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Cultural Constraints and the Denigration of Womanhood in Ikechukwu Asika's *Tamara*

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Abstract

This study examines violence and harassment in Asika's *Tamara* with particular attention to the denigration of women and constraints that shape their lived experiences. The novel presents a patriarchal society in which female characters are subjected to physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual exploitation, and systemic marginalization. Using Asika's *Tamara*, this work explores numerous problems patriarchy poses on women and experiences of the marginalized women due to their gender. It therefore, exposes how cultural traditions, economic dependency, and rigid gender norms reinforce women's vulnerability and silence their voices. Using feminism theory and qualitative context analysis, this work interrogates the structures of power that sustain harassment and normalize women's degradation within the narrative. Thereby exposing the dual constraints faced by women: cultural norms that diminish them to mere objects of matrimony and procreation, alongside contemporary systems that persist in marginalizing them in education, economic prospects, and public dialogue. It argues that violence in the text is not merely individual

misconduct but reflection of institutionalized patriarchy embedded in family, marriage, and community systems. The analysis further reveals how intra-gender tensions among women sometimes deepen oppression as female characters internalize patriarchal values and become agents of suppression against one another. The study concludes that *Tamara* functions as a social critique of gender injustice in contemporary Nigerian society. By highlighting Tamara's quest for self-realization amidst cultural issues, this work calls for a reevaluation of gender rules, social transformation, gender equity, and the dismantling of oppressive traditions, and concludes that there is urgent need to challenge cultural practices that perpetuate harassment and constraint on women's self-realization.
Keywords: patriarchy, denigration, violence, gender, women

Introduction

Women's denigration and constraints have become a matter of urgent and serious concern all over the world. There have been issues related to the denigration of female gender which have negatively affected their dignity. In Nigeria today, many critics and scholars have written and addressed the important issues concerning the denigration of women in diversified ways on some of the oppressive forces that marginalize women through certain practices in their various cultural milieus which not only demean women but also debar them from having say in the daily affairs of the society in which they belong to. According to Fwangyil (2011)

> Women are subjected to male oppression at various stages of life. Unfortunately, female oppression is deeply ingrained in the culture of the societies, which ensures the continuation of patriarchal control. This situation makes it impossible for women to seek ways of liberating themselves because doing so will be tantamount to challenging the age long tradition and the custom of the people (p.151).

Denigration of women has deep roots in the evolution of patriarchal societies. Patriarchy, as a system of governance and social organization, has existed for centuries and has shaped various cultural, economic and political structures across different societies. In these systems, men were often seen as the primary decision makers, while women were relegated to domestic, reproductive and subservient roles. This relegation though not practiced exactly the same way globally was reinforced through religious, legal, and cultural institutions that perpetuated the idea of women as the 'weaker sex', inherently suited for care giving and confined to the private sphere. Women suffer silently under the guise of marriage enduring: domestic violence which can lead to deformation, mental trauma and ultimately death of the abused female.

The idea of female denigration has become institutionalized over the time, not only through the legal disenfranchisement of women but also through a range of cultural practices and norms that stripped women of their agency. The legacy of these practices has had lasting effects on women's self-perception, contributing to the prevalence of gender stereotype and societal expectations that limit women's potentials. From the public exclusion of women from higher education and political participation to the more insidious forms of degradation that women face in their daily lives, such as street harassment, objectification in the media, and the unequal distribution of domestic labor. Many cultures (for example, Igbo culture is different from the Yorubas and the Hausas) of the world testify to this assertion that women's problems vary in the negative cultural practices. Educationally, for example, women are discriminated against. Parents prefer to send male children to school to the exclusion of girls. For instance, in Buchi Emecheta's "*Second-Class Citizen*," Ada's mother plays a significant role in the challenges Ada faces regarding her education. Ada, the protagonist, is an intelligent and ambitious young girl, but her mother, though loving, adheres to traditional gender roles that limit her ambitions. Her mother believes that education is primarily for

boys, reflecting the patriarchal values of their society. She does not see the value in educating a girl, as she believes that a woman's role is to marry and take care of the home.

This mindset influences Ada's initial lack of opportunity for formal education. Her mother's views, rooted in cultural norms, contribute to Ada being discouraged from pursuing her academic aspirations. Her mother's attitude is emblematic of the struggles many young girls face in patriarchal societies, where gender expectations are prioritized over personal ambition and development. Ada's mother's role reflects the broader theme of how women, especially in certain cultural contexts, are often conditioned to accept second-class status. Ada, however, challenges this expectation and continues to fight for her education, despite the cultural and familial opposition. Her determination later in the novel shows how she rises above these limitations.

