



THE DOUBLE OPPRESSION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN BASED ON
SELECTED NOVELS BY ALICE WALKER

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ABSRTACT

This study was conducted with the aim to portray the level in which the African American women were humiliated and dominated by the males, generally, and the whites, particularly, during and after the Civil Right Movement. Three research objectives were formed to achieve the aim. These research objectives were to investigate how the African American women were racially oppressed by the whites, to examine how the black American women suffered from patriarchal oppression by the black men and to examine the impact of racial and patriarchal oppression practiced against the black women. Four selected novels by Alice Walker were analysed to achieve these objectives. The theory employed in this study was the Black Feminist Critical Theory and additionally, this theory was chosen as the conceptual framework to analyse the themes in the selected novels that incorporated black feminist issues with racial matters. Black feminist thoughts also addressed the interconnection of class, gender and race. The findings revealed that most of Walker's female characters had experienced racial and patriarchal oppressions. Further, the findings also revealed the double oppression of African American women characters who were dealing with the disloyalty of male. As a conclusion, this study is a critical attempt to highlight the features of black feminism and women's oppression in particular the African American: female characters had undergone various sufferings from patriarchal American society. As an implication, this study sent a message and gave some voices to black women as well as provided them with pathways to obtain their freedom. Some contributions in terms of social problem issues were identified from this study: it explored the pregnancy and abortion as well as homicides that seemed to threaten African American women in particular.





DUA PENINDASAN TERHADAP WANITA AFRIKA AMERIKA BERDASARKAN NOVEL TERPILIH OLEH ALICE WALKER

ABSTRACT

Kajian ini dijalankan dengan matlamat untuk menggambarkan tahap di mana wanita Afrika Amerika telah dimalukan dan dikuasai oleh kaum lelaki, secara amnya, dan orang kulit putih, khususnya, semasa dan selepas Pergerakan Hak Sivil. Tiga objektif kajian telah dibentuk untuk mencapai matlamat tersebut. Tiga objektif kajian tersebut adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana wanita Afrika Amerika ditindas secara perkauman oleh orang kulit putih, mengkaji bagaimana wanita kulit hitam Amerika mengalami penindasan patriarki oleh lelaki kulit hitam dan mengkaji kesan penindasan perkauman dan patriarki yang diamalkan terhadap wanita kulit hitam. Empat novel yang ditulis oleh Alice Walker telah dipilih untuk dianalisa bagi mencapai objektif kajian tersebut. Teori yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah Teori Kritikal Feminis Kulit Hitam dan teori ini dipilih sebagai kerangka konsep untuk menganalisa tema-tema yang terdapat dalam novel-novel terpilih yang menggabungkan isu-isu feminis kulit hitam dengan hal-hal perkauman. Pemikiran feminis kulit hitam juga merangkumi kesalinghubungan kelas, jantina dan bangsa. Dapatan kajian mendedahkan bahawa kebanyakan watak wanita yang digambarkan oleh Walker telah mengalami penindasan kaum dan patriarki. Selain daripada ini, dapatan kajian juga mendedahkan bahawa kebanyakan watak-watak wanita Afrika Amerika dalam novel Walker mengalami penindasan yang berkaitan dengan ketidaksetiaan kaum lelaki. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini adalah percubaan kritikal untuk menyerlahkan ciri-ciri feminisme kulit hitam dan penindasan kaum wanita khususnya Amerika Afrika: watak-watak wanita telah menjalani pelbagai penderitaan patriarki daripada masyarakat Amerika. Implikasi, kajian ini memberikan mesej dan beberapa suara kepada wanita kulit hitam, dan juga menyediakan mereka laluan untuk mendapatkan kebebasan mereka. Beberapa sumbangan terhadap segi isu masalah sosial telah dikenalpasti daripada kajian ini: iaitu kehamilan dan juga keguguran, dan juga membunuh diri yang mengancam wanita Afrika Amerika, khususnya.





