Are We There Yet?

Gender Equality - Myth or Reality

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ABSTRACT

This research will address American gender theorist Butler's assertion of third wave feminism and gender ethics and advocate that despite education and modernization, a duplicity still exists in the way gender has been depicted in western culture as well as in indigenous culture. This investigation seeks to acknowledge this duplicity by performing a comparative study of the western superhero Wonder Woman and the indigenous Indian Goddess Durga. Ultimately, this study challenges the contemporary terminologies and the interpretations concerning gender roles within the society to show the duplicity inherent in these contrasting renditions. Through a theoretical and practical framework and with the help of academic works and social media, the study conveys more visually empathetic ways to define the feminine gender as being powerful and multifaceted. These investigations will include traditional and contemporary examples of visual illustrations that contain their own social and cultural narratives and offer visual evidence of the perceptions and preconceptions that Butler refers to in her 'Undoing Gender' as "social and sexual constraints" (Butler, 2004, p. 10-15). The findings include visual responses that explore the personal counter-reaction towards duplicity that I argue is rife within social constructions of the feminine gender in both the Western and Eastern cultures. The illustration techniques in this research will provide more in-depth representations of the multifarious feminine characteristics. The study concludes that the sense of gender inequality still exists in contemporary society and only acceptance of this fact can resolve the issue.

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Introduction:

Most people in society are trained to think stereotypically. They read about the concept of a 'perfect woman' in literature and imagine her to be feminine with the characteristics of submissiveness, weakness, and emotional instability. Conversely, men are considered masculine, brave, strong and the more dominant gender. These stereotypes and biases are constructed and based on idealised or expected performance, rather than by natural classification. Gender never creates any performance, but performance creates gender. "Because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all." (Butler, 1988, p. 522).

Importance of Gender Equality in 21st Century:

We are living in the 21st century; it is true indeed. Does everyone over here believe in gender equality? No. not at all. So, let's know the definition of 'Gender Inequality' first. This sociocultural term 'Gender' is a man-made term which has unnecessarily defined the behaviours and roles of men and women in the society and presents men as superior to women whereas 'sex' is the only biological phenomenon to determine a male and a female. Women have always been considered as the weaker sex in the society. They have been discriminated as subordinate to men, exploited for profit or pleasure, and violated everywhere. We take pride on stepping into the 21st century where birth of a baby boy is celebrated and a baby girl is considered as a mere 'responsibility'. Due to ignorance, people have been so much in love with their sons that killing their daughters mercilessly before birth has become a very common incident throughout the world. (Nagindrappa & M.K, 2013, p. 1-4).

“About 5-7 lakh girls a year or 2000 girls a day go missing in India due to female foeticide. During 2000, the highest occurrences of female foeticides are concentrated in Maharashtra (45.1% of India’s total foeticides), followed by the states of Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh.”

(Khatun & Islam, 2011, p. 95).

And if, she is born alive, the society finds numerous ways to kill her in every single step with their conventional thoughts and partial opinions. Women are looked upon as goddesses and worshipped with devotion, but exploitation of girls is also a day to day matter. Such duplicity still exists especially when it comes to the importance of women in the society. Officially, various encouraging words are said about women whereas, in personal life, we are the hardcore believers of dominating her. In fact, mythological resources depict the same idea where patriarchy has found its validity more than anything else. (Nagindrappa & M.K, 2013, p. 2). As per ancient Hindu law giver ‘Manu’:

“Women are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, they must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of her son in old age or as widows. In no circumstances, she should be allowed to assert herself independently”.

(Patwari, 2011)

As per Simon de Beauvoir, ‘a free woman may refuse to be owned without wanting to renounce, or being able to transcend, her yearning to be possessed.’ (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 14). The treatment of women in the contemporary society has

been aptly depicted by Kate Millett as well. In her famous creation, 'Sexual Politics' she says: "Women are part of a "minority group," they are treated like slaves because they do not have a lot of rights, and they are not equal to men, "they live for differential and unequal treatment". In the traditional patriarchy, women cannot be in charge of the economics of the family. Then, "they could neither own nor earn in their own rights," and they are treated as "non-persons without legal status." Men mostly have been seen dominating women in the history. Though things have changed with time and now women are also aware of their rights. But still men and women are not considered as same, be it in their professional or personal life. In many cases, women are paid less than men for the same amount of work. Kate adds, "In contemporary patriarchy, men dominate, they "form groups of their own level" whereas women need the approval of men, in church, and so on, to do something." (Millett, 1970, p. 17-55). Though various laws are there in western countries including gender neutral divorce laws, equal pay laws and so on, in reality, these two binary genders are never treated as equal. But gender equality must prevail. According to Professor Scott from the University of Cambridge,

"Society today is witnessing an ongoing paradigm shift in gender relations. We have gone beyond the male breadwinner/ female homemaker post-war family. Dramatic changes have taken place in the workforce, and enormous progress has been made in policy, but a gap remains in women's attainment in the world of paid work, and this relates to the unequal division of unpaid work in the home."

(Scott, 2009).

But, if we truly had had that gender equality, both men and women would not have been judged for their choice of career path. They would have been encouraged to pursue their dreams rather. When a man stays back at home to bring up his children, he is ridiculed whereas a woman is tagged as a 'bad mother' for continuing her professional life. This can't be considered as gender equality. In many countries, polygamy is legal for men, but same is not applicable for women. So, those who think that in 21st-century gender discrimination against women is irrelevant should rethink.

The very recent advertisement of 'Save our Sisters' by Taproot which depicts how much unsafe the world has become through bruised faces of powerful goddesses of Hinduism, one of the celebrated religion across the globe, mostly in India. This campaign clearly declares, "Pray that we never see this day. Today, more than 68% of women in India are victims of domestic violence. Tomorrow, it seems like no woman shall be spared. Not even the ones we pray to." (Jha, 2013)

These evidences in the contemporary society ensure that Gender inequality is still an important issue to discuss. Without discussing or pointing out this issue cannot be solved by itself.

Understandings of gender discourse:

As professors at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, American analytical Marxist sociologist, Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, an American academic and political activist have authored "Contemporary American Sociology." In the book, they argue that the transformation of gender relations has been one of the speediest and most serious social changes in human history since the beginning of the 20th century. From the earliest stages of civilisation and colonisation in human history, male pre-eminence has always symbolised the gender relations within societies. It is

hard to believe that even in the 20th century, people still hold the view that women should be subordinate to men. In spite of many shifts and women occupying various important roles in western and traditional societies and economics, gender inequalities do persist. Notwithstanding the significant improvement in the position of women in society, but they are still not considered equal to men. Decisively, the male domination did not disappear, though it is still in opposition and not demolished to the ground. (Wright & Rogers, 2009, p. 1). The academic writing elucidates the ideological and theoretical understandings of gender discourse while the observations made on social media by studying gender manifestation/performance, parallel this understanding with a more collective commentary. Examples of this commentary include contemporary social discussions undertaken in blogs.

India, being my native country, my self-realisation about gender equality can serve better to express the suppressed situation of women in society. When we discuss gender equality in India, the subject appears more complex than it actually is and it is difficult to explore everything within the limited ambit of this thesis. Indian women almost certainly are not very comfortable talking about their lives. They believe what is happening in their life is best kept to themselves. If something untoward is happening to an Indian woman, it is hardly a matter for public discussion, as it would bring shame to her and her family. That is because it is common to criticise and blame females for everything whether or not the reasoning for the blame is valid.

Secondly, feminism in India is often unacceptable to women; the idea of feminism contradicts their decades-old idea of religious and social values. This condition makes the subject of gender inequality more complex. Many Indians accumulate the belief from their previous generations that men and women are not comparable—men are considered far superior in every aspect. From firsthand

experience, I have had a chance of an insight into this flawed unsound concept of gender equality. Many of my good male and female friends in India holding high university degree still believe that husband, father and brother should occupy a superior position within the households and society; “his” wish and opinion is ultimate and may not be argued with. That makes even the thought of equality among gender unacceptable; perhaps an instant or quick-fix solution for this millennia-old problem is impossible.

At least as a step in this direction, the aim of this research is to highlight the duplicit view that still exists in the attitudes towards women both in Western and Indian societies and to emphasise that until we accept the fact of such duplicity and hypocrisy, nothing is going to change. Accepting and pointing out the deceptive factors can lead to a path of further change. This research is not intended to be acrimonious or adversarial towards men; it just presents the idea of duplicity that still exists in Indian culture, along with admissible clarifications regarding women’s welfare that can bring some further affirmative changes. ‘Duplicity’ seems to be a perfect word to be used in this context to depict how genders are treated unequally by the society. Modern society pretends that gender equality has been achieved; but in reality, it reveals a double-standard mindset. Duality could be another word to be used as a substitute of ‘duplicity’; but the word itself shows symmetrical ideas living side by side, which can hardly refer the contradiction described in this thesis.

The main challenge: The pursuit of defining our feminine selves within our own limitations strengths and freedoms, using our own terms, not the duplicit terms of society.

Proposition: To identify and depict duplicity between the idealised and the actualised social constructs of feminine power.

Aims: To define the commonalities and differences between western depictions of feminine power and culturally specific examples of this and to readdress the duplicity, introduce a digital technique to allow a shift in female gender illustrations from two-dimensional imageries to a more comprehensive articulation of the multi-dimensional and varied capabilities of the feminine gender.

Objectives: To use the western female superhero Wonder Woman, the indigenous Indian Goddess Durga to argue that despite education and modernisation the duplicity of the relationship between power and gender continues to be widespread in both western and indigenous cultural constructions. Using multi-layered digital techniques create more holistic and comprehensive illustrations that more appropriately tells the multifaceted story of female depiction/characteristics within social contexts.

The thesis consists of five chapters apart from 'Acknowledgements', 'Abstract', and 'Introduction'. The first chapter contains the 'Literature review' and also discussions about the sociological construction system, gender inequality, pop culture, Indian goddesses, Indian women and their religion followed by a summary at the end. The second chapter is all about the 'Methodology', examining thoroughly how the experimentation was done. The evidence of duplicity and commonalities between Wonder woman and Indian Goddess Durga have been depicted in the third chapter. The fourth chapter explains the 'Final Output' of my thesis containing the

procedures and explanations. The 'Conclusions' and all relevant references cited throughout the experiment are summed up respectively in the last chapter.

Chapter 1. Literature Review:

This literature review has been structured into five subsections. Right after the introduction, the first of the three sections address the generic sociological constructionism of gender and gender inequality. The following chapter discusses the popular culture and sociological construction of gender in contemporary society, while the third one describes Indian goddess, women and religions in detail. With several literary pieces of evidence presented to establish my point, the review concludes by making the point of the existing suppression of women in the society irrespective of cultural differences.

1.A. Literature Review Introduction:

This research seeks to illustrate that within both western and eastern cultures there exists a primitive imagining of a perfect woman as one who possesses all the feminine qualities of docility, vulnerability and beauty, and of a perfect man expressed through his masculinity, strength, emotional stability and the physical and intellectual dominance he wields over women. Endemic as this bias is, it is still incorrect. Performance should be the only parameter for the recognition of gender norms. As Wright and Rogers acknowledge, despite modernisation, gender equality is still an important issue to recognise. (Wright & Rogers, 2009, p. 1). On American Women's Equality Day in 2015 this is a statement, from former President of The United States Barak Obama:

"Women's equality is a core civil and human rights principle in the United States and around the world. Across America, women are contributing to our economy and our Nation in innovative and exciting ways. From businesses to battlefields, women are vital to the prosperity and security of our country. As we celebrate the last 95 years of progress in advancing women's rights, let us rededicate ourselves to the idea that our Nation is not yet complete: there is still work to do to secure the blessings of our country for every American daughter."

(Presidential Proclamation -- Women's Equality Day, 2015).

Obama's statement shows that despite significant achievements in women's rights, the battle for gender equality continues to be waged globally.

1.B. The Sociological Construction of Gender and Inequality:

Chris Brickell, Associate Professor of Gender Studies at the University of Otago, states that the term 'social constructionism' has been adopted in several disciplines and sub-disciplines; sociology, social psychology, history, anthropology, sociolinguistic and literary theory. Each discipline has also taken different approaches within each of these. Brickell explains more simplistically that Social Constructionism is a combination of psychological and biological learned behaviours and those gender behaviours are always being judged according to that 'learned behaviour.' Learned behaviours, Brickell argues have been practised for such long periods that they are considered normal to socio-cultural views (Brickell, 2006, p. 1). Similarly, Butler argues that this socio-cultural construct has been imposed upon gender and gendered subjects. She posits that gender is a sociocultural norm that societies teach, learn,

perform and develop over time. In 'Undoing Gender', she suggests that perhaps it is more realistic to acknowledge that gender is 'pre-regulated'. (Butler, 2004, p. 42).

As an aside, but important to this thesis is my own experience of this behaviour, I would suggest that had this statement been made in my hometown of Kolkata, it would have been ridiculed by both the genders. Therefore, to appreciate the paradox this research discusses as intrinsic to the relationship between inequality and gender, it is necessary to demystify feminism. The educator, film maker and media scholar, Dr. April Kalogeropoulos Householder, compared feminism movements with waves. In fact, this is quite similar to the literal waves, which keep rolling one after the other, retaining the same structure of the original wave. Feminist activity is ongoing, because women's rights have changed, equality has not been achieved yet.

The model of "waves" is considered as a shorthand structuring device for organising feminist history and keeping track of the feminist interventions to bring along some socio-political and socio-economical changes for women. The first wave of feminism gushed into the scene from the nineteenth century and continued to the end of the twentieth century. The first wave came from the rage of socio-political inequality suffered by the women of North America and the UK. The second wave followed right next in the late 20th century, during the 1960s to the 1980s. It brought revolution and changed the entire scenario from the critique of patriarchy and the ethos, to the personal socio-political phase for women. It instigated a sudden rise of non-judgmental sexual pleasure along with the discussion of virility while handling the major issues of women rights such as voter registration, sexual harassment, and so on. This third wave witnessed the gender, sexuality, race and class as the interlocking identities by asserting an oppression. It has also offered an emphasis on queer theory,

transgender politics and rejected the gender binary leading to unlinking the sex, gender and the matrix for heterosexuality. Judith Butler's theory of performativity and gendered bodies come from the third wave of feminism. (Householder, 2015, p. 20-22). Judith Lorber, Professor Emerita of Sociology and Women's Studies argues that, "Gender inequality-the devaluation of 'woman' and the social domination of 'men'- has social functions and a social history. It is not the result of sex, procreation, physiology, anatomy, hormones, or genetic predispositions. It is produced and maintained by identifiable social progress and built into the general social structure and individual identities deliberately and purposefully. The social order as we know it in Western societies is organized around racial, ethnic, class, and gender inequality."

(Lorber, 1994, p. 17).

Lorber further argues that a gender- stratified society usually gives more value to whatever men do than women do even if they are involved in the same or similar activities. It is obvious that society has a distinct mindset about roles for the male and the female. A significant number of authors, support Lorber, while both Butler and Gender and Culture scholar, Adrienne Trier-Bieniek also argue that it is social norms which are behind the development of socio-cultural construction. Our gender identity does not appear to be something that we carry inside us but rather an external influence.

1.C.Popular Culture and Sociological Construction of Gender:

"Popular culture generally refers to the images, narratives, and ideas that circulate within mainstream culture. They are "popular" in that

they are known to the masses—most in a given society are exposed to the same dominant aspects of pop culture."

(Bieniek & Leavy, 2014, p. 12)

Gender & Pop Culture is a Text-Reader Co-edited by Patricia Levy & Bieniek. The book provides a foundation for the study of gender, pop culture and media. Patricia Leavy has a Doctorate in Sociology and is an internationally-recognised leader in arts-based and qualitative research. The editors discussed that pop culture has deeply influenced the western society and culture with its strength to convince us to rely on ourselves as well as our aims. Since males have commanded pop culture, the idea of gender inequality arises evidently. Bieniek and Leavy state that the conventional portrayals of fragility and femininity have been too common in the society and the Statistics is enough to declare the impacts of popular culture along with the style of representation. (Bieniek & Leavy, 2014, p. 14-17). Comic books are a form of pop culture. The first comic book was popularised in America in the 1930s to provide a global view to a large segment of American culture through picture and texts. William and Tyree stated that it was complex to put picture and text together, but this gave the creator an improved opportunity to manipulate the ideological images and meaning in a more conniving way. Furthermore, these pictures and words "encourage the form to create a closed ideological text occasionally, imposing on the reader preferred meanings", (Williams & Tyree, 2015, p. 52). Dr Melvin L. Williams and Dr Tia C. M. Tyree co-authored the chapter four "The Un-Quiet Queen"; Williams is a Doctorate of Philosophy in Communication, Culture, and Media Studies and Tyree is a Professor at Howard University in the Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communications. Bieniek argues that customary accessibility to the masses makes something 'popular.' 'Sociological construction of gender' and 'popular

culture' are reciprocally connected and have a deep impact on each other. Because of its ability to represent the association between media, socialisation, and identity, 'Pop culture' can reflect an image of contemporary social paradigms. "Pop culture is generally the images, narratives, and ideas that circulate widely in contemporary culture." (Bieniek, 2015, p. xiv). 'Popular Culture' is often considered as an accessory to the establishment of inequality between the sexes. Williams and Tyree argue that, according to the social construction of reality theory, sociological knowledge count on a hypothesis that knowledge is a cultural product built by social context and history. A logical explanation of acquired knowledge in day to day life is the representation of a truth interpreted by individuals which makes it more reasonable, comprehensive and acceptable for them. However, Williams and Tyree say, "Individuals conceive their own distinctive social reality through contact and interaction with others and the media-generated images around them." (Williams & Tyree, 2015, p. 50). Although the representation of global images created by media were often manufactured, they were considered as providing an avenue to understand political and social issues better which leads to making the image biased and manipulated by political and economic powers for their benefit. Academics debate whether it is reflecting the opinion of the masses or serving interest of people in power, since defining feminism can be raised as a political and economic question of the equality of sexes. (Williams & Tyree, 2015, p. 49-50).

