



Indigenous Feminism in Postcolonial South Asia and Africa: Resilience, Resistance, and Reclamation of Identity through Mongo Beti’s “Mission to Kala” and Mumtaz Shahnawaz’s “The Heart Divided”

Maryam Tariq*, Dr Amara Khan**

*Visiting Lecturer, University of Education, Punjab, Pakistan. maryaamtariq7@gmail.com

**Associate Professor, Department of English, Lahore College for Women University, Punjab, Pakistan. khanamara@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the relationship between colonialism and female identity formation. This paper also aims to present the development of the female identity in Pakistan and Cameroon that are postcolonial countries. As, it exposes the role of traditions and culture of postcolonial countries in subjugation as well as empowerment of women. The researcher has attempted to present a case for colonial after-effects on the identity of the inhabitants of the two former colonies of Africa and South Asia, based on several background studies. This paper concludes that the genuine liberation cannot be achieved without unity of the sexes. Furthermore, a country's degree of freedom is based on how free its women are to exercise their right to choose. In a similar vein, a society's degree of civilization can be inferred from how its members treat women. This paper derives from an interest in Postcolonial studies. It has used as a tool for researching the phenomena of postcolonialism and colonialism. The theoretical foundation for this paper is formulated by postcolonial discourse theory, and the textual analysis of the novel is limited to matters relevant to this discourse.



Introduction

Mumtaz Shahnawaz (1912-1948) was a Pakistani diplomat, writer and freedom activist. She was born in 1912 Lahore, Pakistan. She had the distinction of being the granddaughter of Sir Muhammad Shafi, the All-India Muslim League's founding member and leading advocate in Punjab. Thus, the activism ran in her blood, but the best expression of that, from a female perspective, culminates in the novel, *The Heart Divided*. The variety in language is what makes this book so appealing. She uses a style of writing that is full of dialects.

Mongo Beti (1932-2001) also called as Alexandre Biyidi Awala was a Cameroonian writer and political essayist. He was born in Akométan, Cameroon's capital, in 1932. *Mission to Kala* is Mongo Beti's third novel, which was published in 1957. Set in late colonial Cameroon, it is a potent comic tale. In 1958, it took home the Prix Sainte-Beuve. A significant figure in contemporary West African literature was Mongo Beti (1932–2001). Throughout his career, he was a strong political and moral voice, constantly engaged in matters concerning his native country. The novel is about the impact of colonialism on the identity of Africans.

Literary works depict society aspects, such as gender norms and the relationship between men and women. This portrayal often explores evolving dynamics influenced by patriarchal structures, particularly

evident in postcolonial societies. Authors like Mumtaz Shahnawaz and Mongo Beti actively challenge patriarchy and women's oppression. Research emphasizes women's historical central roles in African communities, contrasting with colonial-era patriarchal impositions that marginalized them. Colonialism reinforced male dominance, importing Western gender dynamics where men held authoritative positions while women were relegated to subservient roles. This perpetuated a cycle where African men emulated colonial ideals of male superiority, impacting gender relations within society. This paper delves into the entrenched role of traditions and cultural norms in postcolonial societies in perpetuating the subjugation of women, particularly evident in certain African contexts. In many African traditions, power dynamics heavily favor men, with women often relegated to supporting roles subordinate to male authority. Responsibilities such as child-rearing primarily fall on women, while significant decision-making power rests solely with men, reflecting a deeply ingrained belief in male superiority. This cultural inheritance, passed down through generations, serves to maintain the subordination of women, reinforcing the notion that women should not hold power over men. In these communities, women are usually given household responsibilities, which emphasizes their roles as daughters, sisters, moms, and wives in relation to males. Patriarchal control permeates all aspects of life, with husbands wielding ultimate authority within the household. This cultural framework plays a pivotal role in upholding male dominance and marginalizing women.