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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FGC	Female Genital Circumcision
NBA	National Book Award
CRM	Civil Right Movement
PIC	Prison Industrial Complex
TCP	The Colour Purple
TTLGC	The Third Life of Grange Copeland
PSJ	Possessing the Secret of Joy
BFC	Black Feminist Criticism
BPM	Black Power Movements
NBFO	National Black Feminist Organization
BFT	Black Feminist Thought
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the main focus of the current study specifically the oppression of African American literature and also some famous writers, like Alice Walker and others, who honestly their writings reflect the suffering of black American women during the recent era. Another point which will be discussed in this section is the statement of the problem and how the current research contributes to literature. Further, this chapter states the main objectives and the research questions that lead the study, followed by its scope and limitations. Then this chapter will also provide the significance of the research and finally ends with the definition of the operational terms used throughout the study.





1.2 Background of the study

The African American literature emerged and flourished in the 1970s after the emergence of plenty of books that belonged to Black authors and occupied the best-selling and award-winning status. This genre of literature became more famous when the writings of the African American authors were taken as a legitimate kind of American literature in academia. The African American literature became recognized and was analysed due to the inspiration of the Black Arts Movement, which was raised by the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. There were a handful of authors, such as Alice Walker, Toni Morrison and poet James Emanuel, who were credited for making the African American literature promoted and established (Vaidyanathan, 2012).



Shahida (2005), one of the feminists' writers, confirms that Alice Walker is the one who formulated and framed the terminology of womanism. It is a type of black feminism that calls for and supports female culture, plasticity and power. In relation to the writers, womanism is not incommensurably private, but rather connected to all people, whether males or females. Alice Walker is a well-known figure among the black American female authors. Due to her battles against the anti-social segregation, degradation and injustice, Walker has always been a source of inspiration to a black woman who suffers social biasness (Shahida, 2005).





Vaidyanathan (2012) showed how the novelist and essayist, Alice Walker, wrote a well-known essay that brought the classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and its writer Zora Neale Hurston back to the attention of the literary world. Walker was rewarded for her novel *The Colour Purple* (TCP) with both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award in 1982. This novel introduced the story of Celie, a young woman who was suffering from sexual and patriarchal abuse carried by her stepfather. She was forced later to marry a man who used to abuse her mentally, emotionally and physically. This literary work was developed later into a film by Steven Spielberg. Another African American writer, Alex Haley, wrote *The Saga of an American Family*, which was the bestselling book in the 1970s. It was a reflection account of Haley's family history. The book started by introducing Kunta Kinte, who was Haley's ancestor in Gambia, during the time he was a slave in the United State. Alex eventually got the Pulitzer Prize and became a famous television mini-series.

The Colour Purple (1982) is an epistolary, prominent, modern African American novel, written in a form of ninety letters that covered all the events of the novel. In this award-winning American fiction, Walker was extremely praised for her insightful and noticeable depictions of black women's lives. It received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1983. Walker's writing relates to gender matter and racial issues in which most of her works deal with several themes like racism, sexism, gender bias, oppression of women, slavery, male-female relationships, culture, and marginalization. Some critics consider her writings as having a universal appeal because the oppression of black women exists





in all communities. Further, it was discovered that the suffering of black women was represented by patriarchal and racial oppression (Shahida, 2005).

There are similar famous novels and short stories which were written by the author about African American literature: *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), *In Love and Trouble* (1973), *Meridian* (1976), *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (1982), *To Hell With Dying* (1988), *The Temple of my Familiar* (1989), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), *By the Light of My Father's Smile* (1998), *The Way Forward Is With a Broken Heart* (2000) and *Now is The Time to Open Your Heart* (2004). Later, the writer has a distinguished poetry collection, essays and non-fiction books, which contributed to her winning of awards and honours.



