

**Abstract:** *The theories of feminism have global implications for the due rights of the female gender. Women are exterminated from political, economic, and social circles of life based on gender and they lack opportunities as well. This study aims to analyze James Joyce's The Boarding House against the backdrop of feminism. Joyce points out the sufferings and oppression of women in the male dominant society. Mrs Mooney is the protagonist of the story. Initially, she suffers because of her gender but later on, she achieves independence and emancipation from male dominance. Thus the character of Mrs Mooney truly depicts the essence of feminism in the story. Similarly, the character Polly faces gender-based discrimination. This study analyzes the sufferings, subjugation, and oppression of women and recommends ways to abolish gender inequality. This study also calls for the emancipation of women and suggests ways to liberate them from patriarchy.*

**Key Words:** Feminist, James Joyce, Gender, The Boarding House

## Introduction

Literary works are created by people to express their feelings, ideas, and thoughts. Literary works and literature have remarkable influences on society. Literature is capable of making and changing the social construction of society. Literature enables humans to change their perspectives as well. Literature paves way for enlightenment, intellectual movements, entertainment, and cultural manifestations. Literary works can also integrate humans.

One such literary work is the advocacy of women's rights or feminism. Historically, the status of women in society has never been equal to men. Globally, the role and status of women have expanded after the introduction of feminist theories and movements. Before the advent of feminism, they were denied several rights. For instance, the right to own property, reproductive rights, social rights, and the right to vote. Despite major advancements in the current age of enlightenment, there is still a huge gap between the two genders. The contrasting difference is a testimony to the disparity between genders. Women have to face a lot of hardships in different aspects of life. They are denied equal rights because

they are not considered equal humans to men. The power and rights only belong to men.

In several cultures about which we know, women are given a lower status, they are humans but not enough as men are; not intelligent or wise like men; and they lack most of the accolades which are sufficiently found in men. (Montagu 1953). Women face inequality and discrimination because of the tight hold of patriarchy in society. Patriarchy gives power, wealth, and authority to men. Everything revolves around men in the system of patriarchy. In this way, power and authority rest with men.

Patriarchy is a term meaning authority of men i.e., the father. Patriarchy is a norm, which may be cultural or ideological, which favours the masculine gender only it also exists in the political sphere of life which gives unlimited power to men and it prioritizes the interests of men over women. (Madsen 2000). In different regions and cultures, men are dominant over women. Women are restricted by the social composition and structure of society which says men are superior to women. They are not allowed to pursue their interests because men possess the power to subjugate women. This leads to enormous suffering for the female gender in comparison to the

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male gender. Massive inequality, oppression, and sufferings of women compel feminists to respond to the grave situation. Feminism strives to study the oppression of women in different aspects of life; they face discrimination based on class, colour, creed, gender, and sexual orientation. Feminism not only seeks to identify the sufferings of women but also demands to change them. Feminism depicts the importance of the female gender and educates people about the sufferings and struggles of females. Patriarchy is the system in which women are oppressed the most. (Humm 1990).

Several writers penned down the sufferings of women in their writings. They showed the world how women are deprived of the basic facilities of life. For instance, Nadia Hashimi writes about the suffering of women in Afghanistan in her novel *The Pearl that Broke Its Shell* (Hashimi 2014). It is comical, Rahimia, how are you so brave? Parwin asked Rahimia and mocks her by saying that she will see her bravery once their father comes home. She was not brave enough to face her father and she remained silent in front of her (Hashimi 2014). This example shows that the character "Rahimia" is unable to speak in front of her father about the decisions of her own life. She is at the mercy of her father's decisions because patriarchy gives absolute power to him. She does what her father decides for her. Nadia Hashimi presents a fine picture of the miseries of women around the globe in the character of "Rahimia".

The writers not only identified the oppression and sufferings of the females on the bases of gender but also recommended ways to end the inequality through brave characters in their novels and stories etc. For instance, in the novel, *The Color Purple* (Alice Walker 1982), the leading character, Celie, initially remains under the subjugation of her stepfather, and then she suffers at the hands of her husband. But after her liberation and emancipation from the chains of the patriarchy, she could call him by his real name Albert. The day she liberates from the patriarchal influence, she faces her husband in the presence of female spectators for the first time in her life. She openly tells about the role of Albert and his son in subjugating her and other women. In the same context of feminism, *The Boarding House* (1914), is a short story written by James Joyce. He conveys the slogan and message of feminism in *Eveline* (1904). The sense of patriarchy and its operating way can be seen in these stories by James Joyce.

