

CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY AND THE POLITICS OF EXPLOITATION: A MARXIST FEMINIST STUDY OF DATTA AND AHUJA'S *NOW THAT YOU'RE RICH*

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Abstract

*Throughout history, women have been systematically relegated to a subordinate position despite their intrinsic equality as human beings. Capitalist patriarchal societies have limited their defined roles and socio-economic rights. Addressing this entrenched inequality, this study aims to analyze Durjoy Datta and Maanvi Ahuja's collaborative work *Now That You're Rich* through the lens of Marxist-feminist literary theory, adopting a qualitative approach – analytical, interpretive, and deductive. Drawing on theoretical insights from scholars like Jackson and Hartmann, it critiques the intersection of capitalist patriarchy and socio-economic exploitation, focusing on gender-based discrimination. It highlights the novel's critique of women's marginalization due to socio-economic status and explores the exploitative dynamics between capitalists and female employees. It probes the systemic exploitation of women in workplaces, their struggles for empowerment in socio-familial structures, and their pursuit of marriage as a means of socio-economic security in the androcentric capitalist society. It recommends the vital role of female solidarity in resisting both patriarchal and capitalist subjugation, advocating for gender-inclusive socio-economic equality. Eventually, unveiling systemic injustices calls for collective efforts to dismantle oppressive capitalist patriarchal structures, contributing significantly to Marxist-feminist literary scholarship.*

Key words: Durjoy Datta, Maanvi Ahuja, *Now That You're Rich*, Marxist Feminism, Capitalist patriarchy, Socio-economic exploitation

Introduction

Durjoy Datta is a renowned Indian novelist, screenwriter, and entrepreneur. His career as a writer began while still in college, with the publication of his debut novel, *Of Course I Love You* (2008), co-authored with Maanvi Ahuja. It was followed by many ground-breaking novels, including *Now That You're Rich* (2009), *She Broke Up*, *I Didn't* (2010), and *Ohh Yes, I Am Single* (2010), among others. Over the years, he has authored and co-authored numerous bestsellers, such as *Till the Last Breath* (2012), *Someone Like You* (2013), and *The Girl of My Dreams* (2016), exploring themes of socio-familial relationships and contemporary youth challenges. His writing has garnered widespread acclaim, and his novels resonate deeply with young readers for their relatability and emotional depth. He also co-founded Grapevine India Publishers, further solidifying his presence in the literary world. Beyond his literary endeavors, he has made momentous contributions to television, with his show *Sadda Haq – My Life, My Choice* earning multiple awards, including the Zee Gold Award and Indian Telly Awards. Recognized for his dynamic influence, he has also been a TEDx speaker. His accolades include

being listed among young achievers in Media and Communications by Whistling Woods International in 2011. With a repertoire spanning over 20 novels, short story collections, and collaborative works, he remains a conspicuous voice in contemporary Indian literature.

Similarly, Maanvi Ahuja is also a famous Indian author who writes in English and is known for her contributions to contemporary literature. She has gained widespread appreciation for her blockbusting novels *Of Course, I Love You* (2008) and *Now That You're Rich* (2009), written in collaboration with Durjoy Datta. These novels explore themes such as the challenges faced by young individuals, the complexities of various forms of love, and the significant influence of economic factors on socio-familial relationships. They also examine the impact of socio-cultural shifts, highlighting the loss of traditional socio-cultural values and the evolving dynamics of social relationships in the contemporary world.

The present study deals with Datta and Ahuja's collaborative novel *Now That You're Rich* (2013), which follows the lives of four ambitious individuals – Abhijeet, Saurav, Shruti, and Garima. Their transition from college to the corporate world is far from their imagination. They find themselves entangled in life, both exciting and unbearable. Initially, they find camaraderie in their shared experiences, but life soon takes a complicated turn. Their bonds strain as they grapple with the looming threat of an economic recession. Money, which united them, becomes a dividing force that tests their relationships and priorities. The story explores the protagonists' challenges and moral dilemmas, from intrusive and insensitive HR managers to overbearing workloads and obnoxious seniors. At its core, the novel is a witty, relatable tale of youth navigating the realities of ambition, relationships, and societal expectations. It offers a lighthearted yet poignant commentary on the age-old capitalist patriarchal politics of exploitation in the modern corporate world, inspired by real-life experiences and office gossip.