The research also highlights how women in traditional African societies are socialized from a young age to conform to established gender norms, instructed to obey and emulate the passive demeanor of their mothers. Any deviation from these norms is met with harsh consequences, further perpetuating oppressive conditions within matrimonial homes. Despite these challenges, there have been instances of courageous women who have actively resisted oppression within traditional African societies. This paper is an attempt to highlight the women's liberation struggle in developing countries such as Pakistan and Cameroon. This study contends that true emancipation is impossible to accomplish without gender equality. This paper presents Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* and Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala* as the discourse that presents to readers the struggles faced by women, reflecting both their modernization and the obstacles they faced as a result of the patriarchal political discourse. Furthermore, the discussion has drawn a parallel between feminism and postcolonialism as both fight the oppression of the dominant power and have contributed to the feminization of political discourse, particularly in the former colonies of Europe. Because the colonized people were empowered by the freedom and independence of their once-colonized state, they were able to transition from slavery to mastery over their own destiny. Women's definitions of freedom would change if they were to stay confined within the socially constructed institutions.

Research Questions

- 1- In what ways do the colonial histories and postcolonial power dynamics influence the construction of gender identities and the enforcement of patriarchal norms in South Asian and African context?
- 2- What are the key socio-cultural, political, and economic factors that shape the experiences and challenges faced by women in postcolonial South Asian and African Societies, and how do these factors intersect with colonial legacies?
- 3- What lessons can be learned from the successes and challenges of postcolonial feminist movements in South Asia and Africa, and how can these insights inform strategies for advancing gender equality and social justice globally?

Literature Review

Bell Hooks in *Feminist Theory: From Margins to Center* (1984), clarifies the status of a woman as, "I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance – as location of radical openness and possibility" (Hooks, 1984, p.21). Shodhganga in "Women in African Society and Literature" indicates, African women lost their status in the native customs of the continent when the British administrative system was imposed, and they were subjected to the Victorian patriarchal system that viewed women as less than human. The British colonial force encouraged the creation of an African political and social order dominated by men. For instance, despite the fact that the female Omu and the male leader Obi had equal authority in pre-colonial Nigerian politics, the British only recognized Obi and demoted Omu (206).

Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976) provides a useful definition of patriarchy that states that, the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, and political structure where men determine what role women should and should not play through language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, or by force or direct pressure; and where women

are subordinated to men everywhere (1976, p.57).

Lois A. West in "Introduction: Feminism Constructs Nationalism" stated that "Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957) projects a feminist nationalist construct, a "social movement simultaneously seeking rights for women and rights for nationalists within a variety of social, economic, and political contexts" (West, 1957, p.30). He further asserts that by emphasizing women's activism and militant struggle for the Subcontinent's freedom movement, the text honors women's agency. The progress of Muslim women, however, from domesticated simpletons to hybridized free individuals who adjust to the demands of their times, is the primary subject of Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* (p.41).

F.C. Steady in *Women and Collective Action in Africa: Development, Democratization, and Empowerment with Special Focus on Sierra Leone* (2006) identified two types of patriarchy in Africa: Absolute patriarchy and limited patriarchy. Absolute patriarchy is introduced to Africa by colonialism and globalized institutions where "both African men and women are subordinated and oppressed by a global economic system that is anchored in the colonial and similar legacies" (Steady, 2006, p.5). H. Bertens in *Literary Theory: The Basics* (2001) Patriarchal structure and colonial or neo-colonial assumptions play prominent roles in oppressing African women were doubly unheard under a colonial rule, because colonized women are virtually by definition unheard inside their own patriarchal culture. Colonialism/neo-colonialism and patriarchal features operate in collaboration in order to suppress African women in various aspects of life so that African women have been subjected to double suppressions (Bertens, 2001, p.201).

RJC Young in "Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction" stated that, within a postcolonial framework, in order to give the common woman a deeper feeling of collectivity, feminism begins with her circumstances in a specific location and also considers her position in connection to wider issues. It will show how much women still have to fight against the colonial legacy of patriarchy in society, politics, the economy, and institutions (Young, 2003, p.28).