*The Boarding House* written by James Joyce is a social story. The protagonist of the story, Mrs Mooney is born to a butcher father. She marries a

drunken husband on the advice of her father but soon separates from him. She establishes a boarding house to earn her livelihood. She is the mother of a son, Jack, and a daughter, Polly. In the boarding house, many tourists, workers, artists, and clerks of the city stay. Mrs Mooney is an independent and confident lady who runs her business effectively and is called "The Madam" by the lodgers. Polly would work in an office but upon her mother's advice, she leaves the job and stays at home because Mrs Mooney's ex-husband wants to meet Polly. Now, the young lady is surrounded by many lads. As a result, she begins to be in a relationship with one of the lodgers, Mr Doran. Mrs Mooney is well aware of the relationship and keeps a vigilant eye on them. Polly wants her mother to intervene, but Mrs Mooney waits for the right moment.

One day, Mrs Mooney asks her daughter about the relationship. Polly rushes to Mr Doran's room to inform him that their secret is being opened. It leaves him flabbergasted because he doesn't want to marry her. Mr Doran thinks that Polly is not educated enough and she is a butcher's daughter. And he belongs to a renowned family with a good job. According to Mr Doran, if he marries Polly, all his friends would mock him. Polly weeps at her helplessness but at the same time, Mrs Mooney called Mr Doran that she wants to meet him. During the meeting, Mrs Mooney convinces him to marry her daughter by using her wit. Mrs Mooney uses his society and religious devotion as a tool to convince him to marry her daughter. Ultimately, she succeeds in making him afraid of the church. He also fears losing his job, if he doesn't agree to tie the knot with her.

This research examines feminism in *The Boarding House* by James Joyce. The researchers aim to conduct this study in the light of feminism; how the female gender is relegated from the social, economic, and political spheres of life. Patriarchy places women under men in power, authority, and status. Although, men and women are equal humans their social existence makes one gender superior to the other. Men dominate women because of the enormous power and authority they possess. On several occasions, the males misuse their power and superiority to relegate women from their due position. In this regard, the theoretical foundations of feminism are applied by the researchers in *The Boarding House*.

Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), comments on the views of society about women and tries to motivate them to make their own decisions and not let society decide for them. And she is the first to write on the issues

of women. In the light of feminism, gender is the sole determiner in deciding all other realities of life. Feminism not only voices against gender discrimination but also recommends a concrete road map to erase the existing inequality. Hence, the emancipation of the female gender is possible by applying the relative theories of feminism.

The researcher aims to conduct this study through the prism of feminism. They intend to apply the selected theories of feminism in the story *The Boarding House*, and the purpose of this study is to look at how far women are subjugated on the bases of gender and how can the exploitation of women on the bases of gender be exterminated. The leading character of Mrs Mooney in the story *The Boarding House* perfectly portrays feminism. At first, she cannot even make her decisions and in the end, she liberates herself from her caged life according to the theories of feminism. The theories of feminism seek to abolish the subjugation, exploitation, oppression, and suffering of women and play an instrumental role in the emancipation of women.

Feminism is the belief in the equality of all genders in social, economic, and political spheres of life. Although, theories and movements of feminism originated in the western world but soon spread across the globe. It aims to change the social, economic, and political position of women. All feminists are agreed that women face social, economic, and political inequalities due to their biological difference from men. They all strive to challenge the existing norms of society. However, their way to challenge the existing system and bringing a notable change is different from each other and it gives birth to different types of feminism.

Feminists believe that gender is the key determiner of all other factors in defining one's self-respect and dignity. Men are only biologically different from women yet they possess all bounties of life, while women are living a slave's life in different circles of life. This forced different writers to present a grimy picture in their writings. This research is an attempt to focus on the women's gender as it is marginalized from society as manifested in the story *The Boarding House*. The oppressed life of the female gender in *The Boarding House* is vividly presented in this study.

