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INVESTIGATING THE UNHEARD VOICES OF SUBALTERN IN LOUISE ERDRICH'S FUTURE HOME OF THE LIVING GOD

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper undertakes to explore the struggle of Subalterns to raise the voices for their rights in Louise Erdrich's novel *Future Home of the Living God*. The present study adopts the theoretical background of postcolonial theory by focusing on subaltern studies. The main purpose of this study is to explore the oppression and suppression of the subalterns and their resistance against this oppression. It considers *Future Home of the Living God* by LouiseErdrich as a primary source of data. A thorough study and analysis of the text has enabled the researcher to interpret some findings in the light of Gayatri Spivak's essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. The study highlights that the selected text is enriched with instances that represent marginalization and the unheard voices of subaltern. Erdrich does not present subaltern as a strata who has accepted their marginalization but she highlights the efforts of subaltern to be heard. She also highlights that how these subalterns remain unheard after so much struggles. This study is an attempt to criticize the practice of racial biasness, social discrimination and "Othering" by powerful discourses. The parameter of qualitative research is used for this study. The selected instances from the text are studied and analyzed in the light of GayatriSpivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?*.

INTRODUCTION

The present research aims to explore Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God* through the lens of postcolonial theory. This research particularly focuses on the subaltern study. The researcher undertakes this research to

study Louise Erdrich's perspective about the oppressive society and government. The present research is an effort to uncover the oppression of a young woman who is fighting for herself and her unborn baby. The current study is based on the theoretical framework of Gayatri Spivak's essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. The struggles and fights of the subaltern to live and survive in a society are interpreted in the light of the essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. Postcolonial study is concerned with liberating the colonized and the victims of racial discrimination, marginalization, oppression and social discrimination. The concept of subaltern study is particularly concerned with liberation of oppressed and marginalized strata of the society. Guha (1998) says that the concept of subaltern is an attempt to study, "the history, the politics, the economics and sociology of Subalternity" (p. 39).

The contemporary postcolonial writers highlight the issues of colonialism and government policies that are based on oppression of the citizens. The researcher undertakes to discuss the practice of marginalization, systematic othering of the subaltern and identity crisis of a young girl due to oppressive government policies. Louise Erdrich is an American writer. In her writings she gives a clear image of oppression and exploitation of marginalized people at the hands of powerful government structures. She questions the American laws and raises voice against oppression of marginalized strata of the society, specifically women. Spivak in her essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak? Writes:

"The Subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with woman as pious. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribe task which she must not disown with a flourish." (p. 308)

Louise Erdrich is an American novelist and poetess. She is considered one of the most prominent figures of second wave of Native American Renaissance. She is known for discussing all the major social issues in her writings. She has discussed all the aspects of society from WWI to the marginalization of women. Erdrich was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2021, for her novel *The Night Watchman* (2021). In this novel she gives a clear image of brutal society through the story of her grandfather. All her novels present some social issues. *Future Home of the Living God* is also her novel to raise voice for women's rights, the systems of oppression due to government and marginalization. Her novels are a drive for every oppressed part of the American society. She cannot be termed merely as a feminist because she raises her voice for whole oppressed strata of the society. She is a true advocate of 'injustice', 'marginalization' and 'oppression'. *Future Home of the Living God* is a story of a young pregnant American girl Cedar. Cedar's character represents the marginalized women whose bodies are colonized and whose choices of reproduction are not their own. In this novel Cedar is considered as marginalized and oppressed firstly for being Native American and being an adopted child and secondly for being a pregnant woman. Cedar is presented as a courageous character that has the ability to fight back and to speak for herself and her unborn baby. In this novel Erdrich has portrayed pain with strength. As Cedar says; "don't know why it is given to us to be so mortal and to feel so much. It is a cruel trick, and glorious." (Erdrich, 2017) Through

the character of Cedar, Erdrich presents how oppressed and marginalized strata of the society can raise voice for itself. In this way the researcher explores the voice of voiceless in *Future Home of the Living God*.

Research Questions

This study deals with the following questions:

1. What are the particular examples of the suppression of the voice of Subaltern in Louise Erdrich's novel *Future Home of the Living God*?
2. What is Louise Erdrich's perspective about the subaltern's endeavors to speak and the institutionalized practices for suppressing their voices?

Research Objectives

The present study aims:

1. To explore the particular examples of the suppression of the voice of subaltern in Louise Erdrich's novel *Future Home of the Living God*.
2. To analyze Louise Erdrich's perception about the subaltern's endeavor to speak and the institutionalized practices to suppress their voices.