In *Can A Subaltern Speak* (1988), Gayatri Spivak questions the notion that the West is superior to developing countries and makes an effort to subvert the legacy of colonialism. Despite defeating the colonial authority, she argues that the status of marginalized subalterns, especially women, has not outlived its systematic effects. She affirms that the voice of the colonized woman is considered inferior and ignored; the male dominates due to the ideological construction of gender, which also positions the colonized woman as the target of insurrection and the object of colonialist historiography. The subaltern as a woman is even more deeply marginalized if, within the framework of colonial production, she is silent and without a past (Spivak, 1988, p.287).

Ezeaku in "Feminist Positionality: An Overview of Nigerian Literary Scene" adds that Due to harmful customs and societal norms that denigrate women, such as unrestricted polygamy, incestuous sexual exploitation, arranged marriages, isolation, infanticide, female circumcision, and malnourishment, traditional Africa was hardly a safe haven for African women. In addition, political injustice, girl-child marriage, domestic abuse, women trafficking and abduction, marital rape, denial of numerous rights, and many more acts have been used to carry out African patriarchal customs. This suggests that patriarchy functions in various ways throughout Africa, placing various responsibilities on the shoulders of African women that diminish their worth as individuals and as members of society (Ezeaku, 2017, p.26).

Research Methodology

Postcolonial Studies is a relatively new field. It entails an objective, in-depth study of colonialism and its aftermath. It is an interdisciplinary field, and it may range from studying the effects of colonialism upon the identity of natives, literature, economy, education and political system. Hence the impact of colonialism upon the identity of women is a significant issue which needs to be analyzed and researched in detail. An analytical method is used, applying postcolonial theories to works created throughout various points in this historical period. The methodology encompasses an exhaustive and comprehensive exploration of primary sources, critical analyses, and publications pertaining to postcolonial literature and culture. Moreover, the present study is a library oriented qualitative research. In order to achieve research objectives and answer research questions one writer each from Pakistan and Cameroon are included in this paper.

The data for this paper comes from a textual analysis of Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala* (1957) and Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957). The data will be analyzed qualitatively within the parameters of issues and debates pertinent to postcolonial discourse which forms the theoretical framework for this study. Intertextuality will be employed as an analytical tool. And a comparison based on the textual analysis of the novels will be conducted. This will lead to the study's conclusion.

Discussion and Analysis

The colonial use of stereotypical binary oppositions contributed to the maintenance of the difference between the superior colonizer and the inferior colonized and it was also extended to undermine women. A sexual allegory, which represents male and female, good and evil, superiority and inferiority, subject and object, self and other, also organizes the structure of colonial and post-colonial societies, according to Richard F. Stratton's 1994 book *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* (Stratton, 1994, p.15).

The patriarchal mentality that forces women to relegate themselves to marginal roles is one of the barriers to women's identity. Women are directly impacted by patriarchy ideology through customs, religion, laws of custom, and gender roles. As a result, a man is the leader of the family, and he has the ultimate authority to decide on anything that belongs to the family. Moreover, patriarchy characterizes men as logical, powerful, decisive, and protective, while portraying women as emotional, illogical, helpless, and subservient. Here it is also important to discuss that In India, colonialism was characterized as an attempt to bring about civilization, especially with regard to the status of women. Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak describes the British decision to outlaw the suttee practice in India in *Can the Subaltern Speak* as "White men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak, 1988, p.47). Spivak notes that during the colonial era, the colonizers used the bodies of oppressed Indian women, particularly the suttee, as a justification for their entry into India, a decision that had nothing to do with the actual oppressed Indian woman (Spivak, 1988, p.120–30). The justification for these incursions was the moral obligation of the enlightened colonists.