This study manifests the women's subjugation and social upbringing of the female gender. Gender-based discrimination leads to the economic fragility of women and ultimately women are enslaved by men because of the power they possess. Men gain power with the fidelity of women but the same fidelity and loyalty yield in women's exploitation. This study is highly significant to manifest gender-based exploitation. In the story, Mr Doran attains

superiority over Polly because of her faithfulness but then he intends to treat her harshly. Theories of feminism can be effectively applied to this study as it raises a voice against the miseries of women and suggests a workable solution to abolish women's subjugation. Through theories of feminism, harmony can be created and through harmony, women can attain equality, independence, freedom, and emancipation.

This study's significance lies in the sense that it shows the divergence between men and women. It also opens various ways for females to raise their voices against gender discrimination and resist the patriarchal society. The work is significant in the way that it gives voice to the females and paves way for their empowerment. This research can also assist other researchers to apply feminism in literature-related research.

## Literature Review

### Review of Feminist Studies in the Boarding House

To conduct this research, the researchers use the previously conducted studies on the study *Boarding House*. These related researches aim to understand the fundamental and already available knowledge on the topic and to avoid similarities from other writers and researchers. The study titled, *A Feminist Approach to women characters in selected Irish Fiction* by Gabriela Holikova (2015). In her study, she writes about several selected Irish fiction including *The Boarding House*. The study analyzes the representation of women in selected Irish fiction. The study examines the protagonist as a woman and the difficulties of women are scrutinized in the light of feminism. The traditional role of women is investigated in the article. The article gives information about the author and the background of rural Irish society. However, this study does not state the confidence and strength that Mrs Mooney attains after getting emancipation.

Another study is a journal article written by Bridget Butler (2010) entitled *Feminism in the Boarding House*. In this article, Butler juxtaposes the male characters with each other and then compares the female characters with each other as well. This article is about the comparison of characters where the juxtaposition of mother and daughter is manifested in the article. The character of Mrs Mooney is compared with Polly. The writer precedes the article to compare the male characters of the story; Mrs Mooney's husband and Mr Doran. The article compares the differences and similarities between the two female characters. The strength of Mrs Mooney is compared with Polly's delicate behaviour. Similarly, the article manifests how Mrs

Mooney deals with her husband when he mistreats her, and her smart way of talking to Mr Doran is also explained in the article. The article is written from the perspective of feminism.

### **Review of the Related Theories of Feminism**

[Iqbal \[2020\]](#) conducted a feminist study entitled *AURAT MARCH: RELIGION AND FEMINISM IN PAKISTAN*. The study appreciates the global scope of feminism and expresses a modern idea of the postcolonial feminist movement called "Aurat March (women's March)" taking place in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This thesis also argues to create more space for the theoretical understanding of feminism in the religious and conservative society of Pakistan; thus, the phenomenon of feminism in Pakistan may be different from the western world. This research proves that the future of this movement is both revolutionary and progressive. The study is conducted through qualitative interviews with approximately half an hour time for each individual. This study concludes with the debates about contemporary women, Islam, and modern human rights against the backdrop of feminism. And finally, this research aspires to one demand i.e gender equality while showing the difference between the eastern and western feminism

[Anggawasita \[2010\]](#) analyzed the main character of the novel *Lucia, Lucia* [2003] in the backdrop of feminism entitled *An Analysis of The Main Character through Feminism Approach in the Novel Lucia, Lucia* by Adriana Trigiani. This thesis aims to depict the main character of the novel and the traits acquired by Lucia Sartori who is the protagonist of the novel and how Trigiani depicts feminism in the novel. The researcher uses the Feminist theory formulated by Sugihastut, Djajaneegara, and Suharto (2000) to find out the needed feminist approaches. The novel shows that women strive to earn equal status. The main character proves that she resists the patriarchy and wants to acquire good education and a respectful job with handsome pay. Consequently, the writer figured out the freedom, emancipation, independence education, and decisiveness of the leading character in the context of feminism.