Significance Of the Study

The present study aims to discourage the prevailing manipulative discourses. It also aims to present the struggle of those who are at the margin to survive. The present study through a detailed analysis of Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God* exposes the role of dominant controlling powers which exploit the marginalized strata of the society. It highlights that the subaltern has the strength to speak. This study undertakes to appreciate the resistance of the subaltern to refuse being considered as others. Spivak's theory of subaltern is still applicable because still many people suffer in the name of gender, class and creed. (Kashikar, 2021)

The present study is significant because it undertakes to relate postcolonial concept of subaltern to the individual experiences of human beings. Lois Tyson (2006) in *Critical Theory Today* states that postcolonial studies and concepts not only focus on the experiences of colonized nation but also focus on the individual experiences of human beings. The present study undertakes to analyze the marginalization, suppression and oppression of subalterns in the hands of powerful discourses.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

This section of the study deals with post-colonialism and subaltern study to understand Erdrich's novel more critically. Gayatri Spivak is known for her *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1978), a masterpiece of postcolonial literature. Spivak wrote, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* In this essay she widened the concept of subaltern by adding the marginalization of women in this category. Spivak is of the view that women are doubly marginalized, first for belonging to a postcolonial society and secondly for being a woman. She is of the view that women are doubly oppressed in the postcolonial

society. She used the military term Subaltern to represent the marginalization of the women. It is to be mentioned that:

“Much of Spivak’s ideas are informed by her interactions with ‘the Subaltern Studies Group, including Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Spivak suggests that it is impossible to recover the voice of the subaltern, hinting at the unimaginable extent of colonial repression and its historical intersection with patriarchy — which she illustrates with particular reference to colonial debates on widow immolation in India”.(Mambrol, 2016)

Her works are enriched with the themes of colonialism and feminism. In the selected novel the discourse is clearly related to Subaltern. Postcolonial literature is a medium to express the sufferings of marginalized and oppressed strata of the society. It also gives voice to voiceless to stand for the freedom, liberty and equal rights. Unfortunately, these voices are considered rebellious by the oppressing authorities and are suppressed. The contemporary American writers like Louise Erdrich have undertaken to be a part of this confrontation. The present study shows that the protagonist of the selected novel has been a victim of social manipulation and oppression, but she is never silent for her oppression. Spivak has quoted the example of widow immolation (sati) in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* to give a clear image of suppression of women. In Indian traditions the widow is burnt alive with the dead body of her husband because she does not have her own identity. Maggio resets and reframes Spivak’s concept of widow immolation (sati) to highlight this: ‘like a child being torn between two divorcing (or married) parents, the subaltern are silenced even when attempting to speak. The subaltern is always framed as a quisling or as a resistant’.(Maggio,2007).

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad is studied by Sathyaraj in ‘Subaltern Voice in Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness’. He has discussed the text in the light of post colonialism. Sathyaraj studied the character of Kurtz through postcolonial perspective. In this novel Africans are portrayed as Subaltern because they neither have their own identities nor their voices are heard by powerful discourses.

Yadav (2011) also investigates the Subaltern issues in his study. He talks about the marginalization of lower class in *The White Tiger* and discusses suppression issues through the lens of subaltern. In his study he investigates the marginalization of subaltern in power dynamics.

Young (2012) focuses her study on women. She tries to analyze the unheard voices of Subaltern that need to be heard. For this purpose she interviewed some South Asian authors. All those writers have some personal reasons to speak. So she concluded that all these writers have their personal subalterns.

Saeed (2013) studied *Robinson Crusoe*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Passage to India* in the light of subaltern studies. These novels highlight the suppression and manipulation in a colonial era. Daniel Roux (2009) also studied this concept of marginalization and otherness in *Othello*. Roux argues that the

journey of Othello is a journey towards being other. Throughout the play Othello is presented as outcast, other and marginalized.

Maji (2015) in *The Subaltern Can Speak: A Study of Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger* studied the treatment of outcasts in the society. His study highlights the struggle of marginalized people to survive in a country like India. Nimni (2016) studied Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* through the perspective of subaltern. She appreciated Roy for raising voice for voiceless through his writings.