Indigenous beliefs, rituals, language, and culture were attempted to be eradicated by colonial policies and practices. The role of Indigenous women in society was dramatically and often negatively impacted by these endeavors. The problem of bride price is a major theme in Mongo Beti's 1957 novel *Mission to Kala*, placing Niam's wife, the female protagonist of the story in a subordinate position. One could contend that after their parents sold them, they were given over to their husbands and came under their authority. Mongo Beti portrays how women are used by men and how they are subservient to them in relationships, marriage, and household duties. The protagonist of 1957's *Mission to Kala*, a female character, finds herself entangled in a web of dominance and submission. Niam exhibits his macho hubris when he says, "I am the ground and she is just a dead leaf that has just come off the tree," following his wife's departure (Beti, 1957, p.23). Furthermore, women are forced to work both at home and in agriculture in rural Africa, whereas men's responsibilities are restricted to agricultural field.

In most cases, A woman typically begins work earlier in the morning than her spouse. She gets up before her spouse, has to make breakfast, and then has to accompany him to the field. Even when the fieldwork is over, she continues to gather firewood while her husband returns home to relax. In addition, she spends most of her days and nights fetching water, preparing meals, seeing to the kids, and other such tasks while her husband is still sleeping. This concept is heavily included in Beti's 1957 *Mission to Kala*, when Niam's wife looks after both his farm and her career as a housewife. Because of this, her absence causes chaos in Niam's home and demonstrates his incapacity to look after himself.

Since some African traditions place an emphasis on male superiority, the wife is placed under the authority and will of her husband. In such arrangements, a woman is trained to obey and respect all members of her husband's family. On the contrary, the husband or the male child is trained to rule his household knowing quite well that when it comes to important decisions, his wishes prevail. By virtue of this societal arrangement the husband-wife relationship is like a master-servant relationship. This norm of living gives women powerless status and they are frequently abused by their husbands as it is the case with Niam's wife in Beti's *Mission to Kala* (1957), Niam treated such a hardworking woman exactly as if she had been a bitch! And again, a bitch can always make puppies, while, she who had no children, was considered good for all insults and all contempt. (1957, p.21)

In every area of life, patriarchy is evident since the husband is the ultimate decision-maker in the home. In Beti's *Mission to Kala*, Medza, the main character, attests to this patriarchal authority by saying, "My mother begged me, in tears, to walk away, not to offend my father any more, not to deserve his curse" (Beti, 1957, p.246). Children are often trained to listen to their father in order not to incur his wrath. If a child disobeys his father, the mother is blamed for not rearing him well. The irony, however, is that the father and not the mother takes credit for his successful children. It is also assumed that the success of the child lies in the hands of his father and not those of his mother.

In post-colonial African society, it is always the men who conforms the social order. Due to this Medza has no choice but to carry out the assignment. The task of bringing back Niam's wife even involves the village's chief who lends his bicycle to Medza so that he can ride it to Kala to bring back Niam's wife:

“The canton chief deigned to agree to make his small contribution to this national edifice: the recovery of wife Niam. . . he lent me his bike” (Beti, 1957, p.34). This severe kind of patriarchy leads to resistance. Because where there is power there is always resistance. It is clearly represented in Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1957) that after bearing much oppression Niam’s wife starts complaining about a husband who always beats her. This also compelled her to run away with a man from a neighboring tribe. By running away, Niam’s wife shows that she is not willing to be his property. Niam’s wife’s decision to abandon her husband is an act that defies the patriarchal arrangement. Niam’s wife’s action can also be interpreted as a shrewd way of freeing herself from the oppression of men without necessarily having to confront them or engage them in a fight.