This study will analyse four novels: *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970) (henceforth TTLGC), *Meridian* (1976), *The Colour Purple* (1982) (henceforth, TCP), and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992) (henceforth PSJ). These novels are selected because they reflect the same period based on their publishing dates which cover three decades: through the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Besides, she wrote many essays, short stories, and poetry in addition to children's books. The author's novels have been interpreted into about twenty languages. Consequently, Walker honoured her birthplace in Eatonton, Georgia; she now lives and teaches in San Francisco.





This study highlighted the themes that represent the core of African American literature, such as subjugation, exploitation of women, slavery, gender bias, racial and patriarchal oppression and the kinship among black women within the black American family. These themes were introduced and addressed by many writers who are known to support equality and freedom. This study investigated the feminist concept and focuses on selected novels of Alice Walker, the most famous writer in the African American literature. Shahida (2005) commented that the famous work of Alice Walker is *The Colour Purple*, in which she showed the extent to which black women had led a miserable life in the white American patriarchal society. They were obliged to live into slavery under the control of savage maleness norms. African American women were portrayed as very weak, humiliated, and even socially and sexually abused.



Pydah (2016) stressed that Walker scorned the principles of racism established within the African American society itself, particularly the importance of set in skin colour. In TCP, Harpo loves the black skin of Sofia more than her smartness. Harpo says to Celie “Sofia is bright, New bright skin”. He slangs and humiliates Shug by saying “She black as tar” (Pydah, 2016, p. 347). Tashi has suspicions in vamoosing Africa for America: “It was obvious that black skin women are not really admired by white-skinned people, and black-skinned people, like herself, did not admire black skin and black women” (Pydah, 2016, p. 347). The colour of the skin in America represents a lot of significance. The white skin regards him as authentic, perfect, and hallowed and the senior, whereas the one with black skin is regarded is as a symbol of wickedness and





barbarity, and thus is degraded to a slave. In the novel *Meridian*, Lynne's black-skinned husband blames Lynn for her mistake of being abused and sexually exploited, "By being White Lynne was guilty of whiteness. He could not reduce the logic any further; in that direction, Black women for years were guilty of being black. Slavery was a punishment for their 'crime' (Pydah, 2016, p. 347).

Thus, Walker's true mentor is the infallible faith in her own conscience which is her life force. In her work, she was unhesitant to introduce even the most private zone of a black female. So, she had made private to public, which appeared as the reflection of true-spirit of audacious and outrageous wilful character representing Afro American background. While going through her all works, it is clear that she treated elemental things of nature, love, friendship, heroism which she handled with her own angles of vision. Her straightforward question like *African Malpractice of Female Genital Mutilation* is the best example to prove her conviction of human safety. Alice's sufferings were far more painful than she had portrayed in her characters. Her socio-mental conflicts with her revolutionary ideas were stronger than calligrapher in her novels. Her heart burning desire was to ameliorate her sisters out of slavery, poverty and suppression deeply rooted in American society. Travelling through the undulating path of the development of Afro-American women into 21st century, at times it felt so painful with gender status which can be concluded that human civilization is still uncivilized (Anand, 2019).



Cogeanu (2011) added that the novel recounts to the story of two kinds of women: the individuals who are taboo towards the ownership of the mystery of euphoria, the privilege to claim their bodies in regular totality, and the individuals who prohibit others of this right. Walker built the two models 'the selling out mother' and 'the deceived girl' and encapsulated their contention in the connection among Tashi and M'Lissa, who annihilated themselves and each other in view of their confidence in, and addressing of, custom female circumcision.

The writer emphasized the value of black women and children and how they were imprisoned as victims of society. Brownfield's mother in TTLGC was like "their dog in some ways. She didn't have a thing to say that didn't in some way show her submission to her father" (TTLGC, 1970, p. 6). Obligated to try degeneration by her couple, she kills her boy, whose Dad might have remained one of its mother's partners.