The history of female denigration is long and complex, in the recent history, movements such as suffrage campaigns, second wave feminism, and gender equality activism have attempted to challenge these ingrained patterns of female denigration. These movements have made considerable strides in elevating women's status in education, politics, and the workforce, and have been pivotal in reshaping public perceptions of women's roles. However, despite these advances, many aspects of female denigration continue to persist in the modern world. The glass ceiling, the gender pay gap, the sexualization of women in media, and the increasing rates of gender-based violence are all manifestations of an enduring system that continues to view women as secondary to men.

In many cultures women are viewed as inferior and second class citizens. In African history generally and Nigeria in particular, women to a large extent, are human beings meant to be seen and not heard or are simply a pair of eyes behind the veil regarded as

"second class". Women have been culturally oppressed and their subjugation is perpetuated by social structures and gender norms. They face a lot of limitations on the basis of gender. These limitations are interconnected and can be seen in economic, cultural, religious and social spheres. Unfortunately, in most societies and cultures, women are enslaved, subjugated and humiliated. Thus, women are traditionally regarded as mere tools of necessity; housewives, and gratifiers of men's sexual passion.

Women are often stereotyped and reduced to their physical appearance and sex appeal, rather than their intelligent, talents and their abilities. Female gender has definitely faced challenges that pose threats on them. Poor representation of female started from the family, women are subjected to the patrilineal principle at various stages in life. They are confronted with many problems that have caused them their lives and left them perpetually incapacitated. Patriarchal values, principles and perceptions do not only impede the development and advancement of women but oppress, devalue, marginalize and subject them to various forms of exploitation and abuse. Abok Theresa (2010), states that "girls and women do not enjoy the power, opportunity, recognition and privilege given to boys and men. They are inhibited by the restrictions imposed on them by the tradition and culture" (The National Gender Policy….121)

It is on this note that some Nigerian female writers such as Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, among others have challenged cultural norms, advocate for voice, survival and dignity of women. These female writers have served and are still serving as instruments of modifications of consciousness and organization of sensibility of women through their respective versions of prevalent issues of position and identity of the female both in the society and in African at large. Of course women all over the world are clamoring to be liberated from all forms of discrimination so as to fit into the society.

In this post-colonial era of contemporary Nigeria, Asika's poignant novel, *Tamara* is an exploration of domestic violence and the systematic abuse of the girl-child, specifically narrating how patriarchal power operates through denigration (devaluing) and constraint (restriction). Written in an epistolary form, the narrative documents the traumatic journey of the protagonist, Tamara, as she suffers under an authoritarian father whose "Oedipus figurehead" mentality reduces his home to a prison. The text highlights how intense emotional abuse, verbal assault, and physical isolation stifle a child's development, forcing a desperate quest for freedom that ultimately leads to exploitation.

Odinye (2020) concludes that the epistolary genre of writing augments a writer's creativity and intent. Ifeoma Chinwe Okwuchukwu and Juliet Nonye Eziuzor (2024) opine that trauma and psychological experiences are the greatest killers in the society at large. Based on the above mentioned studies, this analysis examines the cultural practices depicted in the play, the pejorative language used by characters, and the acts of defiance through which Tamara and other female figures manoeuvre within the enforced constraints which are not covered in the above mentioned works. The text highlights how intense emotional abuse, verbal assault, and physical isolation stifle a child's development, forcing a desperate quest for freedom that ultimately leads to exploitation.

Postcolonial Feminism

This research work employs post-colonial theoretical framework to interpret violence and harassment in Asika's *Tamara* for better understanding of how historical forces of colonialism shape present day gender oppression. Postcolonial feminism is an intellectual political movement that addresses the intersections of gender, race, class, and colonial histories. It critiques both traditional feminism (often seen as Western-centric) and colonial ideologies, emphasizing the unique experiences. It emerged in response to the limitations of western feminism, which often

neglected the unique experiences and struggles of women in postcolonial societies. Spivak (1998), in her essay "Can Subaltern Speak" examines the silencing of the marginalized voices, popularly known as Subaltern women, in colonial and postcolonial discourses. She argues that Western intellectuals often speak for the subaltern, thereby reinforcing systems of dominance rather than dismantling them. Spivak call to recognize and amplify the voices of the marginalized women is central to postcolonial feminism and gender vulnerability. Gender vulnerability therefore refers to the various ways in which individuals experience disadvantages or risks based on their gender, often exacerbated by social, economic, political, and cultural factors. According to Eze C (2021), gender vulnerability could arise when societal structure and cultural norms disproportionately expose women and girls to risk such as exploitation, violence, and limited access to resources.

