

**“Purdah, Female Sexuality and Identity as the Tools of Marginalization:
A Study on Bapsi Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride*”**

A project work submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University in partial

Fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

Master of Arts in English Literature

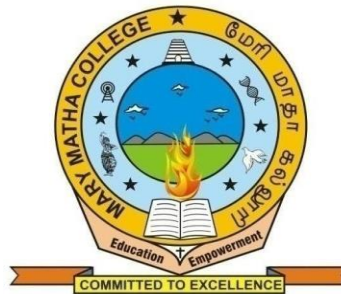
By

AMIRTHAVARSHINI R.

Reg. No. B9T15501

Under the supervision of

Mrs. NISHA S.



Department of English

Mary Matha College of Arts and Science

Periyakulam

April – 2021

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project work entitled, “**Purdah, Female Sexuality and Identity as the Tools of Marginalization: A Study on Bapsi Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride***” submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **Master of Arts in English Literature** is a record of original research work done by **AMIRTHAVARSHINI R. Reg. No.B9T15501** during the period (June 2019 - April 2021) of his study in Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam under my supervision and guidance and the project has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or similar title to any candidate of any University.

Signature of the Guide
(Mrs. S. NISHA)

Head of the Department
(Rev. Dr. JOSHY PARAMTHOTTU CMI)

Principal
(Rev. Fr. ISSAC PJ CMI)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work entitled, “**Purdah, Female Sexuality and Identity as the Tools of Marginalization: A Study on Bapsi Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride***” submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **Master of Arts in English Literature** is a record of original research work done by me during the period (June 2019 – April 2021) under the supervision and guidance of **Mrs. S. Nisha**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam and that it has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or similar title to any candidate of any University.

Signature of the Candidate

(AMIRTHAVARSHINI R)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God, for having helped me with his Blessings to finish the project work successfully on time.

I express my respect and sincere thanks to **Rev. Fr. Issac P.J. CMI**, Secretary and Principal of our college for all the support to undergo my project and for giving me an opportunity to undertake this project.

I am also grateful to **Rev. Dr. Joshy Paramthottu CMI** Head, Department of English, Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam, for the inspiration and encouragement as well as the help he has extended to me.

I am very happy to place on my gratitude to **Mrs. S. Nisha**, Assistant Professor in Department of English, Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam, for all the help she has rendered in the completion of this project. I am indebted to her valuable suggestions and perceptive comments.

I sincerely thank my parents and friends for their support in the successful completion of my project.

ABSTRACT

Pakistani female writers in English continue to highlight the struggle of women within patriarchal Pakistani society. The emphasis of my project has been to explore and analyze the struggle and resistance of female figures against patriarchal structures as presented through the fiction of my female writer. I have analyzed the work of Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*. The study aims to analyze how the reality of Purdah, Female Sexuality and Identity marginalize women in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*.

Chapter One gives a description of writing about the identity of writing themes in fictional works. It focuses on the biographical elements of Bapsi Sidhwa and her achievements in Literature.

Chapter Two talks about how the Purdah, Female Sexuality, and Identity are unveiled in the veil society. Through sexual awakening, sexual victimization (rape, forced marriage) and sexual discrimination Sidhwa's women learn of the gendered oppression that works through the bodies.

Chapter Three speaks about the Marginalization of Women in the work of Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*. The concept of marginalization can be defined as some sort of powerless and exclusion experience by a group, resulting from an inequality of control of resource and power structure within the society.

Chapter Four talks about Summing Up'- Women can overcome all the obstacles by finding out their own originality in life. They have to encounter the new womanhood in their real life. Marginalized women can rise up from their downtrodden situation to live a happy life in this male dominant society. The study of this project is to find out how Purdah, Female Sexuality and Identity act as the tools of marginalization in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride*.

CONTENTS

Chapter I

Introduction	1
---------------------	----------

Chapter II

Veil Unveiled: Purdah, Female Sexuality and Identity	4
---	----------

Chapter III

Marginalization of Women in Bapsi Sidhwa's <i>The Pakistani Bride</i>	18
--	-----------

Chapter IV

Summation	26
------------------	-----------

Works Cited	32
--------------------	-----------

INTRODUCTION

Bapsi Sidhwa, born in Karachi and grown up in Lahore, Pakistan, has been widely celebrated as the finest novelist produced by her country. She now lives in Houston Texas but she frequently visits to the Indian subcontinent. She is graduated from Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore and began writing in her twenties after birth of two children.

Sidhwa has received several honours and awards. She is recipient of the national award for English Literature by the Pakistan academy of letter in 1991 and the Putrasbokhari award for literature for 1992. Her most important and unforgettable novels include, “The Crow Eaters” (1980), “The Pakistani Bride” (1983), “Ice Candy Man” (1988), “An American Brat” (1994), and “Water” (2006).

Literature is the mirror of the contemporary society. Themes in fictional writings find their origin in the experiences and aspirations of the novelists. There exist innumerable potential themes in Indian fiction as are stars in the galaxy. Theme is essentially subject of a piece of writing which means that theme is the subject matter of any literary work. The themes can be arbitrary or concrete. The theme of any novel provides meaning to the work or can be called the lesson or moral of the novel. It is the meaning running under the story’s surface. It is significant to note that themes must be related to understanding of human conditions, which might include psychological, political, sociological aspects. The relevance of one theme from the other cannot be judged because its significance depends on the contemporary situation of the society, the current trends and readers’ interpretation and perception.

The novel of Bapsi Sidhwa reflects the social, economic, cultural and political changes. Role of women and their struggle for self-emancipation became the most widely

written theme along with other social issues. Various social, cultural, political and psychological factors have influenced the novelists in shaping their manuscripts. They narrate their experiences with truth and boldness. At the same time they demand equality in the male dominated society. They just don't criticize the systems but are fair enough to understand the male point of view as well. They truly expose some of the hypocrisies and irrationalities of patriarchy.

Novelists hemmed in by the patriarchal structure of language and culture. There are various characters in the novel of Bapsi Sidhwa who want to live within the structure and some other who want to break the unsaid laws and bear the consequence of their actions. They in vibrant language give the glimpses of life of women in particular and their community and nation in general. The novel of Bapsi Sidhwa is extensively influenced by the various psychological factors evidently reflected in her feminist writings. The image of women in Pakistan has undergone a change in the last few decades. This change is well exhibited in the generations of the women in the novel of Sidhwa. Modern woman will understand the situation and act according to that circumstance.