[Naz et al. \[2014\]](#) conducted a study on the patriarchic and gender-based structure of the society in District Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan entitled *Social and Cultural Challenges to Women's Property and Inheritance: A Study of District Dir Lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*. The research study emphasizes learning about the challenges of the property and inheritance of women in District Dir Lower. In this research, the random sampling method was used with the division on the

bases of education and age. The study shows the ratio of male graduates at 4% and female graduates at 2%. In this study, all individuals are interviewed. The final data shows that women are deprived of their rights to property and inheritance due to cultural, social, and stereotyped reasons. The study concludes that culture is central to the lives of the members of the research areas. Culture overshadows all other circles of life. Most of the life codes of Pakhtuns and the organization of Pakhtunwali represent patriarchy, male dominancy, and gender-based discrimination.

[Salman et al. \[2013\]](#) explored the prominent areas in Islamic discourses in the study entitled, *Feminist Discourse Analysis in Islamic Feminism [2013]*, which are always criticized by top-notch feminists. This article elaborates on the Islamic picture of women's rights or Islamic feminism from the western perspective of feminism and also mediates the contrasting views of the two poles. The study suggests that a thorough understanding of Islamic feminism is necessary for all those who call themselves advocates of feminism. The debate also recommends the academic understanding of feminism more than fieldwork.

Langer 2001] emphasizes the downtrodden condition of working-class women in the mid of the nineteenth century. Because women back in the nineteenth century were sufferings from discrimination. The study analyzes the worst treatment of the familial and outdoor males with females. Even husbands cannot fulfil the rightful needs of their wives and forced women to earn a livelihood for themselves.

[Barlaas \[2020\]](#) explains feminism as the agent of change for all genders in the article entitled *new decade new feminism*. The article sheds light on the difference between all genders and calls for gender equality. Even the article emphasizes the discrimination of males based on the treatment of society. The article concludes in an optimistic way that gender discrimination should be exterminated in the going decade.

The Feminist Majority published an article on the plight of Afghan women entitled, *The Taliban and Afghan women [2010]*. This article shows the plight of Afghan women during the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. As they abandoned all women's rights, women were restricted from workplaces while schools, colleges, and universities were closed for girls. They also prohibited girls to go out of the home; forced them to wear Burqa (veil) and even prohibited lady doctors and nurses from practising. Before the regime, 50% of the students and 60% of the teachers at Kabul University were women and the regime vanished all women's rights. The article

shows that the Taliban regime violated Islamic laws about women's rights. The article proves that the Taliban regime was ignorant of Islamic feminism.

Bronte published *Jane Eyre* (1847) with her pen name cutter Bell. In that era, women were oppressed and they had no rights. Bronte created a unique character, Jane Eyre, who seeks dignity and self-respect. According to Jane, she is not a bird and no one can cage her. She is a free woman with free will. Jane is a strong and confident character and she matters throughout the novel. Her strength and confidence give her the courage to cope with all the harsh events in her life preparedly.

### Research Methodology

The present study is qualitative and based on a descriptive research design. According to renowned qualitative scholars, qualitative research intends to profoundly explore, learn and explain social phenomena in their natural setting. (Creswell 2002). Researchers can collect more information and better understanding the issues and events by using qualitative research. (Arora and Stoner).

This research is limited to textual analysis. It is a methodology that encompasses an understanding of language, symbols, or images given in the text to collect richer information. The Researchers choose textual analysis to conduct research by analyzing the text thoroughly. The researchers apply theories of feminism to analyze *The Boarding House*. Data related to feminism is collected from the story along with the data collected from other sources; past research thesis, the internet, books, and articles.

### Theoretical Framework

Feminism is the belief in the equality of men and women. It encompasses all circles of life; social, political, and economic. Feminism strives for the emancipation of women. Although, feminism arose in the western world in response to the traditions that were contrary to the freedom, independence, and free will of women feminist thought is spread all around the globe. Today, its scope and importance are globally known.

Christine de Pisan was one of the pioneers of women's rights who challenged the social norms and restrictions against women and pushed them for education (Pisan 1405). Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) comments on the views of society about women and motivates them to make their own decisions and not let society decide for them.