Women are also suppressed through religious institutions in Africa. As, in some African societies, the bride price is a religious practice in which a bride’s parents receive money and goods from the bridegroom in exchange for his right to marry their daughter. To some, it is as if this woman is for sale. Moreover, if the woman decides to abandon an abusive husband, she often runs to another man whom she likes and who she thinks can pay back the bride price her parents received from her former husband. Therefore, the topic of bride prices is complicated and occasionally amounts to nothing more than the trafficking of women between two men. The freedom of both the woman and her parents is severely restricted, especially if her parents are unable to make restitution. The same religious custom is repeated in Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1957) when Zambo, Medza’s cousin, confronts Niam’s father-in-law and says, “So, Zambo noted sharply, would you be willing to support your daughter if she sought a divorce? Do you think you can pay back her dowry then?” (Beti, 1957, p.66). Even though Niam’s father-in-law says that his daughter is free to do what she wants, the issue is not as simple as that. For the marriage to be dissolved locally, the father has to give back the bride price that he received from Niam because failure to do so would mean that his daughter would still remain Niam’s legitimate wife. The question of bride price frequently appears in African texts.

Moreover, the female characters in Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1957) are also depicted as prostitutes and whores. Melissa Farley in “Prostitution: Factsheet on Human Rights Violations Archived” asserted that, feminists see prostitution as a form of slavery, and say that, far from decreasing rape rates, prostitution leads to a sharp increase in sexual violence against women, by sending the message that it is acceptable for a man to treat a woman as a sexual instrument over which he has total control (2000, p.12). It is also noticeable in Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1957) as when Medza tell us that; “I remember one day Zambo referred to Niam’s wife in the terms that made her sound little better than a plain whore” (Beti, 1957, p.92). The issue of sterility is also very prominent in African Societies. Female circumcision practices are partly responsible for women’s sterility in many African societies for women are valued first as mothers. In Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1957), Niam’s wife is held responsible for the couple not having children and is insulted by the society and ill- treated by her husband. Medza remarks that, it is the fate common with us to all childless wives to be subjected to a strange anathema, the origin of which must be sought from our Bantu brothers. A mother wife is forgiven for all infidelities, all her whims. But you need to know all of this. In short, the Niam woman was gone. This is always how they leave, moreover: at night. And that’s why they are called the Children of the Night. (1957, p.22)

Due to this poor treatment of women considered as barren in traditional African societies, Niam’s wife seeks release from the miseries of her home life by involving herself in a romantic affair with a stranger. On another hand, the supposed sterility of Niam’s wife in a way liberated her because she was able to leave her husband’s home for a while and avoided his beatings. The subjugation of African woman makes her the victim of many violent crimes. Even if she is not responsible, she is always blamed for what goes wrong. This attitude might be in line with men’s belief that a woman is evil because nothing proves that Niam’s wife is barren. Medza, the narrator in Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1957), says the following about Tante Amou who cannot have any children: “I am convinced today that Aunt Amou was having a complex because she had never been able to have a child” (Beti, 1957, p.21). Barren women have complexes not only in their matrimonial homes but also among their fellow women who have children and also in the society at large.

In *The Heart Divided* (1957) by Mumtaz Shahnawaz, women are reconstructing the meaning of both nationalism and feminism from a women-centered viewpoint. The female characters of Mumtaz Shahnawaz’s *The Heart Divided* (1957) are more active as compared to the female characters of *Mission to Kala* (1957) by Mongo Beti. Shahnawaz’s female characters are continuously trying to form their own identity. They are challenging the gendered nationalism of Indian politics and suggest an anti-patriarchal model of nationalism that includes women’s interests and perspectives. The novel confers autonomous subjectivity on women, highlighting the struggle of Muslim women in the Pakistan freedom movement.

