problem in their own way and this cannot be possible without education.

This is portrayed in the novel *The Taming of Women* through the character Kala. Kala is dropped out of school as she attains puberty. Though she is interested in continuing her studies, she is denied. But she could not stop herself from learning. So, she borrows a book from her neighbour Dingumalli. When Periyannan came to know about this he hits Kala hardly. He says, “Who gave you the guts to go and beg a man for books, eh? Has your mother let you lose to roam the stress? He growled his teeth and raised his hand again. . . . Pouncing on Anandhayai, he caught a handful of her hair, shook her hard and walked off” (37). Poongavanam who is just a year older than Kala also moves out of the school after her puberty.

Dalit women are made to believe right from their birth that whatever the patriarchal system says and does, is correct and should not be questioned. This is the basic reason for their exploitation. Women are perpetual victims of a male-dominated culture, suffering for no fault of their own. They have various roles to perform in their life. They must face criticism for being a girl from the moment she is born. They must rely on her father while she is a child. After marriage, a woman depends on her husband, and in her later years, she leans on her son for support. She has obligations to her sons as a mother, to her husband as a wife, and to her father as a daughter. Despite her significant suffering, woman nonetheless endures a number of male-predominant afflictions. A married women not only face abuse from her husband, but also by her in-laws also. In Dalit community, a woman is physically assaulted by her children too. This is portrayed in the novel *The Taming of Women* through the character Vadakathiyal. She suffers from her, husband, brother-in-law and her son. Her husband beats her using a lock, “I was thrashed around even after my children grew up. See these loose teeth; it was he who knocked it. Once he threw a heavy lock on my face and this is the scar” (105). Her son also attacks her physically. “If I kick your face your teeth will fall off” (104).

Similarly, Periyannan not only beats his wife and daughter but also his mother. He turns his anger towards his mother when she tries to support Anandhayi. As days pass, he also attacks the woman with whom he has marital affair named, Lakshmi. Similarly, Mani also attacked his sister, “Mani came out running and punched her on the back, saying, I’m not able to listen to the song on the radio” (24). He also attacks Lakshmi who is in his mother’s age, “Mani kicked her on the chest, cursing, do you even call yourself a woman?” (128) Lakshmi says, “What hurt me more was what Mani did, whom I thought of as a younger brother. He kicked me on my chest. I had

envisioned him as pure gold. Now I know he is no gold, just rotting tin. How did he have the heart to kick me, Akka?" (129) This shows how a Dalit women suffer from every male member of the family. Despite of their age, women are suppressed and treated badly by all men in their family.

In Dalit communities, men often view controlling a wife as a show of manhood, and they often believe that a wife should follow her husband's instructions. In other words, when a woman disobeys her husband, she will suffer the consequences. In the Indian system, women are treated as the slaves of their husbands as soon as they get married. Women should continue to be sincere and devoted to take care of their spouses, notwithstanding how unkind and evil they are. The female lacks a voice, whereas the male does have a voice at all times. In the due course she learns to accept life with all of its whimsy with ease. In a society where men predominate, women are expected to be the perfect homemakers, mothers, and wives, among other duties in the family.

Periyannan abuses both his mother and girls in a terrible manner, showing no remorse when they bring their father and her son along. His harshness against Anandhayi knows no bounds and serves as an example for her sons, particularly the eldest one who imitates Periyannan's bad behavior. Chinnasami who works in the fields of Periyannan comments that "he's going to be worse than his father. God knows which girl is going to be married to him and suffer" (128). Periyannan who is cruel to his wife and daughters never tries to control his youngest son, Anbu. On the other hand, he is encouraged for his actions, "his temper is just like his father's" (10).

Sexual abuse within families is a growing kind of domestic violence. It's a prevalent misperception that only married women experience violence from their

husbands. The reality is that family sexual abuse may be extremely harmful to both women and children. Many women are instructed to be wary of men when they are away from their houses. Further, due to low socio-economic status, Dalit women are often the victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Dalit women's sexual and bodily integrity are threatened and violated, even from a young age. Dalit women are victims of social, religious and cultural practices like Devdasis and Jogins. In the name of these practices, village girls are married to God by their helpless parents. These girls are then sexually exploited by the dominant upper caste landlords and rich men who think doing this is a work which requires immense power and they show their power and direct them to trafficking and prostitution. BBC in the year 2020 reported that 500 Dalit women in four states across India are abused in one or other form. 54% had been physically assaulted; 46% had been sexually harassed; 43% had faced domestic violence; 23% had been raped; and 62% had been verbally abused.

