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Exploring Feminity and Socio-Political Identity Crisis in the Novels of Naruddin Farah

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The present paper is an attempt to explore feministic problems, and Socio-political problems of Somalian life. As we know that after World War II, Man's life has become much conservative and alienated from the society. Feministic problems are not only in African territories but also in South-Asian countries also. Presently each nation is facing the problems such as terrorism, socio-political upheaval and its affects on common man rigid patriarchic, racial discrimination diasporic complexity, and the fragmentation of social structures from the family to the nation-state in Africa, are the concerns of modern writings. The writers are mostly writing about Identity crisis and global problems. The commonwealth writers such as Naruddin Farah, Ben Okari, Helon Habila , Benjamin Kwakye, are questioned about question of identity. The Exilement, suppression and oppression, are the subjects of modern writers. In India also, the marginalized were always exploited before colonialism. They refused to follow the systems marked by the high culture people. The marginalized had to tolerate all the exploitations at the hands of the so called upper caste. The same is found in African nations also. The crisis of identity is found in African Literature also. This novelist depicts life and culture of Somalia people. The alienation of the modern man, globalization, Nuclear armament, modernization are the major themes of modern novelists. Naruddin Farah touched the all the aspects of human life. Exile, Exploitation, Political crises are the major issues of his writing, so here I would like to focus on his feminine and socio-political identity crisis his novelist.

Keywords: Nomadisim, Somalia, Ethnicity, Mobility, Social-Stratification, Colonialism, Naruddin Farah, Xeer (Civil Law) Islamic Somalia.

INTRODUCTION

Naruddin Farah was a well Known African novelist of dramatist and poet. He learned Somali, Amharic, and Arabic, then English. He studied Literature and Philosophy in Chandigarh University. In India, he wrote several plays in addition to his first novel from *A Crooked Rib* (1970). Even he studied theatre. Upon the Publication of *A Naked Needle* in 1976, he was warned not to return to Somalia, or he would be Jailed. Then he left to Italy, where he wrote stories, plays, novels etc. he won English speaking union prize and the Neustadf prize.

He is one of the most stimulating contemporary prose writers in Africa. His works expose feminism, socio-political life of Somalian country. In his novel, *From a Crooked Rib*, we

readers examines the plight of women in traditional Islamic societies through the eyes of young village girl; Ebla, as she struggles, with issues of female circumcision, arranged marriage and Polygamy. The search for identity is the most important factor in the novels of Naruddin Farah. The feeling of ‘alienation’ made them to become something worth of recognition. Women’s have to become more aware of their self-identity and the search for Identity is also most important feature of Naruddin Farah’s novel.

In Narrudin Farah’s most acclaimed novel ‘From a Crooked Rib’, which deals with modern quest of Ebla, who escapes the suppression of women in rural Somalia to achieve limited self determination in the city, thus she revolted against a male dominated society. At the beginning of the novel we read that Ebla, In a community of Camel nomads’, where society forces women’s to behave according to their Laws. Here, Ebla’s quest for Identity is shown in this novel. We readers are exploring the theme of feminism also. Eblas quest unfolds in three stations country town and city. She has to face many tests and prove herself at each these stationes. However, Ebla proves herself by rejecting female submission to social conformity, in clear contrast to oval morals. Keeping Eblas Life cycle, Farah depicted the destitute Life of women’s and African culture, their birth’s, marriages etc. on the one hand Ebla accepts what seems to her the inescapable demands on women, on the other, she learns to transform her traditional gender role into a source of empowerment in that she can exert control over men with her sexuality. Ebla’s quest leads her from a simplistic revolt against the domination by her grandfather to mature womanhood, which attack on male domination.

The Crooked Rib is about 18 years old girl Ebla who is arranged to marry an older man. She escapes to nearby village from her nomadic community she married her mate, but later on she finds herself alone and helpless. She be friends Asha in that city. Asha convinces Ebla to seek revenge by marrying someone else and she marries Tiffo. Tiffo doesn’t tell Ebla about his marriage of 18 years until after they married and Ebla is simply wife of him. while contemplating her Life, she realized that she was powerless and decided to take control of herself and her life finally she said Tiffo, she has married, and wanted divorce. While her first husband return , she confronted with him, but later they live happily. In this way, this novel, is about female identity and women’s empowerment is shown in this novel. The novel is against the patriarchal system of Somalia. Actually Ebla is the representation of modern man. If something goes against the women’s by one, she revolts against the present system. This novel closely follows the perspectives of an orphaned women and her coming up of age.

