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*'Voices of Change'***

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A Critical Analysis of Treatment of the Woman Character in four Selected Stories from ‘*Half A Day and other Stories*’ and ‘*Voices of Change*’

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to critically analyse the treatment of the woman character in four selected stories from two short stories ‘*Half a Day and Other Stories*’ and ‘*Voices of Change*’. This study assessed gender roles, the impact of patriarchy on woman character and how rhetorical questions have been used in the selected texts to portray treatment of the woman character in the four selected stories. The study was significant, because it depicted the treatment of the woman not only as second class citizen but also the ill-treatment, humiliation, depression, and exploitation denies women rights from enjoying equal status with men in all aspects of life in society. In addition, the study formed an analysis from the selected texts on how the writers assign roles to the woman character, impact of patriarchy to the woman character and how writers have used rhetorical questions among other styles, to portray treatment of the woman character. The findings of this research study also contributed valuable knowledge to the past research on the treatment of woman character in literary texts and therefore formed a reference material to other scholars. The selected short stories helped to bring out the objectives of this study. The findings of the study aimed to benefit the Ministry of Gender in formulation of policies relating to gender discrimination and violence against women and girl child. The study was premised on the Feminist Theory using the strand of Socialist feminism. This study was purely a library-based research. The study adopted an exploratory mode that used a descriptive design to critically analyse the treatment of the woman in four selected stories from two Short Stories Ayebia C (2004) *Half a Day and Other Stories* and Abubaker, B.D. (1998) *Voices of Change*. Data was collected by use of contextual analysis method and was analysed through qualitative method. The findings inspired further scholarly research into the subject of gender discrimination, identified its inherent weaknesses and recommended

improvements that may be adopted to make it more effective. The conclusions of this research study can influence studies like: Gender issues and feminist studies. In addition, they can contribute future research on the treatment of the women in the society, which is a contemporary issue. The researcher therefore concluded that, the set objectives of the study were achieved. The selected stories portray the women roles, patriarchy system and use of stylistic devices. Therefore, these bring out the way the treatment of the women in these stories.

Key Words: *Critical Analysis, Treatment, Woman Character, stories*

1.1 Background of the Study

During the past the relationship between the men and women has been analyzed closely particularly towards the end of the 19th period and also during the 20th period. The issue of the way the sex roles are assigned, has always been an area of research and examination in all aspects of a particular community. For example, in politics, socioeconomics, culture, education, among others. According to the men are always seen possessing power and authority. The male character in the society, is not questioned, but regarded as the leader of the house, the defender, the provider and having the authority as the patriarch. For many years now, the male has been authorized to state female's role in the house environment and in the public (Das, 2002).

A female's role was clearly stated and restricted to caring for the home of the husband and bringing up the husband's kids, portraying a meek personality and appreciating and upholding the bodily attraction which was more superior to the behavior of a person and intellect. The male was viewed as the model while the female was regarded as the inferior. The representation of the female, indicated features of inferiority. The word "woman" seemed not to be having some distinct qualities required for her to be viewed as a complete being. The customary and suitable consideration that a female is regarded as shy, soft, tender, reliant, self-denying, expressive, instinctive, all this was an acceptable behavior (Das, 2002).

Literature acts as a reflection of the transformation taking place in a society. Tradition is the central area where somebody can understand the culture of a certain society and get to know the position of a woman in the society (Chapter_2.pdf). Hence, literature is capable of reforming and restating the role of the female. With regard to the American culture, the females are not viewed as fictional characters or authors (Gassman, 2006).

According to (Christopher, 2003), it was until 1854 that Norwegian daughters were first given equal inheritance rights to sons. Moments later, two Swedish economists while focusing on peasant women and servants, they noted that the woman was simply a slave to man. Moreover, contemporary sociologists were much concerned with contemporary women's situations who pointed out that though women of the middle classes are spared from drudgery, they were cut off from functional activity. They were either more intimate servants, or decorative hothouse plants. The women whose male parents or spouses were rich, would be kept unemployed and in hibernation. The main intention was to keep them away from self-actualization. The women were characterized with utmost obedience to the males.

A culture resembles the women in the particular society, since they offer the reality of the daily life occurrence. The men are exposed to a bigger world, where they freely create and interact with their peers and family members. But the woman becomes an outcast, who fails to form a close contact with anyone. She is therefore not involved in taking part in sharing of the property, dutiful performances of the house, apart from acting as the mother to the children (Cumede, 2002). Several female activists assert that, the female turns to be the object of the husband's desire in marital affairs. They consider that, in a big culture the wife becomes submissive to the husband and extensively rewards him with all kinds of services, in order for him to provide for her and her children. Since from the children, the wife will be able to partake the role of a grandmother, who is regarded as the star of the house. Women's liberation is a definite type of radical dialogue that investigates the societies, performances, individuals and happenings from the female perspective. However, because in many countries this perspective is not put into consideration, feminism results to a serious contemporary issue particularly in countries like U.K, the U.S and in France (Cumede, 2002).

In Africa, female literature was embraced and introduced into the society recently. It ascribes to the role of conveying out the past of women and their involvements throughout the past years. In the case of the African women, the literature exposes facts about African females who were the leader of their narratives that concentrated on the idolized ethnic and sexy betters. It is merely from such material people know the role that the women played (Kwatsha, 2015).

At present, the female authors from Africa bring out effective and inspiring literature and from these literary works, they turn into causes of societal transformation. They represent their upbringings and their involvement as female imaginatively, investigating deeply into the life experience of other women through a close and genuine way, either like female activists or protectors of customary rules and standards. Female authors like Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Ama Ata Aidoo, Mariama Bâ and S.A. Dazela follow this tendency. Though these authors emanate from diverse upbringings, their literary texts show that, the female have privileges and must not be victimized since they are females. These authors value and support those similar principles to their male colleagues (Kwatsha, 2015).

This study focused on taking a critical analysis of treatment of the woman character in four selected stories from *'Half a Day and Other Stories'* and *'Voices of Change'*. These are books from various African and Saudi Arabian authors whose stories share on one thing in common and that is the oppression and suffering of women in many African communities. In *'Voices of Change'*, the researcher focused his attention to two stories which are *'Had I Been Male'* by Najat Khayyat, *'In A Puzzling Whirlwind'* by Amal Abdul-Hamid. In *'Half a Day and Other Stories'*, the researcher focused on two stories *'Letter To My Sisters'* by Fatmata Conteth and *'Heaven And Earth'* by Wangui Wa Goro. The treatment of the woman character in these short stories, can be viewed in different perspectives some of which are domestic/gender-based violence, child-birth, prejudice, infidelity, neglect, cultural conditioning and depression. These were presented by the various writers.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Single women are portrayed as strong and independent. They resist male dominance and are in charge of their lives. Unlike most married women in many literary texts, who are seen to be submissive and are involved in mean roles, single women are outgoing, and economically independent. The woman's role is that of a life-giver and a caretaker of the new generation of her husband's offspring. Patriarchy may result to oppression of women. Women are not included in economic, artistic and legal fields; instead, they are engaged in physical work in the gardens as their husbands engage in politics and fighting.

This study assessed the roles assigned to the woman character. It also critically examined the effect of patriarchy on the woman character and how rhetorical questions among other stylistic devices were used to bring out the treatment of the woman character in the selected stories from the two literary texts. The research study analyzed how women roles, patriarchy system and the use of rhetorical questions among other styles are used by literary writers to bring out the treatment of the woman character in four selected stories from *Half a Day and Other Stories* and *Voices of Change*.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- i. Assess the role of women and how it brings out the treatment of the woman character in the selected stories in *Half a Day and Other Stories* and *Voices of Change*.
- ii. Examine how patriarchy impacts on women and how it brings out the treatment of the woman character in the selected stories in *Half a Day and Other Stories* and *Voices of Change*.
- iii. Examine how rhetorical questions among other stylistic devices have been used to bring out the treatment of the woman character in the selected stories in *Half a Day and Other Stories* and *Voices of Change*.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the role of women in the selected stories?
- ii. How does patriarchy impact on women in the selected stories?
- iii. How have rhetorical questions been used to bring out the treatment of the woman character in the selected stories?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the feminism theory and informed by the strand of socialist/Marxist feminism. According to Prof B.S. Chandrababu, the term 'feminism' is derived from the Latin word, *femina* meaning women, originally meant 'having the qualities of females' (Chandarababu, 2009). It began to be used with reference to the movement for sexual equality and women's rights, replacing womanism in the 1890s. According to Leah Fritz, women's suffering under sexist tyranny is a common bond among all women (Fritz, 1979). The rebirth of feminism coincided with the use of the term oppression, (Hooks, 1984). Therefore, literary critics look at the relationship between feminism and fight against suffering or oppression of women as presented by literary writers in their literary works. The study was premised on Socialist Feminism also referred to as

Marxist feminism. Socialist feminism was founded by Friedrich Engels, who in his publication, 'The Origin of the family, Private property and the State', lays the foundation for Marxist feminism.

According to Linda (Napikoski, 2017), socialist feminism was used in the 1970s to describe a mixed theoretical and practical approach towards achieved women's equality. It analyzed the connection between oppression of women and other oppressions in society but the focus was on oppression of women in a patriarchal society. According to socialists, gender oppression is a characteristic of capitalistic societies. Depending on whether one is a socialist woman (Marxist-feminist) or a socialist-feminist, however, the weight that one gives to capitalism as a necessary and/or sufficient cause of that oppression will vary (Zillah, 1979). This study looked at the treatment of the women in a patriarchal society as presented in the selected texts.