John Stuart Mill believed in the equality of both genders in his book *The Subjugation of Women*

(1869), he elaborates that women are lagging in three parts: society and gender, marriage, and education. Mary Daly was one of the unwavering advocates of feminism. She not only challenged the roles of gender but also resisted patriarchy in *The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978). She argues that men have always oppressed women throughout history and still oppressing them.

Engel says in his book *The Origin of the Family, Private property and the state* (1884) that the economic system shifted from feudalism to capitalism with the enslavement of women in the economic aspect women are as women are denied to access private property. Psychoanalytic feminists argue that women's oppression is deeply rooted within psychic structures and reinforced by the persistent repetition formed in childhood and infancy.

According to Firestone (1974) and Brownmiller (1976), patriarchy is more powerful than property. They believe that basic discrimination lies between genders and not between economic classes. Similarly, most feminists, especially radical feminists consider women a separate class. They differ from the fundamentalists and conservatives by not believing in the discourse that patriarchy is natural and has existed and will continue to exist.

### Waves of Feminism

The roots of feminism lie in ancient Greeks but the movement is recognized by three waves of feminism.

**The First Wave (1830- early 1900s):** The first wave focused on the promotion and struggle for equal contract and property rights of women.

**The Second Wave (1960-1980):** The second wave of feminism focused on the family, sexuality, workplace, and breeding rights of women. Besides, this wave also identified women's cultural and political inequalities.

**The Third Wave (1990-early 2000):** The third wave responded to the failures of the second wave. It examined issues related to women's lives on an international basis. This wave was more concerned about the acceptance and understanding of feminism.

**Fourth Wave:** Recently, a new wave is hitting feminism and it is introduced as the fourth wave. This new wave breaks the internet from time to time. Millions of women have shared and are sharing their harassment stories online with the particular hashtag #MeToo. In this regard, a great number of women seek political and leadership roles without

any discrimination. The fourth wave brought inequality into the public eye. Media and the internet play a pivotal role in highlighting the current issues of women.

## Discussion

This chapter discusses the story *The Boarding House* by James Joyce from a feminist perspective. This section is divided into two parts. The first part finds out the practice of oppression of women and the second part of the study shows the resistance of women against the oppression.

## Oppressions Experienced By Women

The world is always dominated by men in society. Women live in a patriarchal society, where women are under the authority of men. Women are not only dominated by close relatives: father, husband, brother, and son but are also subjugated by other men in society. Being superior, men easily dictate to women in all circumstances. Men hold power and authority to dominate women and women are not even able to take decisions in their interests. Females are oppressed by applying strict rules to them. James Joyce paints a true picture of the same plight of women in his story *The Boarding House*, where he writes that "She (Mrs. Mooney) was a woman who was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman. She had married her father's foreman (Joyce 1914)." Though she was a determined and talented woman still she was forced to marry her father's foreman because of the influence of the patriarchal society. She had to follow the existing rules of society, even though the rules were based on the principles of inequality. She is dictated by the authority of men in the male-dominated society. Hence, feminism rightly advocates the rights of women because women are not given equal rights in different walks of life.

In the male-dominated society, females have to face physical abuse from the opposite gender. They receive physical abuse from close relatives as well as from other men in society. They must obey the existential norms of the patriarchal society and are prohibited to speak against such abuses. They are thrashed out by the anger, misbehaviour, and maltreatment of men in the male-dominated society. In the story *The Boarding House*, James Joyce writes about such physical abuses at the beginning of the story. "By fighting his wife in the presence of customers and by buying bad meat he ruined his business. One night he went for his wife with the cleaver and she had to sleep at a neighbour's house (Joyce 1914)." Mrs Mooney has to face fighting with her husband in the presence of customers because

of the domination of men. Even her husband intimidates her with a cleaver and she is forced to sleep in a neighbour's house. Such practices are the results of a patriarchal society. Thus, feminism truly presents equality of genders because women are denied their fundamental rights.

Women are exploited sexually as well. They are at the mercy of men and are viewed only as a source of relaxation for men. Women are not seen as humans in the patriarchal society and they face discrimination when it comes to sexual affairs. They are exploited verbally as well as physically on multiple occasions. In the story, *The Boarding House*, James Joyce writes about Polly "Besides young men like to feel that there is a young woman (Polly) not very far away (Joyce 1914)." Polly faces discrimination because of her gender. Every young man living in the boarding house takes her as a young woman and not an equal human. Thus, she is deprived of the fundamental right of equality. All humans are equal regardless of gender but women face discrimination because of their gender. Therefore, feminism and advocacy of women's rights are necessary to recognize women as equal humans.

