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Overt and Covert Resistance: Individualized Responses to Intersectional
Oppression in Chandani Lokugé's *Turtle Nest*

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Abstract

Chandani Lokugé's *Turtle Nest* provides an insight into the oppressional realities faced by subaltern women in a patriarchal society where gender and class play a key role in shaping individual identity. In this paper an attempt is made to critically examine the social inequalities and dominations faced by women characters in the novel. The paper also makes an empirical study of the reactions of the subordinates to the domination and oppression. The intersecting social identities and systems of power serves a force for domination against women characters. This study explores how the characters, especially female characters resist and navigate the intersecting systems of oppression which ultimately highlights complex realities faced by marginalized women within the intersecting system of social identities. Individual resentments lead to individual resistance. The subordinates respond in unique ways, mostly individualized. Almost all the characters in the novel including the male characters resist differently. They resist overtly as well as covertly. Subtle acts of defiance are displayed by Asilin, Priya and Neela. They do not overtly challenge oppression yet they show subtle signs of resistance. However, in the case of Mala, she exhibits overt defiance or resistance.

Keywords: resistance, resentment, intersectionality, domination, oppression, marginalization.

Chandani Lokugé, a South Asian writer reflects the intersectional experiences of Sri Lankan women in her novel *Turtle Nest*. This novel presents fisherwomen's distinct experiences. They are exposed to multiple layers of oppression due to intersections of different social categories. The main female characters in this novel come under Spivak's 'subaltern' women. They face intertwined oppression leading to prejudice, inequality, discrimination, exploitation and marginalization. The paper makes an attempt to examine the social inequalities, dominations and oppressions faced by women characters in the novel *Turtle Nest* and also makes an empirical study of the reactions of the

subordinates to the domination and oppression. It explores the experiences of different characters' personal and impersonal dominations. A closer look of the text is undertaken to elucidate what goes wrong in the lives of the characters and dwell on the subsequent individual resistance.

Turtle Nest offers a poignant story of a fisher family. The fisher community is referred to as one of the subalterns. The fisher family members are displaced to the margins of a society because of their socio-economic and political standings. They live a pathetic life in the coastal areas. The novel highlights the everyday lived experiences and the resistance displayed by these subaltern population. The condition of women in a fisher community is rendered through the lived experiences of Mala and Asilin. They have to face different struggles for their existence. The reality of women, their life and social circumstances in a poor lowly class are exhibited in this novel. The novel portrays a variety of violence, subordination and prejudice that women face in patriarchal society. In fact, all women become vulnerable to marginalization irrespective of class. They are oppressed publicly as well as privately. They have to fit into patriarchal expectations and any transgression from the patriarchal expectations is perceived as disobedience or acts of rebellion.

The experiences of the characters in the novel are mediated by different social entities such as class, race, gender, sexuality, nationality, cultural inequality, community pressure, etc leading to multiple layers of oppression. Lokugé situates the characters in oppressive situations and depicts how they face and deal with the oppressive situation. The characters experience personal domination that is pertinent in a social structure. The oppressions are complied with resistance as power imbalance and violence of all sorts – political or social. The very condition of their existence compels characters to resist. The novel depicts different types of individual resistance. The scale differs from small scale (covert or hidden) to large scale (overt or open) resistance.

In the *Turtle Nest*, the subordinate community, a fisher community of Sri Lanka exhibits no collective resistance. Instead, Lokugé concentrates on individual resistance resulting from individual resentments. Resistance is:

... about forming assemblies, individual protests, manipulations or it can be about desperately opposing one's precariousness. It involves power relations, violence and our political, physical and social environment. The performances of resistance might be played out by individuals or groups in local, national or transnational spaces. Resistance embraces many different forms of activity that might combine in different way: organized or non-organized, violent or nonviolent, sometimes constructive and invisible, or it might be grand, hindering or up-scaled. (Lija 211)