Set in colonial India of 1930s and 40s, *The Heart Divided* (1957) by Mumtaz Shahnawaz, portrays the story of two sisters, Sughra and Zahra. While Sughra envisages a political formation ensuring the safeguard of the underprivileged, Zohra posits for nothing less than independence for erasing inequality. They inherit political cognizance from their father Sheikh Jamaluddin, who has been represented as the first young man from Punjab to study at Cambridge, implying the enlightened status of the family in those times. The development of political consciousness in the characters of Sughra, who is elder, and Zohra takes divergent paths. The novel begins by presenting Sughra as happily guiding maids and serving her father while Zohra as restlessly skimming newspaper, implying her interest in current affairs. While the former is home oriented, the latter is politically ambitious. The act of discarding purdah by Zohra, in the very beginning of the novel, can be considered her first step towards freedom. In this way, she takes her first independent decision. Zohra's evolution towards independent decision making represent the women of her times changing into more independent and active political workers from domesticated veiled ladies restricted to the female chores of their houses and to observe purdah (veil) from men. Moreover, when they move from Nishat Manzil to their new and modern house, Zohra expresses her likeness of the new house because of the abolition of the segregation of the house into female and male portions. This shows how strongly Zohra condemn patriarchy. It is also important to note that the novel begins with Zohra wondering how the change in her life began. This change transformed a veiled Muslim girl of noble heritage to an independent and adventurous radical spirit. Mumtaz Shahnawaz, except being a political worker also had a deep sense of understanding about the changing role of the rich and poor women in colonized India. In *The Heart Divided*, she created the images of educated and politically active women who tried to stand side by side with their men and took part in many political activities. This could be the first step to the socio-political awareness of women which may lead them to their emancipation and empowerment. But this could not be realized so soon because this political awareness was available only at the politically important upper level of society or at the elite class level. The majority of women were still under the oppressive power of custom and tradition. Even these educated women failed in achieving equality and independence. But all this represents the start of the conflict between the culture conservatism and the will for independence and the first steps of change that could come in the lives of women.

Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957), mainly describes the struggle of the Muslim women, which was waged by them for the sake of identity and independence. In this way, the novel very clearly brings before us the picture of the educated, brave, and active women of the Pakistan movement before the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. In contrast to *Beti*, Shahnawaz portrays women in the light of the political movement for freedom that was going on at that time in the name of the independence movement. Shahnawaz shows the women engaged in struggle against the social and political taboos as Zohra is able to get the support of her brother Habib also in order to maintain and to achieve freedom from the social taboos hindering the progress of women. The political environment of that time grew gradually conducive to the women like Zohra who could free themselves from their unjust social limitations. This was symbolic of the freedom that the Muslims were about to get if their freedom movement succeeded. Zohra is very much willing to defy the tradition of Purdah because she thinks that it hinders the progress of women and that she could maintain her purity even without this. She occasionally tries to flout this unnecessary ban of Purdah with her friend Sorraya. This change in the attitude of the Muslim women outlook about Purdah is the part of a larger level of change in the mindset of so many intellectuals of the age. Shahnawaz tells us through the words of the one of the minor characters in the novel that how the forces of conservatism in culture were struggling with the forces of independence and freedom for women. In addition to this, Therefore, Shahnawaz wanted to give a message through the portrayal of her women characters that the freedom for women should also mean their freedom from unnecessary controls on their lives. If it did not happen, they would remain colonized beings even after decolonization.

Though the political environment lent courage and freedom to the women of the rich Muslims, at least, the social bindings and the limitations were still very strong and the educated Muslim women had to face social stigma. The conflict is also shown in the character portrayal of Sughra, another woman character portrayed by Shahnawaz, who was the sister of Zohra. She was less interested in politics and society. Though educated, she is not willing to spend time in politics or the other gatherings. She, therefore, says 'yes' to her parents when they suggest her marriage to Mansur who is her cousin. But after getting married, she could not resist the desire for an active political and social life. It was not possible for her to live under strict Purdah because slowly and gradually she is adopting the western culture. She tried to live by the social system, but the constant bickering of her in-laws ignited in her the desire to exercise her rights. She is educated and knows her rights, but she tries to give a chance to herself to uphold the values of her father. She keeps in mind the views of her father that "the Purdah of our women is sacred, I