The concept of subaltern has been very prominent in literature. The researcher has attempted to analyze Louis Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God* through the lens of subaltern. According to Dhakal (2016) "Subaltern speaks of any group of lower rank in terms of class, gender, race or sexual orientation. It also refers to the marginalized class of society. These people are always influenced by the dominant and powerful groups." (pg. 111)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is an attempt to rejoice humanity and to appreciate the struggle of those who have the ability to raise voice against the powerful controlling systems and ideologies. The increasing number of oppressed and suppressed groups, the unheard voices of the marginalized people and the unjust treatment of the controlling powers are the influence of this research. This study reveals the marginalization of women whose voices can never be heard. According to Guha (1998) "the concept of subaltern intends to promote the discussion of oppressed themes. It helps to resolve the biasness towards oppressed groups." (pg. 42)

Gramsci used the term "subaltern" for the first time. Spivak borrowed the term from Gramsci to present the oppressed group of society. The concept of subaltern seems important in postcolonial societies but its importance cannot be denied in other societies as well. Spivak used this term to represent the lower class and all the oppressed groups. As oppression is a common practice all over the world so the concept of subaltern is not only limited to postcolonial societies but also it is applicable for all the oppressed strata. The subaltern about which Spivak speaks is the marginalized strata of the society in the hands of powerful discourses. She argues that women are the real representation of subaltern as they are in "deep dark shadows". (Spivak, 1985) The subalterns are given the feelings that they belong to the lower class and they are unable to contribute to the society. They are "Others" in the society. The imperialist controllers function on the method of offence. According to Spivak the people of third world are the subalterns. They have no right to speak as they are different and separated by ages, genders, faiths and other discourses. Spivak states in her essay: "The reasonable and rarefied definition of the word subaltern that interests me is: to be removed from all lines of social mobility" (Spivak, 475).

In terms of postcolonial literature, specifically in terms of Subaltern, feminist writers and critiques play a very vital role. As these writers are trying to present marginalized and oppressed women's unheard voices in their writings.

Showalter in her book *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1982) explains the phases of women writings in the history of women's works. She names those phases as: feminine, feminist and female phases. Many of these feminist writers have a subaltern legacy. The subalterns do not have any specific identity and their characteristics are also not specific. Showalter argues that feminist writers of England, America and France have dealt with the inequality of women in many ways. For instance, English feminist writers focus mainly on exploitation of women, French writers focus on injustice of women and American writers focus on inequality in the social lives. According to Spivak, while we need to be attentive to the most recent configurations of subalternity, we should not be deceived to think that its essential features have radically changed – indeed, the difference between the old and the new subaltern is, as Spivak says, 'only conjectural' (Jung & Mascot, 2022)

The concept of "Other" is a common phenomenon in Subaltern studies. The word other is subjective and it changes with context. De Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* (1997) gives the idea of other. The thought of otherness is a category of human mind. Women are considered as others because they are always suppressed by a male dominant system. The category of "others" includes not only marginalized women but all the strata of the society that is considered other in one way or another.

Spivak in her essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, talks about the issues of Sati (widow self-immolation), the women in India were burned alive with the death of their husbands. This is an instance to support subaltern women who do not have their own identity. The ritual of sati is represented as removing the widow's identity: she exists in relation to her deceased husband, who retains his "power beyond the grave" (Roberts, 1832). Spivak is of the view that subalterns are never given a chance to speak but they have the ability to raise the voices. The subalterns have the ability to stand in front of the authorities that try to suppress their voices but they are never given the chance. According to Spivak, "There is no platform for subaltern through which she can speak." *Can the subaltern speak?* by Gayatri Spivak advocates that the subalterns, the inferiors, the marginalized, the others try to raise their voices that are never heard but the powerful discourses suppress those voices and they remain unheard. In this situation the powerful discourses act as noise and this noise obstructs the voice of subaltern. The concept of otherness is the base of postcolonial theory. Many postcolonial writers like Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak and Homi K Bhabha discuss the concept of otherness in different ways. The colonizers leave no space for colonized (Other's) fear, suffering and identity.

In postcolonial literature the term subaltern is used to present the suffering of a particular class of women. After a lot of oppression and exploitation the marginalized Subalterns recognize their voices. Spivak through her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* tried to give the voice to voiceless. She raises the issue of marginalization of women in the society and also discusses their empowerment. After the publication of this essay she is considered as a post-colonial voice of voiceless.