The relationship between genders is also played out in Popular culture texts. Comic books images & text play a significant role in the consumption of gender expectations, projections and concepts. The impact may not be same for each consumer but undoubtedly penetrate their understanding very deeply. "While we are not all impacted equally by the pop culture environment and can exercise some agency

in what media we consume, there is no doubt that the personal and social effects of media culture are far reaching." (Bieniek & Leavy, 2014, p. 19). The complete argument is broadly placed on the eminent contemporary social platform. Also, 'pop culture's tendency of simultaneously celebrating and neglecting the concept of equality and sexes perfected this as a subject for analysis as Brickell explained. (Brickell, 2006, p. 1). Since those comics were meant to reach a wide range of readers, presenting women in a wrong way could easily raise another reason for gender inequality. In the case of Wonder Woman, the matter of gender inequality is also given a role of no real worth within the Justice League where she had no power to decide on her own. Feminism and social constructionism have been conflicting with each other while presenting the definition of ideal 'Modern Women'. (All-Star Comics, #13 and #14, 1942- 1943) On the other hand, "Males largely control the comic book industry, except in this case it is White males." (Williams & Tyree, 2015, p. 52). It cannot be denied that the male legacy, especially white males, has always been there in writing comic books. Moreover, when they portrayed the idea of duplicity in their own style, it not only left a huge impact on the masses, but also affected the status of women in the society.

Dr Mitra C. Emad is an Associate Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Minnesota Duluth: her cultural constructions of the human body, especially regarding how the body functions about cultural translation. She discussed the creation of Wonder Woman by Marston; when the social scenario was different. Since all the male members of the families were out there on the battlefield, the comic character of Wonder Woman was created to inspire the homemaker females to and come out of their cocoon. However, once the battle was over, Wonder Woman was again seen doing the household chores which certainly promoted the thought of gender

inequality as men again became the breadwinners, while women remained housebound. (Emad, 2006, p. 959-966). On the other hand, contemporary feminism and social constructionism appear so conflicted. Evidently, that leads to the argument of how to define the true identity of modern women! Finding the definition of 'Modern Women' may lead to lots of conflicts while searching in western culture. However, the subject may be more complex in indigenous culture.

1.D. Hindu Goddess, Religion and Women

Hanna Hedman quoted Eva Hellman in her research that despite everything, it is challenging to talk about the "Indian woman" because of their complicated circumstances. A famous cultural anthropologist, Elizabeth Åsa Hole, while discussing the "Swedish woman", rightly explains that the phenomena of talking about the "Indian woman" are a hundred times more difficult. In her book, she says that the Goddess-worshipping idea to gather power and inspiration for women seems to be unspoken. Eva Hellman, 1998, 1999 as cited in (Hedman, 2007, p. 2). This may be a reason why it is hard to find academic evidence.

Sharada Sugirtharajah, Doctor of Religious Studies, writes that the term feminism in indigenous context is just as complicated as the term Hinduism, and there are diverse understandings. Some educated Indian women who follow religion refuse to call themselves feminists; the term feminism itself evolved from a western idea and not from the Indian women's movement. According to them the term, feminism should not be used in the Indian context. However, there are other groups of women who have no quarrel with the term. Women who call themselves feminist mostly choose to exclude religion; because they find it oppressive. Some Indian feminists are there who

always deal with Hindu women issues, but they do not like to get identified as Hindu feminists because their perspective of looking at the women issues is mainly in the context of their disciplines, not the standpoint of religion. Despite the fact that there are numerous Hindu women scholars, they would be most unlikely introduce themselves as feminists. (Sugirtharajah, 2002, p. 97).

According to Sugirtharajah, this indicates that though 'feminism' is logical, it has limitations in the indigenous context of complex traditional 'Hinduism'. Western concepts may not apply to indigenous social construction rather geographical, linguistic, socio-economic, political, and other factors impart more complexity to the subject.

Academics do not very commonly touch this part of the study. For many Hindu, the academic study of religion is a western practice. Despite prescribing different rules for women and their lifestyle, they have not shed any light on the idea of duplicity or the concept of feminism. Self-definition was never played out in academic institutions; it was mainly done in public discourses instead. Moreover, while discussing the duties of women in society, Sugirtharajah wrote that the Hindu revolutionaries did not bother identifying the place of the woman in society though they pledged themselves to reform the issues which denigrate women. In fact, the idea of equality was absent in Hindu society since women here were not so much bothered about their rights, lacking knowledge regarding these. They were busy in taking care of their families, and their responsibilities within the household whereas males were considered as belonging to the 'superior gender' in the society. Equality between genders was not even considered as a possibility. Theorising religion or feminism is not a common practice in Indian culture. Moreover, Hindus who write about their religion tend to follow 'Gurus' from different traditions. A more striking phenomenon

is the academics who wrote about Hinduism or feminism itself, are mostly from a western background. Only a few Hindus with Indian background contribute to the study of Religion which may also project a diversified view. Sugirtharajah also argues that academics who wrote about Hinduism are a handful and often do not come from any religious study background. "This is partly because in India religion is not offered as an academic field of inquiry." (Sugirtharajah, 2002, p. 98).

Hannah K. Griggs's paper on Global Issues in Women's Studies course, published by Mary Wollstonecraft Writing Award, is an important contribution in this area. She states that while western feminism looks for an orientalist dichotomy between east and west, choosing the same principles for the other parts of the world, especially, for a country like India, becomes quite repressive where seeking the elevation of women is the sole goal. Western feminists need to step back to help Indian women assert their agency and also, the Indian men and women who want to empower women should claim the Indian post-patriarchal expressions to gain social justice while utilising the elements of their own traditions. (Griggs, 2016, p. 1). As far as Hindu women are concerned, 'Rights', 'Equality' or 'individuality' has never been a problem for them. Dharma or righteous duty is always seen to regulate the relationships in the family. The notion of Dharma has a wide range of connotations like duty, eternal law, conduct, behaviour, righteousness, morality and so on. It has a deeper connection with duty than with the 'rights'. This rule applies both to men and women. They have dharma to their families as well as themselves. However, at the same time, an emphasis on the duty of women towards their husbands has also been added. (Sugirtharajah, 2002, p. 100).

According to Gross argues, it is often a point of argument that women in the culture where they are worshipped as Goddesses are not at all equal. In most cases,

they were never included in religion and society and strangely enough, these women never even had any power or control over their own lives. (Gross, 1978, p. 273). Statistics say that the underrepresentation of females has been quite a natural matter encountered only only all too frequently. The domestic violence taking place against women is another common problem that exists in the country. (Hedman, 2007, p. 2). For women, belonging to a conservative family background, religious notions have often embedded a sense of powerlessness in their minds, irrespective of being literate or illiterate. The subordination of women, both cultural and social, has its roots in various cultural myths. All the literal interpretations found in the religious stories from Hindu epics are responsible for decreasing the acceptance of independent women in the society, and have gradually it increased the inferiority of women. Since they have received nothing but conflicting messages from the newly forged opportunities restricted by economic insecurity and religious laws, it could hardly encourage women, and this made them feel too disappointed with modernisation.

1.E. Literature Review Summary:

The idea of gender inequality is present in pop culture as well as in the indigenous culture. Though both cultures are quite different from each other, sometimes to the extent of being diametrically opposite, the idea of duplicity still exists in the context of gender expectations. The argument comprehends that in Western Culture, gender role is established by socio-cultural construction. On the contrary, in indigenous society, gender role is habituated by both socio-cultural construction and religious practice which is more complex. However, both relate to inequality in gender roles. After studying the Hindu cultural myths, it has become clear that the concept of subordinating women is deeply rooted there. In fact, in many

cases, it has been seen that the religious beliefs have been pretty much responsible for undervaluing the idea of feminism while imparting way to a sense of futility to women. If we consider Hindu mythology, we find that women have been worshipped for power and inspiration; not only as Goddess Durga, but many of her forms too have been worshipped with dedication by Hindus. However, in a conflicting way, equality has not been a major issue for Hindu women. The above discussion leads to the following conclusions:

1. Female superheroes earn more comments about their appearances and brain power than their brawn or muscles.
2. Female characters of power are often disgraced by making them more human.
3. Distinctive evidence of duplicity is found in both western and indigenous female character of power.
4. Duplicity is perhaps more prominent in indigenous culture, making the problem more complicated.
5. The idea of gender equality is illusory.

From the entire discussion, it's undeniable that the status of women has been suppressed to significant in the society, irrespective of whether it is the western or indigenous culture.

Chapter 2. Methodology:

This thesis combines a qualitative research, research for design and research through design. The study has applied the systematic and theoretical analysis of all the methods, including historical research, design method, and experimentations, to determine the choice of technique as well as the design principles that I have followed to complete my experiment and achieve the result closest to perfection that I was seeking. This research is divided into two main phases.

Phase one pursues qualitative analysis and synthesis of literature review, blog discussion, social media and other social discourses, to delineate and investigate gender equality to ascertain the connection within the sociological constriction of gender, popular culture, indigenous goddess, religious thinking and women's condition in India. Literature analysis focuses on Judith Butler's argument on socially constructed ideas of sex and gender, Trier-Bieniek's view on pop culture and feminism, and Dr Sharada Sugirtharajah's insight on Indian women and religious practices. My primary aim in this phase of the research is to define the commonalities and differences between Western depictions of feminine power and culturally specific examples of Indigenous Goddess Durga to compare the duplicity in views that still exists in both cultures and women.

In phase two, I chose the RGB experimentation to prove my point elaborately, according to the design precedents of Carnovsky and Harris Shutter effect. RGB is a project about the surface or printing area, where RGB image will appear deceptive under natural light. It has the capability to hide other images which are visible in their original versions under Red, Green and Blue light. The 'research through design' focusses on the role of design output which represents self-reaction towards the

duplicity existing in society. This phase involves the findings and analysis of the procedure that contributed to the design output.

Chapter 3. Analysis and Findings:

This chapter represents further investigation on the duplicit view through the portrayal of Wonder Woman, indigenous goddess Durga, and their commonalities along with the significant evidence I have come across in the course of experimentation.

3.A. Wonder Woman and Evidence of Duplicity:

The significance of POP culture and its impact on ‘social constriction’ of gender in western society was discussed earlier. I have considered Wonder Woman an equally powerful example of popular culture because of her long historical quest and living to the ripe old age of 75. This study on Wonder Woman intends to record the fact that we still carry a fixed idea about women’s role in society which is not equal to that of men regarding both real women and imaginary characters. I have chosen the character of Wonder Woman because of her long-term existence as a singular female superhero who did not fade away over time. I was also inspired by a quotation by gender theorist Judith Butler. “One is always “doing” with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary.” (Butler, 2004, p. 1). Though Wonder Woman is an imaginary character, she is always being criticised for being a woman. This discussion is not based on femininity, masculinity or other sexual orientation. The whole point of this research is to provide evidence that duplicity still exists in the 21st century. Talking about gender discrimination is still necessary because the problem may be reduced but not eliminated.

Comic book characters are often intended to control the social role of women, but not overpowering them. As male Superheroes are expected to do certain things, such as being strong, powerful, and good, women heroes too have to be there when needed. The very idea comes from the social structure itself where women are considered as the second sex in the society and physically incapable of taking up challenges, unlike men. Hence gender equality is an important topic to be highlighted in the comics as they create a lasting impression in the readers' mind. If comic books can represent women as respected, as well as responsible members of society, then it may invoke feelings of sensibilities in the minds of the common people.

Dr. Julie D. O'Reilly, of Culture Studies from Bowling Green State University influences this study. Her research includes the representation of powerful female characters seen on television and in young adult fiction. Her writing can be related well in this context; she says, "Television series that employ the narrative of female superheroes on trial clearly depict inhibitions and reality checks for women" (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 281). While many believe this to be true, I wonder what obstacles women must overcome compared to their male counterparts in everyday life. Women tend to have a harder time with daily tasks than males do. For example, women are often subjected to discrimination when it comes to applying for what is usually labelled as a "male's job". A "male's job" could be construction, car mechanic, pilot, or even being a truck driver. In the article, women super heroes had obstacles to overcome, just to be at the same level as males. In the real world, females face problems when it comes to the previously mentioned jobs or even "masculine tasks". O'Reilly's states, "That those who govern Wonder Woman's power and put her on trial are other women only underscores the notion that female superheroes operate according to a different code of heroism than their male counterparts, a code with

built-in limitations.” (O’Reilly, 2005, p. 275). As a society, it is hard for people to understand that everyone should be equal. She also says, “Although Wonder Woman, who debuted in All-Star Comics in 1941, challenged previous notions regarding the subordination of female superheroes to men, she was still not equal to her male counterparts.” (O’Reilly, 2005, p. 273). Last year 'Wonder Woman' turned 75, and during her lifetime, she has evolved reasonably as a feminine icon, role model and as a female superhero character.

Although changes are visible in these three cover pages of Wonder Woman comics from different times (See **Figure 1**, **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**); most importantly it is all about keeping the balance between femininity and masculinity, irrespective of biological sex. Through Wonder Woman, I am going to identify the implied power

given to female superhero characters to make them equally powerful as male superhero characters and also going to point out the duplicity in it. This also reflects the view about women which western society carries about women.

Figure 1. “Wonder Woman Arrives in Man's World” Cover in 1942. (DC Wikia, 2017)

Figure 2. “The Princess and The Power!”

Cover in 1987. (DC Wikia, 2017)

Figure 3. “Wonder Woman: Earth One” Cover in 2016. (DC Wikia, 2017).

3.A.i. The Beginning of the story of Wonder Woman & Duplicity:

The creator of Wonder Woman was William Moulton Marston (known by the name of Charles Moulton while writing 'Wonder Woman'). He was a Harvard-trained psychologist and lawyer, who was involved throughout his life with prison reform and credited with inventing the polygraph machine. Marston was appointed as an educational consultant for both national periodicals and All-American publications. These two were later merged to create DC Comics. When he wrote an article in Family Circle magazine based on how comics were unable to live up to their potential, he was asked by the publisher of the comics, Max Gaines, to create a new superhero potentially adding further reader interest. The idea behind creating a female superhero character was as follows:

“Not even girls want to be girls so long as our feminine archetype lacks force, strength, and power. Not wanting to be girls, they do not want to be tender, submissive, peace-loving as good women are. Women’s strong qualities have become despised because of their weakness. The obvious remedy is to create a feminine character with all the strength of Superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman.”

(Marston, 1944, p. 42-44).

While pondering over a new character, Marston always wanted his hero to value peace over war and love over violence. The wonder women in his own life, such as Elizabeth Marston, his wife, encouraged him to create a female 'superhero'. According to an article in the famous alumni quarterly of Boston University during 2001, the distinguished law alumna, Elizabeth Marston (Batch of 1918), could be accountable for lighting the spark of inspiration. When William Marston discussed his idea of

portraying a new type of superhero with Elizabeth, she responded by saying, “Fine, but make her a woman.”(As quoted in (Yodhhewawhe, 2011, p. 7). This push was everything he required to create one of the greatest icons of comics with the artist, H.G. Peter (also a feminist ally). It was fascinating that the idea of portraying a female superhero came from a woman, not from William Marston himself.

We can easily see that the duplicit idea about women existed in the mind of Marston from the beginning. The things he said and those he did were really contradictory. It is commonly known that he had always valued the idea of an educated, independent, and exceptional woman. In fact, Elizabeth herself was a scholar, a working woman, and a mom which was very unusual in contemporary society. While studying for a college degree itself was atypical for a woman, she took her degrees both in law and psychology. Along with his comics, William Marston kept promoting the suffrage movement through his speech and write-ups, and also supported the idea of feminism in the early 20th Century. The ridiculous part was that William Marston was known for his connections with the famous birth control activists, Margaret Sanger and Ethel Byrne.

