Chapter 5

Conclusion
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CONCLUSION

Literature is the channel through which the subaltern voice is highly amplified. Significantly, the literary texts of Morrison and Bama emerge as important testimonials to represent the hardships and predicaments of the female protagonists. The writings about their fellow women are able to appropriate a collective position of resistance and revolt. Indeed, the documentation of the despotism turns out to be a manifestation of transforming and inflating the social and cultural ambience of the respective society.

Through the writings, the selected writers have been discussing immanent perennial matters not to point their finger at anyone, but to deduce optimistic solutions.

The concluding chapter presents the summation of the findings of the research work done on the selected works of the writers. The first chapter has dealt with the foundational theories of the modern feminists upon which the study has been logically built. The second chapter has rendered the indispensable forms of oppressions the women based on the customary and established codes, and the prejudices of the society. The starting point of all the oppressions is domestic sphere, and from that all the other oppressions spring out. Since all the agencies such as home, society, culture, religion, and work spot are embedded, the predicament of the women is pathetic. Among all the oppressions, racial prejudices, and caste injustices are horrendous in nature.

The third chapter has brought out physical and psychological oppressions in the women. It is ascertained that the physical frailty is the root cause of the other one. The fourth chapter has analysed the existence of a strong line of demarcation between the language of the men and the women, the unique features of AAVE with examples, the
non-standard variety and the dialectal form of Tamil with proper evidences, and the oral form of communication of the women.

In all the perspectives possible, it is much evident that the African-American and Dalit women are relegated to a subservient status by various factors discussed in the previous chapters. They are oppressed by the different systems of the parochial society. The oppressive elements are tangled in such a way that the women spend much of their time to get rid of each and every knot of the fetters. Biological factors put the women in domestic confinement, while economic crisis necessitates them to enter the multiple tasks of the society. Culture and ideology prevent them from an escape out of the conventional shackles of oppression. Religion is highly meant for patriarchs and no solace or salvation is offered from the patriarchal religion. In anatomical terms, the women are tenuous and feeble which allow men to take control over their bodies. The physical ordeals cause emotional instability in the women leading them into psychical oppression. So it can be inferred while comparing the negative aspects of the characters created by both the writers that they are inferiors at the social level, deprived of economic independence, domestically confined, culturally subjugated, rejected by religion, spiritually discouraged, physically wounded, psychologically repressed, and linguistically muted. History had documented the inhumanity and humiliation heaped upon them in the name of racism in the United States and casteism in India.

This study has brought out some other significant observations on the causes of the oppressive factors on the women characters of Toni Morrison and Bama. The magnitude of both the writers is illustrated through the blending of the factuality with shaping of the characters in the precise formula. They differ from other writers in the sense that they themselves have either witnessed, or felt the apprehension and fretfulness of their
characters. Morrison belongs to the lineage of African American writers, and Bama is a novice dalit writer. In essence, both the women writers of talent imbued their works with a typically feminine sensibility.

Being a comparative in nature, the study attempts to bring forth the fundamental relationship between the women characters of Morrison and Bama. By and large, the angst-ridden existence of the women forms the groundwork of the study. There are other common aspects of the life to be found among the women that can be classified roughly under two heads: 1. Adversities as the similarities and 2. Sanguine factors as similarities.

To discuss the adversities, at the outset, most of the women characters do not fit into the society, where they live in. Morrison’s notable characters like Pecola, Sula, Hannah, Pilate, Reba, Hagar, Sethe, Connie, Heed, and Christine are socially unacceptable types of women. In Bama, all the dalit women characters including Mariamma, Ezaki, Rakkammma, Thayee, Ponnuthayi, the mother of Bama, the aunt of Bama, and her patti are relegated to a lower status, and they cannot mingle with the other women, however educated they might be.

Society considers the women obsequious in the stance that they do not have carefully cultivated identities of their own, and they are always dependent upon men. The society has always had regular unwritten norms for women to be faithful, dutiful, and submissive. The other form of social unacceptability is the existence of prostitutes. The three whores introduced by Morrison in TBE are detested even by other women like Mrs. MacTeer. Pilate in SOS is snubbed by every man and woman as she has physical deformity. Sula’s position is highly revolting to the existing tradition of patriarchy. Sethe of BD is an unconscious slayer of her baby daughter (female infanticide). Therese in TB is not respected by the black maidservant Ondine and Valerian, the white master. Connie in PD
is a misfit to the standards of the 8-Rock men. Heed and Christine in Love are friends turned foes awaiting the freedom from the entangled web of the old, dead but powerful patriarch, Bill Cosey.

In the case of Bama, the dalit women suffer the curse of untouchability and they are never approved of by other upper class women too. Bama, with severe ache of heart, confesses in her KU that she is rejected by everyone in the society. She vocalizes her status in the society as, “Just as people throw sticks and stones to wound a wingless bird, many people have wounded me with their words and deeds” (104). If Bama, an educated woman and the writer herself encounters the destiny of isolation in the society, the agony of other dalit women needs no explanation.