African feminists such as Flora Nwapa through her works Efuru and others dismantled colonial and partriacial tropes by portraying Igbo women as financial independence, agents of their own destinies and community leaders. Other feminists include Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Nawal El Sadaawi, Buchi Emecheta, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Ama Ata Adioo, Obioma Nnaemeka and a host of others. The text under study examines women subjugation and empowerment.

Domestic Violence as Cultural Normalization in Asika's *Tamara*

In *Tamara*, the abusive nature of protagonist's father is deeply rooted in a patriarchal, "pre-literate" cultural mentality, where the male is seen as supreme and women are seen as subordinates. Tamara's father uses abusive language to demean his wife and children, reducing their self-worth. He frequently refers to them with disdain, using demeaning terms and shouting orders that create a home environment filled with fear. The protagonist recalls, "Father... you guided us so hard until it began to pain and we all missed direction". The constant degradation makes her feel "alone,

so empty and unfulfilled" despite living in luxury. The novel demonstrates how the father's constant imposition of his ideals results in "self-loss" for Tamara, as she struggles to meet impossible, oppressive standards. The second pillar of abuse in *Tamara* is the physical, social, and emotional restriction of the female characters, transforming their home into a cage. The father strictly controls all movements, forbidding his wife and daughter from visiting friends or neighbors. This enforced seclusion ensures they have no outside support system. A stark contrast is drawn between the treatment of the son (Kizito), who is allowed to leave, and Tamara, who is confined.

This unequal treatment highlights how patriarchal traditions limit the girl-child's freedom. The home is depicted as a "prison" where they are "trapped" and "trampled upon," creating a desperate need for escape that makes Tamara vulnerable to further abuse (human trafficking and prostitution) outside the home. Asika's *Tamara* serves as a sobering examination of how the patriarchal "Oedipus figurehead" (being autocratic) destroys family cohesion. The above is clear act of domestic violence and intimidation. Domestic violence therefore is defined by Okwuchukwu I. et al (2024) as the "inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another; also a repeated/habitual pattern of such behavior."(p.122)

Asika's *Tamara* explores how violence within the home is treated as normal part of life. Instead of protection, marriage becomes abuse, and loss of autonomy. It examines how women are expected to endure abuse silently due to cultural expectations and fear of stigma. The victims are discouraged from speaking out. Fear, shame and societal backlash keep women silent about their experiences. Here, the protagonist, Tamara is portrayed as a character that is robbed of her love, life and dignity, crushed and destroyed for asking for nothing but love, highlighting the loss of agency and self-determination that women often face in patriarchal

societies. The prevalence of the domestic violence started between Tamara and her father immediately after her birthday. She recalled:

> Work, work, a new board has just been instituted this morning. We are meeting for the first time in an hour's time. I will be presenting a paper so I must hurry back."
> "At least you can see the child before you leave?" she had pleaded. She was already used to your attitude.
> "Yeah, yeah! That's why I came. The doctor said she is a girl."
> A beautiful girl, just like you," my mother told you
> "Yes, my baby…" She said you took me in your arms,
> Showed me the world and hurriedly dropped me on my bed.
> She said that was the last time you touched me for years as a child. (p.18)

On the other hand, Tamara's mother was actively involved in the nurturing of their children, but that would not prevent her abusive husband from scolding her. She always supports their children, but all she would receive in return is abusive words. In fact, she was the bond that joined the family together. Tamara narrated what took place one evening when her mother thought her husband was not coming home so she called her and her brother Kizito to tell them stories, and as the story was going on, her husband came in and started shouting at her for allowing the children to be awake by that time of the night. According to her, her mother could not answer immediately rather she stammered, which means her mother is also afraid of her husband. Tamara reports:

> I hate how you make these children see me as a bad father. How can you be telling them stories when they are supposed to be in their beds? That is what

> every child of their age is doing right now? When in school, the teachers can tell those stories as they choose, but this is my house and my children will live to respect my orders. Stop making them defy me. Stop! (p.31)

The above excerpt pictures this spousal violence manifest in the persistence verbal abuse by Tamara's father denigrating the self-worth of his wife. The wife is simply humiliated because she is entertaining their children with moral stories. In a broad sense, the situation that results to verbal abuse does not require the use of hurtful words. This manifestation makes portrayals of female identity, a daring cultural ethic of silence that has earned her little or no respect. The fact that Tamara's father does not allow his wife to visit friends or neighbors is a clear indication that the female gender is disadvantaged in his house. Kizito (his son) is given the liberty to explore life by leaving the house without his father's permission (p.33); while Tamara and her mother are confined in the house. The mother's sanity was affected, she later got sick from overbearing pains that caused her heart failure, and she died, after which the family scattered.