According to (Hooks, 1984), it is the freedom from assigned roles and freedom from oppressive restrictions of the society that drives feminists. Socialist feminism focuses on assigning of roles based on gender. This study looked at how these roles assigned to women characters portray the treatment of the women. In a puzzling whirlwind, this study will look at how the women in the text are subjugated by the roles assigned to them and the efforts to change these roles are curtailed. Ill femininism treatment can be in many forms, some of which are domestic/gender-based violence, child-birth, predujice, infidelity, neglect, cultural conditioning oppression and depression. This will be seen as brought out by the various writers. If one is the former, gender (and race) oppression is seen as secondary to and reflective of class oppression. Socialist-feminists attempt a synthesis between two systems of domination, class and patriarchy (male supremacy) both relations of production and reproduction are structured by capitalist patriarchy (Beauvoir, 1960). This study evaluated the impact of these roles to the treatment of the woman character in the selected texts.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Women Roles

Women have often been involved in performance in literature. It has been argued by many a literary scholar about the essence of literature. The said arguments are grounded on the belief half that literature more often than not is a mirror of society. It is a mirror that reflects a society's culture and its universally accepted beliefs- in this case culture being a people's way of life. It is the basis of this research that, literature also plays a role in imposing the said beliefs, popularizes, criticizes or just highlights them. However, despite the intense influence that the female activist of the 1970s had on American beliefs, culture is still mostly controlled by men and a lot needs to be done, for the females to achieve traditional equal opportunity (Gassman, 2006).

In the American literary culture/canon, women are more often than not treated as 'the other gender.' A gender that does not deserve to play a lead role either as a producer of art or as (a) lead character(s) in a work of art. This is evident when Osterhaus (1987) summarizes that, most well recognized and valued authors throughout the years, have always been males. Hence, creating images of females in work of art which are as a result of a limited perception. Therefore, literature has the ability to recreate and redefine the responsibility of females (Osterhaus, 1987).

Hence,, in this work the researcher set out to establish how women are presented in the selected short stories as well as how they are treated as per the their society's gender role expectations.

Women for the longest of time, have been presented in an unflattering light. It could be argued, and rightly so, that this unfavourable presentation of the 'woman' character was fuelled by the fact that most of the published works of literature were written by men. The said men-writers wrote based on beliefs and perceptions informed by the patriarchal societies they came from. A case in point is the kind of literature that is characteristic of the Victorian period England. With a raging debate on the 'acceptable' responsibilities of women during this period-Victorian England-, writers tended to create 'socially acceptable' women characters who bore the stereotypical traits of being innocent, physically weak compared to men and the motherly/matronly figure who was at home next to the hearth or while knitting.

Deviating from this image of the 'acceptable Victorian Age woman character, some critics have been at the forefront in highlighting the biased way in which women have been presented in works of literature, Quanta, writes that,

'Literature has always been ambivalent in its representation of female characters.' Most female activists note that, a female becomes an object of a male's pleasure in marriage. "...We live in a man's world and males are regarded superior to ladies. Therefore, as daughters and wives, we should respect and listen to our brothers and husbands and it is only right that we must ask for their approval before taking any kind of action. (Quanta 1987,p.)

Until now, women in most African societies are treated as lesser beings and are neither accorded the opportunity to express themselves, nor are they involved in making decisions (even the decisions that affect their well-being directly) in the presence of men. This is evident in literary works by African writers including Wangui Wa Ngoro in *Heaven and Earth* a short story that has been selected by the researcher for this study. This research admits literature as a medium through which, writers effectively portray experiences of members of a particular society. It is through these presentation/portrayal of the said characters that literature reflects on the social realities of women characters.

The roles assigned to women in literature, has evolved with the changing times and it is manifest in the continually/progressively changing way (s) in which women characters are presented in literary works. Progressive reforms fanned by women's unrelenting quest for gender parity has led to a cannon of literature that portrays women as self-determining characters who are ready to challenge age-old norm perpetrated by men as evidenced in Conteth's *so long a letter*. This argument is bolstered by Krivis' argument when she contends that;

'Contemporary literature has acted as an opening for the female to express their rights. Women authors have risen and provided the reader (s) with an enormous collection of cultural and communal views. The distinctive expression of the women, is a familiar concept in the future literature to be produced. These will permit every author to establish a distinct uniqueness for their characters and for their own. Women in current literature frequently take account of tough self-reliant women, contrasted by burdened women in order to bring out illustrations for other female readers and to criticize weaknesses of our culture. The development of the liberated women authors

in America has permitted for a different development of the role of women in fictitious writing (Jessica Krivis).

According to (Taylor, 2003) society directs behavior and helps shape individual's lives. While many members of different societies would opt to differ with this proposition in the belief that they have chosen their behaviour based on individual characteristics and or inclinations, Taylor, posits arguing against this argument by stating that behaviour is socialized rather than by natural occurrence. Taylor (cite source) goes ahead to recommend that,

People must appreciate their own set personality and get to know the role played by both the men and women. (Taylor, 2003. P)

Moreover, numerous researches have investigated and established that patriarchal societies are structured in such a manner that they place the woman character at a disadvantage. This research established the same based what Bolak (1997) posits, focusing on how the support of women's income from a job employment to the family relate with the intra family authority. Since the income potential in today's society, seem to affect one's position, when jobs become available to the women and the salary is small, this can still be a way of them becoming independent on their husbands. This eventually leads to the women becoming more assertive in managing the home affairs (Bolak, 1997).

The research(er) also established a tendency men writer to present 'plastic' –brainless objects who bend to the whim of men- who are sculpted to fit into a macho man's image of 'the ideal woman'. The critic Chen points out in, (which book). The females are portrayed with attractive outlooks, involvement in substantial domestic chores and a lot of speaking. These fixed descriptions of females cannot be attributed to any person who considers these customary qualities of females. In most cases, the women have been forced to be inferior to the men in the male-dominated society. The 18th Century Britain, is an illustration of how the males and females performed various duties at that time (Chen, 2010).

Further research, relevant to this study has established that Olsen (1999) argues that, the role of men was fend for their families whilst their wives were expected to be stay at home mothers steeped in domestic chores and taking care of their children Olsen (1999) Went ahead to establish how gender, variation was portrayed in many other ways. For instance, women were not permitted to participate in elections for they were deemed unequal to men in terms of intelligence. On the other hand, they received less money compared to the men with whom they were employed to execute the same tasks in employment situations. Olsen (1999) goes ahead to bring the light the issue of assignment of professions based on ones gender. He points out that women were prohibited from careers such as the medical profession among many others that were traditionally viewed as a preserve for men.

It has been established by prior research that women had been operating under the yoke of oppression with limited (if any) freedom coming from men. This is the reality that ended up being the fertile breeding ground for the feminist writer of today. From it sprouted the feminist writer who was hell bent on safeguarding women's rights and welfare. As a result, this led to a generation

of women activist writers committed to not only focus on their women colleagues but also wage moral welfare. Spurred by this ‘revolution’ Mary Austell produced a proposal:

‘*A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* which was amended by Patricia Springborg in 2002. From it, she prompted the females of their value and counselled them to follow their identical privileges

(Chen, 2010).

In this battle front, Austell was not the only female activist author pitted against male dominance in literary production and criticism. There were also other female activist authors struggling together with her. For instance, Mary Wollstonecraft claimed in her significant work *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* that females must not be limited to house chores and should acquire appropriate studies just like the males. In the meantime, Jane Austen was also regarded as an informative female activist whose perspectives were rather comparable with Wollstonecraft’s. In Austen’s books, (give examples) her protagonists were always cultured to,

‘think about the difficulties they encountered and vexed to find for solutions to these difficulties on their own, since in Austen’s view, females ought to be able to learn ethics individually as the males (Chen, 2010).

While researching on related literature, the researcher has established that, prior scholarly works have found that with evidence- that women in predominantly Muslim cultures are an oppressed lot. A case in point, is the place of women in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Despite the fact that the two aforementioned nations are celebrated as the only two predominantly Muslim nations that have accorded women the right to vote scholars have come up with concrete findings on the unpredictability of predominantly Muslim countries with consideration to issues of the female involvement in politics and governance as well as women involvement in making parliamentary decisions. This, as noted in (Union, n.d.) points out that.

This, predictability has been taken into consideration in investigation that mostly comprises of numerical tracing and in detailed native study by researchers A key foundation of numerical observation is the esteemed Inter-parliamentary Union, that was established years ago in 1889. The Inter-parliamentary Union presents online, the international dates for females’ right to participate in election and to become politicians (Union, n.d.).

In addition, the Union also upholds a Website, which presents existing statistics of the female figure in parliamentary groups and women to men percentage in every country (Union, Women in National Parliaments, n.d.). The females are portrayed with attractive outlooks, involvement in substantial domestic chores and a lot of speaking. These fixed descriptions of females cannot be attributed to any person who considers these customary qualities of females. In most cases, the women have been forced to be inferior to the men in the male-dominated society (Chen, 2010). Regarding this line of argument, (Offenhauer, 2005). States that,

‘In consideration to the females in Islamic communities and in similarity to the civil domain, administrative researchers and other intellectuals have examined the role of the government in suggesting and determining female’s duties, actions, and spheres through state policies and laws. In this approach, scholars consider, for example, if the females are excited with the rights of

nationality in their right and have privileges on communal properties as persons. Those researchers also get involved in descriptive creativity, investigating how certain developments of government systems, greatly impact on female's position and welfare. Literature also contemplates females as characters who like politicians, investigates if the females get involved in governance. This includes; administration and election participation' (Offenhauer, 2005).