It is often noticed that the oppression of women and postcolonial theory go side by side. Sara Suleri in her 'Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and Postcolonial Condition' argues that, "the term postcolonial is often coupled with women." The reason is that in postcolonial studies the focus is on marginalized strata, oppression and suppression of inferior class. Similarly the writings about women focus mainly on oppression of women in the society. So, though subaltern is a postcolonial term but it can also be used to present oppression of women. In the Critique of Post-colonial Reason, Spivak states clearly: 'I think it is important to acknowledge our complicity in the muting, in order precisely to be more effective in the long run' (Spivak, 1999). The theory of subaltern by Spivak is still applicable as the suffering of people in the name of class, gender, nationality, race and color is still an issue. Therefore this study is an attempt to study the novel *Future Home of the Living God* by Louise Erdrich under the light of the theory of subaltern.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study the researcher has adopted the qualitative parameter of research. The primary source of data for this study is Louise Erdrich's novel, *Future Home of the Living God*. This study is based on a thorough reading and analysis of the text of selected novel. The textual references are analyzed according to the concepts of postcolonial theory to reach at the proper findings. To support the arguments of the researcher the relevant passages and references are used. To understand the findings properly the available literary writings about Louise Erdrich are referred to support the understanding.

The subaltern study is the base of this research. The contributions of postcolonial theorists like Gayatri Spivak, to the concept of subaltern, are discussed. To understand the subaltern's struggle to speak the textual evidences from the text are collected. These evidences have been related to Spivak's concept of subaltern, which was given in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. In this way the influence on this study is the concept of subaltern by Gayatri Spivak.

The close reading of *Future Home of the Living God* by Louise Erdrich also enables the researcher to analyze the unheard voices of the subaltern. It enables the researcher to analyze the novel as a criticism on oppression and marginalization. In this way the text of the novel and subaltern theory by Spivak go side by side throughout the research.

The subaltern theory has always been used to study the oppression in all the forms including gender, age, culture and race. Louise Erdrich is a well-known writer of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and children books. All her works have been studied through the perspective of feminism, Marxism, dystopian studies and science fiction. There is no considerable work on the application of theory of subaltern in her writings. Similarly there is no considerable application of theory of subaltern in her novel *Future Home of the Living God*. So the present study undertakes to study the theory of subaltern thoroughly under the light of *Future Home of the Living God*.

Data Analysis

“The subaltern does not have the vocabulary to speak in such a way that will get a hearing in front of powers. It is hard to see the ability of subaltern to speak.” (Spivak, 1985, p.77) Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God* is a narration of the subaltern. Louise Erdrich has undertaken her role as a social activist therefore she has given a clear image of subaltern in her novel. She has talked about the marginalization of women and given a new direction to the concept of subaltern. The marginalization of subaltern is presented in two ways, in the selected novel. Women are presented as being subaltern firstly for being women and secondly for being pregnant in a society where pregnant women are considered outcasts. Louise Erdrich exposes the practices of exploitation and suppression of subaltern in the hands of powerful discourses. These exploitations are made on the bases of race, sex, religion and class. In the selected text she exposes the practices of government to express the marginalized group of people. She is of the view that the powerful discourses control the marginalized strata by controlling the realities.

Future Home of the Living God is the story of a young girl, Cedar. Cedar is a young girl of 26 and she is an adopted child. When the novel starts she is four months pregnant. This pregnancy becomes the cause of her oppression and suppression. “The subaltern is unfortunate and unprivileged. It does not have a voice which can be heard. It is very hard to determine that how a subaltern can speak and how it can be heard.” (Spivak, 1985, p.77) At the very start of the novel Cedar is confused for her own identity. She is adopted by an American family but she is Indian native. Therefore, she is always marginalized as she says: “Even worse, I had no clan, no culture, no language, no relative. Confusingly I had no struggle.” (Erdrich, p. 2) In this way Cedar's suppression is very clear from the beginning of the novel. She is always treated as an “other” by her step-parent's culture and as “nobody” by her real parent's culture. When she calls her real mother to inform about her visit, her mother not only gives a cold response but also denies the recognition of her identity. “*Who's that, Sweetie? Man's voice. Nobody!* She says.” (Erdrich, p. 7)

Cedar is living among the Americans but she is always treated as “other” because she is not ‘white’. Her brown identity is the very first instance of her being a subaltern. She is not accepted by the ‘white’ culture. Though her adoptive parents are Americans but she has no identity and no right to speak. She also considers herself mismatched in that culture. “Maybe I look more native than usual today, darker and more raven-haired.” (Erdrich, p. 38) Her disappointment increases, when she feels struck between her real identity and her adoptive identity. She had been living with this confusion throughout her life but then she decides to stop being ‘voiceless’ and determine her own identity which will safeguard her baby in future.

