PREFACE

Women down the ages and throughout history have been considered as second sex. From her birth till death a woman faces discrimination. Though this discrimination has been questioned by both male and female thinkers across the centuries, women oppression and their second-class citizenry have not yet been nullified altogether. Their rights at par with men have been denied and in spite of all kinds of empowerment policies and international conventions and declarations and recognition of women’s rights as human rights, the struggle for gender equity continues. Debates and discussions are taking place in innumerable forums in innumerable ways. Theories and praxes are of no help. Hence to chew the chewed has been a solace for the researchers to explicate possibilities and analyze the design, aesthetics and dynamism of the feminist writers and activists to continue the dissension till the goal is reached.

In the undertaken project the humble researcher analyzes the works of a very great African-American activist-writer Alice Walker, who is a novelist, poet and cultural and political activist along with selected Naga women writers to compare and contrast their views, voices and efforts to justify the cause of women and to support them wholeheartedly to make them able at least to voice their protest against the discrimination of women
at large and their individual conditions. Naga writers like Kekhrievou Yhome, Easterine Iralu, Monalisa Changkija, Temsula Ao and others including some Tenyimia women poets of early 20\textsuperscript{th} century have been analyzed and compared and contrasted with Alice Walker. Alice is a stern activist and visionary for a new age who has portrayed the angst of African American women while the selected Naga women writers are also writers with some feminist inclinations and aspirations. All these writers have strong ecofeminist sentiments.

Alice Walker (1944-) is the eighth and youngest child of Minnie Tallulah Grant Walker and Willie Lee Walker. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1983 for her novel \textit{The Color Purple} (1982). She is a poet, fictionist and non-fiction writer with strong feminist ideology and sentiments. Married and divorced, she herself has suffered the demonic patriarchal oppression and has experienced and witnessed the traumas of these age-old maladies. Throughout her works there is a strong protest against the myriad mutilations of women’s body, mind, honour and ego. This is echoed to a certain extent in the works of the proposed selected Naga women writers which have been exposed and explicated in course of the discussion in the study.
Observing some feminist similarities between the thematic treatment in the works of Alice Walker and Naga Women writers, the researcher aims at analyzing them objectively and dissecting the contours of feminist pragmatism. All writers may not be activists, but in their thoughts they pragmatize the activism. As such the title has been so framed to take care of the reality. Major works of Alice Walker and Naga women writers have been taken into consideration while analyzing and carving out the themes/designs of feminist ideologies of the selected writers.

New critical close text reading and comparative diagnosis have been the basic tools for analysis. Besides textual reading, the writers have been interviewed by the researcher to seek their opinion about their art and craft, and the world in general and their views on women in particular. While applying feminist theory and its contextual praxis in the analysis of the works of the selected authors, the views of these authors collected during the interviews have also be considered. Besides that field study on the status and predicament of Naga women in general have been made to expose their subalternity comparing that with Alice Walker’s presentation and vision of feminism/womanism and condition of the women class at large. The secondary sources, though not available sufficiently on the
selected topic, have been used to support the observations of the researcher to carve out the findings.

Though the selected Naga women writers do not share the same socio-cultural environment that Alice Walker lives and experiences, they uphold similar aesthetic sensibilities that exist in the Naga society, conditioned by patriarchy, custom and culture. Like Alice Walker, they ventilate similar agonies, ambitions and perspectives on life. They share in writing a similar vision of the future world or the new age. Both the types of writers dream of women’s liberation and permanent women empowerment for the benefit of the women and the world at large. They uphold strong ecofeminist vision and champion the rights/dignity of women and ecology. In the first chapter the concept of feminism and womanism has been defined. Ordinarily feminism/ womanism means championing the rights of women for safeguarding and promoting them. Women’s consciousness about their rights, enjoyment of liberty and their empowerment and all sorts of activities for the promotion of status of women in the society, come under the purview of feminism/ feminist pragmatism. Along with theoretical background of feminism in general and womanism in particular, the researcher has introduced the concerns of Alice Walker and major Naga women writers in this chapter. In the second chapter the fictional works of
Alice Walker and their feminist and ecofeminist concerns have been analyzed and justified. In the third chapter the characteristics of Alice Walker’s womanist interests have been identified in her poetry and non-fictional prose works and their activist dynamism has been appropriated. In the fourth chapter the similarity between the African-American and Naga Women’s predicament and the matrices of these coincidences have be contrasted. In the fifth chapter aesthetic similarities have been compared and dissimilarities have also been identified. The importance of their contribution to contemporary feminist thought and aesthetic congruity has been highlighted. In the concluding chapter the findings of the research have been ruminated and its contribution to new knowledge and possibilities of further research and its hinterland have been indicated.

Both the types of writers dream of women’s liberation and permanent women empowerment. They uphold strong ecofeminist vision and champion the rights/dignity of women and ecology. Though they live in a traditional matriarchal and patriarchal society, they ventilate their obsessions for a world of liberation and equality with their male counterpart. The Naga women’s yearning for equality is very similar with that of Alice Walker/ African/ African-American Womanists.
The present work in comparative perspective is the first of its kind to compare Alice Walker with Naga women writers. Though critical works in this field is not available, yet this effort will open up new avenues of criticism. It is expected that Naga women writers will aspire to achieve glorious liberty to venture into new ideologies to realize their own outcast state of life which would help them to struggle ambitiously to bring radical changes in the society.

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