This research further established a correlation between labour output and bride price. Prior researchers have established that, some communities peg the 'economic value of a woman' on labour output once she is married. Polygamy is popular in communities that perform shift farming. Likewise, in cultures where the females perform utmost the farming labor, it is the husband-to-be who should recompense the bridal price, although when the females are passively involved in farming, bridal expenses are generated from the bride's clan. For instance, in South and East Asia, there is a great relation between the occupation for the females and the trend of bridal price; in Burma, Malaysia, and Laos, females perform utmost farming job and the bridal price is expected. In the early Arab community or in Sudan, even up to-date, it seems to be a symbol of division and complexity for a literate lady to give up work and get into isolation after completing studies (Studies, 2014).

A Bangladeshi narrates of a seventeen old young lady, who has been in marriage for 5 years. About 18 months earlier, she was thrown out of her house by her husband after he found that she had not cooked dinner because she was sick: The lady was reprimanded and beaten by the husband for failing to prepare his meal. Her mother-in-law, also ganged up with her husband in the abuse. The lady was forced to go back to her parent's and left the child behind. In order to file for divorce, her husband is trying to get a certificate from a doctor to declare her insane. This is not a case solated to Bangladeshi as further afield the same abuses have been (according to previous scholars) reported in countries such as India. Previous scholarly findings have established that, abuse of women is rife in India as (Schuler, Hashemi, & Badal, 1998) write of 'women's silence as a self-protecting strategy in the face of few social or economic options' (Schuler, Hashemi, & Badal, 1998).

Jacquiline K Isiaho is one of the authors who has written on female roles in the community in her MA thesis, "*Taswira ya mwanamke katika Riwaya za Said Mohamed*". Isiaho investigates the representation of the female characters in Said Mohamed's three works: *Asali Chungu* (1977), *Utengano* (1980), *Kiza katika Nuru* (1988). Her research was based on observations on how Swahili language using writers tend to present women characters in various roles which derive from diverse socially expected/accepted roles in society. She contends that, the roles given to women in culture has a direct influence to the roles given to women appeals by authors of fiction works. She posits that, Likewise, in Kenya, women re-counted being dashed out of their houses by their partners without their own property. Across the universe, females stated takings light choice when confronted with mistreatment and intimidations to possessions and their survival (Isiaho, 2002).

Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby*, as a result of his own involvement (in what) in the 1920s and as a reaction to the concerns of the period, among these, was the manner in which women were viewed in his society. Although women play a major role in his writing's, Fitzgerald assigns

to them minor duties in his writings. As Wrenn (2010), writes ‘this maintains the customary perspective that women do not have room for expression. Even though Gatsby loves Daisy, she is used to appreciate him or her husband Tom Buchanan. Myrtle, who would have been viewed as the supplement of her husband Wilson, this reveals modern features in her search of individual needs, thou she is a supplement to her husband Tom (Wrenn, 2010). Tom perceives Daisy and Myrtle no respect, because he views them as lower to him. Jordan Baker, yet unmarried and perceived as self-reliant, is presented as an imperfect woman who wants Nick to be- the male to stay close to her (Wrenn, 2010).

2.2 Patriarchal System

According to previous scholar’s and established cannon of literature, the term ‘patriarchy’, had been , before the development of the feminist association and the education concerning the women and gender studies been defined as Kramararae (1992) put it,. The idea of patriarchy, has been regenerated to investigate the history and circumstances of men’s domination of women (Kramarae , 1992).

Whilst concerning patriarchy Cumede (2002) says that,

Patriarchy, refers to the control of the men as leaders of their families over their wives. The issues of men authority can also be seen in the areas of financial management of wealth and the method achieving the finances- to fairness of chances, to school learning, occupation and sensual liberty (Cumede, 2002).

Dominance, mistreatment and manipulation of the woman in a male dominated community, have often been a main concern in Indian creative writings. This subject can be traced back to the Indian epics like the *Mahabharata* and *the Ramayana*. Whereas some authors obviously increase their opinion in supporting women’s freedom and place in the community, some authors do not struggle against the male dominated acceptable norms but only portray women in their customary ‘acceptable form. To that end Ruskin Bond is one of the authors who portrays a man dominated community of the 20th century period, but the anguishes of the females are inactively analyzed (Handique, 2015).

Ruskin Bond goes ahead to portray a community where men are tyrannical and dominate over women. In Bond’s perspective, women in the said society accept their anguish without complaining. He presents an image of women who are bound by a patriarchal society where;

‘They are forced to responsibilities and commitments to attend to their families and husbands. Their wishes and feelings are destroyed by the males; giving themselves is made their main purpose (Handique, 2015, p.).

According to (Aina’s, 1998), study,

Nigerian society has been a patriarchy society. Patriarchy structure has been a major feature of the traditional society. The situation of financial status or wealth and the societal concept, creates an opportunity for the males to control the females (Humm, 1998).

Aina, argues that, it is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles

and activities of females. Aina also observes that the traditional husbands do not get involved in household chores. For example, bring up the children. This kind of duty, is perceived to belong to only the females. Males are categorized as having the following qualities: strength, vigor, virile/powerful courage and confidence. According to Wollstonecraft (1992).

The issue of men control/ authority can be viewed in nearly all the cultures internationally. However, it is good to note that, its perspective is portrayed in a diverse manner, in the various countries, in various social status and also in diverse times in past. For example, the exercise of *pardah*, (the cloak used by Hindu and Muslim females to hide their facial appearance), this form for oppressing females can be unlike for females of another country. It can also be different for the female Muslim and Hindu. This tradition can also vary according to the variations in period (Wollstonecraft, 1992, P.),

An instance in support of this scholarly findings may be attributed to the incidentally to Taliban controlled Afghanistan when all women were made to hide their physical appearances from their hair to the legs even hiding their facial outlook. They were further prohibited from holding jobs and leaving their homes without a male companion. However, after the collapse of the Taliban regime, women have been permitted to go back to jobs and the state does not force women to adhere to the strict Taliban imposed rules. This research also established that previous scholars in Muslim dominated domains advocate for the supremacy of men with women being treated as the inferior gender. When illustrating the resolve of characters in regards to a male-controlled system, Muslim scholars, in in the realm of their communities frequently observe that these characteristics are noticeable across the many diverse Muslim countries. Nilsen (1990) points out that the male-controlled organization in the societies, was in the past related with entrepreneurial systems of society systems and it is still evident in the country's idea long various countries of Asia and North Africa (Nilsen, 1990).

The male-controlled system moves from North Africa, in the Middle East (this includes non-Arab Turkey and Iran) to South and East Asia. The patriarchal movement irrespective of the religious conviction, is categorized by the control of the men, premature marriages (and subsequent great potency), the inclination of the boy child, obstructive conducts of performances for females, and the relationship of household integrity with the women quality. Sometimes, the household organization is polygamous. In Muslim countries and concealing authorized by request to the Qur'an and other religious writings, create a portion of the sex organization. For Muslim countries, too, the obsession with woman as a virgin, principals to strict authorizations, like integrity massacres, for any observed sex misbehavior by the females (Nilsen, 1990).

Further afield, from a literature review grounded on *Coming to Birth*, Oludhe Macgoye, and this research illustrates the role of an African woman and her position in the society. Paulina Akeyo who is the main character in the novel, gets married to Martin Were at a young age.

Paulina's father allows her to get married, after he is given two cows, a food-safe for his mother-in-law and a watch for him. The man would be given the lady, if only he was able to pay the required bride price. This did not matter if the girl was just barely old enough or not. Women are portrayed in alight whereby their main responsibility is to become mothers and the society doesn't expect them to have any other major goals in life. The author gives some descriptions to illustrate

Paulina's young age. Rachael who is a neighbor to Martin, become astonished when he sees Paulina. She asks: Sixteen? Yes, they are in a hurry to get you settled these days. And pregnant?' (Macgoye, 1986). This illustrates, that the parents did not really care about their daughters age of marriage but the roles she is required to perform. In the entire novel, there is male domination over the female characters even in decision making.

In addition, we find Martin Were been represented by Oludhe Macgoye, as the kind of husband who mistreats his wife. Martin beats his wife anytime he feels like doing it. When Paulina gets lost trying to go back home after undergoing a miscarriage, Martin beat her and insulted her mercilessly. He did not want to care about her, not even her health condition. The author illustrates domestic violence, when Paulina is beaten by Martin "...His hand slapped across her check and again across her shoulders.... Two nights. Where did you spend two nights?' He kicked her buttocks" (Macgoye, 1986)

Paulina goes through a hard time, and a painful state. The author basically expresses the treatment of the women character. It can be observed that, women are left to take the impassive roles in the society and while the males dominate them. It is through these kinds of observations that the researcher set out to undertake this research study. The female characters are portrayed with behaviors that illustrate mistreatment. It is very rare to find the women been allowed to bring out their voice in the society.

The roles that the women perform, most of them result to them been oppressed. A woman in the society, is viewed merely as objects in front of the male characters. The women are perceived as performing the roles of house chores and rearing their children. Marilyn French is one of the prolific female writers, whose novel *The Women's Room* (1978) is a female activist expanse that portrays an adoring condemnation of the men control in the community and the evil and inequalities it enacts the females. Marilyn French assaults the males openly and gives the reader a detailed evidence of the kind of oppression that the women undergo, through the men authority. The male characters that Marilyn uses are self-centered, merciless and forceful and the solitary resolution for the females is to move out of their lives (Nilsen, 1990).