On the other hand, the more unconventional factor was his relationship with Olive Byrne. Both William and Elizabeth used to stay with her in a polyamorous relationship. Elizabeth used to be the primary breadwinner in the family since Marston was busy pursuing the comics and Byrne took on the responsibilities of caring for Elizabeth’s children. Therefore, it is surprising that after being so connected with women related activities, Marston never came up with the idea of creating a female superhero on his own. Originally, Marston wanted to create a man with different values. He observed the lack of these features as a flaw in the famous characters like Superman, a moral and upright individual, who had hardly thought about the power

of love to win over hate as it was a common fact that real men never speak about love. This is where I can see the idea of gender balance was very important to Marston. He not only spoke about feminism, but took a dive into the DNA of Wonder Woman. Because of his perspective towards life and the conceptual thoughts he supported in his lifetime, he also attempted to secure a place on earth for a 'new type of man', who is a man, value things just like women. (Marston, 1944, p. 42-44). Once Marston wrote, "Wonder Woman is psychological propaganda for the new type of woman who should, I believe, rule the world," Quoted. In (Emad, 2006, p. 981).

“A male hero, at best, lacks the qualities of love and tenderness which are as essential to a normal child as the breath of life. Suppose your child's ideal becomes a Superman who uses his extraordinary power to help the weak. The most important ingredient in the human happiness recipe still is missing - love. It is smart to be strong. It is big to be generous. However, it's sissified, according to exclusively masculine rules, to be tender, loving, affectionate, and alluring. "Aw, that's girl's stuff!"

(Marston, 1944, p. 42).

It forced me to think of this scenario: what if Marston had created a male character with all the power of Superman and the appeal of a woman, instead of a “feminine character with all the strength of Superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman,” as depicted by him in the quote mentioned above. Alternatively, a commendable feminine character could be portrayed with the strength of Superman and masculine charm. It may sound a bit awkward but when the entire world, as well as the early feminist movements, were getting ready for such an amazing character as

Wonder Woman, the reverse character of a Superman would have been too hard for them to believe. A masculine character can possess the qualities of both men and women, but a female character is expected to display only feminine qualities.

3.A.ii. Wonder Woman's Most Un-feminist portrayal:

Wonder Woman was first published in All-Star Comics #8, which was a team book representing a proto-Justice League named the Justice Society of America. After getting published, she received the rank of an honorary member of this Justice Society. By Issue #13 she had impressed the team so much as she fought by their side that even though she was “now an honorary member,” they gave her an officer's position on the team. Being a woman, they, of course, made her the Secretary, a role she was attached to for years. Though the rank of a secretary in a membership organisation and the rank of an office secretary are not the same thing, it's good to know that Wonder Woman got the secretarial position. However, there was no such hierarchy comprised of a treasurer, a president or a vice president, previously.

Let's take a peek at how Wonder Woman and her new role were described to in All-Star Comics from 1942 to 1945) (See **Figure 4, 5 and 6**)

Figure 4. “Secretary to the Justice-Society” All-Star Comics #13 in 1942. (Thanley, 2012)

Figure 5. “Rest of the team goes off” All-Star Comics #14 in 1943. (Thanley, 2012)

Figure 6. “Certificate of Junior Justice League of America” in 1945 (Thanley, 2012)

The use of the sexist phrase “upon his pledge” for the new members reflects the fact that we are “all different” and are marginalised to race, religion, nationality, and class; but when it comes to gender, nothing has been mentioned. Because of her secretarial post, Wonder Woman needed to stay behind while other members went to fight Nazis. This particular event occurred because her writers were busy and couldn’t consider other writers to write her legacy. As a result, Wonder Woman carried out a somewhat sexist role within the Justice Society. This kind of undignified event never happened to her male counterparts.

So, according to the history of Wonder Woman, she had only marginalised actively when she was kept as hostage by her creator. Marston might not have trusted other creators because he might have believed that others might not follow the feminist ideology which he thought was necessary to depict through this character. When Marston fell ill and died in 1947, the other creators got the chance to portray Wonder Woman.

The costume of Wonder Women itself is an American nationalist iconography similar to Captain America. She has held on to her popularity as the only woman superhero who has successfully combined femininity with nationality from 1941 to 2016. Evolved to inspire women during World War II Wonder Women changed shapes and altered her appearance every time to support the nation and people to fight the problem in a socio-political context.

“Wonder Woman’s enlarged and dangerous body, attempting to straddle the masculine realm of war and politics with the feminine realm of peace and justice, echoed the discourses of danger

surrounding the women's movement in the 1970s depicted her as too powerful."

(Emad, 2006, p. 968).

During the War and through every national crisis, Wonder Woman was seen getting involved for inspiring women to become strong and earn their own money; and in the post war era, when American women were told to return to their kitchen & families rather than competing with service men; Wonder Woman was seen as "Romance Consultant" and owning a boutique instead fighting villains. (Emad, 2006, p. 965-966).

Figure 7. "No Woman can be trusted with freedom- you ought to know that!". (Bunn, 1997, p. 108).

In **Figure 7**, let's have a look at the dialogue box: "No Woman can be trusted with freedom- you ought to know that!" It is not surprising that Wonder Woman was

constantly being chained, imprisoned, tied up, handcuffed, and blindfolded to symbolise women's bondage, freedom and ability and therefore, demonstrated the conflicts between dominance and submission. According to Geoffrey C. Bunn who is a senior lecturer in psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University, "Playing slave might be a whole lot easier than playing conqueror, but it was ultimately self defeating." (Bunn, 1997, p. 105).

Charles Moulton wrote the Script for Wonder Woman on the principle of sexual, social and political freedom for women and ultimately ended up being submissive towards superiority. In the period of World War II cultural changes such as physiological and economic freedom soon took women to "active love leadership" and self-indecency. Freedom generally can be undermined through lack of discipline but in Wonder Woman, the idea to surrender to 'Loving Superior' was carefully implemented which showed a great deal of duplicity vis-a-vis the idea of female empowerment. This contributed more to educating women to teach the value of restraining. The early history of Wonder Woman was thus rather non-feminist.

By the time Wonder Woman could do more in the Justice Society, All-Star Comics was no longer publishing. Although Wonder Woman was the only character whose solo series survived, Justice Society appeared again after a decade in comics, but Wonder Women never lost her presence in print. Since Marston thought it was important, ranging from her origin, costume to actions, a careful balance has always been maintained between the feminine and masculine as well as the approach to peace and war in the comics, though the social thinking of women as the weaker gender remains same. A few more pictorial evidences are presented here to illustrate how Wonder Woman has been de-glorified in several issues of the comic books. She reaches a breaking point while having a nervous breakdown in the lead story. The

story starts where she no longer pays attention to crimes and disasters and reaches the ultimate state of withdrawal. She is now a misanthrope, has lost all hope in humanity and realises that no one deserves any help from her. Such an emotional breakdown has not been witnessed in the case of any other male super hero created till date. None of the male superheroes have been portrayed as leaving a situation where they are needed the most. This is another way Wonder Woman has been depicted weak, though she has power equivalent to any other superhero. Only because she is a woman, it never matters to anyone how powerful she is, inside.

Figure 8. Wonder Woman reaches a breaking point 1. (D. Dayton, 2016).

Figure 9. Wonder Woman reaches a breaking point 2. (D. Dayton, 2016).

Figure 10. Wonder Women reaches breaking point again.(Barrett, 2016).

These three pictures are taken from two different comic books; one from 1963 and another from 2016; but the idea of women as fragile creatures has not changed over the time.

3.A.iii. Wonder Woman's Dissatisfaction: Something's Missing:

It's not only the personality of Wonder Woman but also her actions and choices that helped in displaying the clear presence of gender discrimination. Whatever the original story may be, a couple of things are in common.

She is not happy with the life she used to lead on Paradise Island. Though she loves the Amazons, Hippolyta has taught her the basic values; she feels that something is missing. At times, it is manifested in her obsession with Steve Trevor whom she followed and shielded, knowing that some men are not violent at all. They know how to value women and their existence. Women who keep oppressing themselves for the sake of gender equality can never be better than those who are oppressed by the masculine power. Though that sexual drive appears to have taken a huge place in the entire story of Wonder Woman, this did not happen in the case of many other male superheroes.

3.A.iv. Bloggers Are Saying Same as Academics:

Introducing female characters in the comic books breaks the monotony and adds more drama, bloggers also agreed with academics that characters like Wonder Woman might have been created to influence on the social role play, whereas it is a common idea with male superheroes. Some superheroes are born to be heroes, and some are trained to be heroes. However, Wonder Woman was created and trained purposefully to be a Wonder Woman; she was also evolved with time. These apart, there are a few aspects only left for women such as to be sexy and attract male readers. This particular job is not assigned to male superheroes. So, to some extent, there is a

recognition of gender difference which is represented through the depiction of Wonder Woman.

Figure 11. “You're from a Paradise Island of science-fiction lesbians with a side of bondage”. (Chandler, 2016).

Weakness and Strength:

In the comic book stories of Wonder Woman, we find her crying in pain, utter despair, or missing her close ones. Although it is pretty much difficult to imagine a superwoman being emotional or vulnerable, these human emotions have made her stronger and these emotions have not been visible in the male superheroes. Blogger Victoria Irwin also agrees that “Diana is believable in her unstoppable power and just vulnerable enough to give her more human characteristics” (Irwin, 2016).

Crying is considered to be a natural form of human expression which can't make a person weak. Rather the depiction of her sensitive nature has helped her realise the pain of women who were being dominated by males. At times, she does not want to belong on this earth where a lady perishes all alone and afraid before the walloping

from a man. All she wants is to reduce violence, pain and bring peace. Considering these qualities as a weakness of a human character is completely a male perspective that hardly has any connection with the reality. Bottling up our emotions for too long gives way to massive freak outs and keeps hurting us. Crying helps in purging our body of the toxins which make us stressed in the first place. When happiness is accepted as a strong emotion for success or any other achievement, crying should also be considered as a natural emotion that helps a person to get rid of stress or despair. In fact, those who can cry are often stronger than the rest. The very act of crying is stigmatised by being the social norm for men and women. When 'He' cries, people take him as a wuss and less manly character. And when it is 'She' crying, she is taken as an abject character who badly needs attention. These social constraints need to be abolished soon before they harm the future generations as well. A change in thought is required to help society realise that being emotional in public will end up only creating a healthier society. No uphill battle of gender discrimination should take place on this matter. Just as a person can be happy and laugh, he or she can be sad and cry as well. This simple truth needs to be realistically accepted by the society.

Though Marston's worldview has helped immensely in the shaping of Wonder Woman, his psychological research and realisation made him conclude that "women were naturally superior to men, both morally and regarding skill" as mentioned in the blog-post by (Cerenio, 2016). He believed that 'women's tendency toward loving submission was far preferable to masculine authority', as he viewed masculine authority as 'toxic and violent'. The most recent copy of "Wonder Woman: Earth One Vol. 1" by DC comics evidence symbolic Bondage, vulnerability, lesbian utopia humour which we don't find about her male counterparts. Nor has 'loving submission' ever been explained. As Elle Collins mentioned, "There's a lot of talk about 'loving

submission,' but no real explanation of what that means in a society of equals.” (Collins, 2016). To be precise, the bond is not very offensive until it is offended by anything kinky. However, it becomes less of an integrated story where acceptance is given to the original comics with an added cheeky fun. Undoubtedly, comics create a widespread effect on the mass and the way Wonder Woman is presented; it depicts male dominance (white male dominance to be specific) in the world of comic creation. Since the creators of these comic books as well as the drawing artists are overwhelmingly men, they created the women characters just as they wanted to portray. Comic books have become a common medium to underrepresent the females. Collins complained, “Morrison incorporates the lesbian, kinky, and radically feminist undertones of the character directly into the story, but his perspective remains that of a man playing with toys that aren’t his.” (Collins, 2016).

Though Wonder Woman was a marvellous creation by Marston, a feeling of duplicity has always remained there. A person is judged by his outlook on taking each step. Even in real life women are mostly judged by their costumes whereas society never judges a man in real life by his costume or outfit, not being a Superhero as well. Wonder Woman is being criticised for displaying her exaggerated body, long hair, long bare legs that often overshadowed her real superpower and abilities. She is expected to come with normal body proportions. Readers often overlook her power and are blinded by her sexuality, which makes her less important than male superheroes. According to them, Wonder Woman has no need to be dressed in minimal clothing or display body parts unnecessarily. As per the United Nations' recent announcement, Wonder Woman is no longer going to be the Honorary Ambassador for the Empowerment of Women and Girls, to raise awareness about gender equality among common people. UN spokesman Jeffrey Brez has stated that

the decision took place only after they felt that Wonder Woman had served her purpose and after receipt of a petition her removal from the position. What's more, the major supporters of this decision turned out to be women. When the staffers in the United Nations initiated an online petition, it garnered 44,000 signatures before the announcement of the decision. The petition was as follows:

“Although the original creators may have intended Wonder Woman to represent a strong and independent warrior woman with a feminist message, the reality is that the character’s current iteration is that of a large breasted, white woman of impossible proportions, scantily clad in a shimmery, thigh-baring body suit with an American flag motif and knee high boots –the epitome of a pin-up girl.”

Quoted from (Davis, 2016).

Where some are willing to present Wonder Woman with more clothes and flexible body armour or protective suits, Lynda Carter, the very first incarnation of the character, defends the choice saying,

“What I disagree with is this idea about Wonder Woman. She is an iconic defender, she’s archetypal. It is the ultimate sexist thing to say that’s all you can see, when you think about Wonder Woman all you can think about is a sex object.”

-Lynda Carter, quoted from (Davis, 2016).

While talking about the costumes of Wonder Woman she also mentions,

“While there is some credence to the issue of her patriotic costume design, of course inspired by a time when comic heroes were, in fact,

meant to be American heroes, the idea that Wonder Woman can't be more than an object because of how she is dressed seems to counter everything that the U.N is trying. To be precise, the bond is not very offensive until it is offended by anything kinky. ying to accomplish.”

-Lynda Carter, quoted from (Davis, 2016).

When Wonder Woman was presented wearing a bikini, it was for the sake of symbolising sexual liberation because just in the generation prior to the publication of ‘Wonder Woman’ in the 1940s, women could be jailed for wearing a bikini on the beach. Where once embracing one's ‘womanness’ was the very core of female freedom, now we have angry voices telling her to put some clothes on. The funny thing is, now the voices are coming from the same side. Feminism is fractured, like so many other core ideals in our modern world. Then it is clear that duplicity still exists in western culture as well. All the male superheroes are wearing bizarre clothes, but their characters are not being judged for that. Though it was not the first time, UN took a comic book character for the first time. However, if the protest is because of her dressing style, it proves the existence of duplicity.

Wonder Woman emerges from such a society that is consisted entirely of women. She grew up knowing that she had to rectify herself and also include men in that line. It shows that Wonder Woman is a bit sceptical about the abilities of men. She could keep parroting what she had learned on ‘Themyscira’ as she kept on entering the Man's World feeling that change could take place. Wonder Woman has remained a feminist icon for 75 years after her creation because she symbolises the idea that balance is the key to equality. We should all embrace the masculine and the feminine inside us. If we do that, we can eventually get to the place where personality

traits and ways of being are not gendered at all, where words like “aggressive,” “ambitious,” “peaceful,” and “nurturing” won’t conjure ideas of gender at all. They will simply be Things a Person Can Be. Here’s to 75 more years of Wonder Woman teaching us this lesson as often as we need to learn it. Writer and Emotional Health Advocate Yolo Akili Robinson argues that “It has also been attributed to our sexist culture, which struggles psychologically with the concept of women and power.” (Robinson, 2013).

3.B. Indian Goddess Durga and evidence of duplicity:

In Indian mythology, a goddess is worshipped as a source of invincible power, but oddly women are never considered powerful. Hanna Hedman’s research is a qualitative study in which she discusses middle-class women in ‘Hindu’ society. She states that India is the largest democracy in Asia. Though it is considered to have the fastest growing economy, religious and social traditional construction outright this. 83% of the Indian population is Hindu. (Hedman, 2007, p. 1). In this part of the research, I will identify and discuss the duplicit portrayal of gender equality in India; I will illuminate the place held by women in Indian society, and how it is not aligned with the notion of a fierce Goddess. I will posit that the female voice is deliberately muffled and women should fight for an equal status in social, economic and even sexual areas. The reluctance in Indian society to discuss culture is complicated. I would suggest this is not helped by the patriarchal society that continues to dominate. Since an invalid and limited distinguishing of the gender, discrimination phenomenon can have critical consequences for the accomplishment of social and cultural interaction, my aim is only to identify it. This is because there is no instant to such a complicated issue. People in Indian society habitually see women in their traditional

roles. They are seen only as wives or mothers to their children. A reciprocal deduction towards women by their husband or children is not expected, and I would assert that this causes faster systemic gender inequality. As Hanna mentioned in her paper, -

“During the interviews, the role of being a good wife and a mother is described as being the most important thing for the informants. This can be related to the most significant result on what the understanding of gender equality is based on.”

(Hedman, 2007, p. Abstract).

Traditional Indian society believes that men and women are blessed with different qualities so their roles or position in society cannot be equal. Due to this social construction, western paradigms cannot simply be duplicated in India. In contrast to this, there are some Indian women who think that “women are more than just mothers” (Hedman, 2007, p. 2).

