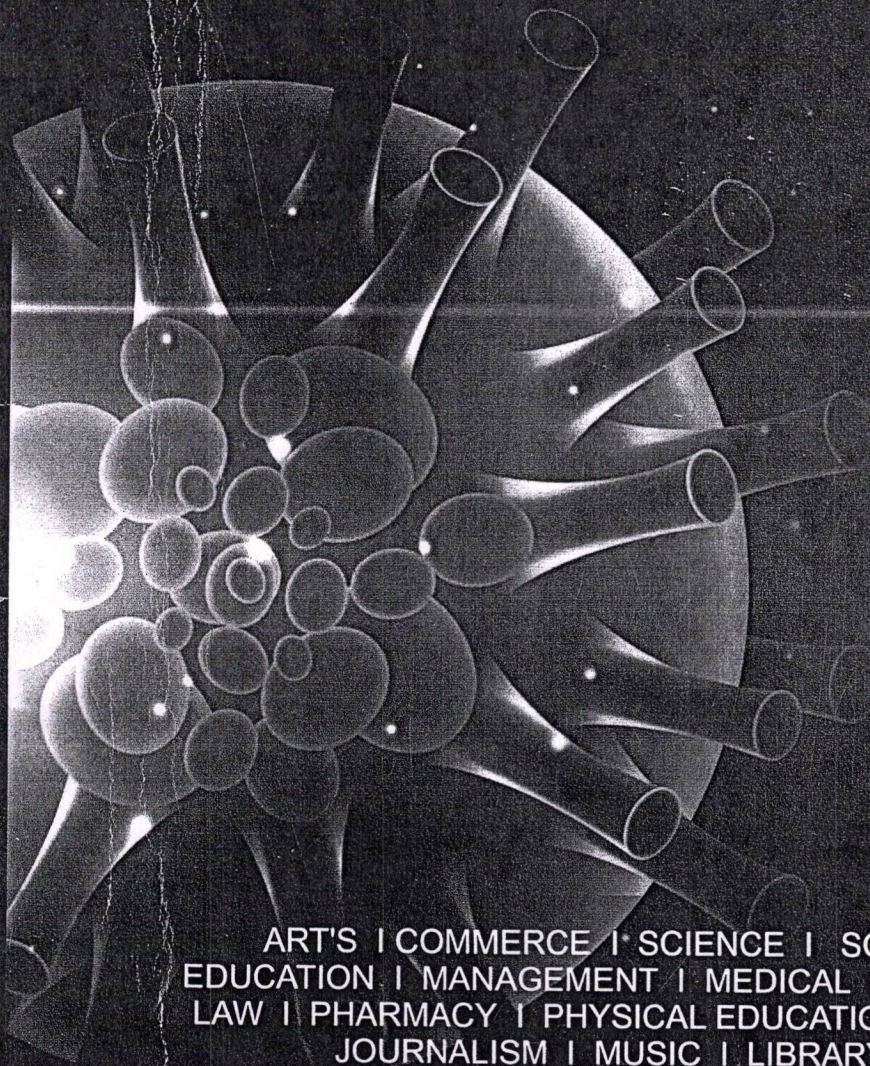


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Editor: **Dr. Sadashiv H. Sarkate**

E-mail : powerofknowledge3@gmail.com
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The study of Gender Discrimination in Deborah Ellis's Novel 'The Breadwinner'

Kailas Baburao Giri

Assistant Professor Dept .of English
ACS College Gangakhed, Parbhani-431514

Abstract:

The major concern of this paper is to find out the issue of Gender Discrimination in the book of Deborah Ellis's novel 'The Breadwinner'. Gender based discrimination is an important issue that requires much and more attention in the world. This paper discusses Gender bias and concerns in the lives of women. One of the literature that explores the issue of Gender discrimination is Deborah Ellis's novel 'The Breadwinner Trilogy'. It also explores the issues of poverty, torture, violence, power, sexual abuse against women in the male dominated society. This is an international bestseller book that has received several awards. Its originality is to talk about gender issue. Deborah Ellis herself is an activist and feminist writer who really care about women's lives.

Keywords: Gender, Inequality, Patriarchy, Feminist, Discrimination.

Introduction:

'He is not born, but rather becomes a woman'.