Further, Cedar's suffering as an “other” is described when she is pregnant. The world is moving towards its end and there is a reversal in the process of evolution the women are giving birth to the babies that seem to be from primitive human species. The government has decided to confine the pregnant women. They are imprisoning the pregnant women to study the reasons of this

evolution. In this way the systematic oppression starts. Basically, this rumor of evolution is the propaganda by the government for some research activities. But the women have to pay the price by losing their babies either born or unborn. It is highlighted when Cedar visits her doctor for a regular checkup and her doctor advises her to hide her pregnancy. "When you get out, don't tell anybody that you are pregnant." (Erdrich, p. 43) From this point Cedar's struggle to confront oppression starts.

Subaltern represents the inferior rank of the society. It also presents those classes in the society which are affected by the domination and control of the ruling class. According to Spivak the ruling class always tries to suppress the voice of subaltern. They try to make the subaltern voiceless but the subaltern has the ability to struggle against these powerful discourses. Same is the case with Cedar the powerful discourse of government tries to control her existence. At one point, her voice seems to be suppressed. The social system forces her to think that she is not an independent being and the fate of her existence and her unborn child's existence depends on the decisions of authorities. This leads her towards being 'marginalized' and 'voiceless'. "I can be merely the nameless being." (Erdrich, p. 53) but like all the other subalterns the powerful discourses are not able to suppress her voice for a long time. She is courageous enough to stand against the suppression and marginalization of women for being pregnant. She decides to confront the new laws and constitutions to protect her child. She stands alone in front of powerful discourses and tries to raise her voice. "I am the first and the last. I am the honored one and the scorned one. I am the whore and the holy one. I am the wife and the virgin." (Erdrich, P. 55) She has been suppressed and marginalized all her life but this led her to become courageous instead of being voiceless. In this way, the voice of subaltern can remain unheard but not unvoiced.

The government of America is confining the pregnant women. The pregnant women are not allowed to leave the hospitals and meet anyone. Once the babies are born, they are allowing only one in a hundred to survive and using all the other babies for their research. Also, no one knows about the fate of women after deliveries. The government has announced rewards for those who will turn in a pregnant woman. "They are offering rewards now for anyone who turns in a pregnant neighbor, acquaintance, family member, whatever. There's billboards. Ads up on lampposts." (Erdrich, p. 71) So the pregnant women are hiding to protect themselves and their babies. The powerful discourses are trying their best to suppress these subalterns and to use them for their own benefits. To cope with all these circumstances Cedar is also hiding in a deserted house. She has no contact with her family. She is afraid to use the mobile phone because pregnant women are being tracked by mobile phones. She is in a continuous fear of being discovered. She has no one to share her feelings with. She seems to belong to the strata of society who is not given the chance to live freely. She writes everything in a diary so that if her child survives he can know what happened with his mother. The fear is trying to overcome her, as she thinks, 'will this be the day that I am discovered and taken away? And what then? What would they do to you (baby)?' (Erdrich, p. 92) According to Spivak, subaltern is never given the chance to live a life

according to its own will. They are always controlled by the powerful discourses. The subaltern tries to raise its voice but the noise of powerful discourses make the voice unheard. Hence, Cedar's voice is also unheard due to powerful discourses. She has the ability to speak but her voice is suppressed.

Finally, the time comes when Cedar is discovered. She is turned in by her husband. After all the struggles to protect her unborn child and herself she is betrayed by her husband. She is in confinement when she receives a hidden letter from her step mother informing her about the person who turned her in. when Cedar reads that "Phil was the one who turned you in" (Erdrich, p. 114) she is numbed for a moment but this numbness proves to be the start of her encouragement. It is the moment she decides to stand alone in front of all the powerful discourses. Erdrich has described the character of Cedar as a person who does not kneel in front of powerful discourses. At this point Erdrich also introduces the characters of Agens and Tia who are also pregnant and imprisoned. Erdrich has described them as the women who endeavor to speak but their voices are suppressed by the institutionalized practices. The following instances explain the subaltern's endeavor to speak and suppression of their voices by powerful institutions.

When cedar is taken in imprisonment she meets her roommate whose name is Agens Starr. She is a black woman and pregnant. She tells Cedar that she is planning to run away from the prison. Also she tells Cedar not to take vitamins provided by the hospital because they are not vitamins but drugs. When Agens is informed that it is the day of her delivery she decides to run away from the hospital. She even kills a guard to protect herself but she cannot make it out of hospital. She is again taken in and killed. The character of Agens shows her endeavor to raise the voice for her protection but her voice is suppressed by the powerful institutions by killing her. So she presents the subaltern whose voice is suppressed after all the struggles.

