

The Concept of ‘New Woman’ as a struggle of women in *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*

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Abstract

This paper studies George Bernard Shaw’s play ‘Mrs. Warren’s Profession’ as a true picture of Victorian patriarchal society. The paper uses non-empirical methods of Textual Analysis and Close Reading Method to analyse the play from textual and thematic point of view. The feminist approach of ‘New Womanhood’ by W. H. Cooley (1904) as a theoretical framework is used to analyse the selected play and the characters in it. The paper intends to uncover the position and status of women in Victorian society by analysing the female characters in the play as unconventional and un-Victorian in attitudes, interests, preferences, values and ways of lives. The paper aims to highlight the hypocrisy and monstrosity of socially powerful capitalist class the way play portrays it. The paper proposes to find out the elements of new womanhood in female characters, Mrs. Warren and Miss Vivie Warren. The study interprets the struggle of female characters as rebel to liberate themselves from the patriarchal pseudo-morality, male-chauvinistic conventions, male-oriented values, institutions and tenets of society. The themes of prostitution, poverty, starvation, hypocrisy, rotten morality and values of patriarch society, individuality, overthrow of authoritative powers, and relationships or understanding between two different generations are intended to be studied and discussed in context with the selected work in this paper. This paper may be helpful to unfold the idea for readers that the fall of women is actually the fall of society and is a real tragedy.

Keywords: woman, profession, concept, play, struggle

INTRODUCTION

Literature prominently reflects the spirit of society and trends in progress in it. G.B. Shaw, an epitome dramatist, critic, socialist, and feminist, enjoys the prominent reputation of inevitable influence on the art of drama as a medium of reflecting the social values and institutes on the stage (Greenblatt, 2018). Shaw used drama to criticise social status quo, morally rotten norms and values, corrupt institutes and trends in Victorian society (Crompton, 1971). The Victorian society, a true example of patriarchal society, was a male-oriented, male-chauvinistic, and male-favouring. Its norms, values, and institutes are culturally, politically, economically, religiously and morally rotten, corrupt, and crooked up which directly or indirectly suppressed, marginalized, alienated, and othered women in every walk of life (Young, 1960). “In the Victorian era woman was confined to Victorian norms” (Mohammed, 2017, p 88).

Victorian Society did not believe in the concept of equality between man and woman. The woman was always considered as second to man. That professed the idea that woman is naturally meaningless and their meaning is revealed when defined in relation to her opposite,

a man. This idea of being taken as a meaningless creature of woman in the society represents patriarchal Victorian society's shame face. Nsaidzedze (2017) adds that a woman was never accepted as a distinct creature in the Victorian society. "The Victorian woman was her husband's chattel. She was completely dependent upon him and subject to him" (p 01). This society had assigned different spheres of social life to man and woman. The man could participate in public affairs and institute, however, Victorian woman was kept limited in her private sphere—home. "The woman had her area of expertise which was the home where she was the mother, the homemaker and a devoted domestic" (Nsaidzedze, 2017, p.2). This patriarchal notion of Victorian society implies that a man, by birth and by gender, were competitive, assertive, masculine, and materialistic. On the contrary, women were taken as pious, submissive, pure, Mother-Mary like figure, sacrificing, submissive, and emotional, Nsaidzedze (2017), Burke (2017), Mohammed (2017), and Watson (2015) add. The woman who beatified home, submissive before in-laws' family, caring to children, and faithful to husband was idealized as a role model for other women in the Victorian society. The Victorian age, notorious for its patriarchal and prudish values, discriminated women by confining them to the domestic sphere. Davidoff and Hall (1987) note that the women were compelled to be dependent upon men and female's identity was kept bound with domesticity and motherhood in a family. self-definition of men became dependent upon their ability to provide for their families. Powell (1998) and Davidoff and Hall (1987) posit that as per patriarchal psychological and social setups of Victorian society women's purpose was believed to complete others' lives, they were expected to labour within walls unpaid as homeworkers and devoid of any participation and contribution in society or home independently as well.

Victorian society as a whole was divided into various classes i.e., Lower class (generally called peasants), Middle Class (generally known as business class), and Upper class (generally known as elite class). A clear and distinct change in values, institutions, sense of morality, responsibility, culture, and norms is observed in to various classes. However, the Victorian society as a whole retained magnanimously prudishness, patriarchal, male-chauvinistic attitude when it came to define the position and status of woman in the society irrespective of which class she belonged (Calder, 1977; Davidoff and Hall, 1987). The suppression and oppression executed by Victorian Patriarch society pushed feminist movement and suffrage to claim for the rights of women. The trends to hoist the voice for

women in society were initiated through various aspects of society i.e., Literary figures, social activists, journalists, and other more. The later emerging Victorian literature brought about the genuine trend of feminism which cemented the very idea of ‘New-Woman’. The term “New-Woman” Sarah Grand used first in her writings as a rebel of women in the Later period of Victorian society in 1894. This communicated more sense than the term feminism could do. Apart from many great literary works, Ibsen’s *The Doll House* medalled this spirit of “New-Woman” as the voice of women demanding their rights and equal status in society with men. Shaw’s *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* also reflects the unconventional role of female characters in the patriarchal Victorian society. The play portrays female characters i.e., Vivie and Mrs. Warren, physically and intellectually stronger and unconventional. This paper reveals the social evils found in the male characters as Sir George Crofts and Rev. Samuel Gardner: their hypocrisy, diplomacy, stained character and brutal or animalistic nature as well. This paper discusses the docility and weakness of other two male characters Frank Gardner and Mr. Praed.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate certain issues insinuated directly or indirectly in *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*. His female characters are more powerful, confident, self-expressive, audacious, self-dependent, and financially independent in *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*. The paper exposes the social evils that compelled women to push themselves in the furnace of prostitution for the sake of survival. The capitalist class is the main force to breed poverty in the society which ultimately leads women to sell their bodies to beasts and wild animals in the shape of capitalists, business class people, and elite class as well. The word prostitution or incest is not mentioned in the entire play, yet the way dialogues between and among various characters are embodied to lead audience capture the fundamental problems in the play: prostitution, poverty, limitations of women, brutality of upper class, sexual abuse, incestuous liaison, and a voice to be echoed for individuality and independence of women in the society.