Walker, through the novel, had contended that women's lives needed a huge commitment from men. Grange was the perfect man of all the male characters displayed in the novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970) just like Walker's other books. Walker through the novel had displayed her worries on the way that men need to contribute to wellbeing, nurturance, love, trust, confidence and solid comprehension for the progression of their female partners and their progressive ages. Walker highlighted the point that being macho, virile and combative were not being male, however, being



cherishing mind and understanding were the most virile part of black masculinity (Hasanthi, 2018).

As a distinguished group of contemporary black American writers who are famous for their recent works in African American literature, reflects and portrays all shapes of oppression and violence against black American women like, Alice Walker, Toni Morison, Alex Haley and James Emanuel. Particularly, Walker's artwork has addressed topics related to racial and gender oppression, suffering, and bigotry, which affected the black American female during the modern era. This study focused on specific themes that can be considered as essential issues in Alice Walker's writings, such as public and domestic violence and murder. The black woman's family - as referred to in this study is like an arena that is known for its violent manifestations, and even forming the underlying structure of it. The researcher is in line with the writer's opinion: Changing the stereotyping and categorizing of black women is fraught with problems. Stereotyping is an act that was used as a control mechanism against possible retaliation to the brutalities and barbarity perpetrated over centuries. So, Walker's main aim is to stand against all kinds of conventional norms of society and to represent black women raising their voice to achieve their rights, freedom and equality as human being.



1.3 Problem Statement

The statement of the problem is a significant part in this study which is mainly addresses the multiple kinds of oppression, represented by racism, classism, and sexism, together have been attacked the everyday life of African American women in the United States during the modern age, particularly in the southern states where the majority is blacks. The black women have been racially or ethnically oppressed by the white men. Further, they suffered from domestic violence or can call patriarchal oppression by the African American men because of they are non-white and women, and how they should undergo a lot of depressions and subjugation by the white and black American males. Therefore, as a modern African American feminist author, Walker is counter to whiteness and maleness. Walker, through selected novels, presents her characters to portray how patriarchy and gender inequality affected the lives of black women. This has increased currently that it is so problematic for any African American female to live a happy life in a male-controlled culture like America, as illustrated in this figure.

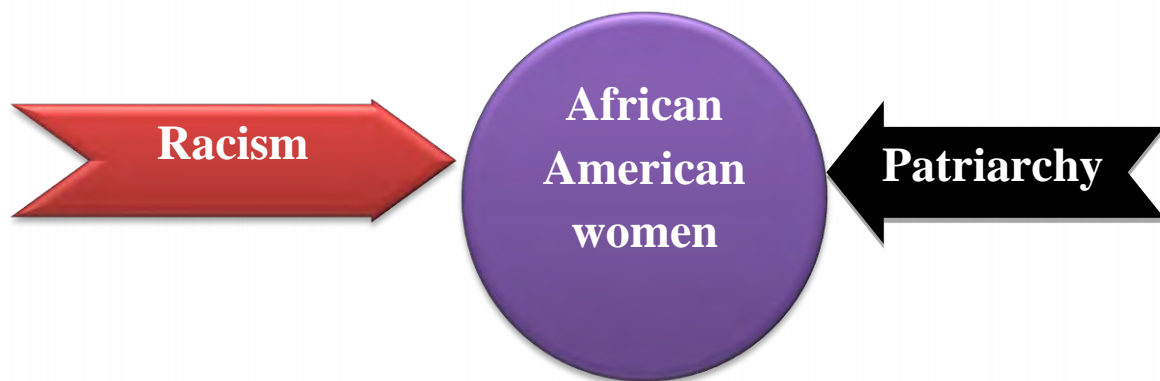


Figure 1.1: The Theoretical Outline of the Dual Oppression Practised towards African American Women



This study emphasises on the influence of ill-treatment represented by racial and patriarchal oppression against African-American women. African American women are obliged to endure all these miseries. They are humiliated by the American males in general, they spent most of their life suffering from these miseries, and all these difficulties were surrounded by poverty. Thus, this study intends to discuss in-depth and address such issues to find out a pathway for next studies to search deeply in these troubles which reflects Walker's black feminist idea with strong feminist enthusiasm.