The situation arose from patriarchal cultural dominance of the female gender is indeed psychologically damaging. In order to assert her freedom, Tamara acquires new traits to deviate from her father's mapped-out gender role of being vulnerable to men's sexual quest. She defies her father's expectation and assumption that girls must behave in accordance with cultural expectations. To him, girls must stay at home to protect themselves from the preying eyes of men. The feminist ideologies employed interpret experiences and the strategies used by the protagonist to revolt against patriarchal subjugation. Asika's *Tamara* is analyzed from a feminist perspective as a critique of extreme patriarchy, domestic violence, and the subjugation of the female gender contemporary Nigerian society.

Asika, in his writing *Tamara* through the lens of her female characters explores how patriarchal structures, societal expectations, and norms, often rooted in patriarchal ideologies can lead to the oppression and marginalization of women. The novel exposes how patriarchal structures, where men hold power and women are subordinate; shape the lives and destinies of female characters like Tamara. The patriarchal notion that boys and men are inherently superior to girls and women is an ideology grasped with open arms by Tamara's father. A good example hinges on the different treatment he gives to his children. Tamara confesses to the above discrimination based on sex:

> We have timetables and schedules for everything we do and the training we receive. My brother was towing a different line of training and upbringing as a man and I was strictly being raised as a girl and that was why, though we stay in the same house and sleep under the same roof, our paths never crossed much like children who stay in the same house do. (8)

The above excerpt pictures the sensitive issue of gender inequality which suppresses Tamara to the extent that she lacks the capacity to think for herself. A young girl (Tamara), the protagonist could not transcend beyond the limitation imposed on her by her abusive father. Her father, while claiming to demonstrate his authority as figure head contributed to exploitation and oppression of women within the family structure. The narrator points out the verbal abuse of the protagonist father as thus:

> What the hell is going on here? That was the only response to our evening greetings showered on you,
> Silence…
> "Can someone explain to me what is going on here or
> Have you all turned deaf and dumb? I am talking to you woman! (30)

> The narrator continues "woman, what's the meaning of this? Speak now or speak no more". (P.31)

Sexual Harassment and Exploitation of Vulnerable Women in Asika's *Tamara*

Asika's work on *Tamara* vividly explores to a large extent issues concerning the oppression and exploitation of women in male-dominated society. The novel depicts the tragic life of the protagonist, Tamara, a young girl whose life is stifled by an authoritarian father; leading to her exploitation and eventual downfall. Asika's protagonist is violently immersed in interpersonal relationships with other characters in the novel as she embarks on a metaphorical journey of liberation. This journey is a movement away from emotional abuse. In Asika's novel, Tamara is liberated from her father's abusive behavior through her escape. In fact, her escape as captured in the journey motif (physical, emotional and metaphorical) shapes the novel.

In the story, Asika traces the physical and psychological journey of Tamara (who is naïve) from her father's house to the streets of Nigeria and to Italy and London as a prostitute. Tamara's assertiveness and quest for liberation are strongly motivated by her father's dictator attitude. She seeks liberation from her father's overbearing attitude, but in the process, she is exposed to more violence as she tries to understand the complexity of human relationships. This novel also explores the destructive power of sexual exploitation as it has negatively affected the emancipation of women as portrayed in Asika's *Tamara*. Senorita in her clever way lured Tamara into prostitution, and Tamara, in her bid to free herself from the confinement fall a victim of trafficking. Senorita deceived her into believing that she was going to Italy to continue her education, not knowing that she is being tricked into sex slavery. Ozoh N. J. (2019), in her work 'Women's Quest for Freedom, Recognition and Empowerment in Ngozi Chuma-Ude's *Echoes of a New Dawn'* clearly states that the empowerment of

women is the ultimate solution to women's mistreatment. If Tamara had been positively engaged, she would not have fallen a victim. On leaving the country with Senorita, Tamara was pushed into the world of prostitution, where she became addicted to sex and became a professional in the act.