Literature Review

Feminism is “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights, power, and opportunities as men” (HarperCollins, 2006, p. 527). Central to this belief is the recognition of women as valuable and capable social contributors. Historically, women have struggled to achieve parity in social, political, and economic domains for centuries. Mary Wollstonecraft is regarded as a pioneer of feminist thought, laying its foundation through her seminal work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which advocated for equal educational opportunities for women. Now, feminist thought is diversified, leading to various branches, each addressing unique aspects of gender inequality. These include liberal feminism, radical feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, existential feminism, postcolonial feminism, eco-feminism, postmodern feminism, and Marxist feminism, tackling distinct concerns. Despite their different approaches, these schools of thought share a common objective of dismantling systemic oppression and achieving women's liberation.

Among these, Marxist feminism stands out for its dialectical approach, which links women's subjugation to capitalist production. By uncovering the material basis of women's oppression, it explores how economic structures influence gender roles and perpetuate inequalities. It seeks to address the intersection of production and reproduction, highlighting how the capitalist system commodifies women's labor and reinforces patriarchal norms, thereby calling for systemic change to achieve genuine gender equality. It traces its origins to Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), where he argued that women's suppression stems from societal structures rather than biological differences. It is an intersectional branch of Marxism and Feminism that examines different methods through which “women are marginalized and exploited through capitalism” (Desai, 2014, p. 119). It affirms that true emancipation from exploitation requires the eradication of capitalism. It believes women can achieve genuine freedom and equality by standing on equal footing with

men in a socialist framework. Ultimately, it emphasizes freeing both men and women from the oppressive constraints of capitalist systems.

Mitchell (2000) argues that Marxist feminism views the family as a patriarchal unit that restricts women's autonomy and independence. She critiques the family as a mechanism for perpetuating external relationships that dominate society and as an illusory refuge from society that becomes "a reflection of it" (Mitchell, 2000, p. 147). She furthers that any meaningful change in women's status must be accompanied by the dismantling of both capitalism and patriarchy through social and ideological reforms. She emphasizes the need for collaboration between Marxist revolutionaries and Freudian psychoanalysts to achieve women's comprehensive liberation, suggesting that "Marxist strategies must be employed to overthrow capitalism and psychoanalytic methods to dismantle patriarchy" (Mitchell, 2000, p. 412).

Holmstrom (2002) contends that women are victims of class-based and androcentric structures. She defines Marxist-Feminist liberation as an effort "to comprehend women's subordination in a sound and methodical way that integrates class and gender, along with other aspects of identity, such as race/ethnicity or sexual orientation, with the aim of using this analysis to help free women" (Holmstrom, 2002, p. 38). In essence, she views class as a fundamental determinant of women's lives, where certain aspects of their experiences within the family are economic while others are social and ideological.

Guy-Evans (2023) outlines the central tenets of Marxist feminism. Marxist feminism posits that women are the primary labor producers, channeling it into society's hierarchical structure, yet their contributions remain unrecognized and unpaid. Moreover, it argues that working-class women face dual oppression – both from their capitalist employers and their working husbands – while also absorbing the anger and frustration of their exploited partners. Furthermore, it emphasizes how this systemic oppression, such as relegating women to unpaid domestic and reproductive labor, directly sustains capitalism. It also critiques the harsh reality of women being treated as a cheap labor force, hired for minimal wages and dismissed without hesitation.

Datta and Ahuja's *Now That You're Rich* is a notable contemporary fictional work offering valuable insights into socio-economic and interpersonal dynamics. Despite its literary merit and thematic richness, it has received limited scholarly attention, leaving significant scope for further research and critical exploration. A research gap remains in analyzing the selected text from the Marxist feminist perspective. Hence, the present study intends to bridge this gap by exploring capitalist patriarchy and the politics of exploitation, thereby contributing a fresh perspective to the existing body of scholarship.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm characterized by an analytical, interpretive, and deductive approach. The primary focus is an in-depth analysis of Durjoy Datta and Maanvi Ahuja's collaborative work *Now That You're Rich* through the lens of Marxist-feminist literary theory, drawing on the theoretical frameworks provided by scholars such as Jackson and Hartmann. The selected novel serves as the primary source, while critical books, scholarly articles, and reviews are utilized as secondary sources to ensure a robust and authentic foundation for the research. This methodology intends to offer a deep understanding of the selected novel by synthesizing theoretical insights with textual analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The Marxist-Feminist approach seeks not only gender equality but also the eradication of capitalist society as a path toward women's emancipation. Marxist-Feminists hold that women's emancipation is only possible by dismantling capitalist systems, which thrive on exploitation and inequality. They argue that socialism offers a framework where women can

attain genuine equality with men by participating as equals in both economic and social spheres. In this sense, the strength of Marxist feminism lies in its commitment to addressing the root causes of exploitation, envisioning a society built on collective equality and human dignity.