Mira Ward, the protagonist in this novel, turns out to be separated with her husband and eventually as the novel comes to the end, she stays by herself. After giving up on male (relationships) and realizing that there is a great distinction between the two genders and for them has their lives together. Marilyn French can be accused of unfairness, by stereotyping one gender, thou she is moderately constant and propagates what can be referred to as the reasoning of women's movement to the extent where severe actions for instance; lesbianism and exclusion are well thought-out. However, the resolution French eventually appears to be functioning for is the peaceful eradication of patriarchy and the creation of a solely culture in which no systems of prejudice can be found (Nilsen, 1990).

Many contemporary female authors stake such an inspiring idea of another society rule which there is completely fairness between the genders and also more happiness and agreement (Nilsen, 1990). The females have continually been controlled by the males in the Patriarchal community where males are the leaders of the family and the law creators. Males are the ultimate consultant and females are the supporters. These issues are still common even in the twenty first century, they are

carried on in our community and there is no female in any country that has not undergone this ill-treatment in their lives (Bartleyby.com, 2016).

2.3 Rhetorical Questions

According to John (2007) in his publication, 'Rhetorical Construction of Gender: How Women Are Portrayed in Popular Music Today', he argues that rhetorical figures are used with specific intentions for each character in that they reveal important traits telling of their nature. Johnson (2002) upholds that the females were rhetorically restricted to correct discourse, the house environment, while the men were fortified to use rhetorical ability and teaching in order to organize transformation of their thinking and influence of ethical reactions. The males talked concerning the issues of authority, the women on the other hand, communicated on topics associated with the household or domestic affairs (Karman, 2013).

Modern linguistic study encompassing sex and humor recommends that for many researchers, the use of female humor is a reaction to the harassment (Bing, 2004). Crawford (2003) supports the perspectives of the female humor confirmed by studies carried out by Lampert and Tripp on sexual role and humorous joke targets.

Lampert (1998) revised over 40 studies conducted between 1970 and 1996 that sought out the proof for deterioration in the approval of anti-female humor and an increase of professional female activists. They resolved that there are movements concerned with reducing recognition of anti-female humor and an improved approval of humor that tasks customary observations of sexual role by aiming at the males. They determined that these tendencies are most distinct amongst those who promote professional female activists or generous attitudes.

Other stylistic devices for instance, use of vernacular language, the usage of mockery, and the concealing of characteristics take on another kind of meaning when reflected in the communal performances of females assimilating the household environment. Usage of dialect language, for instance, averts consideration from the importance of the communicated in the book: the females must have equality in participating in the civic community, given the freedom to have their wealth and the freedom to participate in elections (Karman, 2013).

From an analysis of an article "About Face," presented in *Time's* December 3, 2001, it portrays Afghan females and their customary women roles in Muslim religion. On page thirty-eight of this article, it stances the rhetorical question, "What are Afghan women really like beneath the burka?" the article portrays three humble, illiterate females from a certain community. The story infers that the three females symbolize all the Afghan females. The females for instance, account discontent with their lives and they have gone through marriage abuse from their husbands or they have a family member who has gone through the same. The story confirms the typecast that unfortunate, burka-clad females have no views of their own. It also endorses the concept that they are under the authority of their dictatorial husbands (Anderson, 2006).

3.0 Research Methodology

The research employed an exploratory study that used a descriptive design, to critically analyse the treatment of women characters in the four selected stories from '*Half a Day and Other Stories*' and '*Voices of Change*'. The target population for this study consisted of all four selected

stories from 'Half a Day and Other Stories' and 'Voices of Change'. Two stories from *Half a Day and Other Stories* (*Letter to My Sisters* by Fatmata Conteh and *Heaven and Earth* by Wangui wa Goro) and two stories from *Voices of Change* (*Had I Been Male* by Najjat Khayyat and *In a Puzzling Whirlwind* by Amal Abdul-Hamid).

Purposive sampling was used to sample the four selected stories from 'Half a Day and Other Stories' and 'Voices of Change'. This study was purely library-based. Therefore, the researcher used contextual method to analyze the selected texts. Documentary analysis technique was then used to gather and information from the four selected stories; 'Half a Day and Other Stories' and 'Voices of Change'. Payne & Payne (2004), describe the documentary method. To establish the findings of this research qualitative method of data analysis was used in analyzing data from four stories selected from, 'Half a Day and Other Stories' and 'Voices of Change' and to relate the data to the objectives of the study. Contextual analysis data analysis method was used to analyze the data. Contextual analysis is a method that is mainly used in qualitative research as a method of qualitative analysis.

4.0 Research Findings, Analysis and Presentation

4.1 The role of women and the treatment of the woman character

From critical analysis of *Letter to my Sisters* by Fatmata Conteth, this is a short story in *Half a Day and other Stories*. The writer presents in the epistolary mode, the role of women in an Islamic setting and how they are treated. The letter is written by Dr. Dao, who writes the letter to her dear seventeen sisters. Out of her seventeen sisters, Dr. Dao particularly mentions *Amina, Ajaratu, Ajara* and *Aisha*. Dr. Dao writes a letter (a suicide note), that would be read by her sisters, after she commits suicide. In the letter, Dr. Dao gives reasons for her decision to take her own life. She states that her suicide is spurred by the mistreatment she has gone through and she is not willing to persevere any longer.

From the beginning of the letter, Dr. Dao is seen addressing the letter to her dear sisters only and not her brothers. Dr Dao is used by the author as a female activist, who sacrifices her life in order to fight for the rights of the women in the Islamic religion. Her death is supposed to serve as a silent but yet a loud scream by women who have to go through oppression in a deeply religious society. Dr. Dao tells of her mother might react upon learning of her daughter's suicide. She portrays an image of a daughter who not only understood but also knew her mother well. She anticipates how her mother will mourn distraught by her eldest daughter's suicide. Dr. Dao imagines how her grief- stricken mother would cry and question God why she is going through such a castigation Conteth writes,

“As usual, I know how mother will wail. She will beat her flabby breasts. Breasts that have suckled eleven children. She will undo her long, beautiful hair and pull it apart. She will shout and ask what she has done to God that she should deserve such punishment. She will call my name countless times and she will ask why God should deprive her of her eldest daughter and the fifth of her eleven children, why only nine are alive. She will run about, crying and shouting, and many women will chase her and try to console her” (Conteth, 2004, p. 52).

Conteth paints a picture of women who unlike their male counterparts are deeply attached to their Daughters They are the ones who are portrayed as emotional. They are assigned the role of bringing up their children. Dr. Dao shows the many children that her mother had borne.

“Breast that have suckled eleven children” (Conteth, 2004, p. 52). They are these kind of roles assigned to women, that later confine them into staying at home and only performing house chores. This is what Dr.Dao’s society expects of women. On the other hand, according to this culture, men are not supposed to weep. They are expected to portray an image of strength and firmity. Being emotional or showing emotions like grief/sorrow by way of crying when in mourning is regarded as a symbol of weakness. Dr. Dao predicts that, her father (*Baba*), her uncles and older brothers will not weep for her. Unlike her aunts, sisters and her mother who are expected to mourn her death openly.

Conteth writes, “*Baba* will not weep. He believes so much in his manhood, his religion and God and the total submission of women to men and their parents” (Conteth, 2004, p. 53). In Dr. Dao’s patriarchal society women are treated as weak vessels. Dr. Dao seems to insinuate that her society has no tiff with women openly expressing their emotions for it is regarded as the ‘womanly’ thing to do. However, men cannot get emotional because that is what the society dictates. It is the work of the females to take care for their children.

Dr. Dao predicts how one of her female patients (Ya-Yanoh), who was a Muslim like her would cry because of her death. Ya-Yanoh had been disregarded by her people in the society because she was travailing with an immense sore. Ya-Yanoh had been stigmatized and treated as a pariah for her people said that the disease was not curable and she was therefore thought to be a sorceress. Ya-Yanoh was a woman who had to brave a society that dabbled in both religion and superstition. In regards to her illness, the community attributed it to the practice of witch craft on her part. Among her people, practice of witchcraft on her part was the only credible explanation for her malady. She is disrespected by everybody and worst of all besides stigma, her conditioned deteriorates by the circumstance of her state of childlessness, which is prejudiced in her society. Dr Dao consoled her, telling her that her condition would improve with proper medical attention. When Dr. Dao is writing the letter (her suicide note), she invites her sisters (her addressees) to the fact that Ya-Yanoh was recuperating and awaiting to get cleared from the hospital. With the reality of her new state of health came the rider of self-respect and esteem before her people who had maltreated her earlier due to her illness. Conteth says,

“So, when she returns to her village, walking straight and confident, people will regard her as a human being. Before that she was treated with contempt and opprobrium” (Conteth, 2004). The society expected women to have particular physical appearances and if anyone for instance in the situation of Ya-Yanoh was different, s/he was regarded as an outcast. For such women, they had to accept their life as it was for they could not change the dictates of their culture. As a result, they lived in misery in their entire lives. This clearly illustrates the treatment of the woman character in this short story. Based on how Dr. Dao expected her mother to react to her death and how Ya-Yanoh was treated, it is evident that women are treated as lesser beings in this patriarchal society.

It is evident from this letter that, women are denied education, unlike men. Dao’s father had refused to educate her and her sisters. Fortunately, one of Dao’s uncles, uncle Bubu influenced

Baba (her father) to educate his daughters. Dr. Dao's uncle (uncle Bubu) was the most learned uncle and knew the importance of education. *Baba* (Dr. Dao's father) was inclined towards giving his sons western education at the cost of his daughters. Despite the fact that the western 'education system' was the same for either genders *Baba* believed that it would raise wickedness, disregard for leaders and for custom in his daughters.

