CONCLUSION
The main thrust of this dissertation has remained to study women's struggle for liberation in Kenya, within the broad parameters of the significant role played by third world women. The study has tried to see the significant role played by Kenyan women's struggle for liberation as reflected in the fictions of Ngugi Wa Thingo. An eclectic approach within the broad framework of sociology of literature had been taken to evaluate the fictions of Ngugi Wa Thingo, in order to find out how the women in Ngugi Wa Thingo's fiction, representing the Kenyan Women play a significant role in their society.

Often in various literatures, culture and history, the image of women that has been constantly projected is that of women as slave of domestic duties and victims of Patriarchy. They appear as non-thinking beings confined to the domestic sphere. They hold a secondary status in the political, social and economic sphere of the society. Their work is limited to the private nuclear family. Such images of women's role only show that she is in the receiving end. It leaves little space to understand how crucial and important role she
plays in building up the society and nation. Only few studies have shown the celebrated women's strength, capacity and creativity in resisting subordination and uplifting the society, and in this thesis we have focused on such positive qualities of women, which challenges the popular stereotype of submissive women, nurtured and perpetuated in the patriarchy.

From the origin of political philosophy the women question has plagued the architects of the state, right from Plato and Aristotle. Both of them considered women to be weaker sex, physically inferior to men; but Plato to a certain extent has idealized women and had recognized her positive qualities. He argued in his book Republic that women pursuits can be same as men. Both can be Philosophers, Physicians and Warriors, as human intellect regardless of whether possessed by men or women have the same absorption capacities for knowledge. Though Plato had argued in favour of women's capacity, skill and intellect in creating the ideal state society along with men, yet women in the Middle Ages did not enjoy similar status to that of men. But later in the feudal State formation women enjoyed power equal to men. Women had remained active in all aspects of feudal economy including those areas requiring physical strength and endurance.
Feudal women of all classes had been economically active, therefore they enjoyed power. However in the seventeenth century when the society changed from feudal economy to Capitalist economy women's role changed. Women were confined to home while men out to work. Men were identified with production while women with consumption. They led more or less a parasitic or dependent life.

For Rousseau the female body becomes the symbol of all that is dangerous to the political order if not properly contained. He finds domesticated female sexuality the cement of social order. Feminist theorists have considered how this conceptualization of the women's body has limited the political status of women. Feminists constructed different theories to transform women into public persons. With their feminist movement started the women's liberation movement which became a radical movement for fundamental gender equality at work and in domestic activities, legal relations and cultural practices - Feminism has sought to oppose male dominance and patriarchy and has advocated equal opportunities for men and women.

Apart from Feminism, Marxism has sought to achieve women's liberation. But it is different and opposed to feminism. The feminist analysis has addressed itself to a patriarchal ideology,
locating the source of male domination and female subordination in the biological differences between the sexes. Marxists, on the other hand, have seen the origin of female subordination in the growing Phenomenon of private property, which, in their view, has made possible and necessary the exploitation of those biological differences in the modern world. And women's liberation can be sought through class struggle by abolishing Capitalist system.

Capitalism has enhanced the subordination of women. Infact in their exploitation it's the advancement of capitalism. Though it renders freedom to women but it values freedom above inequality. So without equal access to the market and without state assistance in meeting child rearing obligations; Capitalism requires women to reconcile their economic dependency through bargains made with individual men.

The women question as discussed above from the days of Plato and Aristotle along with the various theories associated with it throws light on the, varying perspectives regarding women's changing role and status in different socio-economic conditions and understanding of their struggle for liberation. But the above theories do not provide the right framework to understand their world women who have a different kind of existence in a Socio-
economic environment as compared to the western women. Since the main aim in this thesis has been to study about the struggle for liberation by women in Kenya, an understanding of the third world perspective on women became fundamental. The study has carried on within this broad framework.