Jackson (1999) delves into the intricate relationship between Marxism and feminism, highlighting their shared theoretical foundations and points of divergence. She highlights how these two frameworks engage with issues of oppression, albeit from different perspectives. Marxism, at its core, seeks to explain the systemic oppression of individuals, irrespective of gender, within the capitalist structure. It emphasizes how the economic system perpetuates inequalities that affect all members of society. In contrast, feminism focuses specifically on the oppression of women, attributing their subjugation to patriarchal domination within androcentric societal structures. Scholars within this discourse tend to fall into two distinct camps regarding the origins of women's subordination. One group attributes it to the mechanisms of capitalism, arguing that the economic system inherently marginalizes women to sustain itself. The other group perceives women's oppression as stemming primarily from patriarchy or other enduring forms of systemic male dominance, independent of economic considerations.

Jackson (1999) further contends that while Marxism approaches oppression as a general phenomenon affecting all marginalized groups, feminism narrows its lens to address the unique and specific challenges faced by women. This distinction highlights the complementary yet distinct ways these two ideologies seek to understand and address systemic inequality. Her exploration offers a nuanced perspective on the intersection of these theories, emphasizing their potential for mutual enrichment in the pursuit of social justice. She holds:

Marxism's central rationale was an explanation of oppression. Furthermore it analyzed oppression as systematic, built into the structure of society. This made it attractive to feminists since it held out the promise of an explanation of women's subordination as social in origin, as neither given by nature nor an accidental feature of relations between men and women. (Jackson, 1999, p. 12)

She advances: "Feminists sought in a variety of ways to extend, modify or reformulate Marxist ideas, giving rise to a series of debates on the relationship between capitalism and male domination, often referred to as a patriarchy debate" (Jackson, 1999, p. 12).

Similarly, Hartmann (1976) holds that patriarchy fundamentally revolves around controlling women's access to "resources and their sexuality" (p. 138). This control is perpetuated by the labor market, which sustains and reinforces hierarchical structures. The concept of low wages compels women to rely on men for financial survival, driving many to view marriage as a viable means of economic security. However, marriage introduces another layer of inequality. Women are often relegated to domestic roles under the pretense of fulfilling their duties, allowing men to benefit from higher wages while maintaining control over women's lives.

Hartmann (1979) also argues that although Marxism and feminism are one, their integration remains inadequate. Marxism prioritizes the struggle against capitalism but largely overlooks feminist concerns. While Marxism envisions an egalitarian society, it is inherently sex-blind. Radical feminism, on the other hand, critiques patriarchal systems but often mirrors capitalist structures in its treatment of women as subordinate or dependent on men. She advocates for combining the strong points of both Marxism and feminism to understand and address the systemic oppression of women fully. She emphasizes the necessity of freeing women from the dual constraints of patriarchy and capitalism to create a society that genuinely

values equality. She focuses on the roots of women's subjugation in "the patriarchal class system, which manifests globally as world capitalism and imperialism, and domestically in the feudal and capitalist classes of underdeveloped nations" (Hartmann, 1979, p. 91). This intersectional approach highlights the systemic and intertwined nature of women's subjugation on both global and local scales.

The selected Marxist-Feminist theoretical framework critically critiques women's oppression by examining its dual roots in capitalism and patriarchy. It contends that true liberation for women requires dismantling capitalist systems, which perpetuate exploitation and inequality, alongside patriarchal structures that reinforce gender subordination. While Marxism emphasizes systemic oppression rooted in class dynamics, feminism narrows its focus to address the unique challenges women face due to patriarchal domination. The framework critiques the family as a patriarchal institution that curtails women's autonomy and highlights how economic dependence fosters subordination within societal and domestic spheres. Ultimately, the approach seeks to liberate women from the dual constraints of capitalism and patriarchy, envisioning a society rooted in equality and advocating for holistic reforms prioritizing class and gender equity.