tell you, no woman of our family shall break it, while I live, yes, while I live” (Shahnawaz, 1957, p.70) but still decides to take action to get control of her life. This was her first such daring step in the colonized world. Such women were the role models of struggle and change for the next coming generations of Pakistan. Zohra, Mohni, and Sughra, in *The Heart Divided* (1957), are the prototypes in this regard. Furthermore, the women like Zohra are the prototype of the women struggling on the path of liberation, emancipation, and empowerment in conformity with the vision of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (the founder of Pakistan) about the liberation of women. This was the very change that had come in the identities of women first because of the colonizers and second because of anti-colonialists. Zohra goes to prove that women are capable of performing great deeds if they are encouraged and given independence to play their role in the society. In *The Heart Divided* (1957) Shahnawaz proved that women could also be as great leaders as men could be at any place or time. The concept of their being inferior is only due to man constructed identity.

Bell Hooks in *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989) presents Bob Marley ideas on this as “We refuse to be what you want us to be, we are what we are, and that’s the way it’s going to be”, that space of refusal, where one can say no to the colonizer, no to the down pressor, is located in the margins” (Hooks, 1989, p.19). Additionally, Zohra begins to reject anyone who tries to subjugate her. Adopting such attributes was never valued in Eastern society, where women were kept apart. Surrayya acknowledges this fact as well when she says, “Those who adopt new ways must pay the price” (Shahnawaz, 1957, p.14). However, Zohra embraced the new, masculine ideas with such speed that it was frowned upon for women to follow them in the rigidly conservative Eastern system. She takes advantage of the chances her parents give her because she is “proud and willful and rather spoilt by her father” (Shahnawaz, 1957, p.15). With time, Zohra grows more powerful and progressively changes.

In *The Heart Divided* (1957), Shahnawaz uses the development of female characters to effectively convey her point of view. Her identity is presented in a psychologically veiled and non-obvious way because of the traditional patriarchal system in the East. *The Heart Divided* by Shahnawaz (1957) effectively demonstrates how identity transformation leads to a greater degree of self-sufficiency and facilitates individuals' ability to overcome preconceived notions. On the other hand, Beti’s *Mission to Kala* (1957) depicts the subaltern role of uneducated women. The depiction of female characters is not meek and, therefore, they fail to alleviate themselves and remain suppressed. They are limited in their boundaries set by the society and therefore are unable to transgress them.

Findings and Conclusion

The findings of this paper reveal that similarities are not equally balanced between the literatures of South Asia and Africa, the unique circumstances of the two cultures, which suffered and persevered during colonial times, can be blamed for the cause. There is a strong sense of resistance to colonial power in South Asian and African literature. This research also concludes that the relationship of men and women are an issue that never ends, but continuously grow up. The relation of both the colonizers and the colonized became a phenomenon because of the patriarchal system dominates in a postcolonial society. Women are considered as a member of society who do not have a major role in all areas in the public domain. This research strengthens the idea that women can combat patriarchy and oppression. This study concludes that the genuine liberation cannot be achieved without unity of the sexes. And A country's degree of freedom is based on how free its women are and how much power they have to make their own decisions. In a similar vein, a society's degree of civilization can be inferred from how its members treat women. This paper goes on to say that, in whatever setting or era, women are equally capable of being excellent leaders as men. The idea that they are less than is solely a product of man constructed identity.

The research also highlights the difference between the condition of women in South Asia and Africa. In the South Asian setting, women are redefining feminism and national politics from a women-centered perspective. The female characters of Mumtaz Shahnawaz’s *The Heart Divided* (1957) are more active and are continuously trying to form their own identity. They are challenging the gendered nationalism of Indian politics and suggest an anti-patriarchal model of nationalism that includes women’s interests and perspectives. The novel confers autonomous subjectivity on women, highlighting the struggle of Muslim women in the Pakistan freedom movement. On the other hand, In the African setting, women lost their status in the native customs of the continent and were subjugated by the Victorian patriarchal system, which viewed women as less than human. The British colonial force encouraged the creation of an African political and social order dominated by men.

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