The social evil that frequently goes unreported in the nation is the sexual enslavement and abuse of Dalit women. They are sexually dominated by people in their communities and families as well as by outsiders, who entirely disregard their value or wishes as human beings. Moreover, Dalit women are frequently the targets of trafficking and sexual exploitation because of their low socio-economic status. Dr Suraj Yengde, in his work *Caste Matters* states, "She is a victim of the cultures, structures and institutions of oppression, both externally and internally. This manifests in perpetual violence against Dalit women" (23).

The novel *The Taming of Women* by Sivakami depicts how Dalit women are sexually abused. Throughout the novel Periyannan is portrayed as a womanizer. He tries to bring women under his control through sex. He abuses many women in his

life. He sees Anandhayi as child bearing machine. She gives birth to six children continuously. When Anandhayi was about to deliver her fifth child, Periyannan bring his mistress Lakshmi to home. Anandhayi expresses her grief as, “Sami . . . *let the slut come down and she will get it from me. She who has climbed up has to climb down*” (4). Periyannan not only betrays Anandhayi by bringing Lakshmi to home but also gets into a relationship with Muthakka who comes to take care of Anandhayi and her children during the time of pregnancy. Muthakka who came as a maid also suffers from sexual assault, “Brushing against her body, Periyannan walked out of the kitchen” (7).

Dalit women are treated as slaves. They are not given the respect and care that is given to animals. The novel *The Taming of Women* depicts how women are illtreated. They are always suppressed by men. Periyannan says to his wife’s cousin Iyyakannu, “You are free to take your sister, but don’t touch my bulls. What I do without my bulls . . . don’t make me say things I might regret” (43). This is because Periyannan fears that Iyyakannu might not provide good food to his bulls. But he does not care about his wife Anandhayi. She has spent many days providing the available food to her children and where as she sleeps with empty stomach.

Dalit women are defined as marginalized beings by the patriarchal classification. Dalit women’s status in their society is decreased, and they are reduced to nothing more than objects. Women are not only sexually abused by their husbands but also by their in-laws. The novel, *The Taming of Women* explores how Dalit women are abused by their in-laws for their physical pleasure. Vadakathiyal suffers because of her brother-in-law. She says, “When I question him, he says, a younger brother’s wife is as good as one’s own wife and an elder brother’s wife is half one’s

wife” (105). In this perspective S. Anandhi in her chapter “The Women’s Question in The Dravidian Movement” published in *Gender and Caste* edited by Anupama Rao writes, “Once a woman was made, she was made the guardian of man’s property, she herself became his property to produce heir for the family . . . women lost their right to worship their Gods but only their husbands. The private property which has been the main reason for women’s oppression has to be totally destroyed in order to achieve women’s liberation” (144).

Dalit women who are 16% of the female population become easy prey to the men because of their triple marginalization based on gender, caste and economic deprivation. They are easily abused by upper class men and by their own family members. A power disparity between the husband and wife could lead to domestic violence. P. Sivakami portrays this in her novel *The Taming of Women* through the character of Neelaveni. The story of Neelaveni tells how she was raped by her nephew Manickam. This affects her for a longer period of time:

Did he not know whom he was touching? I am his aunt, for God sake!
Of course, he knew it was me; after all, he crossed the other two
sleeping beside me to get here. I know I have a reputation. But that
does not mean he can do this to me! . . . I still cannot believe where he
chose to touch. how do I even look at him tomorrow? (148)

Over the decades, women suffer in terms and conditions that men impose on them. They have frequently remained silent and mute. Over the years, they have made an effort to win equal rights for men and women. But as of yet, that has not materialized. The patriarchal system has marginalized, oppressed, and even constructed women, which has resulted in their subjugation. Aggression of male make

them to own woman's body. But, with the rise of feminism, a woman's body has become her own destination. Historically, men have sought for the bodies of women. Sivakami through her novel *The Taming of Women* depicts how women are abused from their young age. Right from her young age Neelaveni is sexually abused:

During school days she was abused by her teacher Rangasami and PT master. One day, when Rangasami was enticing her thus, the PT master entered the room. This is not you are going to get her to listen. She has to be caned, he said and began to wallop her. Before Rangasami could intervene, the PT master came to her. And so, she became a plaything for everyone. (28)

Women have tried to express their demands, wants, and angst, and as a result, their speech has become more combative. Women must develop the practice of disrupting the system of patriarchal violence instead of allowing themselves to be passive targets of male aggression. Women should also recognize their own potential and make an effort to speak out against the abuse, oppression, and suffering they have endured over the years. But still Dalit women are unable to voice out for themselves. They fail to recognize their importance and the rights they possess. This makes them easy target of violence.