Analysis and Discussion

Datta and Ahuja (2013), in their thought-provoking novel *Now That You're Rich*, masterfully expose the oppressive intersections of capitalism and patriarchy, shedding light on the precarious lives of women trapped within this dualistic system. They explore economic inequality, patriarchal norms, and women's empowerment. Through a nuanced portrayal, they reveal the multifaceted exploitation faced by women in the workforce, including excessive workloads, prolonged duty hours, and paltry wages that fall short of promised salaries. Furthermore, the threat of termination, coupled with workplace harassment, sexual abuse, and psychological manipulation, perpetuates a culture of fear and vulnerability. Consequently, many women are driven to seek solace in the notion of marrying men for wealth and security, spotlighting the deeply ingrained societal pressures that undermine their agency and autonomy. As the narrative unfolds, the authors pose critical questions about the very fabric of society, inviting readers to confront how systemic oppression shapes women's lives and fortifying de Beauvoir's famous line, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (1956, p. 273).

Datta and Ahuja (2013) depict the working conditions of the proletariat with a particular focus on female workers in the corporate sector. Silverman Finance recruits top graduates from prestigious institutions who have dedicated two decades of relentless effort to secure high-ranking positions with lucrative salaries. However, these employees are offered only a fraction of their promised remuneration, receiving thirty thousand instead of the promised seven lacs, contingent upon their success in a rigorous training program. This betrayal leaves them feeling deceived and crushed. The authors lament: "Their dreams were shattered, their hopes crushed. Silverman had not just taken away their promised salary, but had also stamped under its corporate foot, twenty years of their young lives" (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 46). Adding to their misery is Sumita Bhasin, the chief of human resources, who wields her authority with unrelenting harshness. She is described as a tyrant whose words frequently reduce employees to tears. She openly undermines the achievements of these top-tier graduates, dismissing their academic excellence. She reminds them of the institution's stringent expectations and warns them of the dire consequences of underperformance. Her message is unequivocal: "We do not tolerate incompetency. Only the best stay. The best are very few" (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 41).

Data and Ahuja (2013) vividly illustrate the dehumanizing effects of corporate exploitation, resonating strongly with the Marxist feminist critique of social structures. The

workers, including the female at Silverman Finance, endure inhumane treatment, working 16-hour days in static positions, a challenge even for those accustomed to rigorous study schedules. Marx and Engels (1998) reinforce, “the proletarians [are] whom the necessity to work a 14-hour day debases to the level of a beast” (p. 306). Datta and Ahuja (2013) further unmask the inhuman treatment of the capitalists: “They wanted the last cell of their bodies to work for them till it died and decayed” (p. 42). The lure of a high salary compels workers to persevere through degrading conditions. As the authors remark: “At least they were being paid amply for all the inhuman treatment they were going through” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 44). Even the official letter of agreement serves to institutionalize the exploitation. Tarun, a company representative, announces that recruits will only receive basic salaries during their training period because they are not yet contributing significantly to the company. This announcement devastates the employees, many of whom are reduced to tears. The exhausting work conditions at Silverman Finance also worsen as the training progresses. Employees struggle to endure limited time for basic needs like eating and bathing. Their physical and mental states deteriorate under the relentless workload. Even the Managing Director acknowledges the unsustainable workload, admitting, “I know it’s a stupid thing to say to you when you work eighteen hours a day, but this is the reality of investment banking!” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, pp. 50-51).

Furthermore, Deb, the narrator, openly criticizes the bloodsucking culture at Silverman Finance: “It is stupid and unfair and if I had another job, I would leave this in protest” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 59). He highlights the physical and emotional toll of this system, remarking: “You may lose your hair, have suicidal tendencies, and lose your boyfriends or girlfriends, if you have any” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 59). Even the HR chief, Sumita, cynically sums up the company’s exploitative ethos: “Silverman was known to suck one’s heart out and stuff it with money” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 60). Specific examples illustrate the extreme exploitation. Like her peers, Garima works tirelessly for hours, only to face further scolding and unreasonable deadlines. The oppressive work culture impacts not only productivity but also the workers’ health. This physical decline reflects their broader sense of despair. The relentless workload leaves little room for recovery, with their weekends insufficient to restore their well-being. Thus, the authors’ portrayal of the corporate sector, like Silverman Finance, highlights the dehumanizing impact of a capitalist-cum-patriarchal system that prioritizes profits over people, leaving workers physically and emotionally drained in its wake.