Gender roles, religious beliefs and patriarchal structures contribute to this intensely complicated scenario. There is evidence in existence that shows the inequality between male and female from the beginning of Indian Mythology, though the important ancient book ‘Purana’ says that feminine power needs to be under male control.

From the beginning of the ‘Vedic era’(1500 BCE. to 500 BCE.), feminine power has been regarded as the energy provider to the masculine entity. The same concept is beautifully captured in the picture by the half male and half female. Ardhanarishvara' symbolises the combination of Prakriti and Purusha. This depiction has been an important part of Hindu philosophy that has existed right from the age of ‘Kapila Muni’ to date, and it is contextual to discuss. It shows how the feminine

aspects of Goddess Shakti and the male principle of Lord Shiva are indistinguishable from each other.

“In the Hindu mythology, there are both gods and goddesses. The divine, Ardhanarishvara, is drawn as half man and half woman. The right side is Shiva and the left side is Pavarati. In the Hindu mythology there are both gods and goddesses. The divine, Ardhanarishvara, is drawn as half man and half woman. The right side is Shiva and the left side is Pavarati. The purpose of the drawing is to show that the divine consist of both a male and a female side and that these two are equally important.”

(Hedman, 2007, p. 2).

Soumi Rai, Assistant Professor, also supports this papers assertion and feminine power by saying “Rig Veda (V. 28) also depicts women having held high status as ‘Brahmana’ during those ages with equal command over scriptures and knowledge as their male counterparts.” (Rai, 2012, p. 20).

***Purana,** (Sanskrit: “Ancient”, 400 and 1500 CE.) in the sacred literature of Hinduism, includes a number of popular encyclopaedic collections of myths, legends, and genealogy, with varying dates and origins. (Doniger, N.D).

***Vedic Era,** 1500 BCE. to 500 BCE. (Encyclopedia Britanica, N.D)

The actuality within society does not fit the mythology. Boys receive better treatment than girls. Gender discrimination is passed down through the generations. It is a socially constructed norm with its foundation so deeply rooted in society that it has become very hard to remove it. This paper asserts that women need to accept

themselves as equal to diminish the “under- representation of women.” (Hedman, 2007, p. 2)

“Feminism in general assumes that women have less power than men.

There is inequality between men and women. This can be expressed in society as well as in the family. Feminism is therefore connected to the power relationship between the sexes and how it should be understood.”

(Hedman, 2007, p. 5).

The situation for women in India presents differently, depending on the place they are situated. Women who are working have economic freedom, but still have to take full responsibility for the domestic household as well. In India men doing customary housework is not a common sight even when their partner is working. For the women this means that they are virtually doing two jobs. Other uneducated women, especially those living in rural don't have any freedom in any circumstances; they have to put up with and stay dependent on her male partner. There are other women, living in the city with modern privileges but not working who can't escape the 'isolation of home'. So regardless of what their situation is, they are not entitled to equal rights and opportunities that men have. Of course, they have constitutional rights equal to men, but the scenario practically becomes completely different; society determines what she is allowed or not allowed to do; furthermore, illiterate women are never aware of their rights as well. (Hedman, 2007, p. 15-18). Although feminism refers only to the equality of the two genders, this term is considered to be unfriendly in India as women were mostly dominated by men in the Indian patriarchal society. An independent

woman is nothing but a myth in this society and sounds exciting but hard to be accepted in reality.

The situation is different for an Indian Hindu woman, compared to a western woman. Most of the women in India are not educated and they are unaware of their rights. In a country like India where a woman is constantly burdened with domestic duties, words like feminism seem irrelevant. Oddly, Hinduism encourages men to worship feminine divinities with rituals. But this does not diminish gender inequality in Indian societies. In many cases, only males are privileged with the rights to worship in temples.

As an Indian feminist scholar and professor in English Dr Rajeswari Sunder Rajan notes in her article 'Is the Hindu Goddess a Feminist?':

“That the ideological promotion of powerful female models does not contribute to ordinary women's well-being may be logically contrary to certain feminist expectations, but it appears to be an empirically valid find.”

(Rajan, 1998, p. WS35).

The objectification of women regardless of status or education continues to be relentless. Where the Indian goddesses are respected and worshipped for their strength and inspiration, women are seen as subservient by the male members of the family. Again, feminine self-awareness and continuous vocal objections can challenge this condition. (Griggs, 2016, p. 6-16).

Irrespective of their social status or educational qualification, women were objectified by men relentlessly right from the primitive age. Where the Indian goddesses are worshipped for their strength and inspiration, women are seen to be subjugated by the male members of the family. Such a contradicting image of deity and reality is not

only challenging but also strengthen patriarchy of which different types and degrees are available to present an intersecting classification.

From the Center for Women's Development Studies, Mary E John argues “modern Hindus must realise that patriarchy can oppress women in many different contexts—even within a single culture. The Region, caste, and language create intersecting classifications of identity and varying types and degrees of patriarchy.” Quoted from (Griggs, 2016, p. 6). In India where patriarchy is present females are treated as objects. Widows in many areas of India unable to marry again are separated from their families and must follow a strict code of conducts. Young women are considered possessed if they speak out against the system. As patriarchy exists everywhere in Indian society, the form that caste, region and language take can change. The human aspects of gender inequality have now been examined, so the situation for Goddesses will now be discussed.

3.B.i. Durga: Character Introduction & Duplicity:

The purpose of Eva Hellman’s research on goddesses and women is to find out if there are common features in the constructions of goddesses and women and what kind of qualities are ascribed to the female side of the divine. In the Puranas the goddesses have two basic qualities; they are either Shakti (the creative or active) or Prakriti (the material condition). These qualities are understood to be good ones if they are controlled by forces that are identified as masculine. The protective and creative goddess’ qualities are controlled by male gods. Power play can occur between males and females.

“the feminine need to be under male control. Prakriti represents something wild and untamed; if the male quality Purusa is not

controlling Prakriti it is a dangerous condition. The reason why women need to be controlled is that they are dominating when it comes to power that they have more Prakriti than men. The goddesses are also obeying this order.”

(Hedman, 2007, p. 7).

Figure 12. 'Fight goddess'. (McLain, 2008, p. 300)

Hedman states that Durga, being one of the most common as well as important goddesses of the Hindus, is mainly presented as a 'fight goddess' who can't be defeated by the enemies. She was created by the powers of all Gods to combat the evil and make peace prevail on earth. Although Parvati is another avatar of Durga, these two characters possess opposing personalities. However, as Hellman says she has been a powerful instrument to the gods to protect the 'power structure'. (Hedman, 2007, p. 8).

Rita M. Gross (July 6, 1943 – November 11, 2015) was an American Buddhist feminist theologian and author. Before retiring, she was a Professor of Comparative Studies in Religion at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. She says,

“for many people either automatically expect a Goddess to correlate with high status and autonomy for women or else fail to see that feminine qualities can be reversed even if women lack autonomy.”

(Gross, 1978, p. 271).

The female ideology of a goddess has been presented in various aspects through Hindu mythology. Though it shares a strong religious connection with the positive evaluation of the conventional concept of feminine, it never determines the role of woman in society. As Gross mentions, this distinction is quite important to consider people don't often realise that except for autonomous situations, feminine qualities should always be respected.

Indian men have always worshipped Hindu Goddesses for their immense power and inspiration. The physical strength of men, their social as well as political dominance has been visible within traditional societies, whereas people do have an understanding of a goddess and her power. At the same time, the depiction of the Hindu goddesses

has a large effect on the society as it breathes in appreciation for the women, rather the feminine side of humanity. The way people keep longing for the blessings of the Goddesses with patience, respect and perseverance, that much respect is indeed required for the women in Indian society. Here women are ruled and dominated by the masculine power as the inferior sex and often objectified for their own purpose. If men who are so engrossed in the rituals of worshipping the goddesses had thought of giving the same respect to women in real life, the question of gender equality wouldn't have even been raised. (Gross, 1978, p. 271-272). She further says,

“However, even if She is a product of men's imaginations, it seems that the Goddess also echoes women's mythic projections. She seems to reflect a general consensus, not just a male assessment, about what is truly primordial and deserves to be material for religious imagery.”

(Gross, 1978, p. 272).

Indian Goddesses have always been depicted in segregated perspectives where they are both powerful and marvellous to look at. They have always been presented as a less-confident character despite her power or beauty. Goddess Durga has always been one of the most famous religious figures in Hindu mythology. The portrayal of Indian Goddess Durga does not have any true access to this 'naming of reality', the process of symbol making that limits the activities of women in society. In reality, her depiction only inspires the evaluation of women, their traits and tasks as per the religious system. Though she is a creation of men who used their imaginations and powers, she possesses the mythical projections of women. It is not only reflecting perception from the male point of view, what she simply reflects is the general harmony depicting the ancient idea that can be used for religious imagery of ‘the

divine'. Though there are three main Gods in Hindu Mythology, Vishnu and Shiva are regarded as the supreme of all Gods. Goddess Durga holds the same position in Hindu mythology along with them, but she is somewhat overshadowed by the third one by the male dominance. Generally, in all the books, she is described in the final chapter of a few words. Her magnificence has nowhere been described as much as the male gods. (Gross, 1978, p. 273). This is definitely a duplicit view.

Sugirtharajah agreed with the argument; she stated that Goddess Durga had been depicted as the omnipotent deity whose powers were manifested in her from the male gods. However, all her forces were emancipated by 'Sakti', the feminine principle of energy. (Sugirtharajah, 2002, p. 101-102). Though Goddess Durga is symbolised as a source of immense power, her association with the male deities takes her at a relatively low level, as published in religious books. According to the paradigm of Brahmanism, femininity is considered to be vigorous yet subordinate as she was primarily created by the association of male powers. Since Durga has always considered herself to be at a lower level compared to the male deities, she has found herself with fewer powers available to her than males deities. This myth predates the idea of prevalent association with the feminine power. The myth explains Brahmanic femininity might be powerful, but it is still subordinate to the male power. The primary power, therefore, becomes a secondary synthesis. It has always been seen that Hindu goddesses are always related to the male gods in various ways. The female goddesses of Hindu mythology mostly hold a dominant position in the religious world and are commonly seen as being paired with some male figures to get identified. This way she belongs to a different hierarchical position while her husband is presented as a guard to her. However, the same thing never happens in the case of the male deities. Moreover, the conventional thoughts go on like this. Whenever a female deity seems

to dominate the masculine power, according to them it is considered as a threatening premonition of an ominous situation. However, the pairs where males are dominating the females promote benevolence “When the feminine dominates the masculine the pair is sinister; when male dominates female the pair is benign.” (Robinson S. P., 1985, p. 186)

Similar scenario is seen in women in Indian society, Gross states,

“It is argued that the women in Goddess-worshipping cultures were not "equal." They were excluded from power in religion and society; they didn't really have power over their own lives; and they were often confined to roles that seemed monotonous and boring to modern women.”

(Gross, 1978, p. 273)

If argued, it is often seen that the female figures of the Goddess-worshipping culture are not the same in comparison with males. In society, ordinary women have been deprived of power. They did not have control over their own lives at all. Such a depiction of their lives has mostly confined them to certain roles and for modern women, it seemed to be quite monotonous. Since women in today's world are multi-talented and have the potential to create a strong difference on earth, they find it gratuitous to present themselves as women with a single perspective. While discussing the icons of Hindu goddesses, Durga is considered to be one of the most important ones. In the stories of Mahisasura Mardini, Durga, the Slayer of the Buffalo Demon, has been presented with an overlay of men's thoughts. If the origin of Durga is discussed, it will show how she was created with the combination of energies of the male gods. She was called up only to win over the 'impossible' as well as 'unconquered'

by the male deities. As soon as she was created, she mounted her lion and was seen in her supreme grace, enchanting beauty and power. Most of her images have been depicted on the battlefield where she is defeating Mahisasura in physical combat. Durga symbolises power, beauty, grace, and universality at once. Her universality leads to her carrying the major theistic traditions of Hindu. The embodiment of power, Durga, is imagined to be a perfect idol of strength and inspiration to common people, irrespective of their genders. She also has various avatars which represent love, kindness, knowledge and so on. (Gross, 1978, p. 280-281).

David Robert Kinsley (1939 - 2000) was an American professor and expert in religious studies. He was fascinated by the Hindu religion, and throughout his life, he made many research trips to India to study the Hindu gods and goddesses, rituals and festivals related to them.

Goddess Durga is regarded as one of the most magnificent goddesses in Hindu mythology. The mythological functions of this Hindu deity include combating the demons causing threats to the universe. She is also depicted in the same way with numerous hands and weapons in them, as a 'battle queen'. She is riding on her lion, which is fierce and unbeatable on the battlefield. The reason for her creation was to slay the buffalo demon and save the cosmos from further destruction and preserve the naturalism on earth. She is famously idolised as the 'Mahisamardini' for defeating the Buffalo Demon or 'Mahisa'. Later on, Goddess Durga becomes connected with Lord Shiva as his wife through the sacred union of marriage. When presented in this shape, Durga gains her identification of Parvati, and she is seen with all her domestic characteristics, and as a loving mother, she plays her role perfectly as well. At 'Durga Puja' her most important festival, she appears with her children, Kartikeya, and Ganesha, along with goddess Saraswati and Lakshmi. In fact, Durga is supposed to

have a connection with crops and fertility as well. It's true that various divine beings have been displayed as warriors or 'demon slayers' in the 'Vedic' literature, but there has not been any Goddesses introduced that have acted as this function. Though the name 'Durga' cited in Vedic literature, "no goddess resembling the warrior goddess of later Hinduism is to be found in these early texts." (Kinsley , 1988, p. 95).

The best-known narrative of 'Durga origin' is something like this; when 'Mahisha' demon defeated all other gods in the battle and evicted them from their kingdoms, Durga was embodied by assembling the powers of main male gods. The essential idea of creating a female goddess was that Mahisa got the blessing of being invincible by any man. While creating the holy figure of Durga, lumps of strength and light from male gods took the shape of a wonderful woman that spread across the globe. Lord Siva formed her face, Vishnu formed the arms, and Yama gave her hair. She was equipped from all the male deities who created her. She received Chakra from Lord Vishnu, Trident from Lord Siva, bow and arrows from Vayu, her vehicle lion by God Himalaya and more. Once created, the lion roared mightily shaking the earth. In a situation where male gods failed to subdue the crisis created by the demon, Durga was originated as a warrior with superior power. In spite of being a woman, this Indian deity proved her superior power by defeating the demon on a battlefield along with her super power and combat abilities. When Mahisasura found Durga alone without the help of male deities, he took her to be a helpless woman just as they have been described in 'Dharma-Sastras'. These scriptures say that women's only role lay in being daughters, sisters, wives and mothers of the males. They lack the ability to hold social significance or control their matters without having any relationship with men. But all the forms of Goddess Durga destroys this conventional thought by presenting her as a fiercely independent and sturdy character without any male

association or support. Though she is too charming and beautiful to describe, these traits never serve to woo her husband but entices her enemies on the battlefield. With her beauty, strength, and intelligence, she has broken all the clichéd concepts of a traditional 'woman' as mentioned in the Hindu law books. (Kinsley, 1988, p. 96-99). “Such a characterization perhaps suggests the extraordinary power that is repressed in women who are forced into submissive and socially demeaning roles.” (Kinsley, 1988, p. 99). It breaks the monotony of expecting a male God to be only superior. This particular role of Goddess Durga inspires the common women to be as powerful as her; to take all the responsibilities on their own and utilise their multi-tasking skills.

The attitude that Hinduism shows towards women depicts some noticeable disparities. Strangely enough, it is now known that the Hindus who have seen a female political leader still believe in the old religious practices where women were described as the weaker sex in the society. Not only in social status, but women were also looked down upon when it came to appointments for religious roles. On the one hand, the idea of Hindu wife and mother who gives life is considered very auspicious in a conventional way. On the other hand, the practice of 'Sati' for the newly-widowed wives causes Hindu women to feel threatened. The newly-widowed bride was expected to give up her life by burning herself alongside her dead husband to prove her devotion towards him. After a long time of practising this inhuman ritual, it sparked controversy among people, and a reformation was demanded by Hindu society. However, there is still a religious practice where banishing widows from society exists in many parts of India even in wealthy families. As per the Hindu sanctuary, the status and ideological presentation of the goddesses is deeply connected with the social role model of Hindu women. The intersecting line of femininity regarding both the figures - where the former image of women portrays various

dimensions of femininity which are considered as revelatory, the latter depicts as the models of women's role in contemporary society. The connecting line is where the cultural construction of a quintessential feminine nature reflects the social construction of the conducts. The social constraints seek to find the relevance between the immortals and the mortals. (Sugirtharajah, 2002, p. 181-183).