The next adversity that these women face is the recklessness of their men towards them. Abandoning the family, the wife, and the children, is a common trait found among the black and dalit men that again leads to the destitute status of the women. The men either neglect or desert their wives who endure the pain of rejection mutely. The internalization of the pain diverts them from leading a normal life. The husband-inflicted-agony makes the wives unconsciously damage the entire system of the society and generates tension or develops a deep void in their mind. The catastrophe of Pecola in TBE results chiefly from the deterioration of the family system because of the disharmonious relationship between her parents. Geraldine, another sophisticated black woman in the novel also suffers the same fate of being neglected by her husband. In Sula, Nel is abandoned by her husband who develops an illicit affair with her friend Sula. However, Nel differs from Pauline. Though she cannot endure the husband’s disloyalty she sublimates her sorrow by carefully bringing up her children. Sula herself, who
switches over from man to man, is sternly forsaken by Ajax. Eva, the grandmother of Sula, is deserted by her husband for another woman.

In SOS, Ruth is completely isolated by her temperamental husband who treats her capriciously and with disdain. She tries to invert the dominant power structure by asserting the relationship with her son Milkman by nursing him till he attains his teenage. The nickname “Milkman” originates from this peculiar nursing habit. Milkman also does the same emotional violence to Hagar, who turns insane. In Jazz, Violet Trace’s bonding with her husband Joe is like the “the empty birdcages wrapped in cloth” (11). There is a deep abyss between the middle-aged childless couple, as the husband develops a liking towards a teenage girl. While the husband is recalling the sweet memories of his juvenile ladylove Dorcas on the bed, the unfortunate wife sleeps with a baby doll in her hand. The emotional alienation is the outcome of men’s contemptible attitude towards women. In PD, Connie, the nun on a fancy develops an affair with the highwayman, who takes her to remote places, exploits her sexually as and when he wishes. But, when Connie invites him to her place, he abruptly ends the affair fearing that he might get into unsolicited commitments. In Love, a fifty-two-year old papa marries an eleven-year-old Heed, the ally of his grand daughter Christine, with no thoughts about her future. Soon, it happens that the old man passes away leaving the young widow in a state of ever lasting wilderness.

Bama’s patti herself is one such abandoned woman. At the age of fourteen, Vellayamma (the patti) gets married to Govindan. Two children are born for the couple. Bama’s aunt (periyamma) and Bama’s mother are the two baby daughters, and after four years of married life, the husband leaves his wife and two daughters alone, and disappears (SI 4). From that time onwards, it is patti who toils hard to take care of her children. With
no support from the community, no education, and no pecuniary backing, *patti* has to 
brazen out the adversities of life that any ordinary woman would dare to venture with.
Most other dalit women also meet the same destiny, as the men have the rights to do any 
meanness upon their women. It is a common practice among most of the men to pick as 
many women as they desire, even when the wife is alive with them. The wife has no right 
to question the husband, since men have the privilege of possessing many women. In [SI], 
Bama exposes the viciousness of the husband as sung by the woeful wife:

Here’s a song about a man who took a mistress after he got married:

Eighteen sweet *paniyaram* (an eatable)
You handed to her, across the wall
But whatever you might give away
You still are my husband (77).

The song clearly indicates the stereotyped role of the submissive, subservient, 
domesticated and conventional Indian wives. It also vividly pictures the plight of the 
women to depend upon their husbands, despite their disloyalty towards them. The 
eponymous heroine of the short story “Ponnuthai” is also abandoned by her husband 
callously. Not withstanding the brutal behaviour of the men on their wives, Bama decides 
to remain single in her life. She cites many examples to show that women are either 
neglected totally, or ill treated daily. The husbands use violence and intimidation to 
ascertain their supremacy over the wives. Bama, being an enlightened woman, does not 
care to follow the tradition-bound ideology of her fellow women. She chooses to differ 
from the existing dalit and Indian social mores. Indeed, resisting patriarchal control by 
refusing to take up the role as wife is a way of asserting one’s individuality. However, the 
dalit community and the Indian society never approve of the status of a single woman,
despite the self-assured or empowered status of the woman. Bama wishes to create awareness among the women about the troubled marriages. She disapproves of the anti-feministic voices that suppress woman to the core in SI. “We must give up the belief that a married life of complete service to a man is our only fate. We must change this attitude that if married life turns out to be a perpetual hell, we must still grit our teeth and endure it for a life time” (123).

However, in the midst of their desert like life, there are some oases, which have comforting characteristics that aid the miserable women to come out of their adversities to some extent. The first feature is the exceptional use of oral tradition of African-American and Indian custom that innately offers solace to the victims’ hearts. For all occasions, happy or sad, melancholic or moody, dejection or delight, for all emotions, Morrison and Bama make use of songs.

The second optimistic aspect that bridges the space between the black and the dalit women is the inevitable presence of a powerful matriarch in the works of both the writers. Black mamma figure is a customary image even in the works of white writers. Morrison excels in employing the matriarchal mamma characters amidst the patriarchal supremacy of the society. The matriarchs, in fact, are wise enough to guide the younger generation with the experiences they had gained in their life. They are the guiding-spirits for the whole community. Eva in Sula is such a powerful matriarch, who with firm determination can even eliminate her son Plum by burning him alive. She is “like a giant heron, so graceful sailing about in its own habitat but awkward and comical when it folded its wings and tried to walk” (46). She is, in a sense, a martyr who spares her leg for the sake of family. She liberates her son from the futile life he leads. She justifies her act because he is worthless to live and “Boys is hard to bear” (71). In the last part of the
novel, she enlightens Nel about the crime she had done with Sula. In TBE, the great aunt Jimmy of Cholly is a matriarch who collects the four-days-old-baby Cholly wrapped in two blankets and newspaper, and placed on a junk heap by the railroad by its mother. She raises Cholly up, and she has many mamma friends who take care of her at her deathbed. All the fellow mammas sit near Aunt Jimmy waiting for her death. The mammas are described as “they had given over the lives of their own children and tendered their grandchildren…. They were, in fact and at last, free. And the lives of these old black women were synthesized in their eyes – a puree of tragedy and humour, wickedness and serenity, truth and fantasy” (110).