The paper also intends to evaluate the concept of ‘New Womanhood’ depicted in *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* through the characters of Vivie Warren and Mrs. Warren who embody *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* as a prominent play with its significant voice of women in Patriarchal Victorian society. Similarly, the paper aims to uncover the major social, ethical, and moral values through the female characters in the selected play. The concept of authority

of parents over children, husband over wife, male over female, mother over daughter, father over son has been attacked by Shaw through the characters in the play by propagating individuality, freedom, liberty, equality, and womanhood of woman in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since, the concept of new womanhood by Cooley (1904) points out the rebel of women against the Victorian traditions, values, standards, social institutes and ideals, they also stand for constitution of new ideals, which depicts women self-dependent, self-narrative and audacious enough to participate actively in *social constructionism*. The new womanhood represents the result of continuous struggle by entire womanhood since antiquity of Rome and Greece, argues Cooley (1904). Digby speculates that Victorian society—a male-chauvinistic, male-oriented and patriarchal society—was generally divided into spheres: public sphere and private sphere. The public sphere was generally “Masculine domain concerned with paid work and national politics”. However, the private sphere was “a female domain concerned with home and family” (1992, p 195). This type of dichotomous division of Victorian society always suppressed women as a weakling (Digby, 1992; Cooley, 1904). Furthermore, the Victorian age as a whole was embodied with the hypocrisy of small but powerful fragment of the society. The brutalities and cruelties committed on women, the degraded position of un-married, single-mother, or a wife in the society, and inequality among social classes were few among various factors which compelled the working-class women to adopt the profession of prostitution. (Muhammad, 2017; Nsaidzedze, 2017; Sindradóttir, 2015; Öztürk, 2012; Heilmann et al., 2010; Digby, 1992).

The Conceptualization of New Woman

Alfred (2015) and Gardiner (2002) expostulate the conceptualization of new woman as a new force to challenge and confront the traditionalism and conservative morality of the Victorian social setup. The very romantic idealization of women in the Victorian society restricted women from participating in public affairs and engaged them with the narrow and limited ideas, pre-conceived notions, mind-sets and moral approaches in a male-dominant society, argues Cooley (1904), Peters (1998) and Walters (2005). Women taken as second sex to men, were considered innate meaningless creatures unless in relation with men (Tyson, 2006). The patriarchal norms and social setup of Victorian society deprived women of all fundamental

rights including education. The Victorian women were trained to be good girls, good wives, and good mothers. What made them earn the title of good was again decided by men in the society. In other words, woman who followed men, obeyed to them, served them unpaid, sacrificed their wishes and dreams, laboured in in-laws' house, and gave birth to children was epitomized as a decent, innocent, pure, gentle and mother-marry like figure—*good woman* (Tyson, 2006; Eagleton, 2008). However, the woman who dared to seek independence, work like men self-dependently, joined public places, decided for herself, discarded all obligations and pseudo-norms of patriarch society would likely be defamed as a bad/spoilt creature, adds Tyson (2006) and Greenblatt (2018). This Cooley (1904) mentions that the new-woman is courageous, audacious, brave, daring, independent, self-dependent, and possesses all masculine attributes. Victorian patriarchal setup eulogized the woman of domestic affairs as idealized one by limiting her to private sphere of society. On the other hand, the same age at its end witnesses the birth of concept of New-woman in the society. This new woman was in the beginning taken as a threat to all pre-conceived social norms, values and institutions which made men dominant, oppressor, and ruler over women (Burke, 2017; Toynbee, 2012; Sanders, 2001). The idea of New-womanhood fascinated many women with the basic understanding of rational approach to claim the right of equality in education, profession, social status, dressing, and other fundamental circles of life mentions Banthakit (2011). As “an independent Feminist Woman who did not conform to conventional women’s roles as a mother and a wife” (Banthakit, 2011, p 2) made Victorian women turn to be a new straightforward threat to the conventional social setup of women’s sphere (home or domesticity), encouraging women to step forward out of home to seek the education, job, work, profession, and suffrage (right to vote) etc. The new woman is more idealist, individualistic, self-dependent, self-assisting, and self-determined who never longs to remain idle or never accepts others’ authorities to be imposed upon her very existence. Holroyd (1989) posits that the idea of New-women made them more rebellious and threatening to the society where traditionalism, conventionalism, and morality were supposed to be deep seated principles of Christian male-dominant society. He further elaborates the audacious Shavian women having more manly powers in comparison with unmanly male characters.

Portrait of Women with Manly Characteristics and Features in the Victorian Society

Abrams (2011) and Gordon (2003) discuss that the Victorian women adopted the concept of New-womanhood as an armour against socially rotten values and morally corrupt society. These women dared to challenge all the pre-conceived, irrational and patriarchal values. Sullivan (1993) states that women, accepting the New-womanhood, discarded the idea of being submissive and blind obedient, rather became more aggressive, eager to argue and counter argue with men. They started using their natural power to suppress the male chauvinistic attitude. They became audacious, bold, brave, daring, and courageous in performing and executing jobs that were marked as reserved-for-men-to-do. Banthakit (2011) states that the concept of ‘New Woman’ strengthened Victorian women as a challenging force not only in social spheres, but set a new movement against the sentimental Victorian novels and values. These females were representation of reality and rebel against previous values and norms. Smart (1994) and Plain, Gill and Sellers, and Susan (2007) and Sanders (2001) are of view that the moral corruption and rotten values in the Victorian society indirectly pushed women to stand against them as a threat, rebel, challenge, and counter attack.