Women's role in the society was to get involved in matrimonial affairs; of marriage and get children. That was all. But they were not supposed to acquire knowledge. Dao goes ahead to point out that she and her sisters did well in school compared to their brothers. They even did better in school than their eldest brother, (Nkodo) who had gotten sired children out of wedlock. *Baba* does not become offended by what Nkodo had done despite the fact that, he was still in school. Their father was elated for out of Nkodo's Don Juan ways he had acquired grandchildren. Conteth, through Dr. Dao's letter, jolts the reader into re-examining her community's values on gender relations. It is evident that men are free to 'experiment' and sire children with women out of wedlock while a girl, getting a child out of wedlock is regarded as a dishonor. This is a glaring oppression of women because men whose sire children out of wedlock are celebrated as evidenced in *Baba's* reaction towards Nkodo's Casanova ways while women who do the same are said to have dishonored their family. The concept of family honor as Dr. Dao writes to her sisters is pegged on women when it comes to the issue of marriage and child bearing. The unlucky girls who conceive out of wedlock are forced to terminate the pregnancy. All this is done in the name of family honor with total disregard to the girl's/woman's health, Conteth writes,

Do you still recall our big secret? No one, as far as I know, can forget that incident. I am to the time Ajara almost died while trying to induce abortion. We had all been so terrified that if it became known that one of us had been made pregnant out of wedlock, it would have brought dishonor to the Dao family.

Ajara almost lost her life. It is a society where women are socialized to live in constant fear of 'dishonoring the family name.' Whilst men have a carte blanche (they are free to live and experiment), women are bound by the strict dictates of society. It is the reason that Ajara procured the abortion that almost cost her life. In 'A letter to my sisters' Dao reminds her sisters about the time when Ajara nearly died while trying to induce abortion. This kind of mistreatment of the woman character in this story, illustrates the situation that Dao had observed and gone through. As a result of this incident amongst many other injustices, she states the ill-treatment of women in her society, as the reason for taking her life.

In addition, Conteth through Dao's letter- portrays a society that demands of women to be submissive to their husbands and to serve them. Wives are not required to question any decision made by their husbands. In fact, the role of decision making is vested on men.

"Mama accepted and believed that she was born to serve *Baba* or any man that would have her as a wife. Mama could never question anything *Baba* said to her, good or bad. Mama whose seductive figure had now become lost in fat, because *Baba* had scolded her that she was giving him a bad name by staying slim. She said, if you disobey your husband, you will not go to heaven." (Conteth, 2004, p. 5)

Dr. Dao points out to her sisters that women have no choice when it comes to the issue of marriage. In her society women are treated as disposable objects who have to get married to any man their father deems fit. Once married off, to the man chosen by her parents, a woman was expected to be subservient as evidenced in Dr. Dao's mother.

Mama accepted and believed that she was born to serve Baba or any man that would have her as a wife (Conteth, 2004, P5)

Dao and her sisters go to the extent of seeking for freedom of movement. In this endeavor they enlist the help of their paternal uncle (uncle Bardara). However, it was not easy to broach the issue with him or trust him because they had often witnessed him beating his wives over minor offences. Dr. Dao writes of a day when uncle Bardara beat one of his wives until she vomited. Her crime had been that she had gone to watch 'masquerade devils'. For uncle Bardara, it was the devil that had induced his wife. Dao writes that her world had become a prison and sometimes she felt guilty talking to men. As the letter comes to an end, Dao narrates of her current situation. She is forced by her father and some elders to get married to Alhaji Hamsu's son, who is older than her elder brother. She is supposed to be a third wife because polygamy is allowed in Islam. Dao knows that she would be mistreated yet she has no room to voice her concerns. She resolutely writes that, it is better for her to end her life and meet her maker, to whom she would explain her situation instead of living in misery.

"Now I am to move to another house of exile, to serve a worse master, to be enslaved again.... Everybody has a right to be happy, to be free, to love someone of his or her choice, irrespective of family name or religion" (Conteth, 2004, p. 60).

The role of the women in this society is to stay at home and perform domestic chores. Dao introduces us to the role of her mother as the one who prepares meals, submits to her husband and serves him.

"...she will go and prepare breakfast. Breakfast that is always like a feast in this house" (Conteth, 2004, p. 61).

In the story *Heaven and Earth* by Wangui Goro, the writer presents Mme Lady who leads a life of pretense. In spite of the fact that her rich husband (Kimanja) is abusive, she strives to portray the image of a happy and content wife. Wangui Goro, uses Mme Lady, to portray treatment that women go through in abusive marriages. Mme lady projects her inner agony and woes by showing openly disrespect of the 'vicar'. She is accustomed to coming to the church late and walking noisily inside, in order to be noticed. This is a sad woman who under the agony of abusive marital woes and in a silent scream for attention and care attempts to present a façade of achievement while trying to make the female congregants understand that a woman is also capable of performing noteworthy activities. However, the Vicar, fails to recognize that Mme Lady is just an ordinary woman. He views her ways as an open challenge to his authority. The Vicar, driven perhaps by anger at Mme Lady's open disrespect fails to fathom her tribulations. He, irked by what he believes is a challenge to his authority by Mme Lady, resorts to The Scripture, condemns and reminds them of their submissive roles to their husbands as the holy writ dictates.

"And women, you shall adorn yourself for your husbands" (Goro, 2004, p. 92).

The preacher's choice of scripture underscores the fact that Mme Lady's society has a religion that demeans women. It brings to the fore the aspect of patriarchy arguing that 'man is the image of God while 'woman' is the other or weaker gender as grounded in Christian faith.' The Vicar says, "Women should obey their husbands and remain humble till the end of their days" (Goro, 2004, p. 95).

Mme Lady's faith upholds submission of women. It is a religion (as evidenced by the Vicars sermon above) that views women as lesser beings compared to men. Religion in this case socializes men to demand utmost submissiveness, adoration and respect out of their wives. On the other hand, Goro, in *'Heaven and earth'* creates for the critical reader a true reflection of a patriarchal society where women are expected to be weak, reliant on men and submissive yet the reality is that they too have heavy burdens to bear. Mme Lady seeks refuge in 'religion'. However, in her case it is the place she draws feelings of worthiness and importance. This is evident in the way she interacts and treats the poor female members of her church. Goro, in *Heaven and earth* satirises the actions of those who, despite their marital woes, cover it up with religion and pseudo-piousness. A

Mme Lady is opposed to the preacher's view on the role of women. She despises the vicar for the kind of preaching he gives which only serves to justify the oppression women go through in their marriages. He, grounding his sermon on the society's accepted religion, talks concerning the roles that women are supposed to play in the family, without considering what they go through. At the end of her tether, Mme lady, recovering after she was brutally attacked by her husband finally opens up to the vicar and says,

"And next time when you preach those sermons, remember that you are condemning so many women, like me, to suffering at the hands of men. We come to church as a sanctuary, a safe place, the only place we are allowed to go without supervision..." (Goro, 2004, p. 100).

Goro highlights how Mme Lady's patriarchal society controls women. Whatever move they make outside their homes is monitored save for the time they are in church. Goro, in *'Heaven and earth'* successfully creates the image of an oppressed woman who has nothing but religion to resort to. Goro, portrays the role of women as performance of domestic chores and making their husbands happy. Mme Lady Cooks for her husband and in order 'to be regarded as a good wife' to her husband, she has to entertain his friends. Goro writes,

'Besides, it was her day to be a good wife to her husband, by entertaining his friends and mates.' (Goro, 2004, P.96)

Goro, through Mme Lady presents an image of a society where women live for their husbands. A society where married women have been robbed of their identity in a patriarchal community.

Therefore, the women are expected to be submissive and totally dependent on their husbands simply because society has not given them a chance to prosper or try their hands at careers. Mme Lady's community as per Goro's *'Heaven and earth'* is a society that surfs on the wave of masculinity and machismo at the expense of women. After Mme Lady is discharged from the hospital after suffering injuries from her husband, she tells the doctor -Vim- that she has to go back to her husband because she depended on him and no place to go. Bringing the reader to the

reality of domestic abuse, a society that controlled every move woman made and emotional disenfranchisement of women, Goro writes,

“Where else can I go? I have no money and, in our community, you know that women are dependent on their husbands. My family will not take me back; a very high dowry was paid for me for me which they cannot repay” (Goro, 2004, p. 99).

Goro’s short story bring to the fore the issue of commodification of women. It is a society that men are made to pay bride price for wives. In the case of Mme Lady, Goro illustrates what ought to have been a ceremonial function enjoining families (dowry payment) being degraded into a business transaction. Mme lady’s words on the steep dowry her husband paid illustrates a communy that regards women as a source of wealth. The girlchild, just like a female diary cow calf, seems to fetch a high price in the complex market of women exploitation and degradation. The effect of this commodification of women is best explicated when Mme Lady tells Vim that she could not go back to her maternal home for the bride price paid to her was too steep and her family could not afford to refund it. She had been, within the market of culture been sold as choice veal.

In a Puzzling Whirlwind by Amal Abdul-Hamid, ill-treatment of the woman character is evident in this story. The narrator is made to get into early marriage, when she is not only barely old enough but also naïve. As a woman, society vested on her the responsibility to take care of the family. Hamid paints a picture of women who are oppressed by cultural expectations. Marriage for them is not grounded on love and mutual consent. He writes of a community whereby arranged marriages are the order of the day. Hamid writes of a society where women were hardly given enough time to grow. Their role was to be child bearers who were ‘disposed’ of at the earliest opportunity. Using an anonymous narrator, a style that makes the story universal, Hamid writes,

“My father repeated in confusion, “You are still too young and marriage is a responsibility that you might find hard to bear” (Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p.84).