Datta and Ahuja (2013) argue that the proletariat remain perpetually in a state of insecurity and subjugation under the capitalist system. They are paid meager wages and constantly fear being fired from their jobs. They illustrate how fear and exploitation dominate workers’ lives at Silverman Finance. The constant threat of being fired looms large over their heads, a fear their superiors weaponize to maintain control. Moreover, the evaluation system is another source of anxiety for employees. Tarun from the HR department informs trainees that their performance will be reviewed after six months, and those who fail to meet expectations will be expelled. This announcement plunges the trainees into despair and their hearts sink and they begin to sweat. Moreover, the competitive environment destroys camaraderie among the workers. Instead of fostering teamwork, it pits them against one another as rivals. The authors note: “Before people could start knowing each other, a big wall was drawn up between them. Everyone was competitor now, and the field was set” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 46). Despite working tirelessly, employees remain haunted by the possibility of dismissal. Shruti and her colleagues, for instance, dedicate themselves to their work but still live in constant fear.

Datta and Ahuja (2013) also assert that the oppressive corporate culture exacerbates the mental and physical toll on workers. Even as employees exceed expectations, they are burdened with additional responsibilities. Discussions about halving the workforce add to the stress.

Thapar, a senior manager, demands more productivity through threats: “Bring me managers, threaten them with life. Make it work. I want man-hours, quality man-hours. And if that does not happen, well ...” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 85). The announcement of potential mass layoffs intensifies the atmosphere of dread. A newscaster reveals that Silverman Finance plans to terminate ten thousand workers globally, including many in India, making employees panic. The authors poignantly describe the workers’ anxiety: “But now, everyone realized how much they loved their job” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 106). However, despite the unbearable conditions, Shruti clings to her job out of sheer necessity. She has not even once expressed “displeasure at working so hard, having accepted it as her reality” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 86). Hence, the authors’ depiction of Silverman Finance is a scathing critique of capitalist exploitation, echoing Marxist feminist analysis of the perpetual insecurity and degradation faced by the female proletariats under such systems.

Datta and Ahuja (2013) highlight the physical abuse of women in a capitalist patriarchal society. For instance, Garima is portrayed as a victim of physical abuse, first at the hands of her uncle, who repeatedly violates her trust and dignity. This traumatic event leaves her psychologically scarred, and later, she finds herself in a toxic relationship with Karan, who not only exploits her but involves others in her humiliation. Despite her suffering, Garima confesses that she is too weak to endure “the dysfunctional relationship” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 67). In this context, Marx and Engels (1888) reinforce that women are often objectified in bourgeois society to satisfy the sexual desires of men. They assert that “Community of women is a condition which belongs entirely to bourgeois society and which today finds its complete expression in prostitution” (Marx & Engels, 1888, p. 52).

Datta and Ahuja (2013) also explore the harassment of women in the workplace by their superiors. For instance, Garima and Shruti face harassment by their superior, Dinesh. His behavior is described as predatory and demeaning, as he subjects them to excessive workloads and inappropriate attention. Garima remarks, “Dinesh was giving them a hard time, but more than that, she hated the way he looked at her and Shruti” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 78). The exploitation reaches a disturbing climax when Saurav and Garima witness their boss, Thapar, engaging in inappropriate acts with their female colleagues. Despite their moral outrage, both Saurav and Garima feel powerless to act, fearing repercussions on their careers and the lives of the women involved. Similarly, Shruti also fears potential exploitation by Thapar and Dinesh, feeling trapped by her circumstances and unable to resist. The authors describe her internal conflict: “Refusing them was not an option for her. It’s not an option, it’s not an option, she kept saying these words inside her head” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 94).

Datta and Ahuja (2013) argue that human relationships are often arbitrary and transient, shaped by the pursuit of personal economic gain. Moreover, they argue that the social system is so deeply rooted in the economy that any significant change in the mode of production results in a corresponding transformation of the entire social structure. Also, Marx and Engels (1998) emphasize the intrinsic link between societal relations and the economic foundation, stating: “The connection of all existing relations [lies] with the economic foundations of society” (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 438). Datta and Ahuja (2013) highlight how societal norms favor alliances based on material benefits, with pretty women drawn to affluent men. This sentiment is encapsulated in Shruti’s brother Archit’s assurance that someday, if she does not secure a good job, she will attract a wealthy man who will provide her with everything she desires, including a diamond ring.

Datta and Ahuja (2013) characterize marriage as a transactional arrangement, describing it as a compromise between looks, family background and economic strength. This perspective is exemplified by Megha, who justifies her decision to marry her boyfriend abroad

not only because of emotional attachment but also because of his financial security. She candidly remarks that “he will join his father's business and has a secure future. He loves me, too, I guess. So, I don't think it is too bad a deal” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 28). This notion of marriage as an economic contract aligns with Lukacs' argument that those who dominate economic relations also dictate social structures. He posits that “such institutions start by controlling economic relations between men and go on to permeate all human relations” (Lukacs, 1971, p. 48).