Women: Who Struggle to be Independent

Holroyd (1989) notices a change in late Victorian women as rebellious in nature, adopting New-womanhood, having a strong determination and will-power to struggle for self-dependence, individuality and freedom. The most prominent and eminent issue that Victorian Patriarchy faced was that of spirit of independence in women (Holroyd, 1989). Gardiner (2002) discusses women’s endeavours to be independent and individual as a rebel shackled the deep-rooted patriarchal foul and corrupt values. The concept of New-woman professed the voice for financial freedom of women that provided them decision-making power and the free will to plan their lives the way they want to (Muhammad, 2017). Watson (1964) affirms that the idea of New-womanhood inculcated the inevitable struggle in women to be financially, socially, individually, intellectually, morally, ethically, and naturally independent members of the society. The struggle was not limited to social aspects only but within the family authority of the mother over daughter, father over son, husband over wife, son over girl was generally abandoned to indicate how audacious and courageous these New-women have been (Watson, 2015; Watson, 1964; Holroyd, 1979; Cooley, 1904). Literature, of later Victorian Period, portrays women to be embodiment of manly attributes and women were no more depicted idiotic, but of more intelligence in comparison to men. The equality of women

with men in every walk of life made writers of the Victorian age eulogize unconventional but daring women to be dominant characters in literary production, essays, novels, plays, poems, and dramas. Banthakit (2011) and Holroyd (1989) posit that the average government would not be known a government until it possesses men and women in equal proportions. However, if it is supposed that only one sex would be to regulate the government, women would be set on the first rank, no place for men. Equality of women with men meant women to be treated as independent in will and spirit, are self-confident, realist and rational, morally audacious and courageous, and less emotional and sentimentally well-suited to work in every sphere of society. It was the voice for women who worked for twelve hours with no proper wages paid in factories and coal mines. This equality in the terms of finance would bring the class equality, to inter-marriageability and other domains of the life as well. However, this further supported the independence of decision-making power in women and liberation from pre-conceived stereotypic, patriarchal, and male-chauvinistic ideals of Victorian society (Holroyd, 1989; Bodichon, 1954; Erikson, 1993). The voice to uplift women was full of fascination and active participation of women in the man-privileged institutes of the Victorian society. The characters in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* stand for a sort of campaign or movement to improve the education system having equality and liberty for women to be educated so that the very talent of society could not be wasted by sitting idle at home. G.B. Shaw is no less than any other writer who professed and propagated the concept of New-womanhood in his literary productions like *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. He shattered the traditionally eulogized women of private sphere to be more public, daring, audacious, manly, and out-spoken unconventional figures. Holroyd (1989), Morgan (1974), Erikson (1993) and Smart (1994) posit that the female characters in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* are literal embodiment of New-womanhood. They struggle to be self-expressive, self-esteemed, self-dependent, and self-motivated figures.

Self-expressing Female Characters in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession'

Morgan (1974) and Taylor (1988) claim that Shavian females, as embodiment of New-womanhood, are more active, rigorous, intelligent, wise, self-respected, self-dependent, and self-maintaining ones. They are audacious to express their own points and arguments without bothering about the social liability. They are audacious enough to counter-argue with men and to challenge the social tenets and tendencies. MacDonald and Goggin (2013) and Jain (2006) add that Shavian women can be portrayed as: incarnation of feedback of societal

standards and presumptions about defensive mother, virgin, womanly woman. Vivie is a practical and business minded young girl; she has no interest in the artistic or romantic beauty of world around her. She rejects two proposals from her suitors, sir George Crofts and Frank Gardner. She completely abandons the very idea of getting married. The boundary between proposals and desires is blotched - Frank flatters with Vivie as well as with Mrs. Warren and Sir Crofts asks Vivie to marry him in spite of knowing that he had been in an intimate relationship with Vivie's mother, Wells (1982). Vivie's rejection of both proposals from her suitors in a way symbolizes "denial of the capitalist society" (Jain, 2006, p 135). Shaw's heroines in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* are more powerful and audacious to challenge the conventionality of Victorian society. His heroines are the very much made up of flesh and blood like ordinary humans, yet they distinguish their own position, attitude, and personality from other in society due their mannish, unwomanly, and audacious features. Researchers (Ardis, 1990; Gardiner, 2002; and Heilmann, Ann and Mark, 2010) say that Shavian heroines are the very women of society, but every woman of the society is not the Shavian heroine. The best achievement of the new woman is individuality and freedom. The degradation of women lies in the very concept of assuming men as the bread-winner, head of the house, wage-earner, strong, intellect and wise human being and women as submissive, naturally inferior, emotional, irrational, and weaker. The New-woman what Cooley (1904) calls the blooming rose of all the womanliness of the previous ages has started spreading its fragrance of civilization and development of nation based on both men and women to be endured with its wholeness and entirety. New woman has made her previous sufferings her strength and power, her feelings of motherhood has made her as deep as the ocean is, and she has widened her approach based on education, she has come to acknowledge and make others acknowledge that her perfection leads races and nations to the perfections. She is the new sun of everyday world which rises to bring change in its every domain and sector.