In SOS, Circe is the absolute matriarch who has been guiding the orphans Macon Dead and Pilate when they were in their childhood days. Later, when Milkman, the son of Macon Dead meets her to know about her ancestors, she shares with him all the possible information. Milkman develops a respect and regard for her as he thinks, “the woman who had helped deliver his father and Pilate; who had risked her job, her life, may be, to hide them both after their father was killed, emptied their slop jars, brought them food at night and pans of water to wash”(246).

In TB, there are two types of mamma figures. Ondine is a refined black woman serving the elegant white people in Isle de Chevaliers. She guides her niece to be out of the dangerous nigger, Son. However, she disapproves of her master and his wife’s attitudes towards many matters of life. She strongly condemns Margaret for having ill-treated her son. She insists Jadine to fulfill her duties as a daughter. The other mamma in the novel is Therese who strongly believes in the existence of horseman in the island. She loathes all the modern black women who had forsaken their traditions. She calls Jadine “The chippy. The fast-ass” (107). She rigorously criticizes the way of life of American
women, their abortions, abandoning the babies, and so on. She is a typical mamma believing in the early traditions and conventions. Baby Suggs, the mother-in-law of Sethe in *BD*, Alice in *Jazz*, Connie in *PD*, and the character named L. in *Love* are all such matured women who with their wisdom could steer the life journey of the other characters.

Bama never camouflages the considerable presence of her *patti* in all her works. Though she is an old woman, she is known for her presence of mind, intelligence and acumen. She is so prudent and sharp that she could manage her life with no assistance from any men of the community. At the same time, she never antagonizes the patriarchs directly, though she does not approve of many of their malicious activities. *Patti* directs Bama and other young girls in many contexts. Bama also feels proud to discuss her *patti*’s feats in the patriarchal world. When *patti* was abandoned by her husband, she never felt depressed. She tried all the available chores, and turned out to be the breadwinner of her family. *Patti* saved the family from starvation by selling her *tali* when there was a terrible famine. *Patti* proves to be a pragmatist in her decisions always. She advises Bama on the matters of rape and other sexual abuses perpetrated by the upper caste men. *Patti* warns the young dalit girls not to go alone for gathering firewood, and advises them to go in groups. For the upper class men, the dalit girls are easy sexual preys.

*Patti*, in a way, advocates the age-old systems like not permitting the young women to go alone without the company of men. She insists that the women are very much vulnerable to the sexual abuses of other men. It would be better to be in the company of the dalit men. *Patti*’s practical wisdom saves many women from harm’s way. She tells

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1 *Tali* is a Tamil equivalent for *Mangalsutra*. Normally, it is a sacred intertwined threadworm as a symbol by married women. Sometimes, the *tali* is also made of gold depending upon the economic status of the family.
Bama “Whether it is right or wrong, it is better for women not to open their mouths. You just try speaking out about what you believe is right. You’ll only get kicked and beaten and trampled on for your pains...It’s the same throughout the world. Women are not given that kind of respect” (SI 29).

Like the black mammas, patti in Bama’s works has a major role to play. There are many such wise, elderly women who are referred to in Bama’s novels. In VM, Rosamma patti speaks of the problems of being the wives of dalit men. When the dalit men contemplate upon taking revenge, Rosamma advises them to get united. One of the short stories “Parivu” revolves around the judicious nature of Katayi patti. On the whole, these matriarchs have wider experience in all the matters and considerable wisdom embedded with skill and sharpness. They direct the youngsters on many occasions with their natural philosophy of survival in a patriarchal society.

The third positive feature is the presence of women-healers in both the cultures who with the lessons they have learnt from their wounds offer solace and comfort to the fellow victims. A strong woman–to–woman bonding is also to be observed among the women of Morrison and Bama. It is really noteworthy to mention the implausible good will and mercy of some women. Despite the physical and psychical scars they receive, the women help other women to retrieve their lost peace, reconstruct their lives, and relieve the pain of their struggle. In TBE, for Pecola, Claudia and Frieda offer a comforting friendship. Nel and Sula are real companions till death separates Sula from Nel in Sula.