3.B.ii. Practical Examples & Alternative Avenues:

Before taking up the subject of feminism in India for further discussion, some visible pieces of evidence are required in the first place. Strangely, in Hindu society, terms like 'Hinduism', 'patriarchy', 'feminism', were never so contextual since Hinduism did not come with the monolithic concept. According to Dr. Sharada Sugirtharajah, it is worthy enough to demonstrate the Hindu perspectives when women's issues are highlighted. She says that while discussing women issues in India, the western feminists need to go beyond the scriptures for understanding Hinduism. Apart from the visual texts, there are many other alternative avenues to explore patriarchy and the roles of women in the society. Since written or visual pieces of evidence are insufficient to rely on, there are no other options, than depending on these avenues.

Journal of Bengali Studies edited by Tamal Dasgupta (Assistant Professor of English in one of the Delhi University colleges) intended to intervene in the theories and discourses of the Bengali Community critically. As I am a Bengali, I can easily relate to the content. Film analysis by Kaustav Kundu in this journal ("Shakto Literature and the 'Durga-Kali' Paradigm: Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay's "The Goddess" as Satyajit Ray's Devi". Vol. 3, No 1) argues the particular point about how the goddess and women paradigm works in India. He analyses Oscar winner Satyajit

Ray's movie 'Devi' (The Goddess). The film 'Devi' depicts how the approbation of the goddess in a woman paved the path to further oppression. The quality of filmmaking enables Satyajit Ray clearly exhibit how strong women can be; he presented the image of a goddess through 'Doyamoyi', created the myth and finally showed how the idea of femininity is wrecked. It is his excellence in production that highlighted the issue by questioning the way women are treated, and this is shown in a very artistic way. He puts forth the question why a female deity in the household is centralised as the root of patriarchal dominance. On the contrary, Ray argues for a society which worships the female deities in reality from an ancient age, it's a surprising that they hold an anti-feminist attitude towards females. "Or in a larger sense, why would a society that has worshipped goddesses from time immemorial be androcentric, misogynist?" (Kundu, 2014, p. 47).

The short story 'Devi' was written by Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay which tells the story of the life of a 16-year old wife, 'Doyamoyi', who was chosen by her father-in-law Kalikinkar, while being an incarnation of Mother Goddess. It showed the reality of tradition-bound, religious women in Indian society. This story is still valid in many parts of India, even in the 21st century. The difference between religious thinking and so-called social expectation on a woman's role is visible in the movie. Goddesses often portrayed in Indian mythology are presented as uncontrollable, independent, and free spirits who can dance freely all around the universe. But in the case of 'Doyamoyi', she is bound by all the conventional responsibilities and subjected to social morality, in her dignified 'Indian attire' with a veil on her head. According to the social belief, this significant honour and respect from her family should be enough for an Indian woman. In the movie, her voice, posture, and actions are submissive and contained. She should not ask or expect anything. Moreover, she is not permitted to

post any letter to her husband. The social obligations keep torturing her from every aspect, but she can't protest against it. (Kundu, 2014, p. 50-51).

Figure 13. Screenshot of Satyajit Ray's film *Devi* in 1960. (Kundu, 2014, p. 51)

If screenshots (**Figure 13**) of Satyajit Ray's film *Devi* are observed closely, an innate discrepancy could be seen, the smile of Doyamoyi is restrained, while that of the goddess is spontaneous. The sensuality of Doyamoyi is restrained while that of the goddesses is uninhibited. Although the expectations from the idol and real life Doyamoyi were almost the same, their functions originated from different perspectives which are too distant to be connected. "They may both remain the object of the wishes and desires of others" (Kundu, 2014, p. 50). From the primitive age in India, it has been a part of cultural belief that women in this society are ought to be shy, calm, quiet, kind-hearted and soft-spoken and Doyamoyi was no exception. When she was idolised by Kalikinkar, she could not find anything to say and lowered her eyes as a symbol of acceptance. But the question arises; how was it possible for Kalikinkar to establish an unpredictable association between these opposing personalities? It was in no way justified to validate a human by the divine. Lots of women who believed in this tradition might consider this an honourable association or find that it is glorifying the position of the Indian woman and it should be repeated.

However, the truth is that “The association, however, is one that is made by a patriarchal society.” (Kundu, 2014, p. 52). Men such as Kalikinkar always possess a tendency to extract the woman from a particular personality into a compassionate goddess and expect her to perform a nurturing role towards themselves and the other members of the extended family. The individual identity of the woman is subsumed under that of the goddess, and she is forced to live in accordance with the image of the other. As in the movie, the third eye is symbolically superimposed and she has been blamed for every mishap that took place.

Figure 14. Screenshot of Satyajit Ray’s film *Devi* in 1960. (Kundu, 2014, p. 52)

The religious aristocrat Hindu family’s daughters, daughters-in-law and their individual qualities were mostly subdued. Their desires, longings, time and space were all captured by others. It is quite astonishing to note that Indian women who are often incorporated into the ideologically divine and supreme Hindu goddesses, are not able to obtain honour or their real value with this divine paradigm. Rather they are

forced to give up their characteristics and assume certain qualities of the goddess. However, again, they are not given the freedom to choose the divine quality they need to assume or enjoy the facilities of being a goddess. The entire system of imposing divinity on a woman was a masculine idea to serve masculine interests. (Kundu, 2014, p. 52).

Since I am discussing the Indian women's situation, sharing my own experiences will not be irrelevant. It is only possible in a country like India where women are objectified for the well-being of their families. They are often told that their religious practice will bring good luck to the family, and they undergo weird procedures such as holding burning pots on their heads and laps to ward off evils from their families. Moreover, in some cases, women in Indian society feel proud to be a bearer of the social beliefs like keeping an uncut hair for ages, again for the wellbeing of their families. Other real life stories of exorcism in India say that when a woman suffers from epilepsy, her family believes that possession by some evil spirit causes it. Despite living a religious life, widows in rural areas are sent to 'ashramas' in their old age when all she wants to look away from their 'Guru'. Victims of superstitious beliefs, women are drugged heavily, beaten on different religious occasions to prove that some evil power possessed them; all her unnatural behaviours are taken to be the descent of God on her, especially during the conduct of various religious functions in rural India. Where ignorance has been the core reason for all these treatments, in rural areas to date, female children are not at all treated the same as the male ones. While bread winning is important for the male members of society, female children are seen only as objects for marriage. They are dominated in the name of religion and superstitions.

Religion has been an extremely important as well as sensitive matter in the Indian society. A strong connection has always been seen there between 'Feminism' and the 'Indian Goddesses'. Hinduism has encouraged the males to adulate the feminine divinities by worshipping them with proper rituals, but it never decreased the gender inequality in Indian society. Rather, males were privileged with the rights to worship Gods only. Though the Indian goddesses are being discussed here, the ordinary Indian women and ideological characters are very different. The Indian mythological goddesses possess immense power and strength, while their human counterparts, the ordinary Indian women, languish uncared for, unhonoured, unsung and unwept, treated as mere objects of enjoyment and to be abandoned in their old age, all due to the ceaseless domination of patriarchy.

Other evidence:

Urvashi Aneja and Vidisha Misra mentioned on their blog, which claims that only 29% of Indian internet users are women and social marginalisation of women will always remain until the digital gender division improves. For instance, 43% of Indian men have cell phones whereas women are lagging behind at 28%. This imbalance in mobile ownership figures also proves the fact that gender inequality still exists in this country. A number of illiterate women in semi-rural areas of India own mobile phones for the only purpose of pressing the green button to answer the incoming calls as instructed by their husbands. They do not even know their cell numbers. Numerous reports of 'khap panchayats' have been there since 2010 for restricting and banning the usage of mobile phone by women. More recently, it has been reported by a village panchayat in Mathura that girls will be charged Rupees 2,100 for using mobile phones outside their homes. Though the scenario in urban India is a little bit different, gender inequality still exists there too. In spite of the increased

numbers of women enrolled in the field of technology, they are mainly found doing the back-office tasks whereas men dominate the specialised jobs. This structural discrimination seems to leave women vulnerable and makes it easier to develop alternative mechanisms. No matter how much more is done to improve the broadband infrastructure or internet services in India, the dream of 'Digital India' can become a reality only when the gender division is abolished from the society as well as the mindset of common people. Otherwise, the digital age will not only deprecate the marginalised but also worsen the hierarchies present between the genders. (Aneja & Misra, 2017).

Answering a question as to why most Indian women were not able to be strong and assertive about their own lives, the famous actress, Renuka Shahane, replied forcefully, "Women are strong. Period!" She said that "women crucially sacrifice everything for their families – before considering their own well-being, they consider their families first." Quoted from (Verma, 2017). At times, women do come forward with new and path-breaking thoughts and the ideas of their new thoughts, but gradually, they all fail to implement them and limit themselves to the old traditions. People love to watch characters which are larger than life, but the shows do not reflect the contribution of the women in the society properly. Since television is a reliable medium of communication that reaches out to the audience quickly, the representation should be more direct. Showing women from a single perspective as a good homemaker will never solve this issue. Stories of working women can leave a positive effect on the masses and as Renuka believes that a blogger or writer can easily influence people with their words, more than anyone else. Leaving the societal norms behind, a blogger should pen down his/her feelings about those issues which are affecting the society at every moment. (Verma, 2017).

Another graphic portrayal of women's present condition in India is the suicide of Majula Devak, a Delhi IIT student, in May 2017. She was found hanging from a fan. Since Devak left no suicide note, it's not clear what exactly forced her to commit suicide. But her death once again raised the ugly question of society being against the success of women who want to live on their terms, shaking off the fetters of rules imposed by society. Some said that the pressure of pursuing a doctorate was intolerable for her whereas Devak's guide and academic mentor stated that she was doing very well in her studies and four of her articles were published in international journals. Her disturbed personal life came to light when Devak's father told a reporter, "It was a mistake to educate my daughter and send her to IIT. I should have saved all the money for her dowry." (Lama, 2017). In spite of being a bright IIT student with a promising career to look forward to, Devak was suffering from psychological issues caused by her husband Ritesh who wanted her to quit research and demanded a dowry of Rupees 20-25lakhs to start his own business. From 2013, she was married to Ritesh. Even though they were living separately for over a year, Devak never applied for a divorce considering the social stigma that would attach to herself and her family. When asked about the early marriage of Devak, her parents said that it happened because Manjula and Ritesh's horoscopes matched perfectly. It is not just the story of Devak; most of the Indian women who are willing to fly high face the same issue. They either have to compromise or are held back by physical or mental restraints, so that men can continue to control them and cling on to their false pride.

India is a 'remarkable' country where the law says that marital rape cannot be considered illegal. Indian journalist and blogger Roma Rajpal points out that a committee of 31 members, including two female members, decided to take the Anti-

Rape bill to Parliament which said that undoubtedly, marital rape has a strong potential to affect the institution of marriage severely. They tried to explain the cause:

“It is considered that the concept of marital rape, as understood internationally, cannot be suitably applied in the Indian context due to various factors like level of education/illiteracy, poverty, myriad social customs and values, religious beliefs, mindset of the society to treat the marriage as a sacrament etc.”

Taken from (Rajpal, 2016).

In India, things have often been going along the same way as past years where families have resolved their problems within themselves, and if the marital rape is brought under law, it will cause stress to the family. The topic of sex is considered as a taboo to be discussed in India, and according to the religious leaders, people here believe that sex is an activity to be performed between two different genders to continue the lineage and in most cases, they expect a baby boy. So, questioning whether gender inequality exists in this country or not, is simply not worth it.

India has its way of explaining the cases of molestation and female safety issues by blaming the victims for their outfits and the western culture as well. They say sex, late night parties, modern outfits – everything that comes from the western culture incites people to commit rape and molestation. In the context of 'mass molestation' in Bangalore during New Year's Eve where the molesters were recorded on CCTV, Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara commented that sexual assault or molestation was never being influenced by the Indian culture. Another leader of a political party officially blamed the western influences stating that partying late at night dressed in 'half-attire' is not in Indian culture. Moreover, the victims' families

have also been blamed by them for not taking precautions while bringing up their children. But what activists say is that gender sensitisation should be taught everywhere, be it at school, college or a work place. Both men and women need to be educated to make the thought of gender equality prevail. Kaimini Jaiswal, a legal expert and lawyer at India's Supreme Court also supports this view. She adds that the women in the bigger metropolitan cities are living a different life from those in the rural areas where lifting their heads is impossible for females. In order to change the current scenario where women are being dominated, they need to be educated, empowered and made aware of their rights. (Rahn, 2017).

Offender known to rape victim in over 95% cases

Figure 15. Crime Against Indian Women. (D. Tiwary, 2016).

The question of gender inequality was again raised when the entire country was taken aback with the fatal gang rape case which took place in New Delhi on December 16, 2012. Rape cases are nothing new in India, but the death of 'Nirbhaya' (named by the countrymen) triggered international rage. Though nowadays Indian women are no longer silent, lawyer and rights activist Vrinda Grover says that there is a long way to go yet. She mentions, "It is one of the biggest horrors: we have an entire political class, and we have the dominant cast-and-class-syndrome, which actually refuses to allow women to live as equal citizens in the country." (Felden, 2014).

The political parties have always raised the issues of domestic violence against women only during the time of the election. But in reality, none of them is truly aware of women rights or their freedom. In most cases, women are treated as subordinates and 'toys' in the society. Whenever there are communal riots or some other political disturbances, their bodies become soft targets irrespective of their age, caste or religion. These kinds of biased views have continued everywhere, be it a middle-class family, a police station or a courtroom. (Felden, 2014)

Leslee Udwin, the maker of rape documentary on Delhi Gang Rape, 2012 India's Daughter,' says in an interview that 'Time has come to tackle gender inequality', and 'India's Daughter' brings gender inequality, violence against women into sharp focus'. She has opened up about the difficulties she had to face during her filmmaking. Udwin said,

"What I learned from these encounters is the degree to which society itself is responsible for these men and their actions, -- These rapists are

not the disease, they are the symptoms. Gender inequality is the disease."

(Udwin, 2015).

Her film on Delhi gang rape revealed the truth of male attitudes in Indian society through the interview of one of the rapists, Mukesh Singh, who was not at all ashamed of what he did and blamed the victim for not being a decent girl instead. It was only because she was roaming on the roads of Delhi late at night which is wrong according to him and the other convicts. Unfortunately, this is the reality of what most of the Indian men think about women. According to Mukesh, a girl is always more responsible for the rape than a boy. A certain number of rules and regulations are there in society (created by men to be more specific) which women should abide by ranging from her outfit, attitude, words and everything else. As Leslee Udwin stated, the rapists were common, and ordinary men, holding the disease of gender inequality in their minds. Mukesh suggested that women should never step into discos or bars and what's more, a victim should never try to protect herself from the rapists. This will not provoke the rapists to kill the victims after the rape is done. (Udwin, 2015).

The "India rape" story has almost replaced the "India rising" story, explains Shivam Vij. Shivam Vij, is a journalist with the Indian news website Scroll.in. He tweets as @DilliDurAst. Though the Indian government permitted Leslee Udwin to interview the rapists in the jail, it caused an embarrassing situation for them afterwards, as the movie was being shown throughout the world. So, the documentary was soon banned by the government and made inaccessible in India. But this film was strong enough to leave a message on the rape culture that is going on in India only because of the thought process of Indian men. Blogger and journalist Shivam Vij

stated a very important fact that “Hearing the rapists is important because unless we hear rape culture spelled out in its ugly reality, we are not going to be able to counter it.” (Vij, 2015). The gender stereotype thoughts are also responsible for injecting gender inequality in the Indian society. The inevitable battle starts from the moment you are born on earth. Society will keep teaching the male child conventional thoughts such as 'Boys don't cry', 'Boys don't cook', and so on which results in creating a man who turns into an irresponsible parent. Boys in Indian society need more lessons on gender equality so that the change can be initiated in society. A commercial advertisement has recently shown how easily the stereotypical thoughts can be removed from society and a fresh thought of equality can prevail. It says all you need is to give way to an open-minded attitude everywhere including workplace, household works or other activities. This will not only make this country a better place to live in but the questions of women security will no longer be raised. In the previously mentioned Delhi gang rape, it was clear that girl was victimised to prove how strong the men are. In this patriarchal society, a man only can decide. If a woman has free-will she becomes a rape victim. A rapist is often embraced in Indian society but the rape victim is outcast. Acid attacks and domestic violence are considered two of the most common incidents where men show their power over women for saying 'No' to them or protesting against them. It not only just inflicts physical injuries but also destroys the victim's entire life, leaving the scars of the heinous crime on the body and the mind of the victim.

Goddesses are worshipped whereas women are disrespected. The eighth day of Durga Puja is considered as Ashtami, one of the most important days in Navratri when the marital side of Durga is remembered. The religious significance of Ashtami is that Astra Puja offers the weapons of Durga. According to Hindu mythology, the

arms of Durga were provided by the male gods as they all were unable to fight against Mahisasura in the battle. Since she was created by the male gods, she is often taken as a weaker warrior whereas nobody recounts how efficient she was in handling a large army as well as her weapons against the enemy. If she didn't have it in her, the powers would have become worthless. Still, she is mentioned after the male gods, and this is the place where gender inequality lives on more prominently. Amidst so many misogynist concepts present in Hindu society, the tradition of goddess worship has been a common practice. In the first place, women are worshipped and on the other hand, women in this 21st century are still burnt alive, starved, cursed to be a woman, beaten and raped frequently. They are taught to be calm, quiet, be submissive, not raise their voice and be perfect in every way. Perhaps in indigenous culture duplicity is more prominent and the problem is more complicated, and the most difficult part is that people in India don't want to talk about their culture or conditions very easily. Maybe this is a characteristic of a patriarchal society which has existed for decades. (Sugirtharajah, 2002, p. 104).