Chapter One gives a description of writing about the identity of writing themes in fictional works. It focuses on the biographical elements of Bapsi Sidhwa and her achievements in Literature. Chapter Two talks about how the Purdah, Female Sexuality, and Identity are unveiled in the veil society. Through sexual awakening, sexual victimization (rape, forced marriage) and sexual discrimination Sidhwa's women learn of the gendered oppression that works through the bodies.

Chapter Three is dealing the Marginalization of Women in the work of Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*. The concept of marginalization can be defined as some sort of powerless and exclusion experience by a group, resulting from an inequality of

control of resource and power structure within the society. Chapter Four talks about 'Summing Up'- Women can overcome all the obstacles by finding out their own originality in life. They have to encounter the new womanhood in their real life. Marginalized women can rise up from their downtrodden situation to live a happy life in this male dominant society. The study of this project is to find out how Purdah, Female Sexuality and Identity act as the tools of marginalization in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride*.

VEIL UNVEILED: PURDAH, FEMALE SEXUALITY AND IDENTITY

The thematic concerns of Sidhwa's *'The Pakistani Bride'* (1990) include purdah, its association with female sexuality and assertion of female identity in a sexually segregated Muslim society. *The Pakistani Bride* is Bapsi Sidhwa's first novel written in her early twenties. The plot of the novel revolves around a young girl, Zaitoon, and a tribal man named Qasim who rescues her from a train attack as Muslim refugees cross the border into the newly partitioned Pakistan.

Qasim and Zaitoon spend the following years in Lahore where they befriend Nikka and Miriam, a childless couple. As Zaitoon matures into a young woman Qasim decides to marry her into his tribe, to his nephew called Sakhi, to re-establish his ties with his people. Towards the end of the novel Zaitoon escapes from her unhappy and violent marriage back to the plains of Lahore. The events in this novel are inspired by a true story Sidhwa heard on her honeymoon trip in the mountains of Pakistan. On this trip Sidhwa learnt of a young bride who was married into the mountainous tribe. This bride tried to run away from her husband's house but was hunted down and killed. Sidhwa was shocked to hear of this atrocity and decided to write this story to highlight the haplessness of women living in harsh environments such as the mountainous tribes of Pakistan. Sidhwa expresses (Dhawan and Kapadia 1996):

“the girls' story haunted me: it reflected the hapless condition of many women not only in Pakistan but also in the Indian subcontinent. Telling it became an obsession”
(28)

In this novel, *The Pakistani Bride*, Sidhwa allows Zaitoon to survive her escape from her abusive husband. This indicates Sidhwa's desire to present her female characters as survivors of male injustice. In this novel Sidhwa presents Muslim communities of the two

culturally and geographically diverse areas within Pakistan, namely the city of Lahore in Punjab and the tribal area in Kohistan. The plot thus remains dynamic as Qasim, a Kohistani tribal, travels back and forth between Lahore and his tribe settled along the River Indus in Kohistan. This temporal and spatial shift exposes how men whether of the densely populated Lahore or the secluded tribal communities of Kohistan exploit women for their interests. The word 'tribal' is used to indicate Qasim's ethnic origin, as belonging to the tribes settled along the bank of the River Indus in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhawa province. The district of Kohistan within this province, also known as the 'land of mountains' is, "occupied by diverse, little studied communities and peoples.

This area is also notorious for its ill treatment of women. *The Pakistani Bride* captures these ill treatments of women against the backdrop of sexually segregated Muslim lives in both the city of Lahore and the tribes of Kohistan.

Marginalization has been an often talked of term drawing out various implications in almost all the walks of life. The world has been divided into binaries and one side of these binaries is often privileged over the 'other'. The male/female dichotomy is one such instance where the world of male has been privileged over the females.

This distances the women from the center and makes them a commodity, which is often marginalized. Purdah is a religious and social institution of female seclusion in Muslim-majority countries. The Arabic equivalent of Purdah is hijab. The term purdah is predominantly used in South Asia. It has visual, spatial, and ethical dimensions. It refers to three main components, veiling of women; segregation of sexes, and a set of norms and attitudes that sets boundaries for Muslim women's moral conduct.

This chapter highlights the different meanings and forms of purdah within the two different geographical locations described in this novel, Lahore and Kohistan. This exploration and comparison reveals that purdah extends beyond the physical shrouding of

women's bodies and includes a certain code of life. The observance of purdah varies in intensity, style and manner in geographically and culturally diverse areas within Pakistan. Similarly, men have devised different ways of exploiting women, and the segregation and the sexual repression happen within Muslim society. Sexual repression, in turn, victimizes both men and women. Men suffer emotionally whereas women face physical, sexual and emotional victimization.

Sidhwa creates female characters of both the purdah and non-purdah society, of the plains, of the mountains, young and old, through which she exposes the inherent structures which shroud women in a range of ways. Their enclosures are physical, emotional and verbal endorsed in the name of modesty, piety and obedience. However, Sidhwa's female figures are shown to transgress and challenge these enclosures at times. Sidhwa openly speaks about purdah and non-purdah society without any hindrance.

Sidhwa exposes the hypocritical standards set against female sexuality especially in the Muslim society based on the sexual segregation which endorses strict limits of purdah for women. This purdah in both dress form and spatial segregation within houses, and courtyards with the aim of limiting and controlling female sexuality has been widely discussed in South Asian literature. Using both the symbolic and physical forms of purdah, this novel allows debating the repression and exploitation of the female figure. It also enables how purdah interacts with female sexuality to lay double standards for purdah and non-purdah women.

Most importantly it allows arguing how the patriarchal male understands purdah and creates his own standards of modesty for his women and the 'other' women. It happens to conclude how notions of purdah and sexuality are tackled by Sidhwa's female figures in the pursuit of their identity.

The word 'purdah' originally derives from the Persian language and gives the literal meaning of 'a curtain', in the form of clothes; it refers to, 'burqa' or 'chador', with the aim of concealing the female body, the symbolic meaning of purdah stands for the 'seclusion' or 'separation' of the sexes. Purdah/veiling remains one of the most debated and criticized symbolic representations of male dominance. (Parameswaran 1995):

The custom of purdah lends itself to both excessive romanticism and irate criticism. It has both an aura of idealization and adverse implications of oppression of women, perpetuation of subservience and patriarchal power hierarchies. (36)

Purdah reduces women to invisibility and silences and thereby deprives her of her separate identity. It does not happen only in Pakistan but it happens in North India. Purdah imposes on women the psychology of prisoners. Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* presents a multifaceted position of purdah in relation to women in a Muslim society. Sidhwa highlights that the true purpose of purdah has been distorted in Pakistani society to serve male interests. She does not look into the Islamic origins and purpose of purdah but highlights how a religious practice has been misused by men to dominate women.