Baby Suggs of BD is a ritual healer who takes all the victims to a place metaphorically named “Clearing”, and conducts a process of cleansing their mind so as to cure the body. Being a freed slave, after sixty years of slavery, Baby Suggs realizes the
necessity to assist the fellow victims to get back their peace of mind, at least free from the repressing past. Her compassion and humanitarianism result from her hardships for many years. The strength of Baby Suggs is in her constructive approach to life. While other slaves continue to wallow in traumatic memories, she courageously takes up the task of healing others. Like a cancer patient creating awareness about fighting cancer, Baby Suggs catalyzes the healing process to stimulate life. Despite all her bereavements – a slave woman with no husband, and lost all her children including Sethe’s husband Halle - she lives with no regrets and disorder. She helps her daughter-in-law by taking care of her wounded body and mind. She is the ray of hope for Sethe in the novel. Strange affinity is seen between the mother-in-law, Baby Suggs and the daughter-in-law, Sethe, with no man to support or protect them from the external and internal miseries. At the end of the novel, when Beloved threatens to kill Sethe, the women of neighbourhood, thirty women, come to her rescue. The women pray on knees to save Sethe from the ghost. The same women who were showing hatred towards Sethe for a long period for her infanticide now strive to liberate her from the treacherous hold of the young ghost.

Pilate in SOS is a woman of comfort to Ruth. When Ruth is severely trampled by her husband, Pilate, the sister-in-law of Ruth, helps her to come out of her pain. Pilate helps Ruth to conceive a baby, and safeguards her till the baby is born. When Macon Dead kicks on the abdomen of Ruth, she comes running to Pilate for help. “Ruth let Pilate lead her into the bedroom, where the woman wrapped her in a homemade-on-the-spot-girdle-tight in the crotch-and told her to keep it until the fourth month”(132). For Ruth, Pilate is the guide, counsellor, saviour, and the protector who could wipe out her sorrows in a natural and affectionate way. Both the women stand together hand-in-hand to oppose the male chauvinistic dominance of Macon Dead. At this juncture, it is necessary to make the
observation that Pilate is the sister-in-law to Ruth, and Baby Suggs is the mother-in-law to Sethe.

Alice Manfred in Jazz offers succour to Violet Trace, the wife of Joe Trace. Alice is aware that Joe is the murderer of her niece, Dorcas, and Violet also has tried to wound the corpse out of her jealousy. Nevertheless, as a woman, she could understand the crisis of a woman like Violet who suffers psychologically at the hand of a patriarch. Alice sympathizes with her, while others fear to get in touch with her. Alice is the sustaining force for Violet. Alice asks:

“At first I thought you came to harm me. Then I thought you wanted to offer condolences. Then I thought you wanted to thank me for not calling the law. But none of that is it, is it?”

“I had to sit down somewhere. I thought I could do it here. That you would let me and you did.” (82).

The trust that Violet has on Alice is a kind of binding factor in the novel. When Violet Trace does not get any response and recognition either from her husband or from any of her relatives, she finds comfort in Alice. Though not a blood relative, Alice never lets Violet down. The soothing words of Alice have a healing effect upon the psychologically troubled Violet.

Connie, the fifty-two-year-old nun in PD, adopts “loud dreaming” (264) to heal the women who suffer from acute mental distress. She makes the entire women step into the fantasy world of dreams. Seneca, Pallas, Gigi, and Mavis remain naked and unspeaking enjoying the open-eyed-dreams in the candlelight. It is equivalent to the escapist ideology of the romantics from the crude realities of life. These women enter a new realm of ecstasy with the assistance of Connie. They could live like water bodies, kicking their
legs underwater, among the scented cathedrals made of gold and so on. "With Consolata
in charge, like a new and revised Reverend Mother, feeding them bloodless food and
water alone to quench their thirst, they altered."(265). The entire set of women appear to
be so consoling and comforting to each other that they try to rejuvenate their inner selves
from the past injuries. In Love, Heed and Christine, though waiting for each other's
collapse to obtain the wealth of Bill Cosey, innately contain the bond that they had as
friends in their childhood days.

In Bama's novels, Bama is frequently guided and counselled by her grandmother. The
neighbouring women also propose suggestions to some problems of life in the dalit
community. Bama, being a humanitarian, is sensitive about the difficulties of other
women. She consoles Mariamma who is the prey of male-abuse and false-accusation and
asks for justice in her matter. She is a soul of comfort to Maikanni, the desolate young
girl. She pities the girl's hard work to save her family from poverty. She encourages the
girl to share all her problems with her. Bama advocates inter-caste marriages between
palla and paraya. She strongly opposes the men who beat their women for their personal
faults. In fact, Bama is a comforting woman to her community. By speaking out
courageously the problems of women, she becomes the voice of the suffering women of
her community.

Amidst the harassment and betrayal, the presence of compassionate, merciful and
protective men bring immense solace to women who otherwise become victims of life
itself. Paul D in BD is endowed with tender-heartedness, and he is caring towards his
former companion, Sethe. He is a middle-aged man who had endured the utmost
hardships of life as a slave. He instantaneously understands the pain of a slave woman
haunted by her baby ghost. With his manhood, strength and perseverance, he could
exorcize the ghost even from the time he starts dwelling in the house. He, perhaps, brings Sethe back to normalcy by re-living their experiences of the past life in "Sweet Home".

With great compassion, Paul D heals the physical pain of Sethe. He "held her breasts in the palms of his hands. He rubbed his cheek on her back and learned that way her sorrow, the roots of it; its wide trunk and intricate branches" (17). Sethe is not a sexual object for Paul D. His caressing activities rejuvenate Sethe from her repressed memories, and she understands "ever-ready love she saw in his eyes" (161). Finally, when Sethe is almost sinking under the clutches of the omnipotent and haunting ghost of Beloved, it is Paul D who courageously fights, and restores her. He is a counsellor and healer to Sethe, and the novel ends up in the comforting words of Paul D, "Sethe," he says, "me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow." He leans over and takes her hand. With the other he touches her face. "You your best thing, Sethe. You are." His holding fingers are holding hers (273). It is evident that the presence of the benevolent men facilitates the women to emancipate from their debased surrounding.