In the novel, different characters or subordinates react differently. A significant experiential variation is observed in the text. Women's lives are often confined by rigid societal expectations. Almost all the female characters except Neela represent marginalized voices. Their stories reflect the everyday struggle many women of low-income family face. Their journeys are filled with hardship, sacrifice and perseverance. The readers are taken into their lives through flashbacks. Mala, one of the female characters in the novel, ponders over the sufferings of women while dusting the pedestal of the statue of saints:

She always thought St Bridget wore the most graceful blue robe, and her smile was the sweetest, but St Anne looked the kindest. Yet there was always something like pathos in their eyes that lessened her pleasure, even as she was drawn to their unearthly beauty. They were so like her mother's eyes in which a similar suffering smouldered. All women were born to suffer through their husbands and sons – her mother said this aloud to anyone who might be listening. (Lokugé 65)

Mala thinks: "It was good . . . that St Bridget and St Anne remained in their statue selves, or they would end up looking like her mother." (Lokugé 65)

The novel grips the readers to reflect on the plight of the marginalized communities, particularly the womenfolk. Women always occupy a subordinate position. More so in a subaltern family, like fisher family, the position of the women is that of multiply marginalized. Men dominate, while women are kept at margins – treated unequally. Asilin and Mala's experiences serve as an exemplar of gender intersectionality of oppression. They face multiple layers of discriminations – social, familial and economic. Being a woman in a patriarchal society, being born in a fisher family puts Asilin and Mala in a difficult situation. Public hardships and personal hardships are all intertwined for these women. They are not only exploited by people outside their family but are also exploited by their own family.

Asilin is one character in the novel who continues to endure adversities until death. She is exposed to multi-layered oppression. She is continuously victimized within the patriarchal set up. Her life is constrained by gendered exploitations. She remains a victim of systematic injustice. She accepts and submits herself to her husband despite his infidelities and betrayals. Her duty is not restricted to household chores only. She has also to contribute to family income by earning in possible ways. She strives hard to make ends meet, while her husband Jamis gambles. And no one dares to protest against his gambling. After the failure of Jamis' trade, that is, fishing, the brunt of the family falls on Asilin. More than Jamis, Asilin takes care of their house. She even weaves coconut fronds to block the roof so that it does not leak, while her husband gambles away money and bets on horses, sometimes peddling ganjas.

Asilin has no time and space to perform her maternal roles. Hence, all of her children are neglected. Jamis's abuse of Asilin and their daughter Mala reflects the pervasive violence against women in their private sphere. Asilin is more submissive and adaptive than Mala as she is aware of her marginalized position. Jamis exercises gendered authority and uses it over the females in his family. He is unfair and oppressive to his daughter, though he himself has illicit affairs. Like other men, Jamis considers women as sexual objects. While drunk he views his own daughter promiscuously. But when his daughter gets pregnant, he perpetrates domestic violence on Mala. Asilin does not resist or confront her husband's infidelity and also physical violence on Mala to maintain peace in her family. She keeps warning Mala about the consequences of her waywardness. She is more concerned about family honour than Mala's pregnancy.

Both mother and daughter are exploited by Jamis. Mala resists and leaves home. Asilin cannot claim justice for herself or for her daughter. She cannot fight back Jamis to bring her daughter back home. However, Asilin exhibits non-verbal resistance at times. When Mala gets pregnant second time, Asilin ignores the stigma as she is more concerned with the health of her daughter. In the absence of Jamis, she receives Mala home. The readers get a hint that Asilin is no longer concerned of dignity. She offers whatever she can to her pregnant daughter.