Women are the Third World powerhouses. In addition to their struggle for national liberation in most of third world countries which were colonized, they are engaged in caring families and homes for production of food, running small scale business and making up a substantial amount of official labour force. Yet their status rarely reflects this enormous and vital contribution. By any measures-income, education, health, land ownership, legal rights or political power, Women get a raw deal. However it is becoming increasingly clear, that substantial development in the third world can be brought in when women play an equal part in the decision-making. No developing country can afford to ignore women's existing and potential economic contribution or their pivotal role in determining the health and welfare of a nation's children. Women in the third world are tremendous forces for change in their families, villages, cities and countries. They can and do make a difference - when they get a chance.
Many third world women face the added burden of running households by themselves. Globally a third of all households are headed by women, as migration in search of work or divorce removes husband from the household. And lack of education and skills frequently forces Third World women into the risky "informal" economy as street traders, domestic servants, homeless workers and seasonal labourers. Although economic productive to the society, once again this work is rarely recognized on official statistics and the women often get no protection from unions or employment legislations.

If discrimination against women in third world is formidable, so too are the heroic efforts to overcome it. They are the most effective agents for change in the third world. They are enthusiastic and determined and prepared to look beyond third world whatever benefits they gain are usually passed on to their families and ultimately, their communities and countries. However their contribution in the political, social and economic realm of the society goes unnoticed and unrecognized. Such unrecognized significant roles of Third World women has been focused and dwelt upon while studying the Kenyan women's struggle for liberation in this thesis.
Before understanding the study of the women's struggle for liberation in Kenya as reflected in Ngugi Wa Thingo's fiction a discussion on background of the role and status of women in Africa in general and Kenya in particular in the Second Chapter of this thesis enables us to comprehend the women's problem and their struggle for liberation in Kenya in a better way. It provides an insight in the changing role and status of African women and Kenyan women in particular through the period of history.

In the pre-colonial period African women had rights to land, animals, labour and the products of their own or others labour, and their status was higher. Women were producers; they grew most of family food, tended animals, and made tools and other articles used by the family. In most instances, women also sold their surplus in the markets, thus dominating these commercial activities and demonstrating their business acumen. Politically they were also powerful. In some societies they were found to be head of state and sometimes holding the position of the chief. There were also powerful warriors queens. In addition, African women organizations existed that acted as parallel authority structure to those of males.

However with the advent of colonialism and Africa's forceful integration into the capitalist economy in the 1800's brought new
constraints on women. Men were forced into the wage economy while most women remained in the rural areas, often assuming responsibilities. There absent men folk could no longer perform. Overall, although both men and women were exploited within the colonial economy, men gained some access to important resources such as money, skill, land and education that were less available to women. Men also gained political advantages as many sources of female power were ignored and undermined. Tradition was usually interpreted in ways that favoured men’s control over women, allowing men to gain at women’s expenses.

In the post-colonial period problems of women are a continuation of policies and forces set in motion during the colonial period. Many women went into the post-colonial era with higher expectations that the newly independent governments would meet their demands. But with the stagnate economy this was not possible. Through most of these contemporary periods most women meet their obligations to their Kinship relations by farming and trading. In urban areas also women carry a heavy burden in feeding their families. Despite these problems women have resisted their oppression as women and have hold economies responsible for the
gender inequality they face. In the case of Kenyan women's role and status changed with different socio-economic condition.

In the pre-colonial Kenyan women as wives, mothers and daughters were equal to men in the household economy as they played a significant role in agriculture. They were well protected economically. Their usufructam rights in land and cattle were well defined—women enjoyed freedom and commanded respect in society. This is because men had to depend on them for food and children. The question of who heads the family was non-existent.

But status of women in colonial Kenya declined. Her economic rights were undermined by land consolidation, as the system of use-rights that included women was converted to almost exclusively male private ownership. However in the deteriorating economic conditions of colonial period women succeeded in maintaining both their agriculture production and their limited opportunities for capital accumulation. Mainly through breeding beer or prostitution. The colonial economy in Kenya overburdened the women with work and responsibilities. In the political field men were allocated power in the local level with few exceptions somewhere. But women exerted their collective power in the political front as the colonial rule, as in the 1922 Harry Thuku
riots. In the violent nationalist struggle of the 1950's women played a major role in this fights against colonialism, to get back their fertile land, which were usurped by the white settlers. They went to the forest, provided food to the fighters and converted homes into armories for storing guns. Her contributions beard fruit and Kenya gained independence. But the land reforms that took place at the transition phase of colonialism largely focused on men, disposing all but a minuscule number of women.