Halle, the husband of Sethe is also "more like a brother than a husband" (25). He craves for the freedom of his mother Baby Suggs, and ultimately accomplishes it by buying freedom for her. Baby Suggs deifies her son, and feels proud of having such a son. "A man ain't nothing but a man," said Baby Suggs. "But a son? Well now, that's somebody." (23). It is a heartrending fact that in a male-dominated society, a mother could entrust her son more than her any other men.

While the husbands like Cholly in TBE, Jude in Sula, Macon Dead in SOS, and Joe Trace in Jazz disregard their spouses, it is highly commendable to notice the deference Sydney recommends to his wife Ondine in TB. When they are celebrating the Christmas Eve with all the members at the feast, the heated argument about Margaret’s abuses of
her son ruins everything. In the turmoil, Valerian, the white master insults Ondine. At once, Sydney is incensed, and warns, “Mr. Street,” said Sydney, “my wife is as important to me as yours is to you and should have the same respect.” (208)

Romen and Sandler in Love are the good examples of men with proper understanding of women. They are undeniably the absolute models of men. Romen, though only a teenager has a better understanding of the old women employers. His grandfather Sandler is the ideal husband to his wife Vida. Sandler advises his grandson as:

“A woman is an important somebody and sometimes you win the triple crown: good food, good sex, and good talk. Most men settle for anyone, happy as a clam if they get two. But listen, let me tell you something. A good man is a good thing, but there is nothing in the world better than a good woman. She can be your mother, your wife, your girlfriend, your sister, or somebody you work next to. Don’t matter. You find one, stay there” (181).

Sandler’s attitude towards women palpably depicts the transformational standpoints of men. More than being an object of sexual desire, Sandler considers that a woman has a definite role to play in the life of a man. He puts across his stances to his grandson too.

Bama always refers to her brother in many contexts of the novels SI and KU as her guiding spirit. Through her description of her brother, it is evident that he is an insightful person with remarkable alertness about their status as dalits. Bama overtly admits her ignorance about untouchability, when she was a little girl. She comes across an incident where a dalit man carries the eatable so carefully by holding its string that even the wrapper is not touched by any chance. The eatable is meant for the upper class man. Bama is amused by the way the man carried the parcel and she narrates the incident to her annan (brother) with laughter. Just then her brother enlightens her about the social
evil that presses them heavily like a huge load. “He said everybody believed that Naickers were upper caste, and therefore must not touch Parayas. If they did, they would be polluted” (13). In a way, her brother places the spark in her mind about the maltreatment. Her brother is a role model for Bama as he does not conceal his identity as a dalit and does not feel ashamed too.

Bama’s brother is an educated man and perhaps he is the one who has sowed the seed for good education in the mind of Bama. When he comes to his native place during vacation, he visits the village library. On his way back home, an upper class man enquires about his address, and with no hesitation her brother says, “I’m a Paraya from the Cheri street” (KU 15). In the library also, the librarian offers him a seat, as he seems to be a refined person. Bama is proud to speak about her brother and she really adores him for his superior qualities. Apparently, by the advice offered by her brother, she resorts to education to come out of her identity as a dalit woman.

In one of the short stories titled “Those days”, when a dalit girl is raped by an upper class man, all the dalit men come to her rescue by tying the rapist to the fig tree. The dalit men ask for justice and life for the victim. They insist on the upper caste rapist to marry her. However, the victim does not approve of the life-long punishment of marrying a brute, and so the men demand two acres of land for the girl. It is an honourable compensation for the affected woman. Nevertheless, it becomes viable only with the espousal of the men.

The treatment of myth is very common among the women writers. Their abundant application of folktales, national, regional myths, and stories from the real life add flavour to the themes, and emphasize the reconstruction of female subjectivity and subjugation. At the outset, the Song of Solomon myth clearly indicates the exceptional
quality of the slaves to fly back to their country. The protagonist Milkman is exhilarated by knowing the truth that his great grand father could fly. But, the inherent layer of meaning exposes the helpless and pitiful status of women slaves. If the men could fly, they did not bother to take the women also. The self-centred action of the men slaves perpetuates women’s slavery. When the line of the song-tale “O Solomon don’t leave me here” (SOS 300) recurs, it naturally reminds Milkman of his meanness and mercilessness towards Hagar. It is quite undemanding for men to leave women at any point of time in their life. He analyses that “he had used her – her love, her craziness – and most of all he had used her skulking, bitter vengeance...he had the power to drive a woman out of her mind, to destroy her”(SOS 301). Though the song focuses the greatness of the African slaves, the pathetic condition of the women slaves left behind by their men is absolutely visible.

In TB, Morrison makes use of the myth of Tar Baby that is used to ensnare the rabbits in the agricultural fields. Jadine is the Tar Baby in the novel who is rendered as a follower of white culture, and tries to attract Son towards this culture. Son accuses her many times for her love towards the fashionable, sophisticated white culture. Jadine perhaps finds it more inconvenient to fit herself in to the African – American culture of Eloé, which is highly oppressive and tormenting. Her outward inclination towards white ideology and the primitive impressions of black culture in her blood results in her nightmares and psychical turmoil. The Tar Baby myth is altered here. The Tar Baby herself is oscillating between the old and the new. Finally, Jadine is so determined to leave even her aunt and uncle for Paris.