Data and Ahuja (2013) highlight the inescapable influence of economic concerns on personal and familial decisions in a capitalist patriarchal society. The interplay of economic and social power is starkly evident in Shruti's experience. Initially, Shruti's parents oppose her desire to work, insisting she marry Gupta for his wealth. However, their objections dissolve when they learn that her job would pay an impressive thirty lacs annually. Suddenly, their so-called principles and restrictions disappear, revealing their prioritization of financial gain over their earlier objections. They even permit Shruti to move to Hyderabad for the job despite their previous hesitations. Archit, Shruti's brother, candidly states that “they want the money, and you know that” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 18). These scenarios spotlight the pervasive influence of economic considerations on personal and familial decisions in a capitalist androcentric society.

Datta and Ahuja (2013) also highlight how economic status often dictates interpersonal dynamics. For instance, Abhijeet asserts, “I will have three girlfriends when I have money. You know why? Because all girls love money. When I will be rich, they will be flocking to date me!” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 44). Similarly, Garima suggests to Shruti that marriage and social relationships are closely tied to economic considerations, proclaiming, “You will find a guy, Shruti. Nice and rich and someone who will love you. It is the best career option, you see. Better than Silverman Finance” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 49). As the story progresses, Shruti's relationship with Rishab, the affluent manager of a prominent nightclub, exemplifies this dynamic. Their interactions accentuate how material possessions amplify feelings, as demonstrated by their enjoyment of luxurious experiences, such as long drives, playful conversations, and her thrill at riding in his private jet on New Year's Eve. She outspokenly comments on the allure of his wealth and influence, noting how his affluence attracts attention: “There may be countless girls around him because he is handsome and, above all, has a big car and owns the biggest Club in India” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 136). Similarly, Garima also marvels at this relationship, commenting, “That super-hot guy from Business World? He is here... strange dream, no?” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 159).

Moreover, Datta and Ahuja (2013) assert that exchanging expensive gifts, such as gold or diamond rings, becomes a customary symbol of deep affection in capitalist society. Sharing of valuable the gifts is the surety of stronger perceived love. Shruti brags about her six-carat diamond ring: “Love can wait, diamonds cannot” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 163). Likewise, Saurav's presentation of a flower-shaped diamond ring to Riya exemplifies this idea. He admits, commenting: “It helps when your boyfriend whips out a gigantic diamond ring to propose to you. If that doesn't work, I don't know what will” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 103).

Datta and Ahuja (2013) also critique the bourgeois standard of love and friendship, where wealth is paramount. For instance, Riya, Abhijeet's ex-girlfriend, leaves him for Arjun, a man from a more affluent background, highlighting the societal preference for financial stability over emotional bonds. Likewise, Garima and Shruti often discuss their ideal partner as “a rich, insanely good-looking guy, someone who will get you new earrings every day” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 87). When Saurav asks Shruti about her ideal man, she clearly states her preference for “a rich guy” (Datta & Ahuja, 2013, p. 73). The dynamics of love and

marriage in these socio-economic conditions closely resemble those depicted in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, where social and economic status play critical roles in determining socio-familial bonds. Austen's famous inaugural line, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a woman" (1813, p. 1), encapsulates this enduring truth about class-gender dynamics.

Conclusion

To conclude, the present study delves into the thorny trap of capitalism and patriarchy depicted in Datta and Ahuja's *Now That You're Rich*, unmasking the systemic exploitation faced by women in these dual oppressive frameworks. It foregrounds the multifaceted struggles of women who endure excessive workloads, meager salaries, job insecurity, and objectification in workplaces in the androcentric capitalist systems. It also highlights the dehumanizing impacts of such systems, where women are propelled to prioritize economic stability over personal dignity both at work and in their personal lives. In addition, it critiques the commodification of socio-familial relationships, illustrating how capitalist patriarchal societies reduce personal relationships to transactional deals dictated by wealth and status. In due course, women relentlessly seek financial stability through marriage or other means.

By centering these narratives, the study calls for disassembling the entrenched exploitative structures of capitalist patriarchy and advocates for a society that upholds equity, justice, and dignity for all. It invites readers to challenge and transform the status quo, envisioning a world where humans are valued for their humanity rather than reduced to roles and limitations imposed by economic and gendered inequalities. Ultimately, the study is a powerful reminder to transcend discriminatory societal norms and work toward a peaceful and prosperous future.

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