On her arrival in Spain, the first thing she saw when she and other girls were led into the compound was the positions of some girls at the gate, which passed a message to her but she refused to accept it. She observes that:

> Many of the girls were almost naked, with strings and clothes tied all around their private parts. I could see their cleavages and the curvatures of their bodies clearly, even from a distance. They were almost naked, yet they sauntered round with reckless abandon, smoking garishly as if that day was pronounced their last day, I saw their private parts shared clean. (107)

On their arrival, Senorita introduced Tamara along with other girls to the madam (trafficker) known as Princess. While she was addressing the girls, she said "You must know that Princess sponsored your illegal immigration into this country. She must reap the rightful benefits. Even if you are dead, she is willing to sell your corpse." (p. 116-117) In the night of the same day, a white man (Bruce) was sent to have sex with Tamara but she fought hard with him, and after that, it dawned on her that she came to Spain for prostitution. Bruce voice echoed, "You must know I paid heavily for you, so you must give me a good treat, a worth for my money. I am going to fuck you real hard." She cried to be sent back to Nigeria, but Senorita told her that it is not possible again rather she should accept it and work for her freedom, which will take her a year or two depending on how she works. This situation is a clear case of female trafficking for sexual exploitation.

I cried and cried, Senorita could not console me. She left me knowing that I would calm down. In the end she was right. "So I will become a prostitute?" "I am sorry, you have no choice". "How long will it take me to work out my freedom?" Perhaps two years or more, it depends on your speed and marketability, but I am not afraid of that, you are a young beautiful girl, men will queue up for you. And if that happens, let's say two years or so you will be free. (116) Tamara, being caught in the trap of prostitution, has no escape route and gladly accepts the things the way she perceives them. The narrator states:

> Listen, as long as you live here, you work for me. These walls were not built for a jamboree; they are for business. It is not for babies like you. You should mature or contemplate being returned to an unknown location from which you originated! (111)

The above excerpt shows Tamara's "Big Madam" initiating her into the business of prostitution, not minding how she feels. Her quest for freedom and emotional stability is not successful; her failure is seen in the concatenation of events that mar her escape. But in the process, she gains an insight into herself and attains maturity through her bizarre experiences. This maturity pushes her to ask her father for forgiveness in her letter.

Tamara's experiences of human trafficking and sexual abuse vividly illustrate the motif of slavery. Trafficking and sexual exploitation of girls for commercial purposes denote an act of slavery. The writer seems to suggest that Tamara is a slave to the pimps that use her body to make money. This slave-like condition starts in her father's house because she is constantly locked up in her room as a girl child. This slave-like condition in her family house pushes her to escape from her family house, but she succumbs to another form of slavery by befriending Obed who exploits her sexually, impregnates, and leaves her devastated. Through her .narrative voice, Tamara says, "I did not think twice before I accepted his proposal, I never had time nor paused to find

out if what I had for him is love" (p.85). All this boil down to violence, subjugation, exploitation and women denigration just to intimidate and subdue women.

Due to her unfortunate circumstances, she is deceived and trafficked to Italy as a sex slave. As an 'object' which most writers portray women as, Tamara does not claim ownership of her body. She is constantly threatened and forced to engage in sexual activities with men (exploitation). This type of enslavement limits her rights to freedom of choice on matters relating to sexual experiences. In essence, her basic human rights are denied. Based on this denial of human rights, the writer condemns human trafficking and sex slavery. To achieve liberation from patriarchal oppression, the female protagonist in Asika's *Tamara* escapes from her first environment to a new one. The writer has employed the journey motif as a strategy for her female characters to escape male chauvinism and subjugation in order to achieve self-actualization. Tamara on her own also escapes from the patriarchal web of her father to an entirely new environment where her freedom of movement is denied. One thing is clear: Asika has employed the journey as a vehicle for female liberation and self-actualization in a patriarchal environment that has no space for female freedom. In essence, Tamara is considered a feminist text that acts as a cautionary tale, calling for the dismantling of oppressive traditions and advocating for the empowerment, emotional freedom, and safety of the girl-child in Nigerian homes.