Asilin's resilience is more inclined on survival. For individuals like Asilin, dignity becomes secondary while survival becomes primary. Although she does not approve of Mala's flesh trade, she does not restrict her from it. Instead, she has to take her share from Mala's earnings as she is helpless. When Jamis becomes aware of Mala's trade through gossiping friends, he becomes violent and flares up. Then, Asilin reminds him, "If not for the money that the girl and I bring in, you'd be sleeping in an ambalama like a beggar." (Lokugé 98) Each character in the novel, including male characters like Jamis resists in a unique way. Although Asilin complies and reciprocates to the gender biased rules, she resists covertly. Asilin exhibits "everyday resistance". James C. Scott's concept of "everyday resistance" refers to the subtle, often invisible forms of resistance that individuals or groups employ in their daily lives, as opposed to more overt and collective forms of protest or rebellion. Through these invisible

forms of resistance, people resist, subvert or undermine dominant power structures through quiet, everyday acts.

Women from marginalized spaces resist patriarchal structures of society through everyday acts of resistance to confront the gendered domination in home and in society. Although Asilin appears submissive, she exhibits false compliance and feigned ignorance, not to overthrow or transform but to survive. Asilin bringing Mala home during pregnancy reflects a subordinate's counter-domination action. Her unwillingness to employ her children as servants can be considered as an act of subtle defiance. She always wants to keep her children out of the servant population. Her resistance however proves futile. Yet, after Mala's scandal, Asilin sends her twin daughters to work at a place through the convent. Perhaps, she wants to prevent the repetition of Mala's scandal. She might have also been compelled by their poverty to change her decision. This act can itself be interpreted as a defiance.

For subordinate women like Asilin, they endure an extensive range of injustice as they depend on men politically, socially and economically. Passive resistance becomes their weapon:

For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support. (Lorde 99)

Aruni's gangrape by the beach boys reveals the futility of "beating him at his own game" as these tools are rooted in patriarchal and economic exploitation, reinforcing her otherness rather than granting genuine homecoming. However, Asilin wields two domestic tools - silence and endurance amid oppression and poverty. She survives through submission.

In the novel *Turtle Nest*, along with Asilin, her daughter Mala is also situated in a dehumanized position. Quite young Mala realises her vulnerability in the "master's house", that is, patriarchal society. When Nirmala (Mala) plays the role of Mother Mary, Joseph does not play his part well as he keeps staring at Mary. Consequently, the audience treats Joseph with a few wolf-whistles and catcalls. Nirmala, which means pure, pure like mother of Jesus is also treated with catcalls. When Mother Mary deeply revered by mankind is exposed to catcalls, Mala knows she is not to be spared. She is conscious of her father's 'promiscuous gaze', a humiliation and a kind of sexual violence. Her vulnerability is increased by her sexuality. She encounters both personal dominations from face-to-face relations as well as impersonal dominations originating from the cultural beliefs, values, traditions, etc. of society. Her oppression is individualized not only in her family but also in her community. Her plights are not recognized. Mala resists individually to the dominations, but her individual resistance is trivialized.

Mala defies traditional gender roles - she lives a wayward life, quite unconventional. She continues to defy societal expectations by her casual sexual encounters. Her flings bring her into trouble. Her defiance is intensified by her two pregnancies out of wedlock. Her suffering is primarily associated with her female body. Her flesh trade is sparked by lack of money. Mala always desires for upward mobility. Her aspiration for a better life is obvious when she says: "When I marry, it will be a rich gentleman from the town side, and he will have a big bed in the house." (Lokugé 68) Simon sees that Mala is not lured to the white men by her poverty alone. Her sensuality is one reason; she is pulled towards the white men. A closer look into the text depicts that Mala's overt sensuality is her choice. Her overt sensuality is opposed to the societal expectations of covert sensuality from a female counterpart. Mala's overt sensuality and indifference to its outcome can be considered as an act of defiance. Her flings are personal choice. Hence, rebellion against male-dominated societal expectations. The values, the cultural beliefs, the traditions of her community provide energy for social dissent against her rebellions.

