



Gender Identity Issues: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Daniyal Mueenuddin's Short Story, *Saleema*

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Abstract

This article focuses the difficulties encountered by women in Pakistani society as a result of the prevailing patriarchal norms, with a particular emphasis on issues of exploitation. The study aims to effectively sensitize the younger generation to these critical issues and underscore the influential impact of discourse in perpetuating gender inequality, while mitigating potential political and social ramifications. This paper employs the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the construction of gender identity in the short story Saleema, the poignant narrative of a servant girl's rejection, her descent into engaging in sexual favors, and her eventual destitution. The examination reveals the utilization of discourse strategies and manipulative speech that mold gender identity, along with the socioeconomic elements that impact it. The results indicate that women residing in patriarchal societies, such as Pakistan, frequently experience a lack of independence and are subjected to mistreatment. Their roles are primarily defined by men, which greatly restricts their ability to act autonomously. The research emphasizes the importance of acknowledging these concerns and confronting the existing gender norms and roles in Pakistani society.

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INTRODUCTION

No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live. You should take your women along with you as comrades in every sphere of life (*qtd. in Bhattacharya, 2014*).

Jinnah's saying emphasizes the importance of women's involvement in every aspect of society and highlights the injustice of restricting women to the confines of their homes is a violation of basic human rights. It asserts that no nation can achieve greatness unless women are given the opportunity to participate as equal partners in all areas of life. The primary goal of the relentless struggle for an independent Pakistan was to "provide a safe home" for all individuals, regardless of gender (Akhtar, S., Imran, M., Xiaofei, W., & Chen, Y. (2021). Regrettably, women in Pakistani society have been systematically denied their rights and subjected to gender discrimination within the patriarchal social structure. Daniyal Mueenuddin's collection of short stories "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders," women in rural areas of Punjab are portrayed as powerless and treated as property, as reflected in the epigraph, "Three things for which we kill - land, women, and gold" (Mueenuddin, 2009). Women have limited agency and control over their lives. In the short story *Saleema*, the female protagonist is depicted as a victim who attempts to empower herself through misguided means, often resorting to the use of sex as a tool. However, these attempts consistently result in failure and misery.

Gender has consistently garnered attention, with extensive research conducted in various realms such as the workplace, marketplace, and leisure activities, to delve into gender-related matters (Gentry, J. W., Commuri, S., & Jun, S. 2003). In today's world, women are actively participating in various fields, including politics and social activities, alongside their male counterparts. This study has shed light on the challenges women face in different aspects of their lives. In particular, women in Pakistan often face physical and mental harassment, even among the educated class. In Pakistan, female entrepreneurs face unequal opportunities compared to men, largely due to entrenched

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discriminatory socio-cultural norms and traditions (Roomi, M. A., & Parrott, G. 2008). “Gender stereotyping acts as a strong force that determines one’s gender status and role” (Rehman,2022, p.36).

Moreover, the term violence against women has been defined as the range of sexually, psychologically, and physically coercive acts used against women by current or former male intimate partners (Ali, P. A., & Gavino, M. I. B. 2008). They are subjected to abusive and insulting language, which contributes to their marginalization and oppression. Despite gender issues being prevalent in many cultures, women in Pakistan are especially vulnerable to rights deprivation and ridicule by men, leading to a miserable existence. They are often considered inferior and are only seen as sources of pleasure and objects of sexual desire, with their lives being controlled by men and their own identities denied. Approximately 80% of women in Pakistan are reported to experience domestic violence annually, with prevalent occurrences of heinous acts like honor killings, acid attacks, and marital rape (Bhattacharya, S. 2014). The societal norms and beliefs in Pakistan are entrenched with patriarchal values, which result in the subordinate status of women. Women in Pakistan are controlled by patriarchal systems that enforce restrictive codes of conduct, promote gender segregation, and associate female virtue with family honor (Hadi, A. 2017).

This study underscores the pressing requirement to tackle gender identity concerns and advance gender equality not only in Pakistan but also in other patriarchal societies. Inequality encompasses not only gender injustice and women's rights but also disparities based on race, ethnicity, and social class. It involves a character being in a lower position compared to others, allowing the dominant characters to easily exert control or influence over the lower class. It is crucial to raise awareness, challenge societal norms, and advocate for women's rights to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect and have the same opportunities and freedoms as men. Only through collective efforts can we strive towards a more inclusive and equitable society where all individuals, regardless of their gender, are treated equally and have the right to express their identity freely. This study aims to investigate ways to improve the lives of marginalized women and raise awareness among people, particularly the younger generation, about gender issues in Pakistan. Discourse, which represents our thoughts and shapes our perception of complex issues, plays a crucial role in understanding and addressing gender identity issues.