Dalit women are mere voiceless beings, having flesh and blood. They are voiceless and remains as silent witnesses to the injustices towards them by the caste hierarchy and gender indifference. Women cannot expect anything from their spouses through marriage. Women are made to be their husband's helpers so they must submit to their husband. As a result, a woman's submission to a man is natural. Even though

they are having children for their husband's benefit, this does not guarantee that their husbands would treat them with respect and dignity.

The story of Vellaiyammal who is the mother of Periyannan also reveals how women are just used as an object to satisfy the needs of men. She gave birth to eleven children and sacrificed her whole life to take care of the family. But she was not taken care neither by her husband nor by her children. Her husband beats her badly, "He flew into a rage, called her a squanderer and slapped her on her cheek. It was a strong blow; after all, he was used to hard labour. Her cheek swelled up like a paniyaram" (65). Periyannan also misbehaves with his mother. He has no affection for his mother. After getting a big building contract, Periyannan throws a bundle of currency at her feet and insults his own mother, by shouting at her if she has ever seen this much money before in her lifetime.

Lakshmi who came in search of love and support was also abused. Periyannan demands physical relationship from Lakshmi whenever he needs. He does not give importance to her interest or for her opinions. Lakshmi bemoaned to herself, "The whole night, after a hard whack on my nose, I lay crying to myself, and here he was with this bitch, not even regretting hitting me or feeling guilty of his act. I am the one who is an idiot" (133).

All women in the novel *The Taming of Women* are forced to sexual abuse right from a young age. When Kala and Dhanam take a bath, they see a group of young men peeping at them from the lemon tree. One of the minor characters Poongavanam also was cheated by Duraisami, by making her pregnant, "Poongavanam was now working in Nayakar's orchard. There she met up with a co-worker Duraisami, and had

a relationship with him. She got pregnant. He promised to marry her but disappeared. No one knew where he went” (242).

Throughout the novel, women are verbally assaulted through abusive words like bitch, slut and whore. They are blamed for all negative happenings in the family. Women are continuously threatened and subjugated. When Poongavanam wanted to go to school she was accused verbally, “Bitch, if I give you a slap, it’ll tear your cheek” (74).

Discrimination against women is normalized in practically every home from an early age, and by the time women reach maturity, they have come to accept it as natural. They later inflict it on their daughters. Even educated women find it difficult to challenge the patriarchal society. Families and close friends make fun of them for who they are and try to paint them as fools or sinners. Because of this, modern women experience significant depression. In Dalit communities the honour of the family they enjoy is in proportion to the restrictions imposed on the women of the house. Women are judged for their outfit. Dalit women are not allowed to wear clothes on their choice. P. Sivakami depicts how women are judged in the novel *The Taming of Women*. Mani tells,

Why should one of her plaits fall on her chest?

Why curl just a few strands of her on top of her plait?

Why should she leave her hair loose after her hair bath?

These were the reasons why the boys ogled at her. His friends had told him. (82)

The majority of Dalit women marry for social and economic reasons. They are compelled to live their lives according to their predetermined fate by man. To a greater or lesser extent, oppression builds tension or hurt, and thereby it becomes an inevitable part of their lives for untouchables, especially Dalit women, who must learn to tolerate one another and make sacrifices. Similarly, Kala Periyannan and Anandhayi forces Kala to get married. When Kala refuses Periyannan threatens his mother, “Is she going to be his wife or just sleep with him? How dare she says she doesn’t like him? Let her say that once more and I’ll skin both the mother and daughter alive” (113).

Dowry plays a significant role in lives of Dalit women. Dowry is a significant issue in Indian marriages. Dowry-related violence can happen when the bride price or dowry appears to be insufficient to the groom’s family. Each girl who pays the bride price known as dowry will become someone’s daughter-in-law. Many people give and accept dowries only because their parents and forefathers did so.