In BD, Morrison uses the real story of a runaway slave Margaret Garner. When the slave owner chases to catch the escaped slaves, the woman attempts to kill her four
children, resulting in the murder of one child. History really forgets such insignificant murders easily. But writers like Morrison imagine how it will be if the dead child comes back in the form of mortals. The girl Beloved is the outcome of such an imagination. Killing the infants for political causes was very common among the kings and emperors in the early stages of human history. According to the Biblical story, king Herod was said to have ordered the slaughter of the innocent children below the age of two across Judea, when he heard of the birth of Christ. Likewise, in the story of king Kamsa as narrated in the epic Mahabharata, he mercilessly passed out an order to his soldiers to kill all the innocent children around the country Madura, when he heard of the birth of Krishna. Men did not seem to have the culpability and remorse for the murders they had been committing. However, women like Margaret Garner and Sethe are often regarded to be the epitome of disastrous mothers.

There are a few differences noticed between the women of Morrison and Bama. Basically, there are the difference of culture, social milieu and systems. Morrison’s women do not face religion sanctioned discriminatory status like caste and untouchability like the women of Bama. While the women of Bama suffer from untouchability, the women of Morrison tend to wriggle out of slavery. Bama has been following the social systems of marriage, life after marriage, the expectations of the society and getting separated from the spouse of the Indian tradition. That there is a wide difference between western and eastern cultures is reflected upon the lives of the women of both the writers. The women of Morrison seem to have been selected from the affluent families of the society, except for the first novel TBE. Sula, Nel, Ruth, Pilate, Jadine, Ondine, Sethe, Violet, Alice, Dorcas, the convent women, Heed, and Christine do not appear to have been suffering from the clutches of economic necessity. Indeed, Ruth is the daughter of a
Black doctor and Heed is the wife of a wealthy resort owner. But Bama's women do not belong to affluent and educated families. Bama herself is highly criticized for her education and her economic freedom.

Marriage and the dependency upon a man are social necessities in Indian society whereas in Morrison's world it is not a mandatory one. Sula has the authority to involve herself in as many affairs as she can with no intentions of marriage. In SOS, Macon Dead does not bother to get his daughters Magdalene called Lena and First Corinthians married to some men. However, according to the norms of the Indian society, Bama cannot afford to remain single. Furthermore, the backdrop of Morrison is a developed nation, where women had already moved towards the "Female phase" of Elaine Showalter. It is not uncommon that the black women have the autonomy to discuss their amorous and erotic feelings at any context. It is highly impossible for most Indian women, especially the dalit women. It is undoubtedly discernible in the works of Bama that the women do not discuss their desires, carnal delights, or personal sexual abuses. Milkman's disregard for his wife Ruth's corporal rights, Violet's longing to be loved by her husband, and Connie's sudden affair with a highwayman are some examples of the revelatory narration of Morrison on the intimate passions of the women. Bama's characters, being Indian women in nature, lack outspokenness, and are described to possess coyness and timidity.

The women of Morrison and Bama tend to evolve themselves into ordinary human beings, not swiftly, but gradually. There is a measured evolution of the women in the novels. Though the women could not attain a noble status as the other women do, there is an assured progression, towards a liberated life free of shackles. The most important aspect of all is that the evolution begins in the attitude and the mindset of the black and
the dalit women. The evolution of the women in a subtle way essentially proves the changing trend from the negative side to the positive in both the societies. The progressive evolution is applicable both to the characters as well as to the writers.

In the first novel of Morrison, TBE, the female protagonist Pecola is so fragile, fickle-minded, and vulnerable to the injustices done to her. Her longing to get blue eyes makes her all the more abject and desolate in the white society. The innocent girl plunges into madness, as she could not tolerate the physical and psychical ordeal inflicted upon her. In her madness, she is natural, thinking that God has granted her wish for Blues eyes. When the eleven-year-old Heed in the eighth novel of Morrison Love, is considered, it is evident that she confronts almost the same destiny of Pecola, even more than that. She, in her childhood, without any idea about sexual life is obliged to get married to a grand father figure Bill Cosey, who is fifty-two-year-old. But when the fragility of Pecola is compared with Heed, there is a remarkable evolution. Heed does not become mad, despite the damages and wrongs done to her. She fights for her property even after the death of her husband Bill Cosey. Heed can be identified as the better version of Pecola.