Women have been heroes of artistic works since the very beginnings of writing, and a significant measure of those spotlights on the more troublesome and tricky parts of a lady's life. Black American writing specifically has brought to surface the segregation which African American ladies had to suffer and bear, previously and currently, just as they battle for uniformity and equity. Such are the numerous writings of the writer; one of the most valued and acclaimed African American creators of today. A large number of her books, articles, and short stories manage to persecute female characters and their lives of battle in a man-centric culture. Separation is clear on numerous levels and it is available in almost all parts of regular day to day existence. As a matter of the first importance, Walker's heroes are looked with bigotry and the way that they will regularly, if not generally, looked down on as a result of their skin shading – something they are not ready to pick or change. Despite the fact that this applies to the two people, racial separation is substantially harder to suffer and battle against for ladies since they also





need to adapt to sexism and customary sexual orientation jobs that are forced on them (Kuharic, 2017).

Kumar and Mummatchi (2014) stressed that the writer is one of the famous black women who first attempted to find out the factors leading to oppression in her works. Particularly, Sexism was the major factor found to be the principal reason behind the oppressing of African American women. However, some parts of Walker's themes remain controversial in the literature. Some speculate that this was due to the fact that she was inconsistent in her investigation of the relationship between African American males and females, further among black parents and children with constant and irremovable honesty.



King presented the expression 'double danger' to depict the dual exploitation of black females. While she noticed that these two sorts of mistreatments are regularly connected to monetary abuse, this thought was excluded in the formation of the term (King, 1988).

As indicated by King, prejudice, sexism, and classism are generally acknowledged as the significant features of the position of African American women. Be that as it may, a few essayists have proposed that homophobia ought to be an extra danger operating at a coloured woman's understanding. Lord accepts that twofold risk and triple danger doesn't completely clarify the connection between the various



mistreatments looked by black ladies. Along these lines, King designed the expression ‘triple jeopardy’ in 1988 to speak to that abuses are manifold, not added substance. Accordingly, King accepts that various persecutions connect with one another as opposed to acting autonomously.

Morales (2016) pointed out that Walker had similar problems that are related to hatred, mainly in Walker’s second narration *Meridian* that attempts to portray the racial discrimination, animosity, hostility, and explosions of aggressiveness between the white and black African Americans. This phenomenon urges this study to be conducted by examining the themes that carry ethnic prejudice and negative stereotyping in its features. In *Meridian*, Walker has obviously portrayed how the black women hate the whites, as they are the people who were behind their enslavement and the denigration (Morales, 2016). This study will address and point out the reasons behind hatred and racial segregation that were existent between the blacks and whites as portrayed by Walker in her selected novels.

Clearly, gender determines the situation of people all over the place throughout the world. This reality charge sexes, mainly ladies. In the event that they are females yet in addition coloured, it turns out to be substantially harder to live in any society. They are isolated from the community. They need to bear all kinds of brutality and supremacist practices of both white males and white females. They battle against supremacist society as well as they need to endure on account of black men. Monitoring these realities, a

well-known contemporary author, Alice Walker fights to depict the encounters of black women in her books. Walker develops our comprehension of the impediments and potential outcomes of the lives of black Americans (Tanritanir & Aydemir, 2012).

1.4 Objectives of the Research

This study aims to portray the level in which African American women are humiliated and dominated by the males in general and the whites in particular. The aims of this study are to examine and study the distinguished themes in Walker's selected novels. This was particularly due to the fact that this analysis will be guided by the basic philosophies and recommendations of the black feminist thoughts of literary criticism. The current study will focus on the development of these novels in relation to the ideology of black feminist writers and gender issues in different social situations and environments. More specifically, it intends to get the following objectives:

1. To investigate how the African American women are racially oppressed by the whites according to selected works by Alice Walker.
2. To examine how the black American women suffered from patriarchal oppression by the black men according to selected works by Alice Walker.
3. To examine the impact of racial and patriarchal oppression that is practised against black women according to selected novels by Alice Walker.