This paper utilizes the CDA framework to investigate the extent of social injustices faced by

the oppressed character, Saleema, portrayed in the short fiction *Saleema* by Daniyal Mueenuddin. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary and problem-oriented approach to analyzing text and talk, and it is an essential part of this research project. According to Fairclough (1993), critical discourse analysis is a research approach that focuses on examining how text and talk within the social and political context perpetuate or challenge social power abuse, dominance, and inequality. Its aim is to expose and resist social inequality through a critical analysis of discourse (Fairclough (1993)). In Pakistan, these issues are particularly severe, and women are often mistreated, as evidenced from the short story, *Saleema*, the protagonist, coming from a family affected by addiction, did not hesitate to engage in sexual transactions, recognizing her complete reliance on men. The authors have selected the story for CDA analysis, focusing on discourse as a tool to understand the language, power dynamics, and ideologies related to gender identity issues.

Gender inequality and discrimination persist as significant societal issues that undermine the fundamental principles of equality and human rights. Despite progress in recent decades, women and gender minorities continue to face numerous challenges and disparities across various aspects of life, including education, employment, healthcare, and representation.

Aims and objectives:

- To look for various forms of discourse employed in the literary work to shape gender identity.
- To analyze the employment of manipulative language in the literary work and examine its impact on the construction of gender identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the paper examines the role of discourse in reflecting ideologies of power, particularly in relation to gender identity issues. The power relations within society are often systematic and seek to undermine resistance from the oppressed class through institutional means. Lakoff (1973) argues that language plays a significant role in the marginalization of women in society, both in the way they are described in social discourse and in the language they use themselves. In the use of language, stronger and more assertive expressions are often associated with males, while weaker and more submissive expressions are associated with females. Women are often reduced to being

viewed as objects of pleasure, with their social roles being considered derivative and dependent on men (Lakoff, 1973, p. 51). From an early age, women are conditioned to be completely dependent on males, with their primary responsibility being to make men happy and provide them with comfort. As a result, women's language, identity, expression, and form are often deprived by societal norms and expectations.

Lakoff's analysis reveals that women are often viewed as inferior and worthless, with a low social status due to their subjugated position. They are considered mentally weak, and society uses euphemistic terms like "girl" and "lady" to ennoble them. In social discourses, injustice and inequality against women are apparent, as these discourses are shaped by males and females are expected to conform to them. Women are often not allowed to establish their own identity without male permission, which is particularly challenging in societies like Pakistan where women face additional societal barriers to creating their own identity.

In their study on the interaction of language and power, Holmes et al. (2008) assert that language plays a crucial role in creating meaning, and power relations shape discourse. Gender is often divided along power lines, with men being assigned positions of power and women being rendered as submissive. These divisions are made both consciously and unconsciously, resulting in women being denied opportunities in various spheres of life, as authoritative positions are predominantly occupied by males. Furthermore, gender variations in language are often employed to portray masculinity as superior to femininity.

Keren (2012) delves into the language of gender, drawing connections with Katz's (2017) work on how common language perpetuates gender violence in today's society. Keren notes that issues of gender violence, encompassing sexual violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse of children, and sexual harassment, are often perceived as women's issues that may receive assistance from well-intentioned men, rather than being acknowledged as men's issues. This gendered perspective limits the scope of gender issues to women only, disregarding men's involvement and responsibility. Moreover, Keren argues that language plays a reinforcing role in shaping social norms that place women at risk. For instance, the use of the term "women's issues" in relation to gender violence gives men an excuse to not pay attention, perpetuated by discriminatory language that renders women inferior. Keren further contends that the passive voice commonly employed in discussing women's issues has a

political effect, shifting the focus away from men and boys and onto girls and women, thereby absolving men of responsibility

Even the term "violence against women" is problematic as it fails to acknowledge men's contribution to the issue. This language use has contributed to the construction of a new social identity for women, which has become a social norm, perpetuating gender-based injustice and violence against them. Keren says. "Speech genres can be thought of as containers of gender ideology. Speech genres are named forms of talk with recognizable routinized sequential structures of content-form relations, sometimes referred to as scripts." She calls this speech feature as "a container-like quality, so that it becomes possible to speak of one speech genre or one instance of a speech genre as entailing a gender ideology that another speech genre or instance of a speech genre does not"