Simone de Beauvoir

In the quote, as aforementioned, it clearly states that a woman become a woman not because she was born a woman, but she was treated like a woman from the moment she was born. She was treated like woman because her physical sex was female and this formed her 'Gender Identity'. Simone De Beauvoir made a distinction between sex and gender in her book titled 'The Second Sex'. The former is biological and latter is socio-cultural process. Gender is defined as 'a social process by which people are treated differently and advantageously under similar circumstances on the basis of gender'. The most of the social norms make a discrimination between male and female on the basis of gender. Feminist writers argued that in the male dominated society women are treated inhumanly. They are not considered human beings. Women are tortured, abused, raped under the privilege of men. The feminist writers want equal rights to compare with their male counterpart in the every facet of life.

In the patriarchal society, women are kept aside from the major activities. The women are trapped in the old paradigm such as race, culture, religion and gender. The women are oppressed and restricted to access the activities done by the men.

The book 'The Breadwinner Trilogy' glimpses over the fact that major and minor male characters in the story are extremely affected by the gender discrimination. The lack of equality that happened in the story resulted in several negative effects in the lives of characters. They are such as poverty, insecurity, fear, discrimination and power, abuse in the Taliban Army. Afghanistan is ruled by the Taliban group which highly limits women's freedom outside of their houses. Once the father of Parvana is sent to jail, 11-year-old Parvana must find the courage to break Taliban law to save her family. 'The Breadwinner' is the story of a girl who takes risk herself to save her mother and sisters can survive life in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Parvana

and other female characters must struggle harder to cope with gender equality since they are still under age. It puts some harms to them. Therefore, it is important to study Gender bias at a deeper level in order to create an insight for the readers that gender inequality for female children is worth fighting for.

Taliban society is one of society which holds a male dominated system. Women are not allowed to go to school, work or any other public places freely. Women are kept at home and forbidden outside home. They must be accompanied by their 'Maharam', their male relatives. They have to remain under the veil.

There is a biased attitude towards women in Taliban society. Women do not have free access to production, work, public places etc. It can be seen from the following paragraph: "We are not allowed to go into the shop. Men were supposed to do all the shopping, but women did it, they had to stand outside and call in for what they needed. They had seen shopkeepers beaten for serving women outside their shops."

It clearly indicates that men and women are treated differently in patriarchal society. It is a society controlled by men. Men are controllers of anything such as making a decision, planning and information. Women are not free to expose themselves in such a patriarchal society. Parvana said that, "I can read that letter as father can", Parvana whispered into the folds of her chador, well almost she did not dare say these words out loud. The man sitting beside her father would not want to hear voice, nor would anyone else in the Kabul market. The women are kept silenced throughout their life. Their voices are choked by the patriarchal society. It is a very severe condition of women. They are forbidden to assert their rights in spite of being intellectual and vocal they are. The major character in the novel does not have any right for education, medical care and other facilities as library and public transportation. Women are not allowed to go outside without a male member of their family. In general females are locked in their houses, particularly the central character of the novel Parvana faced such problems. She is prohibited the fundamental right of education. Even her mother shook the job of writing for broadcasting. Such dysfunctional life is lived by the women. Parvana, a female character herself disguised as a boy & trying to survive the family in absence of father. They are forced to leave the education.

'She wasn't really supposed to leave outside at all. The Taliban had ordered all girls and women in Afghanistan to stay inside to their homes. They even forbade girls to go to school. Parvana had to leave her sixth grade class and her sister Nora was not allowed to go to her high school. Their mother had been out of her job as a writer for a Kabul radio station, year after year Ali.'

It indicates that she does not have a hope all to make everything better. She lost her hope to create a better condition. Such type of attitude of females hampers themselves in the Taliban society. Negative effects of Gender bias on female children in Patriarchal society.

Fear and silence: The female children in the Taliban society live under the feeling of fear and silence. They do not dare to assert themselves in the public as well as private places even though they are not allowed to go for education. Taliban group is very active and dominant group. They hold the life of females. Parvana expresses her feeling of inferiority in her words as follows. Parvana asserts that she is able to read as her father but she is not able to read as father because of being a female. Parvana when speak speak in very low tone. "I can read that