The Crooked Rib’s (1970) is from the point of view of women. This novel savagely attacks on the traditional values of his people. She is representations modern women, through she has propelled through servitude, marriage, poverty and violence, Ebla has to retain, her Identity in a world where women’s are ‘Sold like Cattle’, to a broker as a wife. So, she flee again this time to the city of ‘Mogadishu’, where despite seeking equality, she learns that to be a women in

Somalia means little in comparison to being a man. Yet, with all the struggles within society, she finds herself questioning her religion and world around her.

“What an agony, what a revolting situation naturally women are born in Nine months just like men. What makes women so inferior to men? Why is it that a girl should refund a token of amount to her parents in the form of dowry, while a boy needs amount or more to get a women? Why is it only the sons in the family who are counted? For sure this world is a man’s if his dominion is it. It is his and is going to be his as long as women are oppressed, as long as women are sold and bought like camels. Nature is against the women”.

Ebla’s life in ‘Mogadishu’ continues to teach her valuable lessons about her place in society her naivete leads her through marriages, divorce, prostitution, and reflections upon the horrible practice of female circumcision. The novel focuses on Somali practices, Islamic Law, and the place of women in the world.

In his different novels, Narrudin Farah deals with themes which are reflected to his mother country Somalia. Themes like feminism, traditionalism and modernism, Islamic traditions and search for “The Blood in the sun Trilogy, which includes maps, gifts and secrets. The novel maps is very important which deals with war on the Ogaden. Faran’s novel reflects socio-political themes also. The novel maps deals with problem of identity. Askar is raised by Misra a traitor women and she gives him all affection and love. Later on when Askar grows up Misra tells him, about his parents and the circumstances of their death, there father died in war. Askar lives peaceful lives peaceful life with Misra. Soon after, Askar’s attitudes towards Misra change, he becomes so greedy with her, until one day he thinks of killing her, “I will Kill you”, To live, I will you and with conversation with Misra he says”, One day , I might Kill you?

Here Askar’s dilemma begins, like Who am I? is repeated lots of times. This question reveals Askar’s loss. Askar feels this less and solid to Karin “ I have already begin to fed loss and it takes most Weird form”.

Askar’s confusion can be reflected by Farah,

“ And you-who are you?
He answered, I am foreign body;
Now what does that mean?
You paused, Then, “it means that
I am in a foreign country, I
Was once a young men. But lost
My identity (Page 61).

Even, Askar is not happy with family also, this reflects his moral confusion. “ The loss was so great, the tremor in his soul so distressing. Page (174)

The epigraph of the novel suggests”, Living begins when you, at this time Askar’s life begins he states searching for identity.

Askar got the identity card, but he is not satisfied with this. Now , he is great content with this card, which proves, he is and his Somali identity. It includes his name, his father and mothers. Finally, Askar join the Liberation movement’ In fact, Askar’s life begins to take another stream, with this growing idea of nationalism. However, when the war started, Askar sees that it will be the opportunity to himself:

“ the war was on but
 What mattered to Asakar
 Was it presaged, for him
 Future in which he would be
 Provided with ample opportunities
 To prove that he is a man

Askar always thought about Somalia, that time Ogaden is orphaned too just as Askar was orphaned. Referring to ogaden as the child whose mother (Somalia) is his studies or fighting for liberation. How we see that Askar is searching for identity and his country which is in greedy war, his loss is like Awe Kewi Arhman’s, The beautiful ones are not yet Born in this novel also same take place. He looks for truth and questions truth. By the end of this novel , we can say that there is identity crisis in maps, gifts and secrets.

However, the question of ‘who am I’ is presented in Farah’s all works, this is because his characters Live in a destroyed country. The conflict depression, dilemma’s are the recurrent modes of this novel. The sense of socio political aspects, war, detachment are reflected through his novels.

‘A Naked Needle’ is a more Introspective novel, focuses on protagonist Koschins search for self-fulfillment and freedom within the political and social upheaval of contemporary Somalia. His another novel,” sweet and sour milk’ (1979) recounts the military regime of Somalia but doesn’t asserts specific ideological position. The narrative of close sesame (1982) is told through the eyes of an aging tribal leader, Deeriye who opposes Somalias political dictator and has vision of his dead wife and Allah. Really in the novels of Naruddin Farah we observed that tradition of Somalia life, socio-political life, Patriarchal subjugation of women.

Naruddin Farah’s novels are essentially African, they are thematically relevant not only to the localities of African societies, but also to universal Human conditions. His works contains an undeniable political element. He doesn’t preach a particular political vision for his nation. In this way Naruddin Farah is globally acclaimed writer of Somalia, who questioned the life of people of Somalia. The sharia, xeer, totalitarianism are the issues of writing by Naruddin Farah.

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