METHODOLOGY

Mrs. Warren's Profession is analysed by using non-empirical method of Textual Analysis and Close Reading method. Textual analysis as a data-gathering process is a way of educated interpretation, analysis of interpreting and analysing a text. Through Close Reading method "[t]he text is read closely and carefully, looking at why it's being said and how it's being said" (McKee, 2003, p 3). The approach to be used in the textual analysis of the selected work is formalist in nature which retains the text as a whole and self-narrative piece of

writing. Textual analysis is actually “the construction of knowledge about a text” (ibid). The interpretation of the textual analysis constitutes the meaning out of text and its discourse. Textual analysis aims to evaluate and explore “attitudes, behaviors, concerns, motivations, and culture of the text producer from an expert point of view” (Bauer, 2014, p 1). It is used to analyse a text objectively, but supporting the researcher’s claims with depersonalized reason and arguments far away from reader’s personal feelings of likes and dislikes, prejudices and bias, leans and inclinations towards the author or text (Rockwell, 2003). In textual analysis the text receives primary attention and focus. The text is used “for an understanding of the structure and the interaction within” (McKee, 2003, p 2). The approach would unfold what is hidden behind the text, dialogues, context, situations, statements, and language of characters. This paper will take the selected work from a feminist perspective of Cooley’s (1904) ‘*New Womanhood*’. The female characters’ (Vivie Warren and Mrs. Warren) roles and the way they—as protagonists—go through development in the play will be studied. This paper will interpret their external appearance, their ways of treatment and behaviour, their choices, their denial of association of social and cultural values, standards, institutions and conventions based on the gender and sex. Similarly, the concept of *New Woman* and un-Victorian womanhood along with un-traditional and un-conventional, but audacious attributes in female characters are intended to be specified and scrutinized in this paper as well. Female characters and their specific understanding of social values, norms, morals, ethics and standards and the way female characters have opposed the male dominant and patriarch society are also studied in context with Shaw’s *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*.

Critical Theory

The paper analyses *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* by applying the concept of ‘New Womanhood’ professed by Winifred Harper Cooley (1904) due to its significant portrait of social hypocrisy and rotten patriarchy of Victorian era. The concept of New-womanhood is an extended offshoot of feminism in the Victorian era that was exclusively propagated through literature of the age. Feminism as a critical theory is generally used to demonstrate the status of women either reinforced or suppressed in a particular age (Tyson, 2006; Eagleton, 2008). Cooley (1904) has defined the struggles of women in late Victorian era by highlighting the process of evolution in womanhood and femininity of women making which distinguishes them from Victorian women. The new woman that Cooley (1904) mentions is the result of continuous and persistent struggle of women since the ancient times which make women of modern age

to be “the flower of all the womanhood of past age. (p 31). One of the most important characteristics of a new woman is her personal liberty. By defining the development of both sexes, Cooley (1904) is of opinion that man has earned the achievements with encouragements whereas women, in modern un-Victorian age, has earned achievements despite bitter discouragement from various sections of society. “No one in the world ever attempted to define for man his place in the economy of the universe; the stronger half of humanity always has assigned a sphere to woman, and held her, by force of law, public opinion and social control, in this place” (Cooley, 1904, p 15). The greater change in ideals and values is the desire of girls to remain unwed in the society would ultimately encourage the bitter criticism from society, yet she dares to maintain it as her right. The patriarchal society that of Victorian age always thought it obligatory to teach girls to be docile, morale, submissive, obedient, quiet and good, whereas has taught men to do what makes them a man, bold, aggressive, powerful, dominant, and victorious. However, new woman is the one to be individual, self-dependent, and self-narrative (Cooley, 1904; Watson, 1964). The term ‘*new woman*’ possesses paradox nature of meaning, for a modern woman, who dares to break the patriarchal ideals and values, designs for herself “who does things, who strives not only to be, but to act” is actually not the newer concept or form of woman, however, “*The new woman is only the old woman with new opportunities!*” (Cooley, 1904, p 17). The previous women were suppressed, oppressed, powerless, over-burdened, over-conscious of people’s opinions that they were psychologically and physically made unable to set any marks on history, except few glorious examples. It appreciated the qualities of bravery, honesty, courage, loyalty, perseverance, and the power of initiative in men and condemned women who possessed them. In other words, women were eulogized and praised up to the heights that no man ever reached. But men were always portrayed to cherish the “glories and excitements of battles” and she was always shut into the walls of home (Cooley, 1904, p 5). Another characteristic of a new woman is that she loves to be independent and free thus, making it a jest on marriage. They believe that the idea of marriage based on Victorian ideals states women to be a mere property handed over to groom/husband. Rather, she looks forward to building up a relation based on mutual cooperation, understanding and respect for each other. Because the new woman is not the one habitual creature of spending her entire life within four walls of home, rather she loves to work for economic needs in offices, factories, or run any business that provides them wages and profit making them independent and self-

esteemed in society. This another trait shows the evolution of the new woman “and who shall say that the bright, self-supporting girl, who is not forced to marry to be supported, thus degrading marriage almost to prostitution, or the widow who supports her family, is not as fine a product of humanity as the helpless domestic woman of the past” (Cooley, 1904, p 31).

Thus, the feminism that Cooley professes represents the evolution of women as a result of continuous struggle of women since long time on social, political, economic, educational and individual positions. The play consists of female characters, Mrs. Warren and Vivie Warren, to possess all the elements of a new woman in contrast with the Victorian idealistic and romantic notions of womanhood.

DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

Shaw is the writer who brought the social problems and issues on the dramatic stage with full vigour and urge that compelled audience think and talk about the very controversial characters and issues for the long time after stage performance. The female characters in *Mrs. Warren's profession* have been taken as revolutionary heroines and were subject to severe criticism of censorship as well. The female characters, both Mrs. Warren and Vivie Warren are the protagonists of the play and their tragic fall is in a way the fall of the society as well (Ollevier, 2012). Vivie and Mrs. Warren are the women having a strong determination to be a confident-career-women who willingly invest their time for the jobs rather than spending it in domesticity like conventional women. The success in their lives have established them with financial independence, self-reliance, and paving their own ways to live the way they desire or want to without any sort of support from men. Regarding marriage, they have similar views. For them their own individualities are more prominent and significant than being bound and bonded with their suitors (Carpenter, 1969; Crompton, 1971; Dowling, 1979). Vivie spends and wishes to live in a mannish or manly life style which does not even bother her mother as well. Her mother's abominable profession (of prostitution) does not make her realize her character to be immoral and vulgar even when mother explains the possible factors or impulses that pushed her in such a vulgarity (Kauffman, 1986). She is not ready to assume her profession immoral based on financial needs, nor on bases of socially set values and conventions. Shaw through Vivie draws our attention to the point that the concept of 'New Woman' is more about individuality and self-dependence or independence of woman like Vivie and Honoria Fraser (her business partner).