She highlights the repercussions of this means of male dominance for both men and women of Muslim societies and allows her female characters to overcome the male defined limits of purdah. Consequently, Miriam and Zaitoon are both shown to transgress the male defined limits of purdah in many incidents, but these women do not wish to discard or totally reject the practice of purdah. In other words, Sidhwa yearns for a better understanding and implementation of purdah which does not violate and oppress women, physically or emotionally. Sidhwa, unlike Shahraz, does not belong to a Muslim family, but her interaction with Muslims around her, the influence of a Muslim culture she grew up in, made her aware of the importance and role of purdah for Muslim women.

Sidhwa applies her knowledge, gained through experience of living in a Muslim society, to analyze and highlight both the benefits and consequences of sexual segregation in a Muslim society. The notion of purdah in *The Pakistani Bride* is brought forward through various cleverly interwoven plots with the aim of providing multiple aspects of this concept. Further, as Sidhwa explores this concept through the female figures she creates, she shows us how the concept of purdah is applied differently to women in different places within the same country. The life of women in the plains is governed by a more overt form of purdah, where cloaks, chadors and burkhas act as a shield around the female body.

The tribal people, living in the mountains of Kohistan, exhibit purdah in a more covert, codified manner. The high mountains and courtyards provide the physical boundaries enclosing and shielding the female body from the outside world. The strict honour code of the Kohistani tribe against the milder code of seclusion of the plains in Lahore becomes evident through another incident when Qasim is shocked at Nikka's question about his wife. Qasim makes it very clear that they do not talk about their wives, (Sidhwa 1990): "look, he snarled nothing about my wife concerns you...you don't ask a hill-man anything about his womenfolk; I would have slit your throat" (36).

On the other hand, Nikka talks openly about his wife, (Sidhwa 1990): "I have a wife. Does it offend you to hear me tell of my own womenfolk? ... She is barren." (37) Nikka then discusses the probable causes of her barrenness, and comments on her health issues and Qasim silently blushes in return. As evident, both Qasim and Nikka operate within the purdah system with a different approach. Unlike Qasim, Nikka does not refrain from mentioning his wife to a strange man.

Sidhwa also highlights purdah through spatial segregation of homes in the plains of Lahore. As Zaitoon accompanies Miriam during her frequent visits to the neighbours' houses, she notes the inner parts of the houses were allocated to women (Sidhwa 1990):

Rooms with windows open to the street were allotted to the men: the dim maze of inner rooms to the women – a domain given over to procreation, female odours and the interminable care of children... Entering their dwellings was like stepping into gigantic wombs; the fecund, fetid worlds of mothers and babies. (55-56)

The novel begins with a brief introduction of Afshan; a tribal girl given as compensation to Qasim's father for a loan that Afshan's father was unable to pay. This early incident in the novel reflects the 'object' status that women occupy in this tribal region of Pakistan where a young woman can be used as mode of exchange between men. The exchanged Afshan becomes Qasim's wife. The ten year old Qasim gradually matures into the role of a father and later sadly loses his wife and children as they die battling with small pox. After this tragedy Qasim decides to travel to the plains in search of a living. However, the violence and the chaos of the partition force him to cross the border into Lahore, Pakistan. It is on the train to Lahore that Qasim meets Zaitoon. This train carrying hundreds of Muslims is attacked by Sikhs before it crosses the border into Lahore. Qasim survives the attack and rescues Zaitoon but her parents are killed. Qasim, with Zaitoon, crosses the border into Lahore at the break of dawn and notes that, (Sidhwa 1990):

“The uneasy city was awakening furtively, like a sick man pondering each movement lest pain recur. The slaughter of the past weeks, the exodus, and the conflagrations were almost over” (31)

The Muslim dominated and sexually segregated Lahore that Sidhwa describes in *The Pakistani Bride* is the same Lahore where she ends her narrative of *Ice Candy Man*. These novels are thus linked both temporally and spatially. *The Pakistani Bride* begins from the time and place where *Ice Candy Man* ends.

The sexually segregated female spaces of the houses are closely associated with female sexuality, such as child bearing, nurturing and other domestic chores to be strictly

kept within these quarters. Young girls, on the verge of adolescence are instructed in their roles of motherhood within these spaces. Zaitoon's entry into this adult world of segregation symbolically indicates her onset of puberty. After Zaitoon's onset of menstruation Miriam feels it pertinent to familiarize Zaitoon to the duties of women within Zananas. The young care free Zaitoon then becomes an important member of these segregated domains of the Muslim houses. Miriam is quick to recognize young Zaitoon's frequent belly pains as the sign of this upcoming womanhood. Miriam introduces and instructs Zaitoon about the complexities of the adult world. Miriam consciously takes the role of an instructor, mentor and guide for Zaitoon. From Miriam Zaitoon learns not only the skills of housekeeping, but also discovers a whole new world centered on child bearing and nursing. Zaitoon further experiences a visible bodily change as she matures into a young woman. Zaitoon finds pleasure in exploring her body (Sidhwa 1990):

When she discovered the slight taut swell in her flesh – her promised womanhood...her eyes and fingers probed the enchanting novelty. The softness was delicious to the touch of her childish, inquisitive fingers ... this way and that ... pummelling and distorting. A wondrous, possessive pride welled up in her ... The incipient manifestation of breasts of her own filled her with ecstasy. She now longed each day for the privacy of her bath. (232)

Zaitoon, a Muslim girl of purdah society, displays a childish pleasure in her developing body and sexuality. Zaitoon is told to observe purdah as Miriam strictly forbids her to get in close contact with strange men. Zaitoon, receives only evasive answers from Miriam who considers it pertinent to guide her in household chores instead. The way Zaitoon is exposed to her sexuality reflects the element of purdah endorsed by Miriam where repression of sexual knowledge is considered part of modesty read as sharam (shame).