Hall (2008) highlights the evolving interpretation of gender identity within the field of language and gender. Scholars have supported their claims on the interplay of language, gender, and society by examining the speech patterns of those considered as "linguistic deviants"— individuals whose speech does not conform to the normative speech patterns of their linguistic community based on gender (Hall, 2008, p. 359). From the literature, it is evident that linguistic deviation occurs in various ways. Hall further asserts that the concept of non-normative gender identity, though previously addressed peripherally in the gender and language literature, is foundational to the major theoretical perspectives that have emerged within the field of language and gender (Hall, 2008, p. 362).

METHODOLOGY

The research method employed in this study involves the selection and analysis of expressions, structures, and passages from the short story *Saleema* that is under the control of the speaker, with a focus on identifying and relating them to issues of gender identity. Specifically, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is utilized, which is a multi-dimensional and problem-oriented field that views language as a social performance and assigns a significant role to the context of language. CDA also examines the relationship between language and power, particularly from a linguistic perspective that considers discourse as a form of communication. Gender, politics, race, and media discourse are prominent areas of study within CDA.

According to Van Dijk (1993), CDA critically investigates social discrimination and preplanned oppression through language, highlighting how language serves as a source of maintaining suppression of certain groups such as women, immigrants, and different social and political classes, which are legitimized institutionally through discourse strategies. Furthermore, CDA views language as a means of expressing ideology, and its purpose is not only to study language in isolation, but also to analyze social practices and perceptions that shape language use in specific contexts. The CDA approach suggests that dominant structures stabilize conventions and naturalize them, obscuring the effects of power and ideology, and resistance is seen as breaking conventions or stable discursive practices in acts of creativity (Fairclough and Kress, 1993). Various departments and scholars applying CDA may focus on different subjects of investigation, such as gender issues, racism, media discourses, or dimensions of identity research, as highlighted by Wodak et al. (1999).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The passages under study are taken from the short story “Saleema”. The participants are Saleema, Rafik and Saleema’s son and others. Sentences are enclosed in inverted commas for understanding. The passages present a bleak portrait of Pakistani women who serve her husband and other men throughout her life but her services have never been admitted.

Passage 1

I know what you all think,” she began. “You think I’m a slut, you think I poison my husband. Because of him I’m alone, and you all do with me as you like, I’m trying to live here too, you know, I’m not a fool, I also come from somewhere,” her words poured out clearly, evenly, angrily, entirely unplanned.

He didn’t say anything, smoked, his heavy-lidded eyes half shut. After a moment she got up to leave.

Stay a minute, girl. I’ll bring you tea.”

He shifted to get up, putting aside the bamboo stem of the hookah.

All right, uncle. But let me bring it,” his offering this meant so much to her (Mueenuddin, 2009 P. 34).

Descriptive Analysis

Ideologically loaded words: “slut”, “husband” “alone,” “tear” “evenly, angrily, entirely unplanned”, “smoking his hokkah”

Informal words: “You think I’m a slut.”

Negatively expressed words: “slut,” “poisoned”

The use of negative sentence and pronouns: “I’m not a fool, I also come from somewhere,” her words poured out clearly, evenly, angrily, entirely unplanned.” The use of “she” and “you” “I”, “his”

Logical connectors: “because”, “and,” “but”

Interpretation

The passage under study shows the vulnerability of women. The opening sentence of the passage delves into the mindset of the majority of men towards women, specifically those belonging to the working class and lower social status. Saleema, the protagonist of the story knew their attitude towards her but she couldn’t resist because she was aware of her low status in the society. The passage illustrates that man finds opportunities to blackmail woman as the male servants in the house were blaming Saleema for killing her husband. “You think I poison my husband” Mueenuddin, p. 34). Through the analysis, it becomes evident that in Pakistan, there is a tendency to attribute the misfortunes or death of a husband to the wife.