Characters

The play, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, has male and female characters. Both have distinctively opposite attributes. The play, purposefully, incarnates females characters with manly attributes and vice versa. The male characters lack of all those attributes that previous literary works picturized them with. On the other hand, Shaw has made female characters which is in clash with general stereotypes of women: they are strong, bold, audacious, courageous, individual, self-dependent, daring and self-determined.

Mrs. Kitty Warren: Socially Suppressed Woman

In *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Mrs. Warren has been depicted as single mother, un-married woman who has gone through various challenges and hardships of life to be ultimately a successful businesswoman and worked harder to be an independent and self-respected lady of the society, and is more mannish and unwomanly in over-powering the males (Kusovac, 2006; Berst, Marker & Berg, 1998). Her personality does not seem to be a stereotypical, over-obsessed with conventions, preoccupied with traditional dogmas, and pre-established values and customs which make her very character and role as an abominable lady of the society, says Berst et al., (1998). Her values, interests, preferences, vision, and ways of life are in contrast and clash with those of patriarchal society of Victorian era which makes her to be known as 'New Woman' and one of the most unconventional characters of Shaw as well.

Mrs. Warren represents those poor ladies who suffered starvation, hunger and poverty in their worst forms and pushed them in the England of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to sell their bodies to wild beasts and hounds of the capitalist society. Mrs. Warren was oppressed and victimized by the rich, but later on when she became stable enough to face and confront the society, she liberates herself and her arranges a comfortable life not only for herself but her daughter as well. The success in the business leads her to be independent and self-respected lady of the society. Shaw as an artist, dramatist, and social reformer highlights this issue of prostitution which creates clash between two different generations, a mother representing older generation and a daughter standing for modern and new generation (Mayne, 1967). Both have common similarities and have characteristics distinguishing from each other at the same time. Kitty and Vivie do share similar attributes of having one's own

way of life. For example, Vivie's audacious determination to work in actuary's office or to work and be paid for it and spending her money the way she wants are more like attributes that her mother shares in working at Waterloo bar initially and later running her own private business (Berst et al., 1998). By looking at the perspectives and preferences of two different generations as Rev. Samuel Gardner and Kitty Warren taken as older generation and Frank Gardner and Vivie Warren as young and new generation, former deals and leads the later type as differently as once they were themselves in childhood.

Vivie Warren: a modal for new women

Vivie is not conventional and morally a Victorian (Greenblatt, 2018). She is bolder, audacious, and courageous to keep life in active mood by not depending on others' money (mother's money), but to live on her own feet. She is manly woman with laborious guts. Vivie being surrounded by Patriarchal and male-dominant society of morally rotten values rejects mother's authority as well. Vivie's concept of 'New Woman' or trend and longing for achieving and representing herself as an independent girl is contrasted to her mother's right of motherhood (Croft, 2009). Mrs. Warren, the house-head, assumes the patriarchal authority upon Vivie because she has given her daughter elite-academic career and proper upbringing. For Vivie as a new woman has her own ways to spend a life without any social and conventional boundaries fixed up for women by men. Vivie, in any case, appears to have much more just the same characteristics and features as the New Woman than her mother (Langland, 1992; Croft, 2009; Berst et al., 1998). She prefers the masculine or mannish style of dresses, shakes hands in a masculine spirit, loves to smoke and is not interested towards the idealized romance and beauty of art, but interested in hard subjects to study as mathematics and *trapos* which were generally supposed to be aspired by men dominantly with the plan of distinguished career or profession which could provide her sufficient financial aid to make her claim as an independent and self-respected individual one (SenGupta, 1974; Peters, 1998).

Vivie's wish and desire for independence and individuality makes her enough bold that she does not hesitate to throw away any sort of responsibility regarding her mother or suitors and this is what makes her hoist the flag of new woman through Shaw's dramatic art. In this regard an independent, self-respected and self-esteeming woman would be more like a trendsetter and pioneer to reject and abandon their family duties and practices or throw away

unprivileged pseudo-morality and shallow customs for their own benefits, they would do it without any hesitation (Heilmann, Ann and Llewellyn, 2010). By portraying Kitty with the profession of prostitution and the relationship between Kitty and Vivie as mother and daughter, Shaw has actually presented reasons behind Kitty's running prostitution brothel and showing motherly feelings with daughter as well. Both are the major but overlapping themes of the play.

Vivie is not a Victorian girl to bow down before the traditional authority of her mother. Mrs. Warren is warned by Praed, who has been noticing Vivie from the opening of the first act and her unconventional or non-Victorian attitudes that, "Vivie is a grown woman. Pray, Kitty, treat her with respect" (Act I, 65). At that moment Mrs. Warren replies that, "Respect! Treat my own daughter with respect! What next, pray!" (Act I, 65). However, later on Vivie claims her individuality by rejecting the pre-established dogmas of authority of parents (mother in Mrs. Warren's case) in these words;

"You claim the rights of a mother: the right to call me fool and child; to speak to me as no woman in authority over me at college dare speak to me; to dictate my way of life; and to force on me the acquaintance of a brute whom anyone can see to be the most vicious sort of London man about town."