Furthermore, Zaitoon is strictly told by Miriam to not let any man touch her and to keep her body covered. She further instructs,(Sidhwa:1990): “you’ll bleed every month...You are a woman now. Don’t play with boys and don’t let any man to touch you, this is why I wear a burka.” (55) Thus, Miriam combines the physical element of purdah with the repression of sexual knowledge as also a part of observing purdah and being modest. In other words, the more ignorant a young Muslim woman is towards sexual matters the more innocent and pure she will be considered by her husband. The little information Zaitoon is provided with remains her only knowledge about female sexuality as she goes through bodily and emotional changes (Sidhwa 1990):

Brought up in a sexual vacuum she did not think of sex as good or bad – it merely did not exist. Neither Miriam, nor Qasim, nor any of the women she visited ever mentioned it. She floundered unenlightened in a morass of sexual yearning. Once, snuggled up to Miriam she had rocked her hips and Miriam had snapped, ‘Stop it!’ Zaitoon had felt surprised and hurt by the rebuke that put an end to her innocent pleasure. She had felt rejected. (162)

Zaitoon’s lack of knowledge about her own body and sexuality is further highlighted when Sakhi, happy at his wife’s innocent ignorance, guides her through the process of consummation, (Sidhwa 1990): “his heart welled with tenderness and pride at his bride’s obvious innocence. ‘Like this,’ he whispered, gently teaching her legs to separate.” (163) Zaitoon’s lack of knowledge about her sexuality is clearly appreciated by her husband who sees her sexual ignorance as the kind of modesty a virgin bride should display. Miriam instructs Zaitoon according to the male expectations of a modest woman unaware of her sexuality. (Sidhwa 1990):

The sap that had risen in her since puberty and tormented her with indefinable cravings for so long surged to a feverish pitch. Brought up in a Muslim seclusion she

had not understood the impulse that had caused her often to bury her face in Qasim's clothes hanging from a nail. Breathing in their maleness she had glowed with happiness, taking her impulse to be a sign of deep affection. Knowing only Qasim and Nikka she had loved them with a mixture of filial devotion and vague unacknowledged sexual stirrings. (161)

Thus, ignorance of sexual matters is associated with modesty read as *sharam* which, in turn, is associated with *purdah*. Modesty and *sharam* enjoins the female figures to be silent and obedient especially in matters relating to issues such as marriage. For example Afshan, Qasim's wife who dies early in the novel, when asked about her consent to marriage remains quiet, (Sidhwa 1990): "her head bowed beneath a voluminous red veil, she wept softly as befitted a bride. Thrice she was asked if she would accept Qasim as her husband and thrice an old aunt murmured 'yes' on her behalf" (8). Afshan's silence is understood as her agreement announced publicly by an old aunt who speaks on her behalf. Though secretly excited about her marriage, Afshan maintains her silence as an act of modest behaviour. Her silence, a display of modesty and *purdah*, serves to strengthen the male domination over the female body and desire. By speaking on her behalf, the old aunt, apparently upholds the notion of modesty but examined closely she perpetuates the already suppressed voice of Afshan who is exchanged as a compensation between two men. In addition to silence taken as a symbol of agreement, a bodily gesture like a slight nod of the head or the further lowering of the bowed head are the other non-verbal expressions categorized as agreement. One of the dangers of depriving women of their voice, especially in regards to marriage, in the patriarchal society is that it can result in the bride being tricked into assenting. For example, as Zaman narrates (Sidhwa 1990):

Tales are told of how a bride, unwilling to accept a groom chosen for her has refused to murmur yes, however an old woman knowing that without the bride's verbal

assent a Muslim marriage is not valid, pinches her. The soft exclamation of pain is then interpreted as assent. Other brides it is said, willing to accept their husband chosen for them but too modest to let any male hear their voice, have dropped a bunch of keys to signify their acceptance. (159)

By keeping themselves unvoiced and repressing their desires the women thus perform within the male constructed notions of modesty and serve to further the exploitation of women under patriarchy. It is this self-imposed verbal and emotional repression under the guise of purdah that Sidhwa wants her female figures to break out of.

Zaitoon, also schooled in the concept of silence as part of modesty and purdah, similarly chooses to silently comply with her father's decision to marry her to his nephew in Kohistan. Consequently, Qasim and Zaitoon set off on their journey to the Mountains of Kohistan. As they stop for rest in an Army camp set up by Major Mushtaq, Zaitoon meets an American woman named Carol who is visiting the camp with her Pakistani husband. Carol, during her brief meeting with Zaitoon, notices her shy and modest behaviour in the company of strange men. She also learns of Zaitoon's upcoming marriage, as Qasim explains the reason of their visit to Kohistan before the Army Major. Carol excitedly questions Zaitoon but Zaitoon becomes shy and modestly, (Sidhwa 1990): "burrows her head so low that Mushtaq could barely see her nose." (133). Carol is irritated as Farrukh, noting the situation, reprimands her for asking Zaitoon about her marriage in the presence of other men in the room. He explains, (Sidhwa 1990): "Our women, particularly the young girls, are modest, you know" (133). Farrukh appreciates Zaitoon's silence as part of the modesty expected of women in a purdah society.

Unable to understand the ambiguous codes of modesty and sharam, Carol, the

woman from the non-purdah society, replies furiously, (Sidhwa 1990): “Really! One would imagine they achieved one of the highest birth rates in the world by Immaculate Conception!”(133). Carol, already aware of the repressed yet sexually charged atmosphere of Pakistani society, due to her stay in Lahore, is unable to understand the double standards. On one hand, the Pakistani men around her expected Zaitoon to shy away and not discuss marriage and to observe modesty, on the other hand, Major Mushtaq often flirted with Carol without any remorse or guilt. She finds it difficult to understand why discussing marriage becomes a taboo before men when men like the Major have no qualms about sexually exploiting and sleeping with women. Sidhwa highlights how modest behaviour, as part of purdah, is strictly expected more from women in this patriarchal society where the rules and the boundaries defining purdah and morality rest with men. Qasim lowers his eyes before Nikka’s wife, therefore assigning respect, but both Qasim and Nikka have no qualms about visiting a prostitute and paying her to dance naked before them. As Jane comments,(Jane 1995):

“living or dead, assertive or passive it is the men who are the centre of the novel, dividing property, siring children, violating women, indulging in polygamy or visiting prostitutes, they define the line of action and limit of purdah.” (217)

A similar attitude is displayed by the tribal men who like to keep their women restricted within the courtyards of their homes but boldly stare at Carol when they see her with the Major. It is this injustice and male hypocrisy practiced, under the guise of purdah, that Sidhwa challenges. She shows how such double standards in defining different rules of purdah for men and women can lead to sexual repression in a society. This repression then manifests itself through gestures, behaviours and even penetrates and influences the ways of thinking. Sidhwa illustrates this in the very next incident as Qasim and Zaitoon resume their journey towards their village.