Dowry is a social custom, and it is very difficult to change customs overnight. Notwithstanding the fact that the practice of dowry has been outlawed. India’s social structure is firmly rooted in the practice of dowry. It is deeply ingrained in the patriarchal worldview of society. The rise of materialism made women a commodity. Due to Dalit women’s lack of power, male dominance, and financial dependence on men, dowry is encouraged. The terrible dowry system is the major reason for death and disabilities of countless helpless women. Women are forced by their husband and in-laws to get dowry from their parents. If women refuse, they are being accused verbally. In the novel, *The Taming of Women* Dhanam is physically and verbally

abused by her husband and by her mother-in-law for her past and marrying without any dowry:

He also accused her of coming without a dowry, continuing to batter her with the same stump. And then he kicked her hard. Her mother-in-law instead of pulling him off her, commented that it was her words that had earned her those kicks. . . . So there was yet another verbal duel between the two women. Finally, the mother and son chased her out with the child, to her father's house. (241)

Periyannan the antagonist of the novel pushes his mother and accuses her for supporting Anandhayi, "All this is because of you, ranted Periyannan, shoving her aside. Aley . . . you've broken my foot . . . aiyoo" (118). Periyannan also accuses his wife by asking her to die. He says, "tell her to die, went on Periyannan. Only then shall I have some peace. I can raise kids on my own. But she refuses to die. Don't tell me she cannot find a length of rope or rat poison or some yercum sap" (118). He threatens Anandhayi to obey his words, "you don't want to do so, then be prepared for the kicking" (239).

Dalit women thus lack the authority to make decisions in a household. According to the patriarchal system, the choice should be made by the father or spouse. The freedom of a woman to choose her spouse is restricted. It is clear that this situation disadvantages women, and most of the time, women in marriage experience more depression than men. Women's dependency serves to highlight how weak, meek, nurturing, illogical, and submissive women are, among other things. Periyannan says, "I got Kala married off at fifteen. I should get this kid married too. What she has studied is more than enough for her. She is now a puzzle" (231).

The violence that Dalit women face create scar in their minds which affects their mental health. Though they undergo extreme violence, they refuse to voice out for their own self. Slowly, they start losing interest in their life. Every woman in the novel gets affected psychologically due to the violence they face in their life. Neelaveni, sister-in-law of Kangani, who faces sexual abuse gets scared of all men. She is unable to forget the incidents that happened in her life. It remains as a scar in her mind. She always reminds of what her nephew Manickam has done to her. She tells, "This body is going to rot, after all. And he touched this body knowingly or unknowingly. But why am I not able to let it go? Why am I so troubled?" (149) She is one of the beautiful girls in the village. But this beauty became a threat to her. Every man in the village viewed her as an object of sex. This stops her from getting married. This makes her depressed and forces her to be silent.

Intimate relationship violence frequently results in emotional suffering. The common feelings are fear, rage, annoyance, confusion, and melancholy. The novel *The Taming of Women* depicts how Dalit women who face violence are unable to express their emotions and which is later expressed through frustration, anger and rage. Periyannan's activities upsets Anandhayi. She is unable to bear the violences but also in the state where she could not express to Periyannan. So, every time she shows her rage and anger on her children.

Likewise, Lakshmi who is unable to bear the torture by Periyannan tries to kill him with a sickle in a fight. Luckily Periyannan is saved but gets hurt in his hand. Lakshmi tells,

Adey come on. I am seenidevan's daughter. Stand up if you have the guts! . . . Periyannan's wanning courage took strength and he lurched

forward to take the hold of the sickle. Realizing that her life was at risk, she swung it to and fro so that the blade struck Periyannan's palm and it started bleeding. He screamed in pain and fell down on the ground. (128)

Lakshmi who is unable to bear Periyannan leaves the house thrice. But she is again brought back by Periyannan. When she leaves to her parent's house, he goes in search of her destroys the reputation of her father. This affects her badly and she decides to return with Periyannan.

Looking at their pathetic situation, Lakshmi volunteered to return with Periyannan if her parents were spared. But her heart had hardened. To satisfy her, Periyannan thrust a few currency notes into her father's hands. Forget all this, please. I will not touch this money, said Seenidevan, flinging it to the ground. (135)

Once she returns, Periyannan tries to make her happy by getting her new saree and good food. But she is unable to forget the incidents and the violence she went through. The narrator describes her state that "She could of nothing else but of an escape route from this hell. There seemed none. Her body ached. She refused to say a word to anybody in that house" (144). This portrays that the emerging image of women is still in the state of suffering. Finally, Lakshmi who cannot bear all the violence and torture, suicides by drinking poison: "Periyannan stood with Lakshmi leaning against his legs. He was trying to straighten her twisted face. Her eyes were dilated, turned upward, and the mouth was frothing. Her limbs were twitching. She looked scary. She drank poison di . . . drank poison!" (222)

Thus, the victims of domestic violence are taken to the edge of death. The trauma they undergo makes them to take wrong decision which ruin their life. Therefore, the novel depicts how women lose their life due to the violence they face within the family. The people who need to support and be the backbone for their success are the ones who suppress and oppress by their behavior. Death due to intimate partner violence is common in Dalit communities because they are unable to react to the violence they face. This makes them psychologically weak which leads to death.