1.5 Research Questions

With regard to the aforementioned objectives, this research contains three research questions. They are identified as follows:

1. How the African American women are racially oppressed on the hand of white Americans according to selected novels by Alice Walker?
2. How are the African American women suffered from patriarchal oppression on the hand of black American men based on selected novels by Alice Walker?
3. How are the black women influenced by racial and patriarchal oppression according to selected novels by the writer?



1.6 Significance of the Study

This study addresses the theme of dual oppression which is demonstrated in the selected novels by Alice Walker. This research endeavours to pass on a message that denounces the manner by which African American females were abused, utilized and oppressed. It obviously attempts to voice out how African American females have their very own opportunity and security rights.

Besides, this study attempts to highlight the effect of abuse and male-centric belief system on the life of African American women reflecting on the fundamental





topics of Walker's chosen books to make American black women mindful of these challenges in order to draw reasonable solutions and logical methods to treat with such global unlimited sufferings. This study evokes the widespread feeling of the mercilessness, cruelty and mistreatment that African American females have encountered on the hands of the white Americans. Moreover, this investigation motivates and reinforces human position among races and nationalities and stresses the way that black women are equal to the rest of humanity.

This study illustrates the gradual development of black women and how they are growingly changing from silence to resistance and from isolation, melancholy, and self-doubt, to self-confidence, independent and love. Further, it shows the nature of the kinship among black women. The protagonists in Walker's novels are portrayed as people who can illuminate the human heart, specifically encouraging one towards power and self-direction rather than cruelty and oppression. In short, this study shows the demand for respecting the identity and one's quest for accomplishment and self-fulfilment.

It is added that the motivation behind this work is an attempt to appear in which it means the author has incorporated the issue of black women and their persecution in her novels. With a notice of the creator's common sight in the direction of females and her portrayal of them in writing, various types of separation will be investigated, for example, racial and sexual abuse, together with the depiction of race and gender in a male-centric





culture and the impact it has on black females. As a result, the reader may be informed of the voice of blacks in literature. Thus, this study can restore and amend a crushed American past from the viewpoint of those Afro American women who have been denied their identity and voice in the creation of that history.

In the same regard, Sharma and Dwivedi (2017) stated that such studies are a good behaviour to accentuate and raise the voice of black culture for portraying and documenting the calamity, tribulation of American tendency of enmity against black women in America. The study, through Walker's works, reflects on different dimensions of the writer's tales by portraying the strivings of her female characters in America and how they get stronger step by step. Thus, this work may alleviate the burden of the patriarchy exercised against black women in America.

The researcher adds that such studies offer a chance to talk and to express women's contemplations beliefs and wants. This thought is additionally fortified in Walker's womanism, which is a development which expresses that ladies should represent their privileges and helps each other to demonstrate their personalities while putting a conclusion to men's matchless quality. Walker's misery was far more painful than she had portrayed in her characters.





1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research is limited to study African American literature. Specifically, it deals with four selected novels by Alice Walker in recent age. Although many authors wrote about this field like Toni Morrison, Zora Neal Hurston, Bell Hooks, Elia Suleyman, Angela Davis, Maya Angelou, Simone De Beauvoir, Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberley Williams Crenshaw, and others, the main reason behind selecting this writer is that Walker as a distinguished black feminist writer, was the first who established the term Womanism in her collection in 1983. She was also the first writer to introduce the problems associated with sexism and incorporate the feminist ideology with racial issues.