In the present Post-independent Kenya women lives have improved in a marked way. Until recently women in Kenya have not been viewed as an important social stratum. Subsequent policy documents after independence are silent on gender. In addition to land dispossession, women farmers have been routinely excluded from the distribution of agricultural benefits, especially the credit that is guaranteed with land little deeds. Glaring educational disparities have existed at secondary and university levels that have implications for women's employment in the formal labour force and civil services. Agriculture and reproductive policy strategies and reforms do not yet recognize women's concern. Although development policies theoretically 'recognise' women's work. Policy practice seeks to ensure women in a web of control and
development policy goals cannot be realized unless women share economic assets and political voice. Stymied by a type of development "integration" that controls rather than empower them, Kenyan women are politically active at the grass root level where institutionalized male political machinery is weaker. Independence did bring noticeable change in their role of women. It has failed to involve them equally with men in the functioning of county's economic, political and social institutions. Independence only led to further dissatisfaction among women, as their exceptions were not met. But their active role in the country's economy, their role as political activist to emancipate women and as a social reformer engaged in liberating the society from backwardness, illiteracy, ignorance, by providing education to her child, needs to be accorded recognition.

These roles have been discussed while analyzing the fictions of Ngugi Wa Thingo to study the problem of women struggle for liberation in Kenya. Ngugi Wa Thingo himself is not only the most prolific of contemporary Kenyan writers but also the most prominent one too. He is a sensitive writer, and has given to Kenya a body of thought provoking literature which caused a stir in the Kenyan society.
Fiction in Kenya is a product of interaction between various forces in society-social, historical, cultural and economic. In being a product of meanings, values, which have great implication for the historical development of society. Ngugi Wa Thingo's fictions are the sensitive portrayal of Kenyan society.

The women in his novels that we come across in our analysis appear as embodiments of courage and fearlessness and are capable of rebellion. They are in fact better than men and have positive quality like courage, confidence and ability to see truth lucidly. They are self aware, confident and politically conscious, be it because of hunger, freedom struggle, physical exploitation, mental and economic oppression. They are a challenge to the popular stereotypes of the submissive women in the patriarchal Culture. He has shown their strong will, determination and grit in their socio-economic and political role in Kenyan society. Its unfortunate that such roles have not found much space in other literatures. His fictions reflect their consciousness for liberation in different periods of history and their growing disillusionment regarding the gender inequality, as the emerging nature of state had been unfavourable towards their cause of women's liberation.
While examining the socio-economic political, cultural role women in his fictions, we find out that through the process of time from the pre-colonial time to the post-colonial time, women's position have changed but always not in a upward curve. She has been playing varied roles, which not only determine her strength and capacity but along with determine the upliftment of the society as well as of the nation. In the economic sphere Kenyan women as reflected in Ngugi's fiction, perform moderate to heavy labour. They are primarily responsible for growing food, storing it, marketing in the rural areas. The rural women status has not undergone much change after independence. And women in urban areas are no better of. A dual duty is performed by the women who hold a formal office employment. To avoid being undertreated she put in more effort in her work. Unmindful of her desires, she has to work from dawn to dusk. The character 'Mumbi' in his grain of Wheat epitomizes such Kenyan women whose life toil and hardships to bring up her family and herself and Ngugi throws light upon her persistent effort to liberate herself and the family from hunger and deprivation.

Economic self-sufficiency had no direct equivalent to equality among the sexes. Nancey J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay have observed
in *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Changes*: "In Africa, the economic independence of women is less a mark of privilege than a matter of necessity; women take responsibility for their economic well being because they must in the same sense that western men traditionally accept "national" economic responsibility for themselves and their families."