The anonymous narrator lets us into her story. The story of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Her age is not taken in as a factor when it comes to marriage. For the young girl, whose father said that she was still young and marriage was a responsibility, it was not an option to be or not to be married.

It is not the role of the women to make the decision about their spouses. This is a society that has an established and acceptable way of conducting marriages. It is a community that uses arranged marriages.

Unfortunately, after the marriage, the narrator is not able to give birth due to infertility. This is blamed on her, that she is the one who is supposed to bear the brunt as her as the wife. Amal Abdul-Hamid, introduces us to a society that only accepts wives as members of the family after having children. It is a society that expects women to bear children. Because the narrator is not able to give birth, she is forced to take the blame and advises her husband to marry a second wife. Even though, she is hurt. Mistreatment by her mother in law due to her inability to bear children points out the issue of societal imbalances. Society expected more from the narrator as compared to its expectations on her husband. It is a society that blames women when a marriage does not

result in children. Society does not consider the possibility of a man's impotence because all is pegged on a woman's ability to conceive. Hamid writes,

"A year passed and his mother began to say harsh things and to call me names. She said she wanted to see children as she had seen those of his brothers." (Hamid, 1998, P84)

The narrator suffers at the hands of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law Muna, who use insulting words at her, because she could not get a baby.

"Even my dear friend Muna, accused me of selfishness and said, "You've been married for five years but we have yet to harvest its fruit. Look at me, I'm pregnant with my fourth child!" (Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p.84).

The narrator's life had turned into misery, hopelessness and sadness. After her husband went for a job transfer, she is left with her mother-in-law who keeps looking at her with accusing eyes. As the story comes to an end, the author reflects with us, the potential in a woman. When the narrator sought advice from her mother, she told her to get busy, to get education and look for an occupation. She is able to be independent and the husband now begs her not to leave him.

Had I Been Male by Najat Khayyat, this is a story by a young orphan girl who does not have a father. From her community, she is regarded as an orphan because she does not have a father. The fact that lack of a father leads one to be viewed as an orphan shows a society that does not attach much value to women. Najat successfully brings out the plight of women in this community and the position that the women play in this society. The narrator narrates what she because she is a female and not a male. She gets married at a very young age, to an old man. Women have no voice in this society and now especially that her father was not alive. The anonymous narrator's mother accepts to marry off her daughter without much information concerning the husband to be. She does this simply because she is poor and depends on her brother for upkeep. The narrator in *Had I been male* (Khayyat, 1998) speaks of a society that not only dehumanizes but degrades women. Khayyat writes,

'That night's meeting was the first time that fury blossomed inside me merely because I am female. Now the hatred of my degrading feminist has sunk deep inside me. (Khayyat, 1998, P.19).

The narrator in this case is alive to the fact that she lived in an unjust society. A society where women were degraded and even seen as a problem that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. The woman character is portrayed as an object of submission of the male characters. Her role is to wholly depend on the husband. This in turn becomes her prison and she lives in misery for the rest of her life. The narrator is married to an old man, because he is rich actually the marriage discussions were wrapped up in a hurry as if her relatives were afraid that the 'old groom' would change his mind. Khayyat writes, 'The conversation finished quickly, more quickly than selling small chicken to a man who will eat it at 'id.' (Khayyat, 1998, P21) Therefore, much value is not attached to women. The narrator (a fifteen) year old girl is married off to an old man just because he was wealthy and her relatives where desperate to get her out of the house.

As the fifteen-year-old anonymous narrator leaves for a husband's house, Khayyat paints a picture of bleakness and desperation. The wedding, a function that is normally marked by joy is a gloomy affair. The child narrator is actually in mourning. The narrator says that, 'On the wedding day I

was not moved by happiness, nor was my heart gay as a bride's should be. I was miserable, and furious about being female Had I been male. I would not have been buried in this coffin they call a bride's gown, or celebrated in a funeral crowded with curious neighborhood women who were envying me for this rich groom. (Khayyat, 1998, P.21).It is a society that has totally degraded women. To an extended that the fifteen-year-old narrator is given away because she is a 'responsibility' because she is an orphan. It turns out the narrator views being born a woman s kind of 'crime' against society. She has to pay for the same every day of her life until the moment she dies. She says, "I must pay for every night by lying with a dead body with fossilized eyes, enveloped in the smell of the grave...pay for with my life" (Khayyat, 1998). When the narrator goes to her mother for comfort, her mother tells her that it is unfortunate for her, because she is a female and there is nothing that can be done. She has to accept her marriage and live with it, because there is nowhere that she can go.

"You're a female. It is not my mistake, not my oppression nothing can be done" (Khayyat, 1998, p.22).

4.2 Impact of patriarchy on the treatment of the woman character

In analyzing *Letter to My Sisters* by Fatmata Conteth, the issue of patriarchy is evident in the story. This is an Islamic religion that is dominated by the men. When Dao writes the letter, she illustrates some of the rules that have been implemented by males, to govern the society. Females suffer under the dictatorship of their husbands and fathers with minimal resistance.

The men are the ones in authority in this society. In the religion, they are the ones who lead as the 'Imams.' This is what makes a family to have a high status. But this was a form of slavery rather than freedom. Dao recalls that,

"The fact that our great grandfather was among the few Imams of the mosque of Fullah town has served to enslave us rather than make us free people" (Conteth, 2004, p.56).

The fathers are also the ones in authority at the home places. Dao is controlled by her father, who initially does not accept to educate her together with her sisters. They are not allowed out of the house except when accompanied by several of their brothers and sisters. In addition, they have to be back at home much earlier than even the younger brothers. This clearly illustrates the male domination over the females. They do not have freedom to do anything, without the permission of the males. The women in this society are mistreated at the hands of the males.

For Dao and her sisters, they are strictly observed and their friends are chosen for them. They do not have freedom to socialize with other people nor even to learn new social things.

"That is how I found myself the center of ridicule because by the time I went to college, I did not know how to dance. I found it difficult to socialize. My friends used to say I had two left feet" (Conteth, 2004, p.57).

But for the brothers to Dao they are given freedom to freely socialize and they can dance to any type of song. Dao is restricted on the choice of clothes that she has to wear. It is not in her will to choose what clothes to put on. This frustrates her even more, because life to her seems like prison in her own parent's house. She is condemned for the type of clothes that she wears when she comes

back from college. “You have come here now to teach your younger sisters’ bad manners.... I tell you, hell fire will consume you for this!” (Conteth, 2004)

Baba had even reprimanded Dao’s mother. He accused her, to be the one who gave birth to such a person like Dao and he told her that hell fire would consume her too. Now Dao could not wear such clothes under the command of her father. Further, Conteth, in *letters to my sisters* shows that Dao’s mother had accepted the role assigned to her by society as a woman. She did not have a problem with playing her ‘role’ and says,

“...if you don’t obey your husband, will not go to heaven.” (Conteth, 2004, P.58)

This shows that women are oppressed and religion is used as tool of conditioning them into submission and total subservience towards their men. Dao continues to illustrate the patriarchy authority and its impact seen by how she suffers at the hands of her father. She says that no boyfriend would dare call her nor come to their house. When Dao told her father that the government had provided her with a house, he denied her permission to go and stay in it. He told her that she would only leave his house when she would be going to her husband’s home.

“For *Baba*, unmarried girls should not live by themselves. It is immoral. But it is alright for our brothers to live by themselves. That would not bring dishonor to the family” (Conteth, 2004, p.58).

She had to accept with disbelief and to her, home had become hell.

In her letter, Dao reminds her sisters of the kind of mistreatment that certain wives had gone through. This includes domestic violence from their husbands. Dao narrates the situation of their uncle, who used to beat his wives frequently for slight faults. On a certain particular occurrence, he severely beat one of his wives till she became sick. Her offense was that; she had gone to have a look at masquerade devils.

“For uncle *Bardara*, it was the devil that had induced his wife. So, he had decided to beat the hell out of her, as our people would say” (Conteth, 2004, p.58). In this Conteth shows that, if women in Dao’s society do not obey their husband’s without questioning, they are perceived to have chosen the path of the devil. It is a society that perceives a religious woman as the woman who submits to her husband. Any form of defiance is seen as the work of the devil and such a woman ought be caned in order to ‘drive the devil out of her.’ In this patriarchal society, fathers are the ones who choose husbands for their daughters. For Dao, she has no choice left but to accept getting married to an old man because it was the choice of her father together with the elders. This is the main reason together with the other mentioned illustrations that drive her into taking her life. She is not ready to get married to a man that she and her sisters had ridiculed and despised their entire lives. She knew she would be moving from one prison to another and she would live with this misery for the rest of her life.

“...they agreed that I should marry the son of *Alhaji Hamsu*...he beats his wives and children with efficient brutality...Now I am to move to another exile, to serve a worse master, to be enslaved again.” (Conteth, 2004, p.59 & 60). The patriarchal world created by men has reduced marriage to a kind of prison for women. The society is a form of slavery for women with men being the brutal slave masters/drivers. Dao’s act of suicide is a final act of rebellion to life of oppression where every aspect of her life is determined by the male members of her society.

The author uses local dialect in aspects ranging names of things to quoting Arabic words from the Koran. Quoting words from the Koran has been used to create emphasis specifically on the role of Islamic in the society, which she feels, oppresses the women. Dao would have been made to repeat this word; 'Asterfulai', seven times, if she had refused to accept the marriage proposal. Conteth also uses rhetorical questions to create emphasis on the effect of oppression of women.