Asika's *Tamara* presents an imaginatively epistolary account of the pains of a young girl, Tamara (the protagonist of the novel) and her traumatic experiences right from the home, society, school, and abroad. Asika's representation of Tamara's childhood memory sustains the fact that childhood experiences contribute to shaping the mentality of a person in adulthood. Tamara's childhood memory about her father is not a positive one; her struggle to liberate herself from the emotional trauma associated with her

father‘s attitude plunges her into grievous mistakes and deep sorrow. According to Tamara, “I hardly knew you as a child. It took me years to memorize your face and record it properly in my memory. I still harbor doubts that you are the same man whose smiling photographs adorned every corner of the house. (p.11) In Tamara herself, hatred and rebellion are consuming powerful passions that characterize her childhood – hatred for her father‘s attitude and the quest for self-assertiveness or freedom. Asika explores her protagonist‘s response to abusive family relationship which is captured from the point of view of the narrator (Tamara). As soon as she starts narrating her story, we are conscious of seeing her father as he is described by the narrator .I am writing to tell you those things I had stood before you to tell you but fumbled for lack of words because the looks of a tiger on your face could not allow me to speak.

> Father, if wishes could kill, you would have been dead by now. Many times I had locked myself in my room and wished all the bad things of life would come upon you…I had hoped that you would someday turn to me, but you never did. Even those days you watched me sail away, you made no effort to stop me. You were too busy to take notice of the plight of your only daughter. (P.5)

It is from the narrator‘s report that the reader begins to suspect that the letter is concerned with more complex conflicts that hamper the physical, emotional and psychological growth of the narrator. The beginning of the letter does not merely communicate about Tamara‘s father; it tells us about the narrator‘s willingness to narrate her painful experience and ask for forgiveness: ―Waiting for this angel is very sad and torturing experience. You know he is close, yet seems so far away, and kill time you see yourself doing lots of unimaginable things that may not count in a whole lifetime. (P.9) Tamara, in her narrative voice continued “I am writing to purge my heart and ask you for a special favor, the last from a father to a daughter.” (p. 6) Tamara’s description of her father

creates a general disgust that muddles the reader's sense of judgment. The readers wonder if the unpleasant values of her father are severe enough to cause emotional pain when she writes:

> I understood perfectly, as tender as I was that you are a very busy man, a no nonsense man, a father who can never tolerate a mother and two kids even at the sight of most minute provocation. I knew you are a very strict father, a great disciplinarian, insisting even at a gun point that things must be done your way. (P.8)

Asika used anxiety, fear, depression, guilt, regret, shame, disassociation, flashbacks, and distorted thinking, among others, to portray the mental trauma Tamara went through in the novel:

> The pain still lingers on father. It was a pain borne all over the years in loneliness and perpetual sadness. How I wish you realized earlier, (if ever you have done that now) that your father ship style was wrong, father and never to be used again as model anywhere in this world of flesh and blood…,I, my mother, my brother, you guided us so hard until it began to pain and we all missed direction and lost tracks. We were following your light, unknown to us that you were leading us in the wrong direction. It is so painful, Father! (Pp. 16-17).

Conclusion

In *Tamara*, the issues of women's denigration and constraints are vividly portrayed to expose the harsh realities many women face within patriarchal structures. The novel demonstrates how women are subjected to physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, which limits their freedom, dignity, and opportunities for self-actualization. Through the experiences of the female characters, the narrative reveals that violence and harassment are not isolated

acts but are deeply rooted in cultural norms, gender stereotypes, and power imbalances that favor men over women. These oppressive conditions create constraints that silence women, restrict their agency, and perpetuate their marginalization in society. Furthermore, the text highlights that women sometimes become participants in sustaining these oppressive systems through intra-gender conflicts, jealousy, or internalized patriarchy. Such conflicts weaken solidarity among women and make it more difficult to challenge structures that perpetuate their degradation.

This work serves as a potent literary catalyst, urging modern readers to critically analyze the "traps" of the past and promote a reformed social order in which women is valued, independent, and completely free from outdated restrictions. The study therefore concludes that women's denigration and constraints, as depicted in *Tamara*, reflect broader societal problems that continue to hinder gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Addressing these issues requires not only legal and social reforms but also a transformation of cultural attitudes toward women and gender relations. Educational institutions should incorporate gender studies and awareness programs that teach respect, equality, and the rights of women. This will help reshape societal attitudes that normalize violence and harassment. In addition, Governments and legal institutions should enforce stronger laws and policies that protect women from violence, harassment, and discrimination, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable.

Lastly, Women should be encouraged to support and uplift one another rather than engage in intra-gender conflicts. Unity among women can help challenge patriarchal structures that perpetuate their oppression. Media organizations, civil society groups, and community leaders should organize campaigns that raise awareness about the harmful effects of violence and harassment against women. Women should be empowered through education,

economic opportunities, and leadership training so that they can confidently resist oppression and contribute meaningfully to societal development.

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