After the industrial revolution, women started working in different firms nationally and internationally, and it proved inevitably important for the financial boon and social growth of women as well as humans. However, neither they are given equal opportunities nor equal status in the patriarchal society at the workplace. Mostly, women work under the authority and will of men. They are not allowed to work freely by their close relatives as well. They feel suffocated at the workplace and are mostly forced to do domestic chores instead of working with dominant men. The story, *The Boarding House* speaks about such an incident. "Mrs Mooney had first sent her daughter to be a typist in a corn factor's office but, as a disreputable sheriff's man used to come every other day to the office, asking to be allowed to say a word to his daughter, she had taken her daughter home again and set her to do housework (Joyce 1914)." Mrs Mooney sends her daughter to work as a typist in an office but the influential sheriff's man would come every day to the office and ask her to allow her father to have a word with his daughter. Therefore, Mrs Mooney takes her back home and asks her to do domestic chores. Hence, feminists depict the grave situation of women's rights and they truly lament the sufferings of women in a male-dominated society.

Women grow up in a patriarchal society, where they are denied their basic rights to move freely and work independently. As a result, their growth is void of experience, which is highly essential to living a

blessed life. This leads to an increasingly restless class of the female gender growing bored. They are easily exploited socially, politically, economically, and sexually because of their inexperience. Men are well-versed in different sectors of life, while women lag in this race. Ultimately, they do not contribute to the healthy growth of society. James Joyce presents it perfectly in his story *The Boarding House*, "nor could ignorance be his excuse since he was a man who had seen something of the world. He had simply taken advantage of Polly's youth and inexperience: that was evident [Joyce 1914]." Mr Doran takes advantage of Polly's inexperience because she is naive to the social, economic, and sexual areas of life. She grows up in a cage, where she is not allowed to work and communicate outside her house. Consequently, she is at the mercy of Mr Doran's experience and she favours him at all costs. Therefore, feminism rightly appeals to much-needed equality on the bases of gender.

The financial abuse of women is multi-faceted and it impacts women from various angles. They are forced to concede to compensation if they are maltreated anywhere. It also sheds light on the authoritarian behaviour of males and how they compel women to give in to money rather than to self-respect and self-esteem. Women are financially fragile and socially recessive; thus, they cannot speak against the maltreatment of males. And to keep them silent forever, they are trapped in the trick of compensation. James Joyce in the story, *The Boarding House* writes, "Some mothers would be content to patch up such an affair for a sum of money; she had known cases of it [Joyce 1914]." He depicts the plight of suffering women they are not only maltreated and misbehaved but also forced to stay complacent with a patch-up for money. Similarly, James Joyce writes, "even his [Mr. Doran's] sense of honour told him that reparation must be made for such a sin [Joyce 1914]." Men even drop their self-respect in treating women viciously. Mr Doran was a religious man with great honour but he conceded to losing his self-respect for compensating Polly's mother for his sin. Hence, feminism deems the financial independence of women necessary for a balanced society, where reparation and compensation do not lead to the exploitation of women.

Men subordinate women, even in personal relations. They are treated as subordinates in love affairs and not as an equal partner. This practice takes women to threaten their self-worth in such affairs because of the patriarchal society. They are not only exposed to non-partners misbehaviours but also partner's maltreatment. They are emotionally

abused in personal relations and quite often their life is at the mercy of their partners. To please their partners, women ignore their personal life. James Joyce tells in *The Boarding House*, "She cried and threw her arms round his neck, saying: Bob! Bob! What am I to do? What am I to do at all? She would put an end to herself, she said [Joyce 1914]." It manifests the fact of how much women are suffered in personal relations and are not treated equally as they treat men. Often, they feel so suffocated that they attempt to put an end to their lives. They are equal children of God but they are treated as second-class children in the patriarchal society. Hence, it proves the fact about women's voice in the shape of feminism.