It is quite strange to believe that among the existing rape survivors in India, female children have their share of suffering too. Often girl children are killed in their mother's womb and if they are lucky and safely born, they find themselves in a suffocating and biased society where everybody will be blaming them for every single turn of their lives. So, possibly it is not that important to worship a goddess with all the rituals and courtesy attached when women cannot be respected and are objectified throughout their lives. In a male dominated society like India, most of the women have been facing exploitation and oppression at every step of their lives. A woman has to face endless difficulties throughout her life. And the male chauvinists in society always try to suppress or eliminate her- either in the form of female foeticide or the

form of child marriage, and this suppression leads to more crimes against women. Though it is difficult to understand why a rapist commits the crime, society needs to recognise that being raped is a crime, committed by a male, and stop blaming a woman for being raped. A rape victim faces so many issues to survive in the society whereas her assailant does not. What is mostly required is to inject the thought of equality in the minds of society so that every girl in India can breathe freely, feel safe and live a life she dreams of.

3.C. Commonalities of the two characters (Wonder Woman and Goddess Durga)

Wonder Woman and Goddess Durga, have been selected as the two characters because of their commonalities in terms of strength and status in the contemporary society. Also, there is another reason to take both of these female characters to find out the element of duplicity as they are interpreted as the comic book heroines. Wonder Woman was a comic book character from the beginning of her creation by Marston in 1941; but on another hand, Goddess Durga was a mythological figure, who was portrayed as a comic character later in Amar Chitra Katha (Immortal Picture Stories), Tales of Durga (no. 176, 1978) founded by Anant Pai. In recent times, through the introduction of Wonder Woman and the Goddess Durga in the literature, this study has specifically described how gender inequality still exists in both western culture and indigenous culture. (McLain, 2008, p. Abstract)

3.C.i. Chapter Introduction

Though both Wonder Woman and Goddess Durga belong to different spheres, they are both confident about themselves and are considered to be idols to women

throughout the world. Both of them have been portrayed as powerful and charming characters without losing their feminine qualities. Wonder Woman was the creation of Marston to encourage women to come out of their houses and psychological shells and get empowered whereas Goddess Durga was created by the male powers in order to fight against the buffalo demon who caused a threat to the world. From the very beginning, I have discussed why Wonder Woman is a great example for women across the globe or how Goddess Durga has an impact on the women. The points of commonality between these two have been depicted in the following chapter so that they can become more related.

3.C.ii. Depiction of the Super Heroines on the Battlefield

Suppression of women is nothing new as it has been seen in various places of the new 'Wonder Woman' 2017 movie. The very moment when Diana is found standing alone on the battlefield where a battalion of soldiers tried to send her back, and she repulses them, the strength of Wonder Woman becomes evident (noticeable through this metaphor). As indicated earlier, the kindness and emotion of Wonder Woman made her stronger. Seeing the civilians fighting terribly in the battle, she could not prevent herself from taking the charge of the battle from the middle of a trench. Though Steve informed her that saving everyone would not be possible on the battlefield, Diana was not convinced because she was never taught that she would be unable to do something just because she was a woman. Still, she was often taken for granted since she belonged to the feminine gender.

The situation is no different in the indigenous culture. Goddess Durga is one of the most commonly worshipped female deities in India. During her incarnation, she was blessed with ten arms, three eyes, weapons and elemental powers from the male gods that made her 'invincible'. When all the male divinities were defeated by the

demons, Goddess Durga was created by combining their powers. She projected omnipotence; her three eyes were ornamented by the crescent moon and weapons in her hand symbolised vigour and voracious strength. After a long fight, she felled the buffalo demon to the ground and thrashed the trident through his neck to behead him at a single stroke. But the irony lies in the depiction of such a powerful goddess and her mention after the male gods for being created by their powers. (Robinson S. P., 1985, p. 186)

3.C.iii. Mythological commonality:

It was around 1200 B.C. when the Amazons were created after the Greek goddesses decided to place the souls of the dead women who were killed by men, on the island. Of all the souls, only one was held back to initiate the birth of Diana. She was created by Hippolyta, her mother, who moulded her out of some clay as a baby girl on Paradise Island. Then the six members of the Greek Pantheon put life into the clay and this way, Diana, the Wonder Woman, took its shape in reality. On her birth of 'Diana', was blessed by the six members with certain powers and gifts; 'Demeter' gave her strength, 'Artemis' gifted the heart of a hunter and powers of communication with the animals, 'Hestia' presented her sisterhood with fire, wisdom and courage were offered by 'Athena', 'Aphrodite' gave her beauty and a loving heart, and 'Hermes' blessed her with speed as well as the power of flight. (DC Wikia, N.D).

The creation of Goddess Durga finds relevance in this above context. When the universe was terrified by the atrocities of the buffalo demon and the male deities failed to subdue him, Goddess Durga was created from their powers. After her creation, Durga was blessed by all the gods and each of them gifted her some power and weapons for her ten hands, with Lord Vishnu giving her 'chakra', Lotus offered by Lord Brahma, and a fierce lion being given by Lord Himalaya as a mount, while

Lord Indra and Shiva providing her with the thunderbolt and trident respectively. Being an eternal source of power, Goddess Durga was presented with three eyes signifying sun, moon and the fire along with the past, present and future which symbolised that three worlds are ruled by her. (Kinsley , 1988, p. 96-97). So a close connection can be found in both of these female super heroines who are also commonly presented as comic book heroines. Marston created the comic of Wonder Woman whereas Goddess Durga is also seen as female super heroine in the 'Hindu Devi Mahatmya' Scripture. This way both the female superheroes share a mythological commonality by receiving their powers from the gods.

Figure 16. Creation of Durga (McLain, 2008, p. 308)

So, a close connection can be found in both of these female super heroines who are also commonly presented as comic book heroines. Marston created the comic

of Wonder Woman whereas Goddess Durga is also seen as female super heroine in the 'Hindu Devi Mahatmya' Scripture. This way both the female superheroines share their part in mythological commonality by receiving their powers from the gods.

3.C.iv. Ideological Commonality

Not only mythologically, but Wonder Woman and Goddess Durga also share some ideological commonalities as well. It has been mentioned several times throughout the thesis that both of them are equally powerful and perhaps more powerful than the male superheroes. But unlike the male deities, they carry an alluring appearance to manipulate the enemies on the battlefield and defeat them easily. In fact, when counted on the ground of combining beauty and power Durga can be considered as more powerful than the male gods.

Wonder Woman was created by Marston in such a context where men were out on the battlefield and women needed to enter the outside world for taking on the role of breadwinners. That very scenario called for empowerment of women in order to take care of their household and make them brave enough to face the world. Again, Goddess Durga can be juxtaposed with Wonder Woman in terms of creation as she was also product of the combined powers of the male deities created to combat evil and save the universe. On a psychological level, both of these characters are also connected to real-life women. Indian women are often compared with Goddess Durga for their beauty and strength into maintaining their household and their jobs, bearing children and earning money to support their families as well. They are compared with Goddess Durga for their tenacity, power and indomitable mentality. The same goes for Wonder Woman as well. When the Second World War was over, and men returned

home, she was to be found taking care of the household also. So, a sense of multitasking has always been there between these two super heroines and both the characters were emotionally strong to understand others' state. Wonder woman was found crying in utter despair when she found herself helpless, whereas Goddess Durga has been sympathetic to the common people.

From a female perspective, Wonder Woman and Durga – both are often considered to be feminists. They are beautiful, independent, strong and knowledgeable and this is the reason why in the indigenous culture, Durga is looked upon as a feminist icon.

3.C.v. Unfeminist moments:

Though Wonder Woman increased her perception as a feminist icon when she appeared on the first cover of Gloria Steinem's Ms. Magazine and this way, her image was connected to the women's rights movement whereas Goddess Durga is considered as a model of super power for the Indian women, unfeminist moments were also present there in their depiction.

Popularly known as the solo film with a female superhero in action, 'Wonder Woman' has left a great impact on the viewers' mind with the representation of women as a compassionate gender in the film. One of the important things you learn about Wonder Woman from this movie is that Wonder Woman (Diana, Gal Gadot in the Wonder Woman 2017 movie) belongs to Amazon, home to all-female where the Amazonian warriors were trained. Since childhood Diana had been grown up amidst the real-life athletes and lived a life like the Amazonian warriors, she believed that nothing was impossible for her.

An interesting twist is present regarding the feminist outlook of both Wonder Woman and Goddess Durga. Though Wonder Woman was announced as an honorary member of the Justice Society of America, her official position remained only a “secretary”, which can be considered as an undeniable distinction from the fellow superheroes. On the other hand, Durga instead of being extremely beautiful and strong was mocked by the Buffalo demon when he faced her on the battlefield. So, the similarities lie in two ways. First, both of these super heroines were 'The Most Powerful ones among the guys' and secondly, they were equally mocked and looked down upon by men. No matter how much power they owned, they had received inferior treatment in every step for being a woman.

3.C.vi. Patriarchy is strongly disregarded

In her comic book legacy, whenever she was ignored by the men or was laughed at for the position of secretary, Wonder Woman keeps saving the male companions around. Though she was not given so much power as the Secretary of Justice Society, she preferred holding the position rather than submitting herself to slavery. Several social expectations are there which are presumed to be carried out by women and unfortunately the story is the same till today, right from ancient time. But due to her upbringing on Paradise Island, she was not aware of those expectations and even after learning, she didn't care. Throughout the movie, Diana was admired for her undaunted attitude, femininity, strength and emotionality. She never regretted being a woman rather her emotions uplifted her position more in the world of super heroines. Firstly, she was also judged by her beauty and gender like every other woman is viewed in real life; but later, her unbeatable performance in the battle spoke for her.

Figure 17. "Ho! A Mare Female!". (McLain, 2008, p. 309).

In the mythological story of Goddess Durga, a similar incident took place when Durga arrived at the battlefield in her armour. Her beauty was so enticing and the buffalo demon was so much captivated by it that he even thought of marrying her. She was again objectified for being a female by gender. The demon could never think that a woman would have such power to defeat him showing the perceived way in which women have always been presented in Indian society. (McLain, 2008, p. 309)

3.D. Chapter Summary:

Both Wonder Woman and Goddess Durga have been facing the issues of gender inequality in the society. While on the battle field they are seen fighting against the enemies, men are attracted by their beauty, and at times, it becomes the reason of depreciating them. Wonder Woman was mocked by the soldiers whereas it never seemed odd to Mahisasura that a woman could also defeat him as women were always considered as the fragile gender, making him appear invincible in the view of other men. In both the cases, no matter how powerful these super heroines maybe they were

suppressed by the males as well as society. Firstly, they were considered as feminist icons and then in real life, women throughout the world are still suffering from inequality, ignorance and male dominance. In spite of being incredibly multifaceted, women are still looked upon as the weaker sexes in society, where they are mostly protected by males; not just in the society, and the stories of female deities from Hindu mythology depict the same. They are seen as the female counterparts of the male gods despite being equally powerful and Durga, being an extremely independent character, gets less recognition when compared to other male gods. Nobody cares that the emotions of these super heroines make them more powerful than the male superheroes. It seems that after their creation, they faced inequality at almost every turn.

Chapter 4. Final Output:

In this chapter, I am explaining how I have created the illustrations, the main idea, inspirations behind it along with the experiment procedure or the method I have followed and they are correlating to the idea of duplicity.

The final output is an artistic exploration, which articulates the multifaceted characteristics or emotions women go through experiencing gender inequality in various dimension of life.

Figure 18. 'Final Output'. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

It is true that representation of emotion of women is not that easy to be presented within one illustration, but this experiment will establish my point that women can never be identified from single perspective or mindset since they possessed multifaceted features and blessed with the strength to fight against all the odds.

The light projection videos are placed in two online portfolios. To see how the images change with Red, Green and Blue LED light. please visit any of this links given below:

<http://www.dipanwita-biswas.com/rgb-multi-imaging/>

<https://dipanwita-biswas-gml5.squarespace.com/rgb-multi-imaging>

4.A. Chapter Introduction:

The creative output of my research will be an original figurative illustration supported by this traditional thesis. The aim of this illustrations is to introduce digital techniques that allow a shift in portrayal of the female gender from the one or multi-dimensional superficial imagery to a more comprehensive articulation of the multi-dimensional and varied capabilities of the feminine gender.

The theory of shift or multi-imaging is very decisive concerning our understanding of how the individual viewer makes a connection to the design. The final output of this research suggests that digital design must enable the viewer to connect meaningfully with the design which is also considered as the most important part of an 'interactive design'. With the help of the interactive illustration, I have expressed how the capability of duality explored through 'design' and 'research for design' and how it informs 'design practice'. Because of its multi-imaging quality, it increases the experience of a designer as an informer of aesthetics, and the experience of the witness.

4.B. Aim & Objectives

The creative output of my research will be an original Portrait illustration supported by this traditional thesis. The aim of this illustration is to introduce digital techniques that allow a shift in female gender illustration from the single or multi-dimensional superficial imagery to a more comprehensive articulation of the multifarious and varied capabilities of the feminine gender. The creative output has

been presented in online portfolios and in the traditional thesis format to cover the subject in the exegesis.

4.C. Design & Interaction:

Ideas of aesthetics broadly analyse two important areas of argument in the philosophy of artwork. On the one hand, aesthetics play an important role in the characterization of responses to artwork; and on the other, regulates our interaction with artwork. Therefore, interaction with artwork is often connected with experiment and emotion. Art & Aesthetics are interconnected. The American contemporary art philosopher Noël Carroll asserts, “aesthetic responses distinguish our responses to art, and that art objects can be defined in terms of the aesthetic-though ostensibly independent, can nevertheless, be connected by means of a neat commonsensical approach” (Carroll, 1986, p. 57).

The purpose of making an Art object is often to interact with the viewer to get a certain form of response. Since art underwent a long term metamorphosis with the interplay of various cultures, the experience comprises of aesthetic activities to some extent and engagement in interpretive play.

On the question of whether comic book serials like The Wonder Woman or Amar Chitra Katha are art, Carroll states,

“At that point, we have a reason to regard the comics as art, and the burden of proof is on the skeptic who must show that the alleged allegories are either merely fanciful concoctions of mine or are so

transparent that it is outlandish to suppose that they warrant a response sophisticated enough to be counted as an interpretation.”

(Carroll, 1986, p. 67).

Eventually, it is important for a designer or an artist to realize his/her responsibilities towards the content provided through his/her responsive artwork or design, interacting with people gradually. And the artist will be solely responsible for the outcome or influence created by his/her artwork. Design experiments perusing self-reactions through multi imaging influenced by a duplicit view about gender equality are unconventional, but not abrupt. My own understanding and knowledge have also developed further along with the knowledge of other possible design processes. In the course of designing, I had gained a better realization and produced an idiosyncratic and interactive experience.

4.D. Inspirations:

I am often inspired by the quotes I came across during this research. Quite a number of quotes inspired me to come up with this outcome, but they are too numerous to burden the reader with. However, the one reproduced below, by the Novelist and Feminist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a significant one.

“Gender as it functions today is a grave injustice. I am angry. We should all be angry. Anger has a long history of bringing about positive change. In addition to anger, I am also hopeful, because I believe deeply in the ability of human beings to remake themselves for the better.”

(Adichie, 2014, p. 11)

My work depends on the complete intuition of an artist, combining literary evidence, the reality and personal perception. I was looking for a technique which can help me show the multi-dimensional view; that is how I started working on this technique. This illustration will point out recompenses to the problem of gender inequality which is still a valid point to argue in contemporary times. We need to accept it; an ostrich-like attitude of pretending that everything is alright when it is not, will not help in the long run. Though I am angry but hopeful over the issue, because I believe that humanity will eventually evolve toward good, but we need to make a strenuous effort at that, to do that. This illustration is my comprehensive acknowledgment of gender inequality as an educated, modern Indian woman.

This illustration is an assorted visual evidence of how alteration in our information environment and in digital technology transform our relationship with material, information and our existence and refers to the duplicit notion of women in society. My work is strongly motivated by the current plight of women in the society. When Artists use technology and information by necessity, it also involves them emotionally, and they easily experience a sentimental and observational bonding. Our advancement of the informational environment, easy access to technology and distribution of data circulation, present an appropriate platform for analysing the relationships between the material, information, and our physicality which encouraged me to utilise digital media as a tool.

4.D.i. My Past Work:

My work has also often been influenced by women, their expression of life experiences and the modern interpretation of life. My paintings often interpret a story of existence and non-existence of women, their aspirations and reality. As with a painting, a good story needs both narration and points of reflection, and this is what I mostly try to follow when I create. In my paintings, I intend to talk about the story and how I feel about it and also emotionally move others, providing them with a special emotional takeaway from my work. As a visual artist, I also believe that my work is an interpretation of circumstances and the need for self-definition.