Moreover, the analysis brings this reality to the front that after Saleema’s husband death she was treated badly because she was considered helpless. As a result, her life became vulnerable, subjecting her to the scrutiny and criticism of the servants. Saleema became the target of mockery, perceived as foolish and unintelligent. Their treatment towards her lacked humanity. Following Rafik's negative attitude towards Saleema, who had been exploited her for sexual satisfaction, she felt a deep sense of anger and distress. However, being a woman, she was powerless to take any action, “her words poured out clearly, evenly, angrily, entirely unplanned” (Mueenuddin, 2009, p.34). Her behavior was unplanned and unintentional, as she had no intention of displaying such an attitude (Schiff, 2006). Saleema knew that her voice is suppressed and cannot be entertained and Rafik was smoking his hokkah as usual. He was not paying any attention towards her.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that when Saleema wanted to leave that place Rafik did not

want her to leave because of fulfilling his needs. The analysis demonstrates that Rafik attitude towards Saleema was authoritative like most of the patriarchal men. On the other hand, she also wanted to stay at the house because she has no alternative options or any other place to go. Her choice to stay there was a result of necessity. When Rafik offered her tea, it held significant value for her, “Stay a minute, girl. I’ll bring you tea.” (Mueenuddin, 2009). An important aspect which the analysis shows that Rafik was in place of her father yet he developed illicit relations with her without any hesitation. Rafik also knew about Saleema that she has already been molested by her own father. So he did not feel shame and developed sensual relations with her (Katz, 2017).

Explanation

This passage shows a low status of women in Pakistani society. Further it explores that male is dominant and women are bound to obey them. No respect is given to women and their existence is a burden on males. Moreover the analysis exhibits gender exploitation because Saleema had been exploited by everyone included her own father (Keren, 2012). Saleema’s anger and her ill treatment had no value with any male of the society because her voice is suppressed voice and she is subjugated. Further from the character of Saleema this is visible that Pakistani women have no right in any matter i.e. social, political religious etc. (Susan, 2005). They are kept suppressed and are treated indifferently.

Moreover, the passage shows low social status of women and a negative mentality of men towards women in Pakistani society. Saleema is a true representative of Pakistani lower class women (Anderson, 1990). Additionally male dominancy is clear because Saleema like other Pakistani women wanted to make an identity in the society with reference to a male gender. One more important aspect is clear from the analysis that when a woman is divorced or widowed she has not been given the status of a servant. She becomes a play thing for everyone as is shown in the character of Saleema. Sometimes woman is considered responsible for the death of her husband because this idea has been injected in the mind of husband dies suddenly then the society makes the wife responsible for his death blaming her with different blames. In every matter women need affiliation with men no matter if she has to pay heavy for it. Sometime women sacrifice their lives and honor for this.

The passage also shows vicious attitude of males towards females and in such condition the life of women becomes very miserable and difficult. The reason behind all her conditions was her poor

economic condition. Saleema was much depressed because of Rafik's negative attitude but couldn't resist or speak against him. In the same passage when Rafik ask her for tea she becomes very happy. "Stay a minute, girl. I'll bring you tea." It simply shows that only few words of love from a male are enough for a female. But it was her bad luck like other women that throughout her life she faced rude attitude of males. Further the analysis explores a very sad fact that although Saleema was in place of Rafik's daughter yet he did not spare her and used her and gave her no respect. Rafik was also a servant at the house of K.K Harouni but as he was male so he proved his superiority over Saleema.

Passage 2

Sit here and tell me a story. Tell me about when you were a girl." Neither of them had spoken much of their pasts or their homes. She knew that he had a wife and children, two sons, and shied away from anything bringing it to mind.

"What shall I say? I was brought up with slaps and harsh words. We had nothing, we were poor. My father sold vegetables from a cart, but when he began smoking heroin he sold everything, the cart, his bicycle, the radio, even the dishes in the kitchen. Once a man----a boy---gave me a little watch---he brought it from Multan--- and my father pushed me to the ground and took it from my wrist.

"Poor girl, little girl, how could he do it?" he rolled her over onto the bed ... She didn't tell him the worst, much worse things, her father came into her room at night and felt under her clothes...For the first time, Rafik touched her...He turned off the lights, but she said, "No, I want to see you."

"This old body? Leave it, there's nothing to see. "For me you're not old."... The bhang had begun to affect her; she felt the dimensions of the room, the light, the calendar on the wall that showed a picture of the Kaaba, the black cloth covering the stone and crowds circling around it.

How strange, she had never before seen the roof, made of bricks and metal rods, the little high window to let in air...Standing up and going to the corner, she bent down on purpose to pick up her shirt, letting him see her.

She saw reflected in his eyes the beauty of her young body... Her thoughts were racing, from idea to idea...Oh would he marry her? (Mueenuddin, 2009 pp. 46, 47).