Women live dependent life because they are denied their basic rights in many spheres of life. Women are forced to live a slave life in many walks of life. Firstly, they are denied their rights and then they live a dependent life and this dependence proves detrimental to making healthier personal relations with a lover or a beloved one. James Joyce concludes his story *The Boarding House*, "At last she heard her mother calling. She started to her feet and ran to the bannisters.

"Polly! Polly!"

"Yes, mamma?"

"Come down, dear. Mr Doran wants to speak to you [Joyce]."

Then she remembered what she had been waiting for." James Joyce shows in the story how much dominant the males are and how subservient females are in a patriarchal society.

### Resistance of Women against Oppressions

The fundamental rights of women are breached and then they are silenced through force and intimidation. This practice is deep-rooted in society; however, women liberate themselves from these chains. Men dominate them in a patriarchal society but women are no more silenced through these acts. In The story, *The Boarding House*, Mrs Mooney is dominated by her drunkard husband but being a determined woman she learns about the fight for freedom and independence. Her struggle and resistance to liberate herself from the dominance of males are discussed here from a feminist perspective.

Women are resilient and brave enough to fight the imposed dominance of males upon them. Feminism advocates their right to equally participate in all walks of life and women have proved it right. Historically, they were deprived of the right of separation, if their marriage is not workable. But they

fight against it and their struggle is fruitful. Not only they can part ways with their partners but can also live a comfortable life without them. In the story, *The Boarding House*, James Joyce describes, "After that, they lived apart. She went to the priest and got a separation from him with the care of the children (Joyce 1914)." Mrs Mooney gets separation from her husband when he humiliates her. She also takes the responsibility of taking care of children. She resists the patriarchy and leads by example to prove feminism is a remedy for the problems of women.

Like other rights, feminism is central to the right of business for women. Women strive to stand on their feet and engage in business activities like the opposite gender. But they are predominantly deprived of this right as well. However, feminism paves the way for their right to business. To liberate themselves, women struggle against this patriarchal practice. In the story, *The Boarding House*, "Set up a boarding house on Hardwicke Street, was a big imposing woman. Her (Mrs. Mooney's) house had a floating population made up of tourists from Liverpool and the Isle of Man and, occasionally, artistes from the music halls (Joyce 1914)." In the story, Mrs Mooney is a great imposing woman and she struggles against oppression. Her boarding house earns her respect and money as well. She runs her business magnificently and strives to snatch her rights from a male-dominated society. To quote the story, "All the resident young men spoke of her as The Madam (Joyce 1914)." Being a woman, the character Mrs Mooney runs her business wisely. Thus, feminism not only thoroughly addresses all the problems that a woman possesses but also gives her insurmountable strength to struggle against the patriarchal society.

Women's struggle against patriarchal society is central to their independence in moral problems as well. Feminism gives women the authority to rule in the moral standards as well. They are wise, witty, and insightful as men are but still they are marginalized and isolated from living a normal life. As James Joyce writes in the story, "when she judged it to be the right moment, Mrs Mooney intervened. She dealt with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat: and in this case, she had made up her mind (Joyce 1914)." Mrs Mooney deals as effectively with moral problems as a butcher deals with meat with a cleaver. Women can guide fellow humans towards morality as well but their opportunities are limited. Thus, women can earn a greater place in the world of morality against the backdrop of feminism.

Although the denial of women's rights leads them to a suffocated life if provided with equal rights; which is the main slogan of feminism, they may excel