A lot of elements in my paintings and artwork were also inspired by real life incidents or personal; connecting the process of inspiration, intuition, and adaptation from real life makes the work more sensational. It makes me think and feel what I see every day but often ignore. But Art has capabilities to re-inspire and make us focussed.

I have personally experienced the defining moment in life; the way an Indian Woman has ever been able to experience gender discrimination as well as cultural differences. I felt more connected when I chose this as subject for the thesis, as an outlet for the most intimate of personal feelings. The responsibility of an artist is deeply rooted in the transformation of the world he/she is witnessing and recording on to a canvas or in various media. Only through that battle of expression we can define and distinguish who we are and what we are becoming. I also acknowledge the need for reviving old cultural traditions for the sake of empowering women especially in the Indigenous society, in today's world, where everything is changing, and society is in a state of constant flux. No one bears pain and suffers sorrow patiently like a woman, but she emerges strong ultimately as a warrior with distinction. My obsession is women and their facial expressions, through which I try to give them a possible

indifferent appearance as the reflection of divinity and sanctuary of serenity. I intend to create a digital art to reflect Women's probable reciprocity to partiality, dissatisfaction, and objection concerning gender inequality with growing modernism. I have used certain colours such as cyan, magenta and yellow in every single layer, to create multi-dimensional perceptions through image and colour manipulations, colour projection and layering. My visual expression in the form of this digital print is my response to the duplicit view we still harbour and experience. A story through a visual interpretation that still needs to be told to convince the viewers to rethink Gender equality which is not achieved yet. This story doesn't have an ending and leaves space for the viewer to amend. If design builds up human spirit, then it can create culture and thinking and diversify our emotionality and cultural value.

4.D.ii. Influence of Other Creative People:

To develop the technique, I searched for other artists who have also tried to create multiple images in single surface and came across a few brilliant Art influences and artists who have significantly affected these illustrations which I am presenting as the final output of the research; I would like to refer specifically to the Harris Shutter Effect, Carnovsky and few other print media based artist groups.

Harris Shutter Effect:

Figure 19. Example of Harris Shutter Effect. (Thiophene_Guy, 2016).

Robert S. "Bob" Harris of Kodak discovered the strip device named as 'The Harris Shutter' to create colour with the different primary colour layers exposed at separate time intervals in succession. This technique can be tried out by using such a camera that permits in-register several exposures and keeps changing the filters in front of the lens. An alternative way of this process is to create a drop with photographs the three coloured gels and two opaque sections that are dropped through a filter holder during the exposure. It's amazing how a few filters, the right technique and a good imagination can draw a unique picture. We all know the effort that goes into the shots we take here on Lomography. Composition, technique and style are a few of the things that we pour so much thought and time on. True enough, with the correct settings, vision and imagination, we get to produce noteworthy prints we can feature in our own albums and walls. Robert Harris has created a unique style that is used up to this day.

The Harris shutter effect, a technique in which three filter images are stacked onto one another creates a uniquely beautiful print that is genuinely analogous in taste. This technique is done by using three different filters in primary colours and in quick succession to create a ghostly effect characterised by outstanding colour intensity. Harris invented the technique to develop colour photos for Kodak. It's amazing how one technique meant for developing negatives can turn out to be a creative way of expression and transformation of imagination to material representation. Though replicated quickly in digital form using Photoshop, nothing seems to replace the effort put into the technique which links the photographer, his camera and subject in a unified triffecta of colours. It has that 3D film feels to it.

Carnovsky:

The biggest influence behind using this RGB technique is Carnovsky, the Milan based artist/designer duo Francesco Rugi and Silvia Quintanilla.

Figure 20. Francesco Rugi and Silvia Quintanilla. (Space Gallery, 2012)

In their ongoing series entitled RGB, the duo creates incredible artworks that get completely transformed when viewed through different coloured filters. This collective Carnovsky presents 'RGB', an exhibition which showcases a series of wallpapers that mutate and interact with different chromatic stimulus. The wall coverings consist of three different patterns in red, yellow and blue, which when overlapped, resulting in a disorientation of images. Their work is widely recognized. It has been published in many magazines around the world, such as Frame, Wallpaper, Elle Décor, Whitewall, Vogue, and Wired, among others, as well as in lots of blogs. Their wallpaper “Jungla,” presented in London at “DreamBags JaguarShoes” in 2011, won the 2012 Wallpaper Magazine Design Award for Best Wallpaper.

Carnovsky has not only exhibited the RGB series at solo shows around the world, but have experimented on different surfaces and canvases such as scarves, wallpapers, skins and framed prints. They are not simply static designs, but commingle before the eye and “interact with different chromatic stimulus.” This technique is realized by overlapping three primary colour images. One of their main characteristics as a team is that for them, it is really important to work at the threshold between art and design. Let’s say that they have an artistic approach towards design and a design approach towards art which is a great inspiration to me as a visual artist. They rather try to look at world other ways, maybe to create unexpected links, to try to do things in a somehow different way, such as “painting” frescos through wallpaper or making architecture through purses.

Quintanilla and Rugi are inspired by antique natural history books and engraving techniques, resulting in a colour-drenched oeuvre that blends detailed figuration with a hypnotic palette. All the jumbled lines, as well as colours on the wall, are separated into three different pieces of art within the same physical space. They

create a kind of colour puzzle that seems to be apparent with the shifting of the ambient lights. The RGB murals look chaotic though it is perfect in the RGB light. The major ideas in their arts are the continuously moving emotional landscapes, atmospheric landscapes, perspective landscapes, ephemeral landscapes, and architectonic landscapes in continuous movement.

These artists are using different time span and using the shift of three different images based on a particular subject. I have used human expressions of females with the same technique keeping different time phase, and this is something they have not used yet.

10 Artists, Illustrators and Designers Using Print Media:

Apart from Carnovsky, there are a few more artists who are fighting to keep the printing alive in the contemporary art platform. With the evolution of electronic media, it has subdued the usage of print media. But print media is not yet obsolete.

'Fatherless' was the idea of a group of five printmakers, educators, designers, and graffiti artists namely Corey Hagberg, Jarrod Hennis, Javier Jimenez, Greg Lang, and Dave Menard. The famous illustrator Jon Burgerman from London, came up with his prints, murals, toys, apparels showcasing the best doodle art whereas Rob Corradetti set up 'Killer Acid', his art project with a print base, centred on screen printing to t-shirts. Along with them, the talented folks of France, Europe and rest of the world, brought along 'Frenchfourch', a new idea of screen printing. The famous Australian couple, Simon and Jenna Hipgrave, became the masters of the letterpress with its enhanced physicality. In 2010, 'And Atelier', the Portugal-based design studio, was founded by two flourishing artists, João Araújo and Rita Huet, focussed on the strong conception of both editorial and poster design. 'Age of Reason', a Hove, is a

UK-based print label that specialises in printing the natural fibre scarves which blend the childhood memories of designer Ali Mapletoft in Lesotho while combining it with the street style of London. Robert Rubbish, Bill Bragg, Matt Appleton, Neal Fox, Chris Bianchi, Alex Wright and Steph von Reiswitz shuffled some bits of pop, occult and punk to innovate the great 'Le Gun' together. This printmedia has the single motto that sum is greater the parts. The Brazil-based Bicicleta Sem Freio (Bicycle Without Brakes) by Douglas de Castro, Victor Rocha and Renato Reno, includes women in action, who are seen snarling, jumping and screaming. These Artists are my great inspiration to work on the area of print media.

4.E. RGB Multi Imaging

According to Carnvosky, “RGB is a work about the exploration of the ‘surface’s deepness’. RGB designs create surfaces that mutate and interact with different chromatic stimulus. Carnovsky's RGB is an ongoing project that experiments with the interaction between printed and light colours. The resulting images are unexpected and disorienting.” (Carnovsky, 2015). Carnovsky had already been working extensively on RGB printing method. They have already shown how to make an illusory representation of three images on one surface while having different projections under Red, Green and Blue light. In their primary vision of the image under natural light, three images can be identified separately because of the application of different colours (Cyan, Magenta and Yellow). My research is for the advancement of this unique technique. So my aim is how to make a primary image with three different images where none of them will be identified individually. I am using the same colour method of Cyan, Magenta and Yellow to create the primary

image but it has been applied such that it cannot be identified separately under natural light.

4.E.i. Definition of RGB

The name of this colour model 'RGB' comes from the initials of the primary colours it contains including Red, Green and Blue. This colour model is a perfect combination of additive colours like these three, which are added together to create a broad array of colours. Though RGB has been a common choice in the history of photography, the actual purpose of choosing this colour model is sensing and displaying the images through electronic mediums.

4.E.ii. Theoretical Grounding

“As this world emerges in such an unclear, indefinite way: it is always a little elusive and you really need to concentrate, get carefully closer to perceive what is trying to emerge.”

(Carnovsky, 2013)

RGB is a project about the surface, about the skin of things, where the surface mutates and interacts with different chromatic stimulus. RGB images seen under natural light are like unexpected and disorienting worlds where the colours mix up, and the lines and shapes entwine, becoming dream-like and not completely clear. Through a coloured filter (light or a transparent material), it is possible to discover the layers in which the image is composed, so the image is constantly changing. The RGB digital painting can build a physical relationship with the surroundings and reveal unconsciousness in a unique way.

Perception of vision is more than just passive reception of information. Perception is an active process. Vision involves constant movement of our eyes, head,

and body, or of the things we see compounded with a projection of light or all the above. Especially, the outer part of our retina which is individually sensitive to motion, so when something enters into our field of vision, it draws our attention. Our binocular vision is another fact. The two views are remaining marginally different; it is like moving a few inches to the left or right. If we can fix our eyes on the scene we are viewing and remain still, it will make everything white eventually.

Now how do we sense colour? Our eyes identify only the reflected colours and transmit messages to the brain. Light does not obviously just scatter within the eye itself but also within the atmosphere. This scattering is inversely proportional to wavelength (higher energy light at shorter-wavelengths scatters more than low-energy light at higher wavelengths) as described by Rayleigh's famous equation (wavelength raised to the negative fourth power). Good vision depends on the light source, how objects reflect light, and actual interference by light.

An object reflects all wavelengths it appears as white, and when it absorbs them all, it becomes black. In the colour spectrum red, green and blue are the dividend primary colours. The combination of balanced amounts of red, green and blue lights also procure pure white. Additionally, the human eye can recognize and differentiate the higher number of warmer colours than cooler ones. Another additive colour subset is CMY which represent cyan, magenta and yellow; formed by the mixture of two of the RGB and the exclusion of the third. Red and green combine to make yellow, green and blue make cyan, blue and red make magenta. They are also reciprocating relatively to the primary colours in art production as artificial colour.

To conclude, every artificial or natural colour object absorbs some of the wavelengths of light and reflect others; the wavelength reflected or transmitted,

actually create the colour we see which is the primary colour of print production as cyan, magenta, and yellow, as used in four-colour process printing. Comparatively red, green, and blue are the primary catalyst for the human colour concept and are also, the primary additive colours. The relationship between these colour wheels is actual interacting recipe of colour sensing in art objects.

4.F. Key Issues:

While considering the Key Issues for this research, I came across three basic ones to be discussed namely Light and Colour Play, Relation between RGB & CMYK and the Inner Meaning

4.F.i. Light and Colour play:

While working with the RGB Colour Theory method, I selected the process of CMYK. From this experimentation, I found that magenta, yellow and blue create some abstract form by overlapping with each other. Under the green light, the layer of Magenta is visible whereas the layer of the Blue is visible under red light and the Yellow layer is under blue light; but they are not too light or too distinctive. At the same time, it also can be seen that under white light overlapping of CMY layers create green and purple colours. 'The Harris Shutter Effect' was found the most relevant work to my research subject. Robert S. I will be explaining it further.

Apart from the Harris Shutter effect, the anaglyph method has also been used since 1853 to display the stereoscopic 3D images. In this process, a pair of glasses is used for filtering the colours which pass the green channel to your right eye and red channel to your left eye. This 3D display technique helps the viewer get a proper perspective of the images to understand the actual effect for each of the eyes.

Printing techniques and light have always been two subjects that we care about, and thus they became the object of experimentation. We have seen how an image changes if printed in red and green and then looked at through a red filter. It is an ancient “trick” that has been used many times, but we asked ourselves what could happen with the other colours and how they work. So we began experimenting, and it was really exciting and challenging. That was for the technical part because the big issue then was to develop a language—or better, a visual universe—that could be really fascinating, even also without the “trick.” The issue was working with filters, trying to hold all the “magic” but be sure that the project has a visual interest. We were looking for something “great.” The idea of RGB is that there are many different levels of meanings in things. What you see for the first time may hide the other meanings, other worlds, and what is supposed to be flat maybe is not. This is what we call the “surface deepness”—the idea of “change,” the idea of the mutation of things rather than stability, the indefiniteness rather than certainty. With RGB, we try to do something ephemeral which continuously mutates.

The images change with three filter colours (red, green, and blue) that are not supposed to work in the same way, and we use this difference to enhance the narrative side of the images.

4.F.ii. Relation Between RGB & CMYK:

Every artificial or natural colour object absorbs some of the wave lengths of light and reflect others. The wavelength reflected or transmitted, actually create the colour we see which is the primary colour of print production, such as cyan, magenta, and yellow, as used in four colour process printing. Comparatively red, green, and blue are the primary catalysts for the human colour concept and are the primary additive colours.

The language and relationships of colour involve so much of sensitivity and fluency to interact with the design. Artist Alfred Hicethier did something really unique by translating colour into numbers; making colour understandable in a completely objective (rather than subjective) way.

“When you think about the relationship among a set of greens, for example, understanding those relationships in terms of a different number of drops of Cyan and Yellow pigments greatly simplifies what differentiates one colour from another by revealing the formula used to create each distinct colour. In the Hicethier Colour Theory, each colour is assigned three-digit numerical values. The five-basic colour is White (000), Cyan (009), Magenta (090), Yellow (900), and Black (999). Every three-digit number indicates the proportion of Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow pigment used to obtain a given colour. The first digit always refers to Yellow, the second digit to Magenta, and the third to Cyan.” CMY have a special relationship. Combinations of RGB create CMY, and likewise, combinations of CMY will give us Reds, Blues RGB and Greens.

4.F.iii. Inner Meaning:

The experience of a visual user will depend on the usage of the three colour layers by the digital artist. Two other images can be hidden under one, and you can also use the visibility of these three layers to create meaningful art. Though the art works will make all three compositions visible under the RGB light, the final output will articulate the multifaced characteristic or emotion; women go through in various perspectives. It is true that representation of women is not that easy to confine within one illustration; but this experiment will establish my point that women can never be identified from a single perspective or mindset since they possess multifaceted features and are blessed with the strength of multitasking. My illustration is going to

express the shift (phases) women are going through regarding the aspect of duality. Precisely, these three expressions of disappointment, frustration and outburst, which I have used here are my outcome portraying the duplicity existing in contemporary society.

The primary image which is seen under normal white light is pretentious and cannot really expose a clear vision of the subject. Here the subject is self-reaction; this particular image symbolically represents repercussion as an Indian woman's reaction to gender inequality is complex and un unidentified it is hidden from the naked eye.

Blue Light: In terms of artworks, the colour Blue is cold, shadowy, contracted as well as introverted while triggering a vibration of spirit. This is the sole reason why I projected this colour to express the disappointment in this image.

Green Light: Green is deeply connected to the human expression of disgust, materialistic nature and possessiveness, which lead to utter frustration while objectifying women. Since Green is a perfect intermediate of blue and yellow, a little more of any of these tints can change the expressions of an image.

Red Light: Being associated with the planet Mars, Red stands for aggression and belligerent passion. That's why I have projected red light on the image of outburst. This particular expression stands between aggression and passion.

4.G. Experiments:

My expression towards Duplicity on a canvas brought the realisation that one dimensional picture can never express the multiple reactions of a woman since she is multi-faceted. The interaction between design and the user's persona is so extensive

and essential to make a design successful in terms of interaction with the viewer. It is important to find a successful structure or framework to understand the emotions of various groups of user personas to make design acceptable, usable and enjoyable and make it versatile. Artists select their medium depending on the emotion physicality and their relationship with the surroundings which make their practice an object of interpretation itself and in their practice, digitality, physicality and emotionality always act upon each other. These highly sophisticated illustrations are created in their very own unique and innovative process. When different culture around interact and experiments break previous cultural norm and they create a new dynamic cultural value. Though reflecting duplicity is not my primary need, my self-reflection as a woman from different dimensions in the contemporary time is the main subject. That is why I am using my selfies for the illustration. A sight becomes interesting when it tells a story and make a persona to conceive its depth.

4.G.i. Experiment I

When developing style as a painter, my goal has always been to do something different but simple, drawing inspiration from day to day life. To achieve that my work also gets inflected by my graphic designer persona. First, I started thinking how I could make the illustration that would not make all the three images visible, but it will be visible while looking at them separately through a coloured glass. What I wanted to create is a technique of underpainting. But I never knew how to achieve a successful result. The main idea of human and imagery interaction in terms of visual ability and impact of the coloured filter.