'Why then did I have to spend so much of my time going to college?' (Conteth, 2004, p.58)

In this case, Conteth in *A letter to my Sisters*, manages to bring out the disillusionment Dr. Dao felt. She had spent many years acquiring knowledge with a hope that it would be a source of her freedom. However, to her consternation and disbelief the male members of her society (her father in particular) would not budge and give her any freedom.

In critical analysis of *Heaven and Earth* by Wangui wa Goro, a short story based from a Kenya. The author exposes the readers to what women go through in a patriarchal society. Mme lady who is the protagonist in this story, represents the kind of difficulties that the women from her community face. The women from her community including her, all go to church and find the church as the only safe place to take away their misery. But it is unfortunate because the church leader is a male, who never seeks to know and understand these women's plight. It is due to the state of depression/oppression that Mme Lady is facing, that drives her to behave unexpectedly whenever she walks into the church. It was a form of a silent cry for attention to what she and her ilk go through in the hands of oppressive men and society.

Wangui wa Goro uses Mme Lady to challenge the preacher to whom the congregation is usually listening attentively. She distracts the sermons, in order for her to be recognized and to lower the status of the male preacher. She knew the exploitation of her fellow women by the preacher, who used to preach with much vigor, anytime he wanted to boast about himself. The women are required to cover their heads and Mme Lady, she views this as an oppression to hide their beauty. When Mme Lady attends a church, she dresses to bring out the best of her ample figure. The preacher, quotes verses from the bible with an aim of putting Mme Lady and other women like her into their place. He uses the holy writ in subduing women and thereby uses religion as a tool for oppressing women.

'And women, you shall adorn yourself for your husbands,'.... (Goro, 2004, p.92)

In this case, the preacher speaks of a society that had deprived women of their humanity. They had been reduced into objects who lived only to provide delight and joy to their husbands. Even when it came to dress, their sartorial choice was supposed to be geared towards their husband's delight and gratification. The preacher has no qualms in steering the sermons towards the direction of his prejudice towards women. He takes as his god given role to 'put women in 'their place' regarding men vs women relations. The Vicar says,

'God designated the role of men and women in the community clearly. In the Bible, God, from the very beginning, clearly created man in his own image and gave him woman to be his helper... Women should obey their husbands and remain humble till the end of their days.' (Goro, 2004, P.95)

Therefore, Goro, in *Heaven and Earth*, through the words of the Vicar points out a society that used religion to oppress women. The Vicar appears to allege albeit wrongly that men are created in the image of god while women are mere helpers. Hence women are relegated to a position of lesser beings. After the church service, she challenges the preacher by having a large number of women coming to gather around her. They listen to her conversation while the preacher stands alone waiting for the congregation to greet him. It appears that despite the fiery preaching of the Vicar in Goro's *Heaven and Earth*, Mme Lady held more sway amongst the congregants in spite of the fact that he was a man whilst she was a woman- the gender he sought to subdue. However, despite Mme Lady's supposed 'sophistication and sense of self-importance' she has a dark secret to herself. In public she portrayed the image of a powerful rich woman who had the world at her feet. Yet while at home she was just as oppressed as the rest of the women in her community. Referring to Mme Lady's Sunday afternoon schedule, Goro, in *Heaven and Earth* writes,

'...Besides, it was her day to be a good wife to her husband, by entertaining his friends and mates.' (Goro, 2004, P96)

Goro in this case successfully shows that, oppression of women transcends social class. Mme Lady was married to a wealth man who religiously drove her to church every Sunday (although he never attended), creating an image of a life of marital bliss and a man who cared for his wife. Only to show that, once at home she assumed the expected role of 'servant wife' who had to entertain her husband and his friends every Sunday afternoon. The men in *Heaven and Earth* are treated with much respect and near adoration compared to the women especially on Father's Day, which happens to be on a Sunday. The preacher looks for the best sermon and wears his best clothes. This is one of the few days in a year that the men go to the church. A reception is prepared for the men after the service. The particular service was meant for men. However, women had a role to play a Goro writes,

"The women were expected to volunteer their services to ensure success' (Goro, 2004, P 96).

Despite the service being intended for men, it is women, who are expected to organize and ensure it was a successful day for their men. In this case Goro, shows how women are reduced to serving their men, as loyal servants, or to use the words of the Vicar, as 'helpers' thou their husbands. It happens that Mme lady does not attend the service that day and the preacher becomes concerned because she is always the one organizing such events. The preacher together with Kim, who happens to be a doctor, go to her house to look for her. They find out that she had been severely beaten by her husband and her gown is stained with blood.

"Mme-Lady had dark welts and blotches across her face and traces of dried blood down her cheeks" (Goro, 2004, p.98).

She suffers domestic violence at the hands of her husband. After being taken to the hospital, Kim tells her not to go back to her husband. But she upholds that, she has to go back because she cannot go back to her parents. The parents had already received a high bridal price, which they cannot be able to repay.

“No one will believe me and even if they do, they will blame me. They think I am spoilt and that is my fault! I have no qualifications and I cannot find a job at this age. I don’t even have children, as I am barren. He is everything to me” (Goro, 2004, p.99). This reflects passivity in married women even when faced with domestic violence.

Through this incident, Goro, in *Heaven and Earth*, brings to the reader the reality of how bride-wealth payment commoditized women. It appears that upon payment of dowry, men were free to lord over their wives in all ways. Actually, Mme Lady points out that her family had received a high bride price for her hence, even if she went back to her parents, they would not be able to refund the dowry paid for her. Payment of dowry in this society reduced women to commodities acquired by men by paying dowry. Goro writes,

‘Where else can I go? I have no money and, in our community, you know that women are dependent on their husbands. My family will not take me back; a very high dowry was paid for me which they cannot repay.’ (Goro, 2004, P99). Dowry, in Goro’s *Heaven and Earth* reduces women to slaves/ servants who had to bear the horrors of abusive marriages for they were economically disenfranchised. They are totally dependent on their husbands.

Because of the female dependency on their husbands, women lack freedom. They are not given freedom of choice as to what they want. Mme Lady is controlled by her husband and he does not permit her to leave the church or to go to church by herself. He drives her and gets her back home. When she is battered by her husband, her family would blame it on her for they would not accept the argument that her husband was at fault. It appears the society is constructed in such a way as to deepen Mme Lady’s grief. She is made to feel less of a woman for she points out that she is barren and had no children. This is a mistreatment for her. Her marriage life is like a prison. There is no job for her, apart from staying at home and taking care of her husband.

In a Puzzling Whirlwind by Amal Abdul-Hamid, the author portrays the patriarchal domination in this society. The narrator’s husband is not blamed for the failure to sire a child. The men in *In a Puzzling Whirlwind* are not questioned when a marriage is childless, instead, their wives are the ones who take such blame. The husband has the freedom to leave and stay away from his home but his wife is insulted by her mother-in-law for not bearing children. *In a puzzling wind*, Hamid, writes,

‘A year passed and his mother began to say harsh things and to call me names. She said she wanted to see his children as she had seen those of his brothers.’ (Hamid, 1998, p.84)

From the analysis of *Had I Been Male* by Najat Khayyat, men control women. Women are not allowed to work and this makes them to depend on their husbands, because they do not have any other way of making a living. That is why the narrator regrets, if only she was a male instead of a female, because she would have looked for a job in order to feed her poor mother. She was just a young orphan girl (children were deemed orphans when their fathers died) and she had to get married for marriage was the only way the fifteen-year-old anonymous child narrator was to get security and a secure future’

“Had I been male, my father’s house still would have been open, and I would have relieved her of depending on the crumbs from my uncle’s table. Had I been male, I would have become a wall to

protect my mother from the difficult times...It is socially unacceptable for me as a female to work to save myself from the humiliation of needing the help of others” (Khayyat, 1998, p.19). The narrator has to suffer at the hands of the old man who marries her. She gets married to him, because his mother is poor and the old man is rich. Therefore, her mother thinks that her daughter can now depend on the old man for provision. But this leads the orphan girl to a miserable life. This illustrates the patriarchal dominance in the society.

4.3 The treatment of the woman character in rhetorical questions and other stylistic device

From the critical analysis of the four short stories, the authors have used rhetorical questions among other stylistic devices like irony, mockery and use of local dialects or language. All these stylistic devices have been used by the authors, in order to create emphasis and for the authenticity of the literary work. While taking time to think about the rhetorical questions, the reader gets to feel the character’s plight. The plight of women in an oppressive society.

Some of these rhetorical questions can be analyzed in *A Letter to my Sisters* by Fatmata Conteth, Dao poses some rhetorical questions while addressing several issues in the letter to her sisters. These questions help to illustrate the treatment of the women in their society and how much she suffers together with other women, in a patriarchal society that reduces women to lesser beings.

“Have we not lamented many times that we are not allowed out of the house except when accompanied by several of our younger brothers and sisters?” (Conteth, 2004, p.57). This is a rhetorical question in which, Dao expresses hers and her sisters’ grief. This rhetorical question, emphasizes the kind of oppression that Dao and her sisters go through. Baba, does not give them the freedom of movement. He dominates them by mistreating them. There is no choice for not only his daughters but their mother too, except to submit themselves at the hands of baba.

On the other hand, the males are given all the freedom, including freedom of movement. For the brothers of Dao, they can go out by themselves and come back at home at any time they wish. This is evident through Nkodo his brother, who goes to an extent of having children out of wedlock but *Baba* is happy for him, simply because he will now have grandchildren. This is the opposite when it comes to daughters, it is said that pregnancy before marriage would bring dishonor to the family. It is evident that the brothers are given the freedom to socialize with their friends, who are not chosen for them by *Baba* unlike the girls. This explains why they get to know much, from the parties that they attend.