in the race of life. They can tackle their problems outstandingly well; also, they can provide humanity with a solution to the problems of mankind. Their autonomy and growth in a levelling field are the prerequisites of their prosperity in particular and the prosperity of society in general. In the story, *The Boarding House*, "Mary came to the door and said that the missus wanted to see him in the parlour. He stood up to put on his coat and waistcoat, more helpless than ever (Joyce 1914)." Mrs Mooney makes Mr Doran helpless about his sin; although, he was a religious man with dignity. But still, Mrs Mooney's strength drops him to concede to her daughter's love. Although, initially, he was reluctant to accept the same demand Mrs Mooney's strength forces him to accept her demand. Similarly, the story tells, "She (Mrs. Mooney) was sure she would win (Joyce 1914)." Mrs Mooney augmented power from her sufferings and achieved a position, where she was sure about her success in her daughter's case. She successfully convinced Mr Doran to respect Polly's decision and love. It shows that women can lead men and can speak against their sufferings. And this is magnified by feminism "it deals with the equality of men and women, not sameness"(Caprino).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The discussion section leads the study to a conclusion. The researchers conclude the discussion section of the study. They find how the main characters Mrs Mooney and Polly are described in the story. The study is concluded in the backdrop of Feminism. The study elaborates on the gender-based oppressions of women and their resistance to this practice. The leading women characters (Mrs Mooney and Polly) of the story *The Boarding House* are explicitly deprived of their fundamental rights in the story which shows their submissiveness, but Mrs Mooney does not give in to gender discrimination and she resists it with a sign of mustering courage.

The essence of feminism is evident in the story *The Boarding House* by James Joyce. The plight of women in multiple sectors of life is penned down well in this story by James Joyce. Women are always at the mercy of males, when it comes to their personal, financial, sexual, moral, political, and social independence, while Feminism strives to abolish this discrimination against women. "Feminism, the belief in social, economic and political equality of the sexes"(Britannica). In the story, *The Boarding House* James Joyce attempts to explain the sufferings of women because of their gender. Similarly, the story shows the resistance of a woman to her sufferings. In this story, Mrs Mooney and her daughter Polly are

exploited nearly all walks of life by men but they learned to fight the patriarchic set-up.

Mrs Mooney marries her father's foreman, even though she is a determined and imposing woman. Her husband maltreats her and she is abused physically by her husband as well. She faces gender-based discrimination in the patriarchal society, initially from her father and then from her husband. She is exploited both financially and socially. Similarly, her daughter Polly is subjected to maltreatment by Mr Doran, who exploits her because of her inexperience and youth. Polly confronts hurdles at the workplace and consequently, she is forced to do domestic chores. In the same way, Mr Doran's cold behaviour compels her to put an end to her life. Hence, women are not only dominated by their close relatives but also by other men in society. It proves the fact that women are exploited by men in the patriarchal society and at the same time, it urges the advocacy of women's rights, which is only possible through feminism. Their struggles are aggravated by the denial of their due rights.

In the story *The Boarding House* when Mrs Mooney's character leads women by example to liberate themselves from the chains of domination of a patriarchal society. Mrs Mooney separates from her husband and establishes her own business in the shape of a boarding house where she is well respected by men of the society. Similarly, she successfully convinces Mr Doran to accept her daughter's love. She is capable of working as efficiently as men. She goes away from the sufferings and oppressions that she experiences. Her struggle wins her freedom and equality. She is a leading example for every woman to pursue freedom and equality against the backdrop of feminism.

The subjugation and oppression of women based on gender are as old as women themselves.

However, with time, women learn to fight for their rights, and in the same way, society recognized their deserving position. The struggle of women against male dominance enables them to live with respect and dignity; also, it paves way for their survival. Women's struggle in the academic and practical fields against this disparity is highly essential for humanity as well. In the aftermath of feminist movements and theories, nearly all countries of the world have legislated in the favor of women. Those countries are well-respected in the comity of nations who work for gender equality against the backdrop of feminism. This study recommends lessening the gap between all genders. Though both genders are not the same they are equal in multiple circles of life. Hence, gender inequality must be addressed in the current era of modernization.

The role of electronic devices is pivotal in highlighting the issues of women. It must be used fruitfully in bringing feminism into the limelight. Gender equality is inevitable and media can play an incomparable role in making the concept, theories, and movements of feminism universal. The academic and practical scope of feminism is making it a global subject but still, gender inequality exists and it must be withered away by legislation in the favor of feminism. Moreover, the world must accept the fact that gender equality can bring prosperity to both sexes. Women's emancipation and liberation from the patriarchy can help humanity to grow and evolve while the exploitation of women pushes it to obscurity. Feminists struggle for gender equality as women are capable of undertaking difficult tasks. According to Steinbeck, in the current era beard is the only thing that a woman cannot have like a man, and even she can have it successfully in a circus. (Steinbeck 1937).

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