Descriptive Analysis

Ideologically loaded words: "girl", "home", "wife", "slap" "her legs" "old body", "shirt"

Informal word: "bhang",

Metaphors: "her father came into her room at night and felt under her clothes."

Negatively expressed words: “The bhang had begun to affect her”; “Rafik touched her”, “She saw reflected in his eyes the beauty of her young body”

Logical connectors: “and”, “but”, “than”

One character dominates other: Rafik sexually exploits Saleema

Interpretation

Despite being aware of Saleema’s past, Rafik expressed a keen interest in hearing her life story, seemingly deriving enjoyment from it. While both were servants, Rafik asserted his dominance over Saleema through his authoritative tone when he asked her to recount her past (Rizwan, 2015). They had never discussed their respective backgrounds before, but as Rafik developed a connection with Saleema, he became eager to learn about her family and her history. However, his intrusive questioning into her past implies a negative perception of Saleema, viewing her through derogatory lenses. In sharing her past with Rafik, Saleema hoped to establish a closer bond with him and seek a sense of security within the household, given Rafik's position as the senior servant in K.K. Harouni's residence.

Further the analysis shows an indirect criticism on female gender because Rafik did not show any respect to Saleema. He thought Saleema only a sex object. Saleema was really confused and couldn’t answer his questions. “What shall I say? (Mueenuddin, 2009,) Sentence four of the passage brings a true picture of Pakistani women in the shape of Saleema like many other women, was raised under the strong hold and harsh attitude of man’s violence .From her early age she was dependent on her father but her family conditions were not favorable so her life was full of problems and sufferings.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that Rafik was seemingly listening to Saleema's story about her family background; he was simultaneously awaiting an opportunity to exploit her. Although Rafik performed regular prayers yet his intentions were not good towards Saleema. Rafik has repeatedly taken advantage of Saleema, and on this occasion, he planned to manipulate her again. He pretended to console her about her family background, but in reality, he kissed her audaciously and then proceeded to sexually abuse her.

Additionally, the analysis reveals that Saleema faced degradation not only from society but also from her own father, resulting in her lack of value within society. The passage highlights the clear exploitation of women through Rafik's behavior. Saleema, compelled by societal pressures, readily offered herself to men, demonstrating her awareness of men's psychology. Being from a poor background, Saleema found herself in a challenging position when she entered the house of K.K Harouni. She seeks favour from Rafik by sacrificing her own dignity. This underscores the unequal power dynamics between men and women in Pakistan, where women are expected to submit to men's decisions without the right to refuse. Despite their encounter, Saleema desired Rafik's continued presence, emphasizing the dependency of women on men. The passage highlights the societal rejection of women who engage in sexual relations outside of marriage. Although Rafik briefly considered marrying Saleema, she knew that he would never do so due to her past.

Explanation

The analysis of the above passage shows the prevalent negative mindset among men towards women, particularly those who are divorced or come from a lower socio-economic class. Many men seek to exploit women for their own gratification, disregarding the women's consent, driven solely by their own selfish desires. For instance, Rafik, an older man who maintains a regular prayer routine, yet does not hesitate to take advantage of opportunities to exploit Saleema. Rafik was also interested to know about her past and family. He wanted to investigate about her more and more because he wanted to blackmail her whenever he wants. Rafik was a senior servant at the house of K.K Harouni so Saleema started telling him about her past and family. The evident display of male dominance is apparent in this passage, as Rafik had no rightful claim to inquire about Saleema's past. However, Saleema chose to disclose her history in hopes of securing her safety within the household of K.K. Harouni.

The poor condition of women has been presented in the above text that not only at the house of husband but at the house of father, she had no value. They are not supported by family and at the same time they are let others should help them as Rafik helps her. Generally this is very difficult for a woman to make relations with a man already married but Saleema developed relations with Rafik because she was aware that she a part of patriarchal society and without the affiliation of a male she has no value. Moreover, the analysis confirms that no matter how much a person is religious but he

never miss a chance to exploit a woman.

In Pakistani society this is easy for a male to assault a woman when he knows about her past and family background. This following sentence shows the weak position of women in Pakistan “She didn’t tell him the worst, much worse things, her father came into her room at night and felt under her clothes” (Mueenuddin, 2009)

This was Saleema’s bad luck that she was abused by her own father and she had no respect. Male’s psyche is clearly shown here that man supports a woman if she offers her body in return of a little favor. In Pakistani society, men have power. They have controlled every walk of life and women are under their control (Wooldridge (2015) In the case of Saleema and Rafik, it is clear that Saleema who was very young in comparison to Rafik but she could not show resistance to him when they were in the room.