Periyannan suspiciously questions the workers in the field to know if they helped Anandhayi or Lakshmi. He never sends Lakshmi alone to the field. This affects both Anandhayi and Lakshmi psychologically. He is suspicious of Anandhayi's loyalty towards him. When he sees Anandhayi's skirt in canal he questions,

What is this?

A skirt.

I can see that. Don't you have eyes? This was lying in the canal for three days. I am watching you, okay? Things are strewn about this house and you don't seem to be interested in setting them in order. Did your secret lover get you this skirt? (117)

He also questions and become suspicious for Anandhayi supporting a dumb man. Thoughts were racing in his mind, "Who is he? Why was he behind the wall? Why did he walk away when I called out? . . . Endi is he your secret lover? Why are you so sorry for him?" (59)

Periyannan being suspicious on Lakshmi adds a reason for her death. She enters the house with the hope that she will be loved by Periyannan. Lakshmi says, “It is not that I want sex that desperately. I want love, a relationship, a support, a comfort, a kind word-not like this everyday torture. Kicks, punches and slander” (216). But later she learns the reality of life. He merely sees her as an object just to satisfy his needs: “Leave me alone. She swiped off his hand this time he approached her with a show of affection and hugged her tight. What the heck! Her response angered him. He bit her lip. When she didn't respond he assaulted her with words. Was that lorry driver better than me?” (127)

Women as wives are the most affected in domestic abuse. In spite of the sufferings of married women, domestic violence impacts every member of the family, including children, and frequently targets activities involving women. But women always receive assistance before men, and people talk less and less about how activities affect kids. Children are important for a country's growth, but domestic violence harms them and puts them in a difficult situation where they frequently experience worry, wrath, and dread. Children are therefore just as susceptible to domestic abuse as their mothers.

Family members who are victims of domestic violence include spouses, children, and relatives, Domestic violence includes acts of destructive physical and mental abuse as well as neglect. Especially female children in Dalit communities suffer than the elder female members in the family. They spend most of their time in home, where they witness the violence that happens to their mother, grandmother and sisters. This creates change in their behaviour.

The novel *The Taming of Women* depicts how intimate partner affects the life of children. The life of Dhanam and Balan reveals how children suffer due to intimate partner violence. Neither Periyannan nor Anandhayi did take care of Balan. He falls sick and loses his life. But only Anandhayi is blamed for Balan's death. Periyannan blames Anandhayi as,

Here I am, slogging day and night. The least you could do was take care of the children. You did not stop the kid from chewing on raw rice throughout the day. Instead, you sat around complaining about me to your blood. He dies of a swollen stomach because of raw rice, and here she is cursing me as if she is a chaste woman. I work in the town. You have no field work to do. You sit at home, feeding yourself. Is it too much to care for the kids? (98)

Dhanam, the third child of Periyannan and Anandhayi starts hating her life due to the problems that she faces at her home. She loses interest in her life. She often gets irritated and shouts at Anandhayi and Lakshmi. This creates chaos in the family. Anandhayi could not control her. Anandhayi says, "My man gave her endless suffering, and Dhanam added to her pain. She must have decided on leaving. That's why she made peace with me" (185). She gets frustrated and wishes to leave her home as soon as possible. She says, "My only escape from this shameless house is to get wedded to the first donkey that passes by" (168). Thus, the novel portrays how intimate partner violence can affect the health and life of children which also goes to the extreme of death.

Children can recognize and comprehend circumstances based on what they have observed and can recall stories that have an impact on their bodies and minds.

The repercussions of domestic violence have a significant impact on children and can lead to emotional issues like sadness, confusion, anxiety, fear, potential adaptation issues, and a decreased ability and willingness to socialize with friends and co-workers. As a result, children will remember and be terrified of the issue when it impacts them. Domestic violence consequently affects them, and thus it is indisputable.