(Act II, 98)

Vivie turns from a mother's loving daughter to an individual daughter who abhors mother and leaves her on her own way by saying, "It's better to choose your line and go through with it" (Act IV, 165). A sort of U-turn was executed in consideration of the concept of new woman when Vivie overthrew the authority of her mother and decided to have her own ways in the life. If Feminism is the raising of voice for the equality of women with men, the desire to be independent and individual of a girl without accepting the authority of any other person is what makes it a new woman in the society (Cooley, 1904; SenGupta, 1974; Peters, 1998; Heilmann et al., 2010;). It is more than equality, a voice for the true and authentic recognition of woman as an individual with all qualities, abilities, characteristics, faculties, features, skills, and demonstrations as a conscious and reasoning being in the world. It has been a very matter of highlighting that civilization and cultural development in any society or nation is not possible without the prominent contribution and accreditation of women at all.

Unconventional Attributes in Female Characters

Woodbrige (1968) investigates Shaw's plays in context with social and political background of Victorian era. He argues that most of the female heroines of Shavian plays in general and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* in particular, have a significant mannish characteristics and features which distinguish them from Shaw's male characters. The conventional woman was brought up with the very notion that her husband is the hub of her life and she has to burn herself to provide light to his home, adds Jain (2006). The common depiction of a woman's family life in Victorian society is a personal hub, secluded of the people and the turmoil of the world around it, says Gordon, Nair, & Nair (2003). Jain (2006) states that women in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* have two unwomanly ethics –wit and will; which is against the stereotypical patriarchal society that women are naturally born powerless and irrational. The heroines of Shavian plays have been embodied with revolution and rebel in their blood. He denied ladies from taking the guidance of others as it could form into a long lasting propensity for changing them. The persona that portrays Shavian courageous women is of off-beat, shrewd women with her very own will-power. He demanded that ladies were not heavenly attendant, but rather, normal unsteady animals, subject to hissy fits, sexual captivation and different flaws of decency. In the prevalent manner Shaw made men ready to conceptualize and take women as human beings who must share the equal position, status, honour, reverence and a right to be supposed as an ideal human for younger generations (Jain, 2006; Gordon, Nair, & Nair, 2003). Young (1964) also highlights the very true picture of women in the Victorian society. Shaw's female characters have distinguished themselves as unconventional women of the society. These unconventional Shavian women never accepted male authority to be dominant over them. They had their different visions, aims and ways of life, and had planned the life that was supposed to be the taboo at the very turn of the century when Shaw was enjoying the prominent position as a playwright at the peak of fame and name.

Characters Exposing Real Face of Society

Glicksberg (1935) highlights that Capitalism compels women to sell their bodies "whether in or out of marriage". It is hollow of morality and traditional respectability for women in the society. Capitalism destroys the sense of honour and respect by creating the circumstances of poverty and starvation (p 125). Victorian society is exposed through literary works like *Mrs.*

Warren's Profession as the society with pseudo-morality and rotten values. The values and moral approaches that Shaw has criticized in this play, generally privileged elite class patriarchy. The lower class remained suppressed and ignored at the large scale. At the same time, the conditions and position of women were of the worst (Erikson, 1993). In the Victorian literature women were idealized, eulogized and romanticized, but in real society women were treated as a mere toy for the husband, a servant to attend the in-laws, a babysitter for children, and an unnecessary burden to be passed by parents to others in the name of marriage. This trend of marriage as a very pillar of society was the main reason to snatch the individuality, personality, self and respect or honour of females in Victorian society. The alienation of women can clearly be found in that society in a sense that women were marginalized and limited within husband's house. Her life, as a housewife and a mother, has divorced her from normal or moderate social activities. The feelings of failure, inferiority-complex, and insecurity have been produced in women due to such alienation in the society. Holroyd (1989) studies Shaw's plays in comparison with the then-conditions of women in the society. Shaw upheld amendments to the course of marriage not as a part of tradition or convention which made women bound to bow down before men, but to be taken as a part of human nature with equal right of selection, choice, rejection and divorce as well. For Shaw the convention of marriage celebrated in the Victorian society was more like a slave trade legalized or legitimated. Marriage was not a union of two souls due to affection and love, but women were sold in the name of marriage as she was provided bread, shelter, and bed. It was more offensive and unwholesome. The harsh reality of Victorian society was that women belonging to elite class are not married, but sold and bought for a price. The noble cause of marriage ceremony is buried far beneath "in the scheming, the bargaining and the pricing" (Finney, 1989, p 77). Mrs. Warren, in the play, represents the working women in the Victorian society. She was compelled to accept the profession to survive. It was named as an abominable and disgusting by people who nourished their lust from it. Shaw's motif behind the characters in the play was to let the society know about its own hypocrisy. He exposed how the authoritative segment of society has veiled itself with the pseudo-morality and there lies a monstrous and devil behind a sophisticated, well-decorated, and fine-looking face of the segment which has corrupted the society from very inside. "Every man and woman present will know that as long as poverty makes virtue hideous and the spare pocket-money of rich bachelordom makes vice dazzling, their daily hand-to-hand fight against

prostitution with prayer and persuasion, shelters and scanty alms, will be a losing one” (Shaw, 1893, p 3). Walkowitz (1982) and Eriskson (1993) state that Shaw has used his artistic and dramatic qualities and genius to expose that poverty does not give birth to the malicious and vicious social diseases. So is the case with the prevailing problem of prostitution in the Victorian society under the hidden and reddened hands of powerful, dominant, and authoritative fragment of the society. Rather it is capitalist class who manipulates poverty and prostitution. Mrs. Warren, a single mother in the play, suffered social cruelties and brutalities of a small but powerful fragment of the society. She was pushed and compelled to adopt the profession of prostitution to survive and live a life in the society of monsters and devils who apparently claim to be modest, decent, gentlemen and educated, yet they were the main force to play with the lives of poor, lower class girls and women, argues Banthakit (2011).