“Have you girls noticed how our younger brothers can dance to all sorts of music?” (Conteth, 2004, p.57).

As Dao writes this sad letter to her dear sisters, she portrays the extent to which the society disregards the idea of girls acquiring education. After she completes college in England, Dao goes back to home. But even after becoming the first female medical doctor in her community, she suffers as a woman in her society. Her father mistreats her and denies her freedom. When the government had provided her with a house, her father denied her permission to leave his house. Dao regrets her great education that she had now acquired and seemed to lack meaning of independency.

“Why then did I have to spend so much of my time going to college?” (Conteth, 2004, p.58). Dao goes ahead to explain and inform her sisters of the cruel patriarchy leadership that they are about to face for the rest of their lives. She is aware of the unbecoming behavior of her elder brother, Nkodo. Nkodo had already started to mistreat her and to watch her moves. When he comes across a letter written by Dao’s boyfriend in her wardrobe, he reads it to his father. He had by this time presumed the role of *Baba*.

“What then is our future?” (Conteth, 2004, p.59).

This indicates to Dao and her sister that they will always be under the control of both her brother and father. And even after the father dies, the elder brother will control the lives of his sisters.

Baba together with elders and family members, decide on the kind of a husband that will marry Dao. This is a patriarchal society and women have no voice when it comes to choosing their spouse. This is the ultimate reason for Dao to take her life. Because she knows the old man to be her husband, will always oppress her. According to her society, she is not allowed to reject anything that her father recommends or commands.

“So, what is my choice?” (Conteth, 2004, p.60). Women’s freedom in this society, is denied to them. Dao laments of her freedom to wear what she desires. The father dictates to her the kind of clothes to wear. She had bought new clothes form college, but now she has to put them aside. She laments of this extent of oppression for the women. The father condemns her for the trousers she gets to wear, though this is the style of clothes she likes.

“But where do you wear them to?” (Conteth, 2004, p.61).

In addition, Fatmata Conteth uses symbolism in this story. Dao is a symbol of the women in such a society like this one. Where women are denied their rights. Dao represents the oppression that the women suffer at the hands of the male dominance. The wife to Uncle Bardara, symbolizes the domestic violence that the women go through. Through her, the reader can be able to understand domestic violence that the women face. The likes of *Baba* and Nkodo, symbolize the tyrant leaders in the society, who mistreat the women by oppressing them.

From the story *Heaven and Earth* by Wangui wa Goro, the author has also used some rhetorical questions. This is portrayed by the suffering that Mme Lady with her fellow female friends go through. The author uses the protagonist Mme Lady, to portray the kind of depression that the women come across. This depression that Mme Lady suffers at the hands of her husband is the cause for her behavior towards the preacher. She challenges him in the presence of his congregation in order to cause much attention from her female friends, who look up to her. She does not regard anything that the preacher preaches. She takes an opportunity on Sundays, to humiliate the preacher. This is the way Mme Lady speaks out her depression.

“How dare she challenge him before this congregation?” (Goro, 2004, p.94)

Even as Mme Lady struggles to be a strong figure for her female friends to cling unto, she suffers domestic violence from her husband. The preacher together with Kim the doctor, come to look for her after she goes missing at the service. They learn she has been hurt and at a very bad state. The

preacher asks her, “Were you burgled or something?” (Goro, 2004, p.98). For the preacher, he could not believe what he was seeing. He had not seen anything like that in his entire life.

The author continues to illustrate the condition of Mme Lady, by portraying rhetorical questions from both the preacher and Kim.

“What happened, mama? What happened to you, can you speak?” (Goro, 2004, p.98).

“Who hit you? He asked gently. He did not need an answer ...” (Goro, 2004, p.99). The doctor, had seen this kind of situations regularly, but he was in disbelief that such a powerful woman could suffer the same. He also recognized that she would not speak about it.

Mme Lady depends on her husband, as her supporter. She had gone to the urban to look for an income. Unfortunately, her husband to be had gone to look for her and took her back to the village through marriage. This had made her to depend on her husband and to stay at home, doing the house chores.

Mme Lady has to go back to his husband’s house, after the treatment of her body injuries from the hospital. Despite the domestic violence, she had to go back because she depends on her husband for a living.

“He is everything to me. What about my reputation and his?” (Goro, 2004, p.98).

There is also use of irony in Page 94 “Mme Lady was quite unaware of the distraction her commotion and behavior were causing”. This is the opposite of what the author meant. Mme lady caused the distraction intentionally, in order for her female friends to loss attention at what the preacher was saying. We find the same situation in *Had I Been Male* by Najat Khayyat. For this orphan girl, she could not work because it was against the custom for the females to work. She wishes if only she had been a male, because she would have worked hard and provided for her poor mother. But she had to accept the customs because she is a female. This leads her into dependency on the old man who becomes her husband.

“No. I did not revolt. I stayed miserable and suffocated. Am I not female?” (Khayyat, 1998, p.20).

For the mother, she wants a rich man, who can be able to provide for her daughter. She is a poor mother and thinks this to be a solution to her daughter. But things turn sour for the girl. For the rest of her life, she had to live with the old man as her wife.

“Isn’t that what I have wanted for her all along?” (Khayyat, 1998, p.21).

The narrator goes to seek comfort at her mother’s arm, but she tells her, there is no solution. She had to accept the man as his husband, in order for her to survive and provision of livelihood. The narrator wails for her miserable marriage.

“Shelter? Protection? Did it liberate me from this prison to be sold to the first passer-by?” (Khayyat, 1998, p.22).

The title ‘*Had I Been Male*’, is ironical. Even though the narrator wishes she was a male, this is not what she really means. She uses the title to express the sufferings she goes through, only because she is a female. She speaks out the male domination over the females.

In *a Puzzling Whirlwind* by Amal Abdul-Hamid, the women are denied their freedom. It is evident that the men are the ones that are more respected. Because this is a patriarchal society, the men are not questioned for any kind of decision they make. The narrator decides to study and look for a job, after the husband goes for a job transfer for a long time. She has to remain in misery, blaming herself for her infertility. She becomes courageous to face her mother-in-law because she is now independent.

“I worked to become the master of myself. Why are you angry with me?” (Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p.85). The mother-in-law to the narrator, had hated her because she could not be able to give birth. The females are disregarded for their infertility because it is the role of a woman to give birth. She is mistreated by her in laws because she cannot give birth.

“Why do I need her if she can’t make me a parent?” Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p.85).

The narrator explains to the husband; it is not her desire not to have children.

“Fertility is Allah’s gift. If he leaves me otherwise, do I kill myself?” Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p.86).

There is also use of mockery form this story. The mother-in-law to the narrator, mocks her. This expresses the oppression that the narrator goes through in her marriage. When she gets a job and goes out to work, the mother-in-law becomes angry.

“This house has become a hotel for people who don’t understand the meaning of respect. You do whatever you like with no man around” (Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p.85).

The mother-in-law provokes her, as a way of oppressing her because she cannot have children.

5.0 Conclusions

The study findings reveal oppression of the women in the society. Their freedom is denied. They do not have a right of speech, dressing or even movement. The husbands misuse their wives and go to the extent of assaulting them physically. In the story *Heaven and Earth* by Wangui Goro, she portrays the mistreatment of the women in the society. Wangui Goro, uses Mme Lady, to represent how the other women in her community are treated by their husbands. Mme lady goes through domestic violence at the hands of her husband. She entirely depends on her husband for provision. The husband controls her and watches her. Her husband takes her to church and comes back for her.

From critical analysis of *Letter to my Sisters* by Fatmata Conteth, the author portrays the role of the women in an Islamic society and how the women are treated. Dao writes the letter that will be read by her sister, after she commits suicide. In the letter, Dao gives reasons for making this kind of decision. This is because of the mistreatment she has gone through and she is not willing to continue with it, especially with a forced marriage partner.

The narrator in *Had I Been Male* by Najat Khayyat, cries out the suffering she goes through. This is simply because she is a female and not a male. Her community highly regards the men compared to the females. When the women depend on their husbands, it makes them to be submissive and lack a voice in the house. According to certain cultures across the world like the Arab countries, the women are supposed to be speechless in front of their husbands. The women should not

question their husbands under any situation. *In a Puzzling Whirlwind* by Amal, this is evident. The narrator takes the blame for her infertility. She blames herself and does not question the husband. Her mother-in-law accuses the narrator for the failure to have a child. But she doesn't question her son, who later leaves home for a long time. The researcher therefore concluded that, the set objectives of the study were achieved. The selected stories portray the women roles, patriarchy system and use of stylistic devices to bring out the treatment of the women in these stories.

6.0 Recommendations

The researcher recommends some significant changes that should take place in the formulation of polices related to the Ministry of gender discrimination and violence against women and girl child. First, the government needs to re-examine the treatment of the women in the society. Researchers and authors should start talking more about issues related to women. Second, the church leaders of the society should distinguish between the religious values and those of traditional characteristic, which oppress the women. Finally, the social media needs to examine the depiction of women in order to restrain the ill-treatment of the women in the society.

More research on the feminist literature from scholars is required to create more detailed information on the treatment of the woman character in literary texts. In addition, a careful investigation of how the women are portrayed in texts, is needed in order to gain profound perceptions of these kinds of texts, which represent the treatment of women in the society. Critical theoretical resources are required, in order to know more on how the women are treated in contemporary feminist writings.

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