Dhanam starts to show her frustration on all family members. She behaves wildly with Lakshmi. She tears the clothes of Lakshmi and says abusive words against her. She never obeys her mother's words. This reduces the communication between Lakshmi and Anandhayi. She tells to her mother,

Listen Amma you talk to her if you want. Go fall at her feet and apologize for my actions. I will not. Let her speak about me to my father. I don't care. I am not scared. I did not do something so wrong. In no other house with girls of my age is there so much drama. I will not stop . . . you don't care about your children. Your only worry is when your husband will sleep with you next. (179)

Periyannan has never loved Anandhayi. He was with her just for name's sake. She was almost treated as a maid to take care of his children and look after the household chores. He even wished for the death of Anandhayi: "Secretly he hoped that she would die and that would tie Lakshmi to him forever" (169). But Anandhayi always wishes to be with Periyannan. She loves him with her whole heart and always wishes him to be happy. But the violence she faces makes her feel unhappy and she gradually loses interest in her life. Anandhayi regrets, "I see . . . I was very young

when I look back, I cannot actually believe I spent so many years with that man!
Anandhayi trembled at the very thought” (245).

Parents play an important role in the life of a girl child even after her marriage. It takes time for every married woman to adopt to the new surroundings. They should be given space and emotional support to get into the new surroundings. Similarly, it is the responsibility of parents to take care of their daughters when they are in trouble. They should provide moral support to make their daughters face their problems which helps them to take right decision. But most of the parents fail to support their daughters after their marriage. They also expect them to obey their husband and put up with everything that happens in life. This is the starting point of normalizing violence. In Dalit society girls get married at very young age. As a result, they start taking the responsibility of the family in young age. But there is no moral support to lead their life. Their partners who should support them in all aspects become predators and parents who is their only hope also denies to support or take care of them after their marriage.

Though Anandhayi suffers from domestic violence she fails to understand the similar sufferings of her daughter Dhanam. Dhanam faces double oppression. She gets into physical relationship with Christian boy named Daniel. Finally, she marries with him. Only later she comes to know the true nature of her in-laws. She goes through similar violence that Anandhayi faced. When Dhanam comes to her house after fight with her husband, Anandhayi fails to support her. She gets no hope from her parents and she is warned, “do not come here again” (212).

Thus, the novel *The Taming of Women* deals with domestic violence and its impact on Dalit women who are marginalized from the mainstream society. Caste and

gender are the major reasons for their sufferings. Lack of education becomes a reason for their suppression. Dalit women are not aware of themselves and the rights they possess. The story of Anandhayi depicts the life of common Dalit woman who is triply marginalized from the society.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Women are still treated as property and trained by men to become excellent in both body and mind in order to serve them. Women, without realising that they are in the enclosure, dress themselves up. Domestic violence is the predominant issue that most women face in their life. Victimization starts early in childhood for the women and lasts until their deaths. The protagonists of the novel *When I Hit You* and *The Taming of Women* is a prime example of this. The most crucial truth is that domestic violence it starts as different types of domestic violence in their homes. Hence, the battle to survive victimisation is experienced by everyone, including children.

Domestic violence is a crime that can be done by either a man or a woman inside the confines of a home. It includes not only bodily assault but also financial, psychological, sexual, and emotional abuse. These acts of aggression either target one person or many. Each individual is affected differently by this violence.

Physical assault towards a defenceless woman is an act of hostility and a tactic employed by a strong person to enforce obedience. The perpetrators of this violence can be the spouse, other family members, or strangers. In cases of inter-spousal violence, the wife is targeted physically by the husband for reasons related to dowry, her sexual immoralities (actual or perceived), and disobedience.

The unnamed narrator in the novel *When I Hit You* undergoes physical abuse when her husband feels insecure, jealous, when the narrator argues against him and when she fails to obey her husband. The narrator's actions of deliberately submitting to her husband's wishes and obeying his commands stem from the fear of suffering

harsh corrections and beatings if she doesn't obey him. Her submission to her husband is not motivated by a desire to show him respect; rather, she does so out of a fear of domestic abuse her husband subjects her to. She understands that if she disobeys her spouse in any way, she will be subjected to physical abuse and no one will come to her aid. She decides to continue acting as the husband's puppet in order to avoid getting severely abused. The narrator willingly submits to her husband's authoritarianism in order to preserve their relationship, as they claim that women tend to grow complacent in marriage in order to avoid anger from her husband. This is represented in the narrator's pattern of life.

In the novel *The Taming of Women*, every woman is physically assaulted by their father, brother, husband and in-laws. Anandhayi is physically assaulted by her husband Periyannan. Periyannan also attacks his mother and Lakshmi. Lakshmi is beaten brutally in order to prove her loyalty. Kala is assaulted by her husband, mother-in-law, her brother Mani and Vadakathiyal is assaulted by her children. The female characters willingly submit to their husband's authoritarianism in order to preserve their relationship. The deep wounds and scars as the result of physical violence make them even weaker. So, they get submit themselves to their men in order to escape from the attack. These incidents depict how Dalit women suffer due to physical violence.