Walker wrote nine novels related to different issues about the tragedy of black women. The study focuses on four of them because they address the concerned issues in the same publishing time, and they reflect on the same themes of the study. The research has focused on the protagonists of these novels because they incarnate all forms of violence, racial and patriarchal oppression and disregarding against black women. In this respect, two topics of oppression against women are addressed: one is demonstrated by the white men, and another is by the blacks. So, both white and black males are involved in women's oppression, or what the study refers to as the 'double oppression', which dominates the American Society for centuries.



1.8 Definition of Terms

This section will explain all the key terms used in this study.

1.8.1 African American Women

Locke and Bailey (2013) define African American women as the descendants of enslaved African American women who belong to the United States. The cause that the whole continent (Africa) was used in place of a particular name of an African country was due to the tribe ancestry that was decisively eliminated by the slave masters. On the other hand, the term ‘African American Women’ characteristically means the descendants of subjugated African American women who belong to the United States of America. As related to this study the double oppression of African American women will be the main issue in this research.

1.8.2 Double Oppression

According to Walker’s point of view, the gender of the woman is one of the causatives and relevant elements with respect to why she is oppressed. Her carefully constructed characters enabled her to reveal in what way both race and gender perform and carry out



as a motivator for discrimination and persecution against the African American ladies (Lewis, 2017)

1.8.3 Patriarchy

According to Facio's definition, patriarchy is the authority in the primitive social organizations is exercised by males who act the character of the head of the family, and they extend their power to lead even distant relatives of the same descent using a legal and practical leadership. This is evident in the matriarchies, which were not matriarchies in the strict sense of the word, but rather matrilineal forms of social organization (Facio,



1.8.4 Feminism

The overall idea of woman's privileges demonstrates to the rule that men and women deserve equity in all odds, treatment, respect, and social rights. Generally speaking, feminists are people who endeavour to perceive social awkwardness reliant on the sexual direction and keep it from continuing. Ladies' activists point out that in numerous social orders since the beginning males have gotten a greater number of chances than females (Collins, 2000).



1.8.5 Racial Oppression

Racial discrimination has always been here for a long time. Although slavery has been abolished, at last, coloured people still have to fight with all kinds of unfairness and discrimination. It often takes the form of social movements, practices or beliefs, or political systems that consider black people to be ranked as inferior to each other. It is so hard for people to eliminate it (Zhang & Ye, 2018).

1.8.6 Black Feminism

Black feminism according to Crenshaw (1989) is an institute to learn and to clear the gender bias, class oppression, violence against women; sexism, male-female relationship, and segregation are complexly connected together. The way by which these thoughts joined to each other is called or named intersections. This concept was first used by legal researcher, Crenshaw, in 1989.

Black feminism is an organization that supports activities concerned with gender bias, class oppression, and violence against women, sexism, male-female relationship and segregation (Koynucu, 2014). So this study intends to accentuate the racial, patriarchal and ideological influences on the identity of African American women in American society.

1.8.7 Gender Bias

According to Burton, gender bias is to treat women unequally, unfairly, whether it is in employment, payment, promotion, privileges and benefits. It is a lawful base for a lawsuit under anti-discrimination statutes (Burton, 2006). In this study according to Walker's works, gender bias is obviously applied against African American women by American males as a kind of oppression.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the sufferings of African American women through some contemporary authors like Alice Walker, Tony Morrison, and Haley, who depicted the deplorable state of the black American women. Specifically, the chapter introduced the notion of African American literature and the concept of feminist criticism. It also laid out the problem statement and how the double oppression of gender and race is the dominant phenomenon in America.

Further, this chapter delivered the research questions and objectives of this research, together accentuated the impact of racial and patriarchal oppression, or what the researcher called the double oppression against the black women. Similarly, the importance of this research and how this study might contribute positively to the field of



literature was also explained. The study identified the scope and the limitations of the study and the novels that will be analysed in this study. As the last section of this chapter, the operational terms of the study were defined. The next chapter will submit a sufficient study of relevant literature according to the main themes of the study.