Major Mushtaq appoints one of the workers at his camp, Ashiq also referred to as the Punjabi Jawan, to accompany them across the bridge into their territory. As the three, after another long travel, rest at another army camp Zaitoon instantly becomes the centre of attention of nearly all the men around them. The sight of a young woman arouses such interest that, (Sidhwa 1990): “soldiers, drivers, overseers and tribals gathered outside the kitchen entrance and peeped in from a window.” (151). Qasim and Ashiq are both infuriated by their behaviour. Zaitoon’s vulnerability as a woman at risk of sexual harassment is highlighted to an alarming level as Qasim and Ashiq both struggle to protect Zaitoon from the mob’s lustful advances and gazes (Sidhwa 1990):

Infuriated by their avid, leering countenances, Ashiq impulsively reached for a full bucket by the sink and threw the water at them. The pyramid of craning necks and faces wobbled for a moment, then, swearing and jeering, the wet faces resumed their positions...‘I will deal with these mangy dogs’ snarled Qasim. ‘She has not come with the Jawan. She is my daughter!’ hissed Qasim. ‘I’ll wrench your tongues, you carrion. I’ll gouge the swinish eyes from your shameless faces’.

(152)

This clearly highlights one of the consequences of sexual repression. The Kohistani men instantly assume that Zaitoon, a dark skinned Punjabi girl, could not be Qasim’s daughter. They also assume that she has come with the Jawan, an outsider from the plains, and thus free to look at. One can clearly apprehend the fate of a woman who dares to venture alone in the mountains. This is accordingly shown by Sidhwa through Zaitoon’s rape by some tribal men whom she comes across during her escape. Zaitoon’s fate becomes inevitable as this predictable event had already been foreshadowed by Sidhwa, earlier on in the novel, in the incident where Qasim’s wife

Afshan was almost raped by a passer-by as she bathed in the river. In this earlier incident Qasim manages to save his wife. In other words sexual repression within the mountainous tribe of Kohistan manifests an atmosphere of savage brutality where a man at home has unquestioned control over his women physically and sexually and any women who dares to transcend the boundaries of their allotted domestic spaces, are punished by their men and often raped by strangers.

However, this does not mean that women are not sexually violated in the plains of Lahore, where purdah and modesty is operated through different means. The sexual repression also victimises women in the plains of Lahore where women are relatively free to venture into public spaces clad in burkas. Men in *The Pakistani Bride* exploit the custom of purdah to suit their interests. This exploitation renders purdah as a tool of patriarchal oppression for women. It renders purdah as merely female enclosures that begin to suffocate her and which need to be torn apart to assert individuality. Sidhwa therefore, criticizes the over-emphasis laid on the chastity of Muslim women through purdah as she clearly shows how the mere covering of the female body within the confines of clothes and walls fails to safeguard women in a world where men are capable of sexually objectifying women regardless of purdah.

Sidhwa's message for her female characters is to resist against male oppression for the betterment of their lives and the assertion of their identity through exercising khudi (self). Thus, khudi can be understood as the realisation of an inner strength, power and ability to face, challenge and overcome the obstacles in life. Sidhwa's Zaitoon is shown to exercise her inner strength when she battles with her body as if asking her khudi to raise itself, to free itself from the material confines of her flesh/body and allow her strength to direct the course of her own life. Regardless of whether she would

survive or not she makes an attempt, which constitutes the implicit message Sidhwa tries to convey. In the real incident, on which Sidhwa based this novel, the bride was hunted down by her husband and killed. Sidhwa in this novel, allows the bride (in the character of Zaitoon) to survive.

MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN IN BAPSI SIDWA'S

THE PAKISTANI BRIDE

The concept of marginalization can be defined as some sort of powerless and exclusion experienced by a group, resulting from an inequality of control of resource and power structure within the society. The term marginalization has emerged in the late 20th century. Marginalization lies at the core of all social conflict issues. Marginalization is a broad term when one thinks about marginalization, multiple and various images appear such as violence, levels of poverty, poor educational structure, etc. Marginalization as a process is conceptualized as cumulatively acquired and spatially related phenomena of social, economic cultural and political denials and deprivations, insecurity and uncertainty, hierarchy and domination which get legitimized and reproduces by the functioning of several normative and societal arrangements to relegate several sections of the population at the social margin despite their protests and resistance. Women are included in these sections of the population who are deprived for living a qualitative life in their whole lifespan.

The process of marginalization of women can be analyzed at various levels in family, society, workplace and almost all spheres of life. Women are subjected to patriarchal rule, receiving the respect in society through marriage and motherhood, both of which valued a high level of chastity. The position of women also concern with political changes as in times of uncertainty. As men always remain in the higher position of political and economic power, women are always lagging behind in the possession of political and economic power and thus these precarious scenarios forced them towards the status of marginalized.

The process of exclusion, discrimination and marginalization takes place both in individual and collective plane. Moreover, the degree of exclusion and discrimination has

different dimension in different societies. The female marginalization emerges from social structure especially from the system of male dominant which is called patriarchy. Patriarchy gives birth to gender oppression of women.

The term patriarchy has been used in many ways. A critic Payne complies the statement of sociologist Hartman regarding the term that indicates the male's control of female labor forces the material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men's control over women's labor power. Men maintain this control by excluding women from access to essential productive resources and by restricting women's sexuality.

In every society, still women are battered on the basis of sexuality, violence, and culture. Marginalization is the reflection of such underestimated activities by male to show their superiority. In a country of such as Pakistan, male section of the society is predominant overpowering men. Women face only unequal share of hatred and discrimination.

Feminism as a movement plays a very important role in projecting the suppressed status of women in the patriarchal society. Today, feminism occupies a vital place in modern literature. Today's feminism is anti-patriarchy but not anti-man just as it is pro- woman without seeking to replace patriarchy with matriarchy. In the domain of patriarchal culture, woman is a social construct, a site on which masculine meanings get spoken and masculine desires are enacted.

In the novel of Bapsi Sidhwa '*The Pakistani Bride*,' also published under the title '*The Bride*' Sidhwa presents a number of problems faced by the Pakistani people during the partition of 1947, keeping in mind the condition of women. The physical tortures of women and psychological outburst of women during the division of the subcontinent is brought out in the novel.

The novel reflects the victimization of women in a male dominant society. Bapsi

Sidhwa has very categorically and systematically analyzed the universal problem of women. Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* serves as the best example for the Marginalization of women. It is evident in the life of Zaitoon and Carol. Carol is an American girl who has got married to a Pakistani. In some ways, she symbolizes women in cross-cultural marriages. The women always face many challenges in the male dominant society.

In the novel, feminism plays a major role in the life of women. There are three women who suffered under the marginalization. Hamida is a senior citizen who suffers at an extreme level. But the contrast to that Zaitoon and Carol the young women are also suppressed under the marginalization but they face the suppression with self-confidence. Carol never suffered like Hamida and Zaitoon. When she is under hard situations, she has handled it very easily, because she is a second world woman. Being a third world woman, Zaitoon bravely decides to escape from the marginalization. She runs away from the village with the hope for her life. If she crosses the bridge she has another life.