Mala's flings are act of defiance resulting in giving birth to two 'illegitimate' children – which is considered as a punitive act, hence punished by her father. She is beaten and thrown out. She remains cold and indifferent when streams of insults are hurled at her by men. Mala never asks for help from anyone, nor does she react, neither does she notice when exposed to harassment. She continues to trade herself for money. The novel depicts dignity as less valued compared to economic security in a subaltern family like Mala's. She brings her earnings home, her mother Asilin accepts the money. As she transgresses societal boundaries, Mala is stigmatized but she ignores the stigma. When she gets impregnated out of her flings, she suffers. She is treated as an outcast; her first-born is also treated as an outcast.

Mala is no longer accepted at home by her father after her first pregnancy. She is rejected, neglected and ignored. The social norms dictate women like Mala to submit but she does not submit. At one point of time, conflict between Mala and Jamis reaches a point where there is no potential of negotiation. Her protest becomes loud when she confronts her father. The confrontation results in physical assault on pregnant Mala by her father Jamis. Jamis attacks Mala accusing her of disgracing their family. He flings her and kicks her. When Mala comes to sense, she confronts her father: "You dare accuse me of smearing our name?" (Lokugé 101) She curses her family for her fate:

'I've seen you, you filthy pig. I've seen you with Seela and Maggie and all those other women drunk, fiddling with them in the huts . . . Don't think I've not heard the gossips.' (Lokugé 101)

And turning to her mother:

'And how many times have you taken the money that I brought home from the suddhas? It was good enough to keep all the family from starving, wasn't it? Everyone in the house knows where the money comes from.' (Lokugé 101)

Mala continues to speak out the truth to her father:

'And what do you want from *me* when you're drunk? Think I don't know? I've seen it in your eyes, you drunken sod. Oh, you are a wild animal when you are drunk.' (Lokugé 101)

She is driven out of her house as she brings 'dishonour' to the family following her pregnancy. She is perceived as an unchaste woman. Literally she is disposed from her family.

Mala's resistance is opposed to Asilin's resistance. Her overt rebellion proves an act of sabotaging herself and her family. She gets pregnant second time, also out of wedlock. Her delivery of her second child exhibits the peak of discrimination a woman can suffer. She has an untended delivery all by herself. Extreme poverty, childbirth and domestic violence take toll on both physical and emotional health of Mala. She exhibits non-verbal resistance after her second pregnancy. Her silence functions as defiance and assertion of dignity and awareness of her vulnerable position within the social hierarchy and her family. She remains detached after series of betrayal by her community including her family. She gives her second born to Neela's family.

Mala's abandonment for her second child to Neela's family displays her sense of protectiveness for the child. After the birth of her second child, a girl child, Mala whimpers: "'Kumari' . . . 'your father will look after you. And you'll be a lady.'" (Lokugé 194) She does not care much for her first child, a boy. However, she wants her second child, a girl to be a lady. She does not want her daughter to share her fate. Her act of leaving her daughter to Mohan's family is an act of subverting authority. It is a calculated action suggested by Asilin for the safety of the child. Perhaps Mala wants to save and protect her second child. Later she abandons her home and never returns. She refuses her father's authority. Her never returning home could be integrated in terms of Gramsci's concept of counter-hegemony. She resists submission and dependency. Unwilling to follow the gendered social norm and as resistance to patriarchal violence, she leaves to thrive on her own. This act can be interpreted as an assertion of her independence and a desire for autonomy.

Mala exhibits Gramsci's concept of subaltern resistance when she refuses to return to her home and to acquiesce to the established gender norms. In fact, Mala's transgressions are her conscious choice. Hence, Mala's powerful act of defiance symbolises her rejection of patriarchal norms. She resembles the very fish she wants to free and save: The fish 'struggling frantically to get its breath of air and leap back into the sea.' (Lokugé 19,20). Mala catches hold of its tail, splashes it into the waves and let it go. She shouts at it to come back but it never returns, just as she refuses to return home. Her detachment at the end is a strategy of confronting patriarchal oppression. She takes her own decision to emancipate herself from the constraints that limit her autonomy in her family as well as society. Her individual resentment leads to individual resistance and survival methods. As her revolutionary acts are done on an individual level, not collective revolutionary action – her response and reaction against local politics, power imbalance prove a failure. Future of Mala's children is jeopardized. Women like Mala have no scope of upward social mobility. In fact, Mala represents:

. . . a woman who tried to be decisive in *extremis*. She 'spoke', but women did not, 'hear' her. Thus, she can be defined as a 'subaltern' – a person without lines of social mobility. (Spivak 28)

Besides Asilin and Mala, the novel also depicts glimpses of women selling wares to tourists, women sweepers and women into other odd jobs. Mala, serves as a chapel maid, her twin sisters are employed as servants. And Asilin is into different trade such as selling turtle meat. These women, all engaged in different odd jobs reflect their resilience for survival. An analogy from Crenshaw holds true for these women:

Imagine a basement which contains all people who are disadvantaged on the basis of race, sex, class, sexual preference, age and/or physical ability. These people are stacked – feet standing on shoulders – with those on the bottom being disadvantaged by the full array of factors, upto the very top, where the heads of all those disadvantaged by a singular factor brush up against the ceiling . . . to wait in the unprotected margin until they can be absorbed into the broader, protected categories of race and sex. (151, 152)

All these women represent those on the bottom disadvantaged by several factors.

Neela is one complicated character in the novel who is subordinated because of her gender. The oppression of Neela, a privileged woman is distinct from the oppression of Asilin and Mala, marginalized women. Neela experiences what any woman would have experienced when betrayed by her husband. Asilin experiences the same betrayal from her husband. But both of them resist differently. Asilin refrains from direct and open defiance. In contrast to Asilin's defiance and Mala's outright rebellion, Neela continues to live with Mohan and Mohan's illegitimate child. She internalizes respectability by referring to Mala as a homewrecker while enduring Mohan's infidelity. Yet she nurtures passive resentment till the end which depicts her unspoken defiance. She demonstrates inner rebellion. The treachery of her husband compounds the pain of losing her child Kumari. After the treachery of her husband, Neela becomes aggressive born of despair. She cannot embrace Aruni as her daughter. She refers to Aruni as Mala's daughter and Mohan's child, not hers. Neela, a bereaved mother and a betrayed wife withdraws in her silent world.

For Mohan, he has let go of his past, he moves on alone. However, for Neela: "She still grasped and clutched. But knew the bond was slackened." (Lokugé 220) Neela realises: "And that it was she who could not cross over, could not reach out, could not forgive." (Lokugé 219) Neela recalls Mohan's betrayal:

How easily he had forgiven himself. He must not be allowed to forget. She revelled in his guilt, but sorrowfully. He had violated both her and their dead daughter. (Lokugé 219)

Neela is persistently tortured by the memory of Mohan's betrayal. Hence, she will not make it easy for Mohan. Even little Aruni could sense the distance between Mohan and Neela – sometimes, she is frightened of the silence. And then:

She tried to join their hands, just to see them smile together. But though they each looked down at the joined hands, and smiled with her, they freed their hands from the forced clasp, and went back into their walled-in selves. (Lokugé 221,222)

There is a void in Neela's family, a void in the mother-daughter bond, a void in the husband-wife bond – an emptiness that cannot be mended.

Mala's past shapes the experiences of her daughter Aruni. Aruni carries the bias of the society being an illegitimate child and being the daughter of an ostracized mother. Her mother's past infringes in her life. Her experience of marginalization is compounded by her "misgotten" status – of being a daughter of a scandalous woman marked by social stigma. She is also disadvantaged of her diasporic identity, being an emigrant. She experiences lack of attachment:

All her life she had demanded impossibilities – from her mother, from her father, girls at school. But they all had their private lives that excluded her. (Lokugé 226)