The passive and submissive behaviour, in many ways, serves as a catalyst for their partners to assume a position of unchallengeable authority, which he gladly enjoys both because he is a husband and his wife has a significant role to play in the process of turning him into an oppressor. Because of these dynamics between the

oppressor and the victim, the husband is given licence to use physical violence to subdue his wife and place her in a subservient position in the marriage.

Sexual violence is the next common thing that is depicted in both the novels. Generally, women in Dalit community are always under the threat of sexual assault. They are assaulted by their own family members. Every female character in the novels undergoes sexual assault. They are unable to protest against this violence because they are assaulted by the family member who needs to protect them.

The narrator's pain was made worse to the point that she was raped by her husband due to the impunity that resulted from her subservient and cooperative character. As a result of the husband's understanding that rape is a tool that may be used to undermine and suppress the narrator in accordance with his demands. The incidents also show how marital rape is used as a threat against the narrator. The husband's brutality towards the narrator began with simple thrashings and beatings; as a result, the physical battering is put to the background, and marital rape becomes the natural option for him to take anytime he wants to teach the narrator a lesson.

While the narrator experiences sexual assault on a regular basis, what complicates the issue of sexual assault is the narrator's unwavering toleration of being raped by her husband. This creates a contentious situation because, while the narrator on the one hand condemns and, on the other hand, she continues to put up with the same brutality without raising question or resistance.

The wife frequently appears in the novel *The Taming of Women* as the "other woman." Periyannan has several relationships with prostitutes, distant relatives, and even the midwife Muthakka who comes to the house to assist his wife in giving birth to their fifth kid. Anandhayi is kept in captivity by her husband's violent abuse, her

recurring pregnancies, and lots of household work that must be done on a remote family farm. Periyannan also demands physical relationship from Lakshmi whenever he needs. Through this he tries to bring both Anandhayi and Lakshmi under his control. The life of Neelaveni depicts how Dalit women are abused by their relatives.

Love as emotion plays a significant role in both novels. It is often used as a weapon against the victim in abusive marriage. Women who are the victims, are dominated and manipulated by their husbands easily in the name of love for their own benefits. This is because women always long for love and affection in their relationship. They are blinded by the love and fail to identify the trap set by their husbands.

In the novel *When I Hit You* the unnamed narrator is completely taken under the control of her husband in the name of love. She is slowly made to follow her husband's order where she gradually loses her identity. The narrator herself mentions in the novel that she is assigned to play the role of "perfect wife". Her identity as a writer gets lost in the journey of the love life she expected. The narrator's husband demands and makes her do things according to his wish in name of love

Similarly, Lakshmi in the novel *The Taming of Women* is cheated and trapped by Periyannan. Her past story reveals how she was cheated because of the love she had on her husband. Though Periyannan showers much love on Lakshmi he fails to give importance to her opinions and emotions and always demands physical relationship. Throughout the novel he tries to have Lakshmi under him. Though she tries to escape thrice, he somehow brings her back which affects her psychologically. She finally attempts suicide to get rid of the violence by Periyannan.

A married woman may experience spousal abuse and violence or be under dowry pressure. In these difficult times, parents must reassure their daughters that they are not alone. They must equip their daughters with the confidence. When faced with such circumstances, societal norms, respect, and other considerations that are less crucial than protecting their daughter's life. Parents must act as their daughter's pillar of support and stability throughout this vulnerable stage. She must not lose trust on her parents or lose self- confidence or give up her goals.

The protagonist of the novel *When I Hit You* is left alone without her parent's support. She tried to bring the violence that she undergoes to the knowledge of her parents. But they who should give her moral support to fight against her husband's abusive behaviour failed to support her. On the other hand, they tried to convince the protagonist to accept her husband's behaviour and change according to his wish. There is no sympathy from her parents' side but only the burden of the patriarchal society. This is clearly evident from the advice of her parents. Her father asks her to listen to her husband. She receives no privilege from her mother. Her mother convinces her that marriage is not a magic and she should give him time to change.

The protagonist Anandhayi in the novel *The Taming of Women* also lacks moral support to fight against her abusive husband. Throughout her marriage life she undergoes physical, sexual, verbal and psychological abuse. But she never tries to protest against him. When her daughters Dhanam and Kala seek her support by bringing the violence they face in their home to her knowledge, she asks them to put up with their husband. Anandhayi who is experiencing domestic violence and is affecting severely fails to voice out for her daughters.