Sidhwa writes this story based on a real incident that happened in the Karakoram Mountain area of Pakistan. This is a story of a young girl brought to the tribal area as a bride. The girl who was unable to bear the tortures imposed on her ran away trying to escape from the tortures. Later after fourteen days of wandering in the mountains she was found by her husband. This act of the girl was considered as dishonour and disgrace to the tribe and hence she was murdered. Her head was cut and her body thrown into the river. Sidhwa was very much touched and moved by listening to the story that it obsessed her mind when she came back to Lahore. She wished to write about the poor girl's story and also about the poor tribal's pride in their valour and honour. The hapless conditions of many women have been reflected not only in Pakistan but in the Indian subcontinent.

But in this novel Sidhwa changes the end of the story. She allows her protagonist to

escape. Zaitoon survives the mountains and is saved by a Major from the other side of the river. The novel ends with an optimistic note that finally Zaitoon is safe in her homeland – Pakistan. To fulfil the aim of writing and to give a message to her readers, Sidhwa has made few amendments and changes in the real story. The partition not only is a forced dislocation from familiar places but also, from cultures and people. Pakistan seems to be a dramatic example of the suffering of people that they endured during the time of partition. Sidhwa brings to light the misery caused by such events through her novels. This partition with dislocation seems to be a recurrent motif in *The Pakistani Bride*. Women too are dominated, divided, exploited, tortured and dislocated. They are treated just like an insect.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* is a damnatory indictment of the Kohistani community, the Pakistani society and the brutal treatment is imposed upon the women. The women are marginalized and their fates have been sealed. The novel starts from Kohistan and ends there. The real conditions of those women have been presented where they suffer in silence all the time. They are ill-treated in all means. Qasim is the first character in the novel that is exposed to the brutalities of partition. He is shown to be under the ravages of typhoid and small pox due to which he is decimated from his family. Due to certain circumstances he is completely dislocated to an alien landscape, people, tribe and culture. Qasim's father, made all the decisions as he wished and Qasim's wife Afshan was not given any opportunity to express anything that she felt. Hence Afshan is forcefully partitioned from her family and dislocated away from her home to a completely new environment to her. Later she is forced to call the new home as her home. But anyhow easily she wins the love of her mother-in-law because she was able to adapt herself quickly.

Afshan since she is so elder to Qasim, her feelings towards her husband is not like that of a wife to husband but rather something like maternal. Zaitoon, the heroine and the second bride of this novel is introduced for the first time as a young girl. Zaitoon who is

actually called as Munni loses her parents, Sikander and Zohra during the rebellion of partition in 1947. Since Qasim has lost his family to small pox epidemic, he adopts the little girl and thereafter calls her Zaitoon, which is the name of his late daughter. Qasim was on his way to Jullundur. He makes a home for the two of them at Lahore.

In Lahore, Qasim meets Nikka who later becomes his friend and also a business partner. His wife Miriam loves and looks after Zaitoon as her own child. When Zaitoon becomes young, Qasim in a fit of rural nostalgia decides to marry her to a man of his own tribe. Qasim promises Zaitoon in marriage to a man of his tribe in the mountains. Miriam warns Qasim that Zaitoon will not be happy there and she will suffer. It turns out to be real. For Zaitoon, brought up in the civilized city atmosphere, the tribal life becomes traumatic.

Upon reaching Kohistan and coming across with her husband Sakhi, Zaitoon understands that she can never fit into the male-dominated tribal society. After the bestial treatment dealt out to her Zaitoon decides to run away though she knew such act would mean death punishment by the tribal people. Yet she succeeds in her plan of ultimate escape. Finally the one from which she feels that there is no return. Thus through Zaitoon's experience, Sidhwa throws light upon the history of gender-discrimination prevailing in the mountainous region of Pakistan. Bapsi Sidhwa deals effectively the issue of the fusion of different cultures and experience of the people on diverse levels.

Gender discrimination and marginalization of women have existed in the roots of Pakistani society, particularly in the mountainous region. It is so much rooted those women have no right to express herself or have her own view even in the matters that affect her life. This point can be easily seen in the life of Afshan. She has been snatched the right given to her even by the Islamic Religion. Sidhwa skillfully brings out this matter. When Afshan is sitting amidst few women, she is questioned if she would like to marry Qasim (Sidhwa 1990):

“Thrice she was asked if she would accept Qasim, the son of Arbab, as her husband and thrice an old aunt murmured ‘yes’ on her behalf. Then the mountains reverberated with joyful huzzas, gunfire and festivity”. (8)

Sidhwa also portrays how a Pakistani woman in such conditions had to suffer and change her behaviour to fix herself to the patriarchal system and the male-dominated society. Zaitoon in the beginning when taken to the mountains, she realizes that she will not be able to adjust with the tribal people and she requests her father to take her away in the plains because she is not ready for that marriage. To this Qasim gets angry and shouts at Zaitoon (Sidhwa 1990): “A decent girl doesn’t tell her father to whom she should marry her. ‘If you be smirch it, I will kill you with my bare hands”. (158)

At last Zaitoon is married to Sakhi and lives in the mountain village with her husband. Her husband beats her up often for obedience. Through the behaviour of Sakhi towards Zaitoon, the author seems to pass on that one must keep in mind that it is not only a brutal behaviour, rather it is morally a shameful act of hardness towards women.

Zaitoon, was marginalized under the patriarchal society. She was marginalized by her father and husband. After her marriage, she lived in a village near the Kohistan Mountain with her husband Sakhi. After the marriage, she realized that her life had become a nightmare. She is unable to adapt to their customs, climate and food. She experienced physical violence from her husband. When she felt lonely, she longed to go back to her home. As she was thinking this, she waves her hand to the trucks of the military camp. Her husband saw this. He punished her brutally. This shows that Sakhi was brought up with patriarchal customs.

One day while he was working in the dry land, a half-submerged rock jagged in the ground. He wanted to pull up with the help of his oxen but he couldn’t pull it up and he showed his wild action to the animals. When his mother tried to stop him he yelled and

pushed her aside. He beat her with the blow, which was used for the ox. By seeing this Zaitoon tried to stop him but he struck and shouted on her. Women are always marginalized under men in society. There is another evidence for the marginalization of women under the patriarchal society in this novel. Hamida, who is the mother of Sakhi has also been marginalized. We find that women are not only marginalized by father and husband but also by their sons too. Sakhi, Hamida's son an arrogant man behaves cruelly to her. We could find that no respect was given to her by his son.