After the death of Agens, a new girl joins the room of Cedar. She is an Asian girl and her name is Tia Jackson. "They replace her with a young Asian woman who radiates intensity. She's both demure and severe. Intimidating. she has either stopped speaking or speaks no English." (Erdrich, p. 109) Most of the women who are confined are not American. Erdrich is the true advocate of colored people therefore she has used these characters as subalterns. Cedar is a mixed race woman having brown complexion, Agens is a black woman and Tia an Asian woman. All these characters fulfill the definition of subaltern according to Spivak. Spivak (1985) claims that all the subalterns suffer because they are not white but the women who belong to this class suffer doubly. Firstly, they suffer for not being white and secondly, they suffer for being women. Same is the case with Cedar, Agens and Tia, they are suffering for being non-white and women.

Cedar and Tia decide to run away from the imprisonment because they know that the powerful institution of government will not let them and their babies live. They start to make a rope with the help of blankets' threads. They keep on working day and night because they have the ability to stand against the

powerful institutions. Therefore they are ready to face all the consequences after eloping from the hospital. They do not need anyone else to protect them. As Cedar says, “the two of us against them all.” (Erdrich, p. 118) Finally, the time comes when they are successful in eloping the hospital from the window but their struggle does not end here. Their struggle to survival increases when they are out. They have to hide in the dirty containers and even in caves. Tia gives birth to a baby girl in the cave but the baby cannot survive. After struggling so much for the survival of the baby Tia is defeated by the powerful discourses. Her struggle is like the voice of subaltern which always remains unheard.

After losing two companions, being cut off from the family and being betrayed by her husband Cedar is still fighting for the survival of herself and the baby. She presents the subalterns who keep raising their voices but after all the struggles they remain unheard and unnoticed. Cedar is the representation of suppression and marginalization but she is brave, courageous and confident to confront the powerful institutes. “It is okay, my baby is a fighter and so am I.” (Erdrich, p. 187) After passing through all the difficult circumstances she still has the confidence that she will be able to deal with all these powerful discourses, that she and her baby will be alright and they will live a normal life, that one day her unheard voice will be heard. “I still have this stubborn notion we will be all right.” (Erdrich, p. 209)

Kashikar (2021) argues that ‘subaltern is the person who is marginalized but it has the voice. Subaltern tries to make this voice noticeable throughout the life but the voice remains unheard.’ Cedar also tries to make her voice noticeable. She tries to stand against the oppression and marginalization of pregnant women. She tries to stand for her unborn child and herself but all this leads towards nothingness. She is turned in once again. It shows that her struggle against the powerful institutes ends in her defeat. She is again imprisoned and her baby is born. The baby is healthy without any genetic evolutions but he is separated from her for some research purposes. “The sting of the needle stole my consciousness. As I slipped away, someone pried apart your fist and I felt you lifted from my arm.” (Erdrich, p. 223) In this way, the nine months struggle of Cedar is put to an end. Though she tried to confront her suppression but she could not defeat the powerful discourses. So, through the character of Cedar, Erdrich gives the idea that subaltern is not voiceless. It has the ability to speak and fight. It has the ability to stand against the powerful institutes. It has the ability to endeavor the struggle. But the powerful institutes do not allow the subaltern to speak. They consider voice of subaltern as soundless. They never give the authority of speaking to a subaltern. Hence, subaltern is not voiceless it has its own voice and own identity but this voice remains unheard in the noise of powerful institutes.

CONCLUSION:

The present research paper has attempted to study and analyze Louise Erdrich's novel *Future Home of the Living God* in the light of Gayatri Spivak's essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. The researcher has undertaken this research to analyze the roles of powerful discourses to suppress the voice of subaltern and to make it voiceless. Erdrich through the character of Cedar

presents the suppression of subaltern's voice and the struggle of subaltern to be heard. Cedar Songmaker, Agens Starr and Tia Jacksons are the spokespersons of Erdrich. Through these characters Erdrich voices the identity and sensibility of women. She aims at exploring the women characters who are encountering patriarchy, social discrimination, political and social exploitation. The character of Cedar is the real representation of subaltern. Throughout the novel she is trying to make her voice audible but she is suppressed and marginalized in front of powerful institutes so her voice remains unheard. So it can be said that subaltern is not voiceless. It has the voice and ability to speak but the voice remains unheard in the noise of powerful institutions.

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