This is because the patriarchal society never wants woman to go against man. The patriarchal society talks bad about woman when she goes against her husband or walks out of the abusive marriage. This is the reason for lack of support to married daughters from their parents. In both the novels, parents fail to support their daughters to protest against the violence they face in the abusive marriage. This depicts how domestic violence is normalized in Indian society. The lack of support from parents becomes a major reason why domestic violence is not yet voiced out.

Caste plays an important role in both novels. Women in the novel are abused in the name of their caste. Dalit women generally become an easy target of violence because of their caste. In the novel *When I Hit You* the unnamed narrator is often verbally abused in name of her caste and class as “bourgeois” (24). Though she is well educated and has the identity of writer she is oppressed because of her caste. This depicts that though women struggle and create their own identity in this challenging world they are criticized for their caste and class. In the novel *The Taming of Women* Neelaveni is not only sexually abused by her nephew but also by other upper-class men.

The violences that the protagonists undergo in both fictions make them move to silence. The novel *The Taming of Women* reflects the marginal position of women that has designed their silenced identities. This silenced space of women perpetuates the absence and the voiceless condition of a woman. Anandhayi has a voice of assertion and spiritual fortitude to question her husband’s tyranny, but gradually and characteristically she submits to the hands of male authority and is tamed to silence. In domestic violence silence of the woman is considered as characteristic of weakness and submission to man.

The unnamed protagonist in the novel *When I Hit You* also moves to silence. But her silence does not symbolize her submission to her husband. She uses her silence as a defence mechanism to fight against her husband's abusive behaviour. She uses silence as a weapon to protect herself from savagery of her husband. This silence defeats her husband's dominating behaviour over her. Though she moves to silence, she uses writing as a platform to unveil the ugly reality of sexual violation which takes place behind the closed doors and in the name of marriage. This way she creates a discourse which brings marital rape to light as a serious offense which needs to be recognized in the mainstream society.

In the beginning, the unnamed protagonist is mesmerised by the roles that society has given them, and they unwittingly fall prey to societal and traditional conditioning. She is forced to be conservative due to the dread of losing her connections with the family. Instead of rebelling against the family structures and relationships, she compromises out of respect for conventional values and to preserve domestic harmony in the family and society. After realising how exploitative structures and familial ties are, protagonist rebel in an effort to gain independence and establish her own identity. Despite being victimised in numerous ways, she adopts new positions and live on. While going through the pain of being victims, the protagonist transcends and pursue individuality in order to carve out a niche for herself.

The unnamed protagonist is highly educated and skilled. However, the oppression and marginalisation of the protagonist is greatly influenced by the patriarchal way of life, which takes the form of male hegemony and masculine dominance. Unlike traditional women, the protagonist never considers turning to suicide as a way to end her misery.

Instead, she continues to express their rage and opposition to male domination through her writing. She becomes rebellious as a result of her husband's oppression, exploitation, and marginalisation. Additionally, because of her animosity towards her husband, she is talkative, brave, a little haughty, and incredibly aggressive through her writing. Her education is the reason where she understands that she is losing her identity and decides to fight for herself. She also recognizes that having a child will prevent her from getting out of the abusive relationship. So, she decides to have no children and takes food that prevents her from getting pregnant. Finally, she breaks the societal norms and comes out of the abusive marriage.

Whereas, in the novel *The Taming of Women* the protagonist Anandhayi has no conscious of losing her identity. She is forced to live inside the four walls which is filled with violence. She does not have the courage to fight against her husband. The violence she faces affects her psychologically which prevents her to protect her own identity. All the female characters in the novel undergo different type of violence and start losing their identity right from puberty when they are dropped out of school. This lack of education makes them to stay under the feet of man throughout their life. Kala who is a school dropout gets married earlier and undergoes similar violence that her mother Anandhayi faced. But they are unable to protest for them because they are not aware of the position they hold in the family and society. They are unaware of the strength they possess. The patriarchal society which does not give importance to women's education marginalizes them from both family and the society.

Both the protagonists in the novels are oppressed because of caste, gender and through domestic abuse. But the education of the unnamed protagonist in the novel *When I Hit You* helps her to rebel against the violence she faces. It helps her to walk out of the

abusive marriage where as Anandhayi and other female characters in the novel *The Taming of Women* are unable to rebel and continue to live in the environment filled with violence. Education gives a woman the courage and strength to question the injustices prevailing in the society and also helps her to stand independently and hold on to the views that she believes is right.

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