Another husband of the same kind parallel to Sakhi is Farukh, a Pakistani, who goes down the aisle with an American. He is completely a jealous kind of husband because his wife is modern, westernized and frank. His wife, Carol talks openly and liberally with everyone outside. This makes Farukh to be jealous which the reason is for Carol to have extra-marital relationship with Major Mushtaq. After the escape of Zaitoon, Carol asks Farukh if he would help the victim, he says that (Sidhwa 1990): "women get killed for one reason or other (. . .) imagined insults, family honour, and infidelity". (223)

He also says that killing women is universal and Zaitoon might be killed when she is caught. Hence for the first time in her life, Carol feels that she has been exploited covertly by Major Mushtaq for a long period. She has been used just like a puppet and not even more than a bitch in heat. She also feels that she has been used as a trade good and Major was inclined toward her to blow out his lustful desires. Sidhwa also shows the condition of women through animal imagery which is prominent in the novel. Zaitoon is so much tormented that even in her dream Tribals take the guns to hunt her as if they hunt animals, because in Kohistan absconding of wife is a disgraceful matter for the family, and it is considered as an offence which can never be pardoned and for which the punishment is said to be death. Zaitoon after her escape she went on and on intuitively following the river downstream. At a point she stopped to take rest. It was a moonless night. She shut her eyes

and prayed Allah to help her from the animals.

In her journey Zaitoon becomes tired and hungry. One day she hears a sound. She sees two men. Those men were attracted towards her and she was raped. It seems to be very much tough time for Zaitoon. She finds her life to be in the most difficult situation to live. She faces difficulties which she has never imagined in her life. There is no one to protect her. She is nostalgic about her sweet good old days with Miriam and Nikka where she was fully protected. But everything seems to be changed at the present situation. Finally the Major finds the skeletal creature Zaitoon in the dark hollow between the stones. He wondered if it was the same Zaitoon. The poor girl tries to cover her nakedness by pulling her torn clothes. Mustaq felt a kind of pity and huddled the girl in a blanket and sent it to the Army Mess telling the jawans that it was a bundle of roots. Then Mustaq informed to Sakhi, Zaitoon is dead. For everyone there the girl was dead.

Mustaq pictured a new world for Zaitoon. Qasim was to be blamed for having imposed his will on something that was bound to end in tragedy. Thus we find in the novel how female emotional demands are crushed under male dominance and marginalized by violence. The novel is based on a true story; but it is a work of fiction, so Sidhwa has changed and left out certain parts of the story, like the murder of the escaped wife. Sidhwa does this for the purpose of a successful and didactic plot. Thus we find in the novel that the female body is only given importance and they are used only as an object of lust by men. Zaitoon suffers lot of trauma as the novel proceeds and she escapes at the end. Sidhwa's view of life is optimistic. She loves life in spite of all its ugliness, brutality and horror. In the original story on which *The Pakistani Bride* is based, the girl is murdered but Sidhwa makes Zaitoon survive. She seems to give a message to women that life must be preserved at all costs since one can fight oppression only when one is alive. It is worthy of note that no woman character dies in any of her novels.

SUMMATION

Sidhwa is a new and important voice in the world of woman writers. Her novels are written with a genuine social purpose. The position of woman in various levels is sketched skillfully in all her novels. Bapsi Sidhwa a pioneer in the marginalized writings boldly portrays suppressed voices that create a rampant discourse in the academia. Bapsi Sidhwa has very realistically illustrated women's plight and exploitation in the patriarchal society in her novels. Men establish their masculine power and hence fulfill their desires by brutally assaulting women. Men as aggressor feel elated and victorious whereas women endure the pain and humiliation of the barbarity enacted upon women. Bapsi Sidhwa's protagonist is mainly women and they invariably win against men in their struggle for survival and honour.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's novels *The Pakistani Bride* has the background of feminist discourse in the time of partition. She describes the brutality and animal treatment of women in the society. Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* mainly focuses on the three brides Afshan, Zaitoon and Carol. The novel thematically deal with the oppression of women, both psychologically and sexually by men in the conservative society.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* is about South Asian societies. Marked by a distinct and dominant reverence of religion in everyday life, these societies exhibit a clear inclination to privilege transcendence over imminence, the spiritual world over the material, rationality over corporeality, and consequently, men over women. Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* is about women and marriage written against the backdrop of the relatively newly independent Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The Pakistani Bride is Bapsi Sidhwa's most outspokenly feminist work. Through an array of different characters, Sidhwa explores women's conditions of life, love and self-

worth in Pakistan. Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* explores the themes of marriage, women and sexuality, women as objects of male control and women as subjects of their own feelings. All through the novel, the focus is on female bodies. Whether looked at by men or experienced by women, the female body is the most important image of the novel, and this image links with the most important theme: Women's conditions of life in Pakistan. The image of the bride, both in the title and in the novel, is a more specific image than the female body in general. The bride becomes a symbol of men's power over women's lives and women's bodies, not having a word to say in the arrangement of her marriage; the most fateful transaction of the bride's life is her wedding.

The style of writing in *The Pakistani Bride* is varied and Sidhwa draws on several literary traditions in her narration. The novel displays traits of the travel novel, gothic novel, fairy tale and ghost story and the realistic novel. Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* is first and foremost feminist novel, and can in many ways be said to be related to the tradition of nineteenth-century American woman's fiction. These early feminist novels are less focused on how women should try to emancipate themselves and more concerned with making readers aware of the nature and results of the oppression of women by men. The main focus of the novel is, to show how the heroine manages to carve out a good life for herself within the existing framework of gender and social relations. The focus is one of enlightenment and negotiation, rather than one of challenge.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* tells the reader of the wrongs committed against women in the society that is depicted. The novel takes a rather pessimistic view of the future of women's rights in Pakistan, and does not make any suggestions for what women can do to improve their lives; the protagonists are still negotiating their ways within the patriarchal structures as the novel comes to an end. The ending of *The Pakistani Bride* does, represent a break with the early feminist tradition, as the novel does not end with a good

marriage, but with the resolve to get a divorce for the secondary protagonist Carol and a question mark concerning the protagonist Zaitoon's future.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* has several plots, and especially in the beginning it can seem quite fragmented. The novel can be roughly divided into four parts. The first part describes the Kohistani tribal Qasim's marriage, the death of his family and the accidental way in which he ends up adopting the Punjabi girl Zaitoon, who has lost her family during the violence of the Partition of India and Pakistan. The next part deals with Zaitoon's childhood, as she takes over the place as the protagonist of the novel. The third part tells the story of Zaitoon's marriage to the tribal Sakhi. A secondary protagonist, the American woman Carol, who is travelling around the country with her Pakistani husband. In the fourth and last part of the novel, Zaitoon runs away from her violent husband, who chases her through the mountains, and, in the end, she is saved.