Right from her childhood, Aruni feels excluded. She yearns to belong. She knows she does not belong to the house she is brought up. Aruni is not allowed to touch the pictures of Kumari. Her family observes the almsgiving every year, on the night before Kumari's birthday. She is persistently compared to Kumari. Initially, she loves being called a good girl like Kumari. However, as she grows up, she starts hating the comparison. Aruni finds Neela obsessed with Kumari. When Aruni wants to cuddle in Neela's bed, she hears Neela whispering Kumari's name instead. Aruni feels excluded. She feels an emptiness within her. Her existence seems not to matter to Neela. At the edge of despair Aruni howls: "I am not Kumari. Kumari is dead, dead, dead!" (Lokugé 218) Aruni defies to be identified with Kumari. This becomes one reason for her quest for her roots. Aruni does, as Menika said, "what a caterpillar did. When it got to the end of one leaf, it stretched out and moved onto another one." (Lokugé 223)

Aruni longs for acceptance. She feels "an unbridgeable distance" (Lokugé 44) with Neela. After the trance or madness claiming herself as Kumari, Aruni goes mute for weeks. Mohan cannot heal her. She is taken to a temple by Neela and has a pirith thread tied round her wrist for protection. Aruni's sense of isolation, unacceptance compels her to seek out her maternal relatives. Her quest for her maternal home is significantly influenced by her marginalization. She desires for belongingness to her maternal home, indirectly to stay connected to her mother: "These were her mother's relatives and friends. These, her people." (Lokugé 241) Like "a seedling pushing out of the earth to claim its new life", (Lokugé 35) Aruni leaves Australia and comes to Sri Lanka seeking out her maternal relatives. Simon asks Aruni: "Why must you always belong to someone or to someplace? Why can't you find a home right inside yourself?" (Lokugé 41) Inconspicuously Simon's remarks highlight every woman's predicament. Unlike men who are free, women's identity is defined by their belongingness to somewhere or someone, especially to a patriarch. Consequently, Aruni claims herself to belong to Priya as he is her maternal uncle. Belongingness is all important to Aruni. Subsequently, her craving for belongingness overrides every hint of negation. Aruni's craving for belongingness and her extreme trust trying to get acceptance and attempts to blend in with "her people", bring her into peril. She attempts at connections but ironically, her end is in contrast to her desire. Aruni's desire is not addressed. She considers herself as one of them:

Premasiri, one of the beach boys tells Aruni:

'You look like one of us now.'

'Look like? But I am one of you. I've told that. My mother –'

'Oh yes,' he says, 'we all know that story. But you are not a beach girl, you will never really be one of us.' (Lokugé 228, 229)

Ironically, she is gangraped by these beach boys. Aruni's rape is a nightmarish encounter. They rape her not as a woman but as an outsider specifically. Aruni remains disconnected. By the end of the novel, like newly hatched turtles (baby turtles) Aruni drags herself towards the sea.

Not only females, but also males like Jamis, a fisherman are exposed to over-lapping oppression, that is, oppression within marginalized groups themselves. Jamis who is a discriminator is also discriminated. He is an agent of internalized oppression within his family. But mudalali located in the higher rung exploits the smaller fishermen like Jamis. Jamis attempts desperately to resist his precariousness when his trade as a fisherman declines. He tries to switch to stilt fishing. He also peddles ganja occasionally. His experiments with other trades can be interpreted as subordinates counter-domination actions.

Priya is also another male character who is exploited. He experiences emotional and psychological violence. Like Jamis, Priya is also a subordinate belonging to fisherfolk. He is also situated at a dehumanized position similar to Asilin and Mala. He encounters sexual exploitation by a white old tourist. When Jamis sends away Mala in her post-partum period under societal pressure, Priya stands by his sister. He wants his sister Mala to deliver her child at home, despite their father's disapproval. He keeps his promise to look after Mala's first-born. He also receives Mala home in the absence of his father. These acts can be interpreted as subtle acts of defiance. Priya and Mala's tie resemble best friends. Mala serves like an anchor to Priya. Realizing Mala will never return, Priya feels an "empty space within him". (Lokugé 207) Priya remains in a stupor. He steps out of his stupor on rare occasions and like a hermit crab "disturbed, it sheds the shell and escapes into a small hole". (Lokugé 42)