When the spouses overlook the women, there happens a considerable damage to the woman as well as the family. In the case of Pauline in TBE, the daughter becomes the object of hatred for Pauline as her drunkard husband neglects her. The problem leads to the tragic despair of the daughter Pecola. Same destiny is meant for Ruth in SOS and Violet Trace in Jazz. Surprisingly, these women discover some channel through which they can ignore their worries. While Pauline implicitly spoils the life of her daughter, Ruth finds solace in nursing her son Milkman. Violet Trace enjoys the company of caged birds, though she is much aware that she is also a caged bird. Additionally, she sleeps with a doll in her hand to disregard her pain of being neglected.
In Bama, the evolution is more tremendous and outstanding. Bama’s projection of her self is a great deal in her first autobiographical novel KU. The agony of being born a dalit woman and the acuteness of untouchability been discussed threadbare the novel. The tone is so disgusting and abhorring as if the whole world were to be reproached for her predicament. Bama had vigorously criticized all sections of the society – the working spot, education, community, religion, and even the members of her family. The novel, truly, illustrates the disoriented and bewildered state of Bama as a miserable woman of low caste confined within the four walls. Bama’s contribution in her first novel has a tremendous effect upon the life of her fellow dalit women. Though she asserts that she has written the story of her self, the novel actually echoes the voices of many voiceless dalit women. In this sense, “Bama’s constant movement from the individual to the collective suggest that Karukku is less an autobiography than a collective biography”.

In her second novel, SI, Bama ruptures her shell and moves out to argue the crises of all the women of her community. She points an accusing finger daringly at each and every patriarch who exploits the ignorance and debility of the dalit women. Frequently, she raises many queries to her patti about the tyrannical patriarchal structure and is genuinely shocked to see the conservative reaction of the distressed women. It is through the novel SI, she stakes her claim as a staunch advocate of the rights of dalit women.

In her third novel VM, she leaps one step further to discuss the problems of dalit men. The whole novel is about the inconsistency among the men of dalit community. She discusses the corollaries of the disharmonious relationship between the pallas and parayus, the two sub-sects of the dalit community. She delves deep in to male psyches too through the men characters of the novel, and vividly expresses the adversities women deal with because of the men. Further evolution is to be observed in the short stories of
Bama, where she highlights the social evils like female infanticide, child labour, dowry, and other such mishaps that women face every day. While progressing through the novels of Bama, it is evident that Bama evolves from a gullible state to the state of a social activist.

Despite the implicit and explicit ranges of the two women writers taken for study, it can be declared with no doubt that the African American and Dalit literatures are soaring towards greater heights. Morrison and Bama, with their competence as writers, have exploited in their literary works the angst that women undergo in the parochial society. It is inferred that the nature of problem that women confront may vary from time to time down the ages. However, the subjugation still persists. While women could trounce the domestic and economic devils, they find that they need to fight a long battle against cultural and religious oppressions. Assuming that they could somehow overcome them someday, they may still be trapped in physical and psychical problems. Morrison commences from the poverty-stricken Pauline Cholly Breedlove in TBE, moves on to the well behaved, yet defeated Nel and freaky Sula in the novel Sula, and focuses upon the prosperous black woman Ruth in SOS with other distortions. The fashionable Paris model Jadine does not confront the economic crisis or poverty that crumples Pecola and Pauline to the extreme. But Jadine is also not free from oppression. The dimension of Jadine’s subjugation is viewed from a totally different angle. Albeit the alchemy of racism in BD, Morrison’s focal point critically falls upon the atonement and obsessions of a persecuted mother. Jazz readily deals with the emotional distance and separation of a middle-aged black couple that leads to the violent behaviour of the wife. The next two novels PD and Love deliberate upon the advanced and complex injustices done to women
under the veil of patriarchy, more on psychological planes rather than the ones discussed in the earlier novels of Morrison.

If the threat of being slaves in the white dominated country is the only acute menace for the African-Americans, then it can be declared that in the current era, it has almost been eradicated. But Morrison warns of the other hazards among the African-American race in **SOS**:

They believed firmly that members of their own race killed one another for good reasons: violation of another’s turf (a man is found with somebody else’s wife); refusal to observe the laws of hospitality (a man reaches into his friend’s pot of mustards and snatches out the meat); or verbal insults impugning their virility, honesty, humanity and mental health. More important, they believed the crimes they committed were legitimate because they were committed in the heat of passion, anger, jealousy, loss of face, and so on (100).

It is much clear that the lack of many basic qualities of being humans is also one of the causes for the sub-standard status of the African-Americans in general and the women in specific. When the subjugated people acquire superior qualities, and unlearn the unruliness, there may be chance of empowerment.

Bama also points out at the lack of unity among the dalits that leads to the deterioration of the whole community. When men have vengeance and prejudices among them, there will not a chance for the women the live a peaceful life. They have to continue with the same in their lives too. With this point in mind, Bama writes in **VM**:

“Only time can heal the wounds, they said, and lived to gather in mutual tolerance and friendship... Let the coming generations at least live without quarrels and fights, riots and vendettas. Let them get along with one another.... As for the future... along with the hope
there also lurks the old fear. (135)

Unlike Morrison’s progression towards the most recent issues of women, Bama is still groping with the fundamental forms of subjugations. Social evils, economic shackles, cultural dominance, and religious inflexibility are the most discussed themes in the novels. There is no much scope for the reflection upon psychic disorders and deformations of women except for the documentation of a few cases of the so-called evil-possessed women. The cause may be that the society to which Bama’s women belong might not have come out of the basic problems. Poverty and ignorance are still to be removed from many of the communities in India. No wonder why Bama’s women have not progressed into discussing advanced levels of suppressions of mind. They are yet to come out of their fundamental setbacks.