Zaitoon is the protagonist of the novel *The Pakistani Bride*. After her marriage, Zaitoon transfers into tribal village where her husband lives. As she was growing up in city, she is unable to survive in the tribal village. She faces many difficulties in her life. Zaitoon is shocked at the brutal treatment of Sakhi as well as other tribal men to their women. Zaitoon confronts a completely unfamiliar and savage surrounding. Qasim leaves Zaitoon alone with her fate. Sakhi is cruel not only to Zaitoon but to every woman including his own mother. Whether the woman is a mother or wife, is destined to receive ill-treatments from men in tribal society. There is no civilization, no touch of law in the tribal society. Bapsi Sidhwa has played a very vital role in projecting the suppressed status of women in the patriarchal society. In the domain of patriarchal culture, woman is a social construct, a site on which masculine meanings get spoken and masculine desires enacted.

Sakhi tries to find out one or the other reason to torture and beat Zaitoon even for false reasons, he beats and kicks her until she faints and he gets exhausted. As she is

brought up in the liberal ways of life in Lahore, she cannot understand Sakhi's murderous jealousy and hate. The woman, Zaitoon as a mother or a wife, is savagely ill-treated. The incidents that Sakhi beating the animal almost to death and beating his own mother and his wife Zaitoon brings into focus the tribal manhood, and their unjust treatment against women. Man is a master even if he is a child, as Sidhwa points out at the beginning of the novel, describing Qasim the child husband of his grown-up young wife.(Sidhwa 1990):

A simple man from a primitive, warring tribe, his impulses were as direct and concentrated as pinpoint of heat. No subtle concessions to reason or consequence tempered his fierce capacity to love or hate, to lavish loyalty or pity. Each emotion arose spontaneously and without complication, and was reinforced by racial tradition, tribal tradition, tribal honour and superstition. Generations had carried it that way in his volatile Kohistani blood. (120)

Women are slaves to the men of the family, and they torture her at their fancy at any time even without reason. No laws of civilized life appeal to the men. They may kill their women for the dishonour caused to them but do not hesitate to rape women if they get such an opportunity as is revealed by the author an attempted rape on Qasim's wife earlier and Zaitoon being raped by the two tribal men of some other group. Women are exploited both sexually and psychologically.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel is linked and dominated by images of women who are primarily conceived in terms of the corporeality and sexuality of their bodies. They use it an excuse to reductively position a woman in society in the role of a wife and mother. The characters of Zaitoon, Carol in *The Pakistani Bride* illustrate that in the prevalent patriarchal cultural norms and customs of Pakistani society and the dominant socio-religious doctrines of India, a woman fails to attain the legitimacy of an independent self or an individual being like that of a man.

The need of the women empowerment in the society is very necessary because women are exploited, humiliated, oppressed and violated by their male partners so to defend the girls and women from the mentally and sexually harassment, sexually assaulted also domestic violence in the male dominated society. They should be given proper respect and support in our society. The study suggests us to improve the level and status of women in this society. Women and girls should be given proper education and guidance for their further future so they can also get jobs in the society and they can earn money to make them economically independent. When they will be given proper guidance and support only then we can make a society where men and women can be classified as equal citizen in our society. When they will get job then they will become independent in economical matter and they do not need to depend for economic matter to their male counter parts. The present study focuses to make women free so they can have power to take decisions of their life without asking anyone. Women can take the decisions of their own life by without taking permission of anyone in the society.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* mainly focuses on the three brides Afshan, Zaitoon and Carol. The child marriage is taken brutally in both the novel. Afshan, at the age of fifteen, she is married to a ten year old boy named Qasim. Bapsi Sidhwa brilliantly explains the pathetic condition of child marriage through her novel *The Pakistani Bride*. In Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* apart from the tyranny of her husband, Zaitoon is further tormented by the sense of alienation, the variation in the lifestyle, rites and rituals.

Her colourful clothes are in sharp contrast with the coarse dull coloured fabrics worn by the Kohistani women. Her garments lose their luster similar to her life. In *The Pakistani Bride*, women suffer a different situation due to their marriage relationship. In *The Pakistani Bride* Zaitoon is oppressed by the male dominated society.

Bapsi Sidhwa brilliantly portrays that *The Pakistani Bride* novel is about South Asian societies characterized by a mind divided similar to the one that existed in the classical Western Cartesian philosophy. Marked by a distinct and dominant reverence of religion in everyday life, these societies exhibit a clear inclination to privilege transcendence over imminence, the spiritual world over the material, rationality over corporeality, and consequently, men over women.

In Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* is a story about women and marriage written against the backdrop of the relatively newly independent Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The novel is linked and dominated by images of women who are primarily conceived in terms of the corporeality and sexuality of their bodies. They use it as an excuse to reductively position a woman in society in the role of a wife and mother. The characters of Zaitoon, Carol in *The Pakistani Bride* illustrate about the prevalent patriarchal cultural norms and customs of Pakistani society and the dominant socio-religious doctrines of India, where a woman fails to attain the legitimacy of an independent self or an individual being like that of a man.

In the twenty-first Century, women writers' works are considered as a powerful medium, which changes the social life of women. Their novels consist of the latest burning issues related to women as well as those issues that exist in the society. They describe the whole world of women with simply stunning frankness. The majority of these novels depict the psychological suffering of the frustrated women.

The aim of Sidhwa in the novel does not end with the portrayal and treatment of women in men dominated society but also to eradicate and eliminate these atrocities and biased treatments which are socially and economically hurdles and constraints in the development of women and nation. She endeavors to form a society in which both men and women enjoy equal privileges, opportunities and status in society.

WORKS CITED

Iyengar, K R Srinivasa. *Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., 2016. Print.

Khan, A.A., Qamar Talat. *Emergence of New Woman Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers and Distributors., 2012. Print.

Sidhwa, Bapsi. *The Pakistani Bride*. Haryana: Penguin Random House India., 1990.

Sinha, Sunita. *Feminism in Literature Musings and Aesthetics*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers., 2017. Print.

Srivastava, Neelam. *Feminism and Literature*. New Delhi: Random Publications., 2018. Print.

Web Sources

“Elements of Gothic Literature” April 3, 2021

<https://www.allassignmenthelp.com/blog/elements-of-gothic-literature/>

“From the Margins: Revisiting the Concept of ‘Marginalized Women’” April 12, 2021

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2490983

“The Pakistani Bride: Summary and Analysis” April 10, 2021

<https://schoolworkhelper.net/the-pakistani-bride-summary-and-analysis/>

“Women” April 12, 2021

<https://stories.minorityrights.org/lifeatthemargins/chapter/gender/>