I thought that one image would be seen only under one colour. Hence, I started thinking how colour-blind people might see and appreciate this. Possibly, the way they will see could solve my problem. The prime idea came from that thought: how can we explain our experience of seeing a colourful painting or experience, when unable to see the colour. I started experimenting on the subject. It is not that people with colour blindness don't see colour at all, the truth is they see colour differently. For example, red/green colour-blind persons will confuse them for blue and a purple because they can't 'see' the red element of the colour purple. I took a photograph of my painting and rendered the image to eliminate green, Blue, red and made it grayscale respectively.

Figure 21. A digital photograph of my Painting. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

Figure 22.

Eliminated Red, Green & Blue simultaneously.
Copyright 2016 by
Dipanwita Biswas

Also, I pixelated the vector images after eliminating Red, Green and Blue simultaneously. I pixelated the images to the highest point, converted to 'GIF' one Pixel image to present the colour sensitivity curves of light sensing substances in the human eye.

Figure 23. Images are pixelated to the highest point. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas.

Figure 24. Converted to GIF one Pixel image. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

Since the rendering was not perfect, I had to find some other ways to get positive results. So I headed towards another experiment. In the course of experiment, when I tried to achieve the technique of hiding an image in another first thing that came to my mind was the movie “National Treasure”. In that movie, the main character was reading a hidden map through ocular coloured glasses. In the back of my mind, I had an idea that though they made that visible through special effects, but the whole concept is around that particular scene. I searched Google but didn't get much help about what I intended to do. Neither did my previous research give an inkling; but then I realised it's all about the relation between CYMK & RGB. RGB and its subgroup CMY form the most primary and recognised colour model.

Figure 25. RGB and CMYK. (Domingo, 2016).

Mixing spectral light in varying combinations creates additive colours which are most commonly used in television screens and computer monitors. It produces coloured pixels by firing red, green, and blue electron guns at phosphors on the television or monitor screen.

I got to know that with Design Precedent what I needed to follow to achieve a successful result. But that was still an assumption from the designer's point of view. So I started looking for the artists who have already used the same kind of technology, and I came across two differently innovative styles of artwork; one was photography related industry, and the other was from the print related industry.

The second clue for me was the anaglyph images for 3D. Anaglyph images are much easier to view other than parallel (diverging) or crossed-view pairs stereograms, though anaglyphs do not conclude perfect side-by-side types of bright and

accurate colour rendering. This practice makes use of all the three primary colours. However, the current norm is red and cyan.

4.G.ii. Experiment II

These two perceptions received from experiment one helped me realise that I needed to use CMY colour for making the image and if I rendered the image through RGB colour wave length, I would be able to create the perfect illusive image as intended.

I started experimenting with these ideas and finally came up with a prototype image, in which can potentially hide two other images, which we won't be easy to visualise in normal light. I also realised that to do that I could use gradient. Using a flat primary colour would give a more effective result. I have explained the process elaborately in 'Final Procedure' and 'Design Summary' sections.

4.H. Final Procedure:

This whole process falls under following three basic steps:

4.H.i. Photographs

"The "selfie" generation is defined by an even more pronounced individualist approach to feminism." (Householder, 2015, p. 21). In a complete agreement with Bieniek, I have chosen to use selfies, as they will represent my views as an Indian woman currently living in a western culture but brought up in India. Preliminary images are taken using my Android phone. Another reason for using cell phone selfie is that the images should contain some grains to achieve the proper result. Sharp, high quality images are not required.

4.H.ii. Image Manipulation

First, three images were chosen by me, based on which the experiment is performed. These images need to have a white background from which the images can be separated.

1. First three images have been selected to use it for the experimentation.

Figure 26. Selected Selfie Images. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

2. Then, each of the chosen images has been edited separately. To do that, forth option at the 'Adobe Photoshop' toolbar, the 'Quick Selection' tool has been used to select the area of the picture decided to use.

Figure 27. Image background is transparent. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

If the background area already has various colour or object to it, then using 'Pen tool' and selecting the subject area manually will give a better result. After the area is selected, the 2nd tool on the toolbar, 'Select Tool' is to be clicked and the mouse is taken to the selected ones, and with a right click, a pop up box is opened. Then clicking on 'select Inverse' will select the area which needs to be removed. As the surrounding of the image is selected now, the background layer of the image will be unlocked with double click on right panel under layer option, on the main image layer. Then again, the right button on the mouse is clicked on the image and 'Deselect' is chosen from the dropdown to remove the existing background. This way background area of the image has become transparent.

3. Next, the 'Refine' image option is used to clarify the image. This helps to smoothen the edge of the image, so it does not look rough, But this is optional and depends on what the main subject is or the look that needs to be accurate.
4. These steps have been done with all three of the images to make their background transparent.
5. Next, a new blank page has been created from the 'file' button at the top header along with the size of the final image that was intended to create from here. Once it's done, the 'Copy' and 'Paste' of all the three images one after another on the selected blank page needs to get done.
6. The layer is adjusted according to the need of calibration of the layers on top and bottom. But the Background layer can remain at the bottom. Now the white colour is chosen for the background layer with the help of 'Paint bucket' tool.

With the white background and three cut-out layers, the 'Move' tool is to be selected to adjust all the images properly. Then pressed 'Ctrl+T' to Transform and selection of the images and 'Shift' to keep the images in right size without losing the proportion. Now I have confirmed the proportion as per my requirement, and the set-up is ready to apply the effect on it.

Figure 28. All three images in different layer. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

7. After that, I have worked on each of the three layers with the cut-out images. As soon as the top layer is double clicked, a box popped up where the channels were adjusted by turning off the 'R' and 'G'. So, the 'B' is only activated, and OK is pressed to confirm. This made the image yellow.

Figure 29. Turning off R and G channels. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

8. Same with the middle layer, once the layer is double clicked, the channel gets adjusted in the pop up box. Here ‘G’ and ‘B’ channels have been turned off, and ‘R’ remained activated. This changed the image colour to Cyan.

Figure 30. Turning off G and B channel. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

9. Similarly, when the third layer is double clicked, and R’ and ‘B’ channels are turned off, ‘G’ remained activated which turned the Image colour to Magenta.

Figure 31. Turning off R and B. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

10. To make the visual more effective, the Layers need to be clicked twice, and in the pop-up, blending options also have been adjusted to make it look better and to control visibility. By holding the 'Alt' key adjustment has been done and to confirm OK is to be pressed when it looks satisfactory.

Figure 32. Adjusting images. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

Figure 33. Image adjustment channel. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

11. Now each of the images has been elevated by painting manually, removing a few parts and adjusting the colour tone. While editing, it is required to turn off

Figure 34. Manual editing. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

and on the colour channels a few times to see how the effect has been coming out. This part of the process is completely dependent on the instinct of the visual artist that what sort of output was needed to come out at the end. This was the most time-consuming part. But to achieve perfection, the artist must have a good knowledge of using light and shade, manipulation of colours and facial anatomy too in this Artwork.

Figure 35. Three Different Images in One. Copyright 2016 by Dipanwita Biswas

4.H.iii. Print and Light Projection

A series of Screen Print in CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow and Black) has been taken to check the accuracy of the technique. Images were viewed under Red, Blue and Green LED lights. I have used Outdoor LED Flood Light to get more accurate result. Previously I have tried a smaller one, but it was not that powerful, so the colour changes were not visible very sharply. The new one used to have Input voltage: AC 85-265V, Lumens: 4500-6000LM, Power: 50W. Only this light conceivably

eliminated two other colours and made a single layer of colour visible at a time under projection of a single RGB colour simultaneously, as per the results are shown in the video.

Figure 36. Image changes in 'Red', 'Green', 'Blue' and 'White' Light.

To see the light projection videos please visit any of these links given below:

<http://www.dipanwita-biswas.com/rgb-multi-imaging/>

<https://dipanwita-biswas-gml5.squarespace.com/rgb-multi-imaging>

The process yields best result if projection is done in the dark room and no other light is in use.

4.I. Design Summary:

Test 1:

There was no positive result found in the experiment.

Test 2:

Three different images are visible but not as brilliant as predicted. Blue light projection is not completely revealing the hidden image, though it is showing its presence. Though I have found a way to express through yellow image, keeping in mind that Cyan image is also going to contribute to blue light. Here yellow images have been illustrated such a way that even interference of other layer does not interfere the subject. This is reflecting that how a woman in society as suppressed gender not finding their identity as an individual.

The illusory results for the digitally printed artworks are shown in figures that are only using an accurate shade of CMY colour, and accurate projection of light can only produce an accurate result. For instance, using a darker shade of blue light gives a better result, but if the light has lighter illumination, it certainly effects the visibility of hidden images and does not reveal them completely or eliminate other images.

Use of magenta, yellow and blue makes the abstract forms by overlapping each other; Magenta layer is being visible under green light, the Blue layer is being visible under red light, and the Yellow layer is being visible under blue light, but not distinctively.

It also can be seen that under white light overlapping of CMY layers can also create green and purple colour.

It also can be seen in all cases that the layers of colours have transparency in the prints, and that very high-powered LED light changes the images more accurately and able to effectively eliminate other layers of colours. A low LED light and inaccurate usage of colour in the digital reveal very poor performance in image changing affect considerably.

Therefore, the representation of dark and lighter colour tones in images are possible by increasing and decreasing gaps between lines. Using colour gradient is not going to give effective results.

The digitally printed images act to enhance the 2D image character by making them kind of animated. Also, reveal three different images under one surface. The corollary of this is that the image size of 2D images can be maximized to change the environmental feel. Wall to wall images in indoors with the changing light effect may interact with user more effectively. Therefore, the light needs to project such a way that it can't reflect from the image surface. In that case technology of printing is also a concern for the accurate result.

The simulations of this light predict that the choice of design can have a major impact on the user persona; therefore, a simple change of lighting sequence could significantly increase the amount of animated ambience. The act also predicts that the illusory characteristics of the particular display can also have a significant effect on the viewer. This display predicts that bigger image can exhibit significantly more psychedelic than a smaller image. Understandably it will usually be easier for a user to swap to a bigger display to attempt to compliment the colour sensorium and also the actual brightness of LED light is the transition point for the experience.

Unfortunately, a physical sample of the perfect lighting was not available to conduct visual testing so these results should be considered with some scepticism.

I have proposed a multi imaging technique that was able to collect sequences of images at the single 2D surface and which is also potential to subsidize real life psychedelic indoor environmental experience to the user. Suitable procedures have been developed for image making and especially validating the acquired data.

Experiments on image making on Photoshop and test panels printed with known pigments showed us that image processing techniques. Colour code measurements on an actual case revealed that the methodology developed is valid and can give additional information that is otherwise not easily extracted.

The visual user experience will completely depend on how the digital artist will use the three colour layers. It is possible to hide two other images under one, but it's also possible to use the visibility of three separate layer altogether and make one meaningful art. However, in both ways, The art works will also show three different compositions under the RGB light. The project needs farther research and perform extended tests to achieve perfection.

Design Potentiality:

General print making has potential vast object of observation in experimentation. Perhaps this innovative technique has so much potentially in design application. With the modern digital and silk screen technique, it is possible to print this imaging style on any surface.

For further research on gender equality, apart from the current method, interviewing people can be another prospective way, as a part of the qualitative method to

accomplish the aim, leading to an astounding research. This will serve positively in realizing the socially constructed thoughts of gender equality right from the gender standpoint and their view on the debatable term 'feminism'.

Chapter 5. Conclusions:

In this thesis, I have explored the idea of duplicity between idealization and actualization of the social construct of feminine power. In the process, I have discussed Wonder Woman and the Indian Goddess Durga as examples of the idealized character of power. Both characters have significant social impacts. But this thesis has discussed the duplicity evident in society and indicates clearly that powerful female characters are not accepted as equals to their male counterparts. To highlight this, I have focused my investigations through my own lens as an Indian woman.

In Chapter 1, through the use of traditional literature review, blogs discussions and other social discourse, this investigation has revealed the inequality and duplicity of the portrayal of feminine power. Chapter 2 contains methodology of the thesis. In Chapter 3, I have investigated the duplicit view further with a connection to the superheroines from western and indigenous cultures. In Chapter 4, I have given a broad description of the illustrations which also forms the final output of my experiment.

The first phase of my research conclusively brings out the truth that gender inequality still exists in both western and indigenous cultures. The main conclusion I have reached from this research is that women are always suppressed for being the 'feminine gender' notwithstanding their positions in reality, mythology or as an imaginary character. My research also shows that the western culture has identified

the issue of duplicity for a long time and initiated actions to resolve or improve the situation, though the problem persists still in many ways. However, in India, the issue has been suppressed for a longer period. Applying the same definition or interpretation of feminism to both Indian and Western cultures is difficult, as the respective core social constructions of gender are distinctly different. Indian patriarchal society does not consider equality as an issue. The society believes that men and women cannot have equal rights in every way and religious practices support this. Women in many cases are not aware of their rights because they do not have economic independence or sufficient education. Most importantly many women in India choose to stay quiet about the injustice they experience. They believe that speaking of the humiliation they have endured will shame their families.

Despite this, a solution still needs to be sought as India, like all cultures need the feminine voice to be heard and respected. As novelist Arundhati Roy said “Every freedom we have today, we have because of feminists” (Roy, 2016). Only fight can bring freedom. The only thing that challenges patriarchy is the unified voice of women, unpraised with strength and might. This thesis hopes to contribute by adding to this vocal volume. As Griggs concludes, “women’s oral iterations more consistently challenge patriarchy.” (Griggs, 2016, p. 6). The research has offered a specific insight acquired by an Indian woman who is currently living in a western culture but was born and brought up in India. My views not only offer an indigenous insight of gender inequality visible in India but are also an acknowledgement of what impedes progress in my country. I have been raised to question things, not to follow the tradition blindly which most people have been doing for a long time. But questioning by itself doesn’t bring the idea of equality. My illustration is not intended to represent duplicity

directly, but it is my personal counter-reaction towards the duplicit view concerning women that still exists in the society.

My original figurative illustration has the capability of shifting or multi-imaging. Putting three images on one surface is something that Carnovsky has already done. Though inspired by the artwork technique of Carnovsky, my research work proceeded further with the revelation of a new technique in which one primary image can hide all three images without a hint—they are only visible when colours like Red, Green and Blue are projected up on them. My own design indicates that this will contribute to a vibrant development in an area of the contemporary print media art to make hidden images, and that is how it is unique and advanced from the previous artworks created in the same area.

The visual representation of digitally printed image in plain sight looks pretentious which can hardly reveal any other latent idea; instead, it represents the women, as seen by the eye of society instead. A bigger intention in designing within a worthwhile framework makes me appreciate the design pattern because of its versatility in showing multitudinous aspects of gender inequality. The image having several layers of meanings prevails somewhere between existence and non-existence. The hidden meaning remains undiscovered as the visual image we see under normal light represents the social belief regarding the identity of women in general, which is not the truth but a duplicit notion. When the blue light is projected, it reveals the image which conveys numbness. This is a self-representation of the emotion that I feel as a woman, suffering from a social injustice like gender inequality. In this image, we cannot distinctively see all the other hidden images. It represents the women who are mostly overshadowed by the social circumstances. A viewer cannot understand who she is, what her desires are or how she reacts when enduring social subjugation. Then,

under the green light, it exhibits the expression which comes from the frustration of being objectified and treated as a second sex in the society. Lastly, as the red light is projected, it reveals an extremely aggressive reaction from the women who need to be more vocal against discrimination, as suggested by me as the strategy to fight gender inequality. I have used art as my method of objection against gender inequality that still exists in society because I didn't consider physical confrontation or violence to be a viable option.

Future Research Potential:

The illustration I have made is a prototype. Due to the restriction of time and unavailability of various models of LED lights, future research could further explore the colour codes which have been used, and the sensibility and brightness of light projection. If the light had been custom-made, the print would have been more prominent with a stunning and more accurate result. For instance, if we can control the changes of timespan between two colours, it can be more enjoyable for the viewer to see the changes more accurately. So now when the timespan is changing fast, and the changes are visible only for seconds, it can make the viewers uncomfortable when looking at the image for a long period. The multifarious dimensions presented in the Design response are mesmerizing, but the technique needs further experimentation for perfection and further understanding of what other potential artistic expressions may have in store for us. Another interesting scope for further research can involve the exhibition of an interactive environment in an art gallery.

To continue the research on gender equality, one potential approach is to interview people, a qualitative method which will lead to a Phenomenological Research. It could include interviewing people from different cultures, genders and

ages. Such interviews will primarily provide the socially constructed thoughts of how various people regard gender equality from their gender and other perspectives. Another interesting subject to study could be acknowledging both men's and women's views on feminism, a term which is controversial in the Hindu context.

We may not be blessed with superpowers like Wonder Woman, we all have the ability to change the world with perseverance, individuality and determination because 'The Change has to happen Within'!

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