Priya once questions a Father at confession "why God created rich people and poor people." (Lokugé 86) The Father tells Priya "that his aim in life was not to question God, but to do as He wished". (Lokugé 86) Priya wishes he has not asked the question to the Father. He feels as if he has betrayed his family's secrets to a stranger. Like Asilin, Priya also surrenders. They take domination in life as inevitable: "They avoid direct and open defiance against external domination only because they are aware - rationally - of their inferior position in the social hierarchy." (Ho 43) Asilin's, Mala's and Priya's worldview is shaped by their experiences. Each of them develops a contextual, adaptive understanding of social dynamics. Lokugé exposes how justice and human dignity are served to the people in the lower rung of power structures.

All female characters in the novel are tragic characters. They suffer at different contexts. Asilin and Mala's case represent the shared experience of the subaltern women. They are discriminated for being women, but their discrimination is reinforced by their birth in a poor family. Women like them endure an extensive range of injustice. They face extreme discrimination and exploitation in navigating the double standards of male dominant society Mala gets pregnant while Mohan impregnates. Mala's pregnancy becomes a source of her suffering but Mohan escapes suffering. Mala's flings bring her into trouble. Her sexual affairs are considered punitive acts. Hence punitive measures are taken up against her by her community as well as her family.

The existing pattern of her society serves as a force of exploitation and status degradation for women like Mala. She encounters oppressions in the politics within her family. Jamis' family becomes dysfunctional. One of the several causes of dysfunctionality of Jamis' family is poverty, which is compounded by Jamis' irresponsibility, Mala's flesh trade and Mala's pregnancy. Underclass women like Asilin have to work towards providing for the family. Jamis earns but squanders, while Asilin and Mala earn and contribute to the family. Yet Mala is excluded from her family and deprived of her rights:

It is no simple matter to determine just where compliance ends and resistance begins, as the circumstances lead many of the poor to clothe their resistance in the public language of conformity. (Scott 289)

Asilin does not attempt to fight back the injustice. However, Mala and Aruni attempt to fight or resist, but fail and succumb. Mala is perceived as a rebel while Aruni comes close to a rebel. Asilin does not question against oppression and discrimination because of ignorance. Although Mala questions, both mother and daughter have no awareness of being discriminated and do not comprehend their marginalized position. Hence, they do not strive for their rights. As for Aruni, she inherits Mala's vulnerability depicting that oppression against women extends across generations. Mala and Aruni's sufferings are associated with their female body. Mala is considered a sexual object, even by Mohan. Similarly, Aruni is also exploited. Both Mala and Aruni experience displacement.

To conclude, it is clearly evident from the foregoing paragraphs that Chandani Lokugé's *Turtle Nest* portrays the social inequalities, domination and oppression faced by women characters overtly and covertly as well as the individualized responses to this intersectional oppression. The novel gives an insight into the oppressional realities faced by subaltern women in a patriarchal society where gender and class play a significant role in shaping individual identity. Almost all the characters, especially female characters resist and navigate the intersecting systems of oppression which ultimately highlight the complex realities faced by marginalized women within the intersecting system of social identities. Individual resentments lead to individual resistance. The subordinates respond in unique ways, mostly individualized. Lorde's argument frames female resistance as a radical rejection of patriarchal frameworks insisting that true liberation demands new strategies stemming from difference of the marginalized rather than assimilation into oppressive systems of patriarchal dominance. This challenges women who cling to the master's house for security, urging transformative practices rooted in erotic (sensual) and mutual power interdependences, and this can be applied to women of the fisherfolk in the novel. By the end of reading the novel it would not be wrong to deduce that only the presence of internal cohesion and collective action can serve mobilization and collective resentment. Hence, the need to expand individual resentment to wider and higher-level collective resentment. Almost all the female characters in the novel such as Asilin, Mala, Neela and Aruni, etc exhibit resistance but their resistance is trivialized and unheard.

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