In the social sphere her role as mother, wife, nurse, and provider of good finds no recognition. Since history relates to events broadly taking place in the public sphere, it excludes women who are seen as custodian of private realm. They as non-actors have been hidden from history, since the household, family and health, have never been considered as subject worth of historical enquiry. They play both private and public social roles but since they do not contribute to the economy, their social role goes unnoticed. In field of education, though women were less educated, yet educating their children remains prime concern.

In doing so she is not only showing his son the path of enlightenment but also contributing to the Kenyan society's well being as they are the future of the society. In her struggle to liberate herself and the society she faces lot of injustice and hardships. Ngugi focuses upon the social evil of prostitution and
illegitimate child. But he shows not their helplessness of the modern Kenyan women, rather the urge to fight against such forms of oppression. He depicts the refusal of women to resign before male domination. His character ‘Wanja’ in the novel *Devil in the Cross* is an example of such a woman. She is shown to have a positive set of values, hope to excel man (through hard work, studies and professionalism). Wanja on the other hand wants to rule men through sexual intimacy because, “she was somehow sure of her power over man. Wanja uses her sexual power to gain economic power.

Lynda Nead observes that the prostitute is a woman empowered to revenge herself against all kinds of oppression. She cites from one of the journal of nineteenth Century Britain: “Who can tell the pestiferous influence envisaged on society by the single, fallen women? Who can calculate the evils of such a system? Women. Waylaid, tempted, deceived, becomes in turn the terrible avenger of her sex. Armed with a power which is all but irresistible, and stripped of all which can alone restrain and purify her influence, she steps upon the arena of life qualified to act her part in the reorganization of society. The Lexlationis the law of retaliation is hers.
Although economically and socially she has a subordinate position, yet her social economic role, which she plays, is very much significant. Her political role is also as significant as her socio-economic role. Her multifaceted role in the national liberation struggle in the colonial period justifies her courage, resilience, strength and self-determination. She had responsibility for the organization and maintenance of the supply lines, which directed food supply, medicine, guns and information to the forest force.

In the cultural domain Kenyan women played a pivotal role by becoming the custodian of their culture. She teaches laws, customs and moral code of community and education system when they were attached by the missionaries. In the novel The River Between, Ngugi focuses upon the courage of two sisters-Muthoni and Nyambura, who are the representative of Kenyan women-in practicing their rituals and customs. Ngugi reflects their fearlessness in saving their own culture. Her Cultural role has saved the nation from disintegration. She plays an important role in the society in asserting the identity of their nation.

When it comes to assert her identity she has always remained forthright. From the days of independence she has been struggling to get her due place in the society at par with the men. Ngugi
through his two powerful women characters Nanja and Wanja, not only portrays the gender inequality and the exploitation of women in Kenya, but also shows the revolutionary spirit within women, not to succumb to male dominated pressures in the economic or political sphere or whether it is the question of her body. Their resistance and struggle has been to empower themselves. What marks them as individuals in their own right is their singular resilience and their courage to establish their entities rather than being mere shadows jostling for space in a patriarchal society.

Ngugi’s novel speaks of the Kenyan women’s solidarity, power, independence and struggle at the individual level in getting the country and society liberated and resisting patriarchal oppression for her own liberation. Her role does not confine only to the private realm but also the public. She tills land, produces food, cooks food, feeds her family, educates the child, and in the time of need proves an anchor and support to the husband, works for peace and happiness and the same time she is capable of rebellion if treated wrongly. Ngugi shows that their courage, resilience and fortitude in the struggle for liberation against all odd, which make them independent women, fighters and survivors against all kinds of oppression, Patriarchal and social.
The crux of the conclusive reflections is that the Kenyan women by constituting the equal portion of human society have been under immense constraints of socio-economic and political structure. The struggle against all odds of society for their liberation is just not limited to themselves, but also has virtual implications for the liberation of the society as well. And Ngugi wa Thiong'o through his fictions, has very subtly and lucidly brought such struggle into focus for liberation of Kenyan women.