There are some probable and practical solutions for the problems faced by the African-American and Dalit women. Perhaps, the solution to the problems lies in humanism that is the central concept of Indian feminism. When men can identify and address the despondency of women, humanism springs there. When the society is directed by man-made rules, it is again the role of man to break the oppressive structures. Today untouchability is a cognisable offence, and the Indian law protects the dalits from being ill-treated or exploited by the upper class. There is a positive discrimination in favour of the dalits, which finds the government apportioning certain number of seats in institutions of higher education and in jobs exclusively for the Dalits. Thus the flower of humanism has unfolded its merciful petals to safeguard the interests of the downtrodden people. In the case of the African-Americans, equal opportunities have liberated thousands from grinding poverty, and social security measures have assured them of jobs whether they are welfare politics or workfare politics.
Education and the elimination of ignorance among the dalit women are indispensable for their upward mobility. Many dalit women are not even aware of the injustices practiced upon them, as they are not exposed to education. Bama, being an educated woman strongly insists upon the importance of education for the women in her novel KU. When she gets distinction in the class, all her classmates praise her and befriend her. Bama says that if a woman gets proper education, she can transform herself as well as the society too. That transcendent mindset is essential for female solidarity. Following the ideology of the dominant class or withdrawing totally from the main stream of the society may result in the infliction of more prejudices upon the women. Bama’s women never forget that they are untouchables. Every moment they carry with them the belief that the upper class people are their idols to be worshipped. The ignorance, in a way, helps the upper class people to dominate them with their consent. Mirialini Sebastian posits the future of the dalits to be:

Indefatigable spirit of struggle from within the dalits and unprecedented solidarity on the part of the political, social and religious organizations can dismantle the prevailing oppressive structure and humanize the society. Any religion engulfed and entangled with barriers and boundaries is essentially an irrelevant religion. Religion, must, above all, evoke the Divine in human, whether ‘touchable’ or ‘untouchable’. The dalit cry is a divine call to which all religions must respond creatively and courageously.²

The African-Americans have long shed their belief in the superiority of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) and the Whites as the norm for cultural standards and instead have evolved their own standards and personal merits. Such an attitude saw General Colin Powell becoming the first black Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and
the first black to become the secretary of state. It was well followed by Condeleeza Rice, the first African-American woman to become the Secretary of State. Toni Morrison herself went on to become the first African-American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Again Barack Obama has done the impossible by becoming the President of the United States of America. But such personal achievements still elude the Dalits of India.

The research work has been undertaken on the grounds to represent the suppressing environment the women of African-American society and the dalit community. The purpose is to introduce the plight of the dalit women to the African-American women, and the African-Americans to the dalits. Further, the study aimed at placing a minority writer like Bama in the global scenario to expose the unnoticed pain of such writers and the community behind them. Toni Morrison, no doubt, is a literary giant who has been celebrated and well acclaimed even by the Americans for that matter. Nobel Prize is really a crown not only for Toni Morrison, but also for the whole African-American community. However, in the case of Bama, she is severely condemned and criticized for her overt discussions of the injustices.

Keeping in mind the prospects of extending the present study in the near future with multidimensional perspectives, the following scopes are suggested:

- More comparative studies should be encouraged with special focus upon the downtrodden women of both the western and the eastern societies. Such studies might bring out the authentic apprehensions of the marginalized women. Comparative studies of this sort will surely promote the collective raising of the voices of the women against any injustices done on them. When the sufferings of
minority women are brought to light, it may be alleviated with the help of other women.

- Any literature of a society may reflect the existing situation of the life of the people. In such case, the dalit writers really reflect the morbid atmosphere of the society where thy live in. However, there are only fewer women writers to be found in Tamil Dalit writing. The reason might be that nobody pays attention to such marginalized literature in the society. So, promoting more researches on the dalit writings of women will inevitably persuade them to contribute more to Dalit literature.

- More researches could be done on the suppressed voices of the oppressed people that include men too. There are lots of areas to be scrutinized with regard to the oppression of the men in a caste-dominant society like India.

- The new dimensions, themes, and techniques expressed in the works of modern black writers could be compared with the first generation writers of the African-American community. It is a well-known factor that the problems Zora Neale Hurston discussed in her novels may not be the problems that Toni Morrison has discussed in her works. Since time keeps on changing, and the social evils being dynamic, there is a possibility of coming across strange issues in the novels of the modern writers. Such things may be taken for research work.

- Since the modern African-American writers focus more upon the psychological issues of women, more researches based on the current psychological theories could be selected.

- The language usage of the Tamil dalits is another significant area on which more research works should be promoted. On the AAVE spoken in America, it can be
observed that there had been tremendous contribution by many linguists of the world. However, there is only less number of books on the non-standard variety of the dalits. Linguists who are interested in this area may take up the research.

➢ Bama's novels were originally written in Tamil, and had been translated into English. No doubt, translation only will promote such regional literatures into world focus. So, more researches on regional literatures of India, and the literatures in translation could be taken up.

To conclude the research work, it would be apt to arrive at the same conclusion of Sharan Kumar Limbale, when he makes an attempt to compare both African-American and dalit literatures as a whole:

The comparison of these two literatures leads to the following conclusions. Firstly, African American and dalit writers are searching for self-identity. Secondly, the experiences narrated in both the literatures are based on inequality, and have been drawn from social life. Thirdly, insofar as African American and dalit writers write out their social commitment, both literatures are self-affirming. Fourthly, the language of both literatures is the language of cultural revolution. And finally, there is a search for new cultural values in both literatures.³
Notes

