

# The Memsahib's Anxiety: Colonialism as a 'Mansion of Despair' in Rumer Godden's *Kingfishers Catch Fire* (1953).

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**Abstract :**

The 'androcentric' nature of the colonial narratives (presented by the colonisers) is under scrutiny in the recent scenario for it focuses meticulously on the 'white man's burden' and conveniently slides aside the numerous white women who went to the colony to support the empire's cause. The literature produced by the colonisers to justify colonialism as a noble task consistently highlighted the white man's endeavours in the colony and misrepresented the Memsahibs as 'frivolous' who spent their time doing pleasurable pursuits in their colonial bungalows. Colonial history defines them as 'destructive female' who were considered as an encumbrance for the empire and were often criticised for distracting the colonial men from work. The paper aims at showing colonialism to be a 'mansion of despair' for the white women who became victims of colonial politics. It also aims at deconstructing the universally accepted image of white women as 'destructive' and to acknowledge the burden taken up by them for the empire's cause. For the purpose the British author Margaret Rumer Godden's text *Kingfishers Catch Fire* (1953) will be analysed to give recognition to the numerous white women who got misrepresented and remained 'invisible' in mainstream colonial narratives and history.

**Keywords-** colonial women, destructive female, misrepresentation, colonial narratives, white woman's burden.