RESULTS

Shaw’s play *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* reveals the unbeatable struggle of empowering women in the patriarch society. In other words, it represents the social campaign for women’s rights, equality, and vote in the Victorian society that was never voiced up through literary productions in previous ages. The female characters in *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* possess the boldness, courage, dare, and spirit to fight for their own rights. They have all attributes which were previously associated with men. By unleashing their audacious personalities, these female characters surpass the male characters in various social and personal affairs of life. The play and female characters, on the broader level, uncover the shame face of male-dominant and morally rotten society. The play and female characters have criticized sternly on the social oppression of women, hypocrisy of capitalist society, and gender discrimination. Similarly, issues of duality of poverty, wealth, oppression and struggle for freedom, individuality, and rebel against conventional values of patriarch society are highlighted as well.

Voice for the Rights of Women

One of the significant results that paper uncovers is that the play *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, as a part of social campaign for the rights of women and a voice raised against the women’s suppression, gender discrimination, and inequality in male-oriented society of Victorian era. As a literary work, the play is a significant contribution to reveal the darker and shame face

of capitalist society. The play crushes the pre-conceived notion of Victorian society that men are born stronger and women are weaker by birth. Vivie, in the beginning of the play, shows her strong appearance before Mr. Pread. However, Frank Gardner shows the laziness in attitude which is in clash with the pre-Victorian picturization of men. Holroyd (1988), Wells (1982) and Watson (1964) state that the play are a significant contribution in raising the voice for the rights of women in the society as equal to that of men. The women of time had been deprived of possessing the legal and natural right of being voters, protectors and guardians of their own children. Shaw's ladies are not saint anymore and they are not just equivalent to their male partners, though they regularly outperform men in their knowledge, resolution, and profound quality. Both Kitty Warren and Vivie Warren have been characterized the play which was never done before in Victorian and pre-Victorian literary works. Two possible dimensions of Kitty and Vivie warrens' can be assumed; on the one hand, both characters stand for the general demand of all women in the society to be encouraged, motivated, awaked and triggered up to raise their voices for their fundamental rights. On the other hand, the play is a hard blow on stereotypic notion of men's superiority and women's inferiority based on the genders. Shaw achieved something in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* that had yet to be practiced upon in the society as a campaign for women's freedom and independence.

New Woman: Incarnation of Independence

Victorian society, as a male-dominant society, generally idealized women as second to men. The woman was accepted in terms of a wife, mother, sister, or daughter who was by birth unable to contribute in the social setup. Shaw through her characters in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* smashes such ivory towers built for women and advocates for the independence of women in every walk of life. Shaw's audacious and unconventional characters surrounded by conventional morality not only stand to expose the hypocrisy and double-standard of pretensions and showy morality and values that Sir George Croft and Rev. Samuel Gardner preach for, but also to liberate from the limited, temporary, ephemeral, and artificial aesthetic pursuit of beauty in the wonderful world of art as preached by Mr.Praed and Frank Gardner. The diplomatic attitude and hypocrisy of society if ever revealed by any character in modern dramas was done at the best by Mrs. Warren. The pseudo-morality, rotten customs and conventional values which numbed the senses of women who were treated ruthlessly and unjustly by Victorian customs of marriage, which like prostitution had been customized and commercialized as a trade of women supply from one house to other (Jeffrey, 1989; Gardiner,

2002; Sanders, 2001). Through Mrs. Warren, Shaw declares that prostitution is a medium of survival for those victimized women of poverty and starvation in the patriarch capitalist society. Middle class woman was more conventional and Victorian in traditions about marriage. She believed in being a wife who was more domestic and under the supervision of her husband. She had to serve her husband and other family members in return she would be paid security at home and food/bread for empty belly. The pre-New-Woman concept of women was to subjugate and be subordinate to men in the society, entitled as an object or toy to be played with by men. They earned these titles by sacrificing their own self, wishes, desires, and ambitions and by suppressing their own virtues, qualities, nature, existence, abilities, and faculties as well. “Mrs. Warren’s utterance is not Shaw’s defence of feminist notion about prostitution but a defences of woman as a human being struggling with the morality rotten capitalist society” (Chesterton, 1972, p 55).

The Play: A Criticism on the Society

Shaw as a social critic has portrayed his heroines in an un-idealized characters that they are utterly unconventional and un-Victorian in their ways of lives. The highlighted issues in this play are hypocrisy, duality, female manifestation, poverty, wealth, oppression and struggle for freedom, individuality, and rebel against conventional values of patriarch society. The issue of prostitution as a mean of survival and as a product of social evils, not of poverty, is furthermore highlighted through taboo relations between Mrs. Warren and Crofts, and Mrs. Warren and Samuel Gardner as well. This somehow seems to have created the issue of illicit relations between Mrs. Warren and Crofts for a long time or the love-affair between Mrs. Warren and Samuel Gardner in their youth. Either might have resulted in the birth of Vivie. This was the main reason that Crofts was initially eager to know whether Vivie would be his daughter or not, and this was the reason Samuel Gardner did not approve for the marriage of his son Frank Gardner with Vivie Warren. Moreover, Croft trespassed all the conventional and socially-set limitations by asking Mrs. Warren to approve the marriage of him with Vivie despite having illicit and intimate relation with Mrs. Warren.

Shaw’s main motif behind the play was to let the society know about its own hypocrisy and he exposed how the authoritative segment of society have veiled itself with the pseudo-morality and its monstrous and devil face behind a well-mannered, well-decorated, and beautiful face of elite class. “Every man and woman present will know that as long as poverty

makes virtue hideous and the spare pocket-money of rich bachelordom makes vice dazzling, their daily hand-to-hand fight against prostitution with prayer and persuasion, shelters and scanty alms, will be a losing one” (Shaw, 1986, p 03). For Shaw the most fundamental cause of woman-trade or prostitution was the unjust treatment of women working in factories, lower-wages, and empty bellies under the tyranny of capitalist society.

The relationship between a mother and a daughter, Mrs. Kitty Warren and Miss Vivie Warren, has been depicted as two prevailing forces in clash and contrast with each other on the basis of choices, wills, opportunities, and matters of interest. As Vivie says to her mother: “If I had been you, mother, I might have done as you did; but I should not have lived one life and believed in another” (Act IV 164). Most of women adopted prostitution due to certain causes and factors as they were severely harassed, molested, and tortured in other professions where They were not provided enough wages to fill their bellies and fulfil other necessities of life. In prostitution, however, taken as an abominable profession, women were provided with financial and professional securities as well assured to live their own lives. “Working-class women were in difficult situation and many of these women lacked of literacy. Their duty was to take a job which was offered. So they could either go and work in the factory for long hours and practically no money or they could join this business which would provide them good money and better life. It was quite an issue how this profession should be presented” (Kusovac, 2006, p 174). Shaw posits that “each social class strove to serve its own ends, and the upper and middle-classes won in the struggle while the working-class lost” (Shaw, 1955, p 269). Shaw has uncovered hypocrisy and moral corruption of the society before people through the female characters in *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*. He asserts that the inability of labourers and factory workers to opt for their leaders through voting power is due to financial sufferings and economic deprivation and are unable to fill their bellies properly.

Shaw emphasizes on the working conditions and wages of women labour in the society through female characters. The very attitude, eccentric approach, behaviour, habits, motifs, interests, and ways of life Vivie has adopted are the outcomes of the ways she was treated and educated making her to be ‘young modern new English woman’. The new woman is more individualistic, self-dependent, self-assisting, and self-determined who never longs to remain idle or never accepts others’ authorities to be imposed upon her life. The new woman struggles to get freedom from the dogmatic beliefs, conventional fetters, rotten values,

illogical customs, unreasoning interests, and freedom from all notions based on discriminations and disparities between man and woman. That represent female as a subordinate, no equal to male, suppressed, oppressed, subjugated, and dominated by male.

CONCLUSION

For Shaw drama was more like a symbolic representation of modification, refinement, modernization, modulation and more appropriately de-conventionalization for the people of England in nineteenth century. George Bernard Shaw is one of the most influential playwrights of his period. It was the time of transition and revolution in ideology. People were no more longing for the social, religious, intellectual and political institutes of Victorian era. A sort of shift and transition was prevailing insidiously, and that was accelerated by some playwrights mainly starting from Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen's plays were more like a bomb that fell on pre-established institutes and everything was destroyed or reached the edge of destruction. If Ibsen, who is a Norwegian playwright, has left such an inevitable influence on the British or English theatre that almost every playwright of the beginning of the nineteenth century has directly or indirectly adapted certain features or techniques in their plays and Shaw who is supposed to be a turning-the-table-over-like person has not escaped from his influence. Some have adapted the thematic perspectives, some grabbed on the stage-craft, some modulated their dialogues, and even others gave their social or realistic touches on Ibsenic polish. The concept of modern tragedy in the field of drama can be clearly apprehended through the very play of Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. It is not only falling of a central character, but the fall of entire society has been demonstrated in it. Moreover, it would not be wrong to say that fall of women in Shavian play is actually the fall of entire society and civilization as well. We do not find the characters merely performers on the stage for the sake of just entertainment rather the deep meaning within makes audience stir up. It would not be wrong to remark that there is no gentle ethics in the play: "The play is a pure tragedy about a permanent and quite plain human problem, the problem is as plain and permanent, the tragedy is as proud as in Oedipus or Macbeth" (Chesterton, 1990, 50).

He has made his female characters in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* more powerful, expressive, self-dependent, strong to challenge the rest of world, struggling to survive in the society, unwomanly women, and warrior. The concept of new woman in his play is the most dominant and emphasized one throughout. Shaw's main motto behind the female characters

is that of independence, self-dependence, liberty, and freedom of women from financial, social, spiritual, ethical, and domestic dogmas and dilemmas. In a way he has hoisted a flag of freedom and independence through the mouth of his female characters. Holroyd (1989) says that his voice hoisted for the protection of women was more like the ingenious exercise of protecting women against their protectors that later were men, the dominant head of house.

In Shaw's plays the war or battle has been vigorously waged for the equality of income and financial independence of women in the society. However, Shaw had a strong belief that equality of financial demands would reinforce individuality of Will and choice. In *Mrs. Warren's Profession* Shaw has made women to expose the evil and vile trends and tendencies in upper class of society. His play is purely for the reinforcement of women to be more individual and manly in their determinations, considerations, and survival. As the play had the main focus on the illicit liaison between characters and that Shaw without pronouncing a single time the word prostitution and incest directed the minds of audience towards them. The other side of the play is all about the bitter picture of then society which unveiled the brutality and injustice of corrupted capitalist society of Victorian era which dragged and pushed women to sell their bodies and compelled them to satisfy the animalistic lust of that class by clothing themselves as prostitution and sexually abused ones. Shaw's play brought forward the women, not only on the stage but probably later on in the society, who were more inclined to demand for the equality and liberty and treatment more like that of men which is supposed to demolish the Victorian concept of women in the society.

Mrs. Warren's Profession exposes struggles against victimization and brutalization of women in the hands of corrupt and morally rotten society and lusty capitalists as well. The play itself can be taken as a manifesto which reveals Shaw's voice for reinforcing what was the dire need of the society that was to uplift and upgrade the status of women in the society, that was to challenge the already established rotten and corrupt values and morality of the society and to establish a new society where women are no more starred as an object to be played with or an excessive creature of God, but to regard her as an equal and powerful contributor and participator in social, economic, cultural, political, moral and ethical values.

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