From the analysis this is clear that for a woman age of man does not matter as she wants his support. She wants the name of a male with her name. Saleema did the same because she offered herself to Rafik for a little favor. Rafik was older than her but Saleema forgot his age “For me you’re not old” (Mueenuddin, 2009, pp. 46, 47). This act of Saleema shows that women are always dependent on men in Pakistan. They will do everything to make them happy and satisfied. Women tend to make sacrifices more often in relation to their familial responsibilities, whereas men are more likely to sacrifice in terms of lifestyle adjustments. (Mandal, E. (2020). Women will have to bow their heads in front of men’s decision. But man gives no importance to women as is seen in the character of Saleema. Man does not care about the norms of the society but they only care for their desires. Sometimes women sacrifice their precious lives for the sake of men. The analysis explores that in Pakistani society a woman faces countless problems because of man. In the patriarchal setup women is treated as the ‘other’ and considered subordinate, which limits their ability to fully realize their potential. Akhtar et al. proclaim that a woman is a distinct individual, not ‘an appendage of man’. They emphasized that a woman should not be treated as the ‘other’. (Akhtar, S., Rauf, M., Ikram, S., & Raees, G. (2017).

Passage 3

WITHIN TWO YEARS she was finished, began using rocket pills, which she once had so much despised, lost her job, went on to heroin, leaving her husband behind without a word, she knew all

about that life from her husband and father. The man who controlled the lucrative corner where she ended up begging took most of her earnings, this way she escaped prostitution. She cradled the little boy in her arms, holding him up to the windows of cars, Rafik sent money, a substantial amount, so long as she had an address, and then, soon enough, she died, and the boy begged in the streets, one of the sparrows of Lahore (Mueenuddin, 2009, p.60).

Descriptive Analysis

Ideologically loaded words: “job,” “heroin”, “Husband”, “prostitution”

Informal words: “prostitution,”

Negatively expressed words: “prostitution,” “begged”

Dominant participants “The man who controlled the lucrative corner”

The use of negative sentence and pronouns: “The use of “she” and “her”

Logical connectors: “and”, “then”

Does one participant dominate other? “Men dominate the female character”.

Interpretation

The first part of the passage depicts Saleema's lifelong dedication to serving men. Not only did she cater to her masters, but she also attended to the male servants, recognizing that if she didn't fulfill their needs, she would risk losing her place in the house of K.K Harouni. Saleema diligently attended to their every desire, even going as far as willingly engaging in sexual encounters whenever they desired. Rafik, in particular, took advantage of Saleema's willingness without hesitation. However, when Saleema became pregnant with Rafik's child, she was intentionally subjected to a precarious situation as he refused to acknowledge the child as his own. Within no time her life was deteriorated because of man and she started begging in the streets of Lahore. “She lost her job and turned to heroin, abandoning her husband without any explanation”. It is a sorry fact that when a woman fulfilling the needs and demands of man she is appreciated and welcome but as soon as she fails to fulfill the needs of man she is exposed to danger. Saleema, from her early age was treated barbarously by her father

and husband and then by the society. (Keren, 2012. It is worth noting that she was well acquainted with this lifestyle, having learned about it from her husband and father.

Further the analysis of the passage explores the pathetic condition of women at the hands of men. Saleema truly representing a Pakistani woman's life and especially the life of a domestic woman. Rafik, Hassan and other male servants including K.K Harouni the landlord and particularly her own father are responsible for her this poor condition. She is treated inhumanly throughout her life. She had never been given respect even at her own home. The last part of the passage gives a heart touching portrait of women who cradle her child at the streets of Lahore and begs. This part of the passage shows that this is woman who support boy from his early age but when he becomes a man he treat her very brutally. Rafik used to send money to Saleema for a short period but this ended soon as he was aware that Saleema is no more of any use for him. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that Saleema tragically passed away, leaving her son to resort to begging on the streets. This heartbreaking outcome stemmed from the mistreatment they endured, ultimately leading to the destruction of two lives—Saleema's and her son's.

Explanation

The analysis of the passages shows the hardship and sufferings of women for the sake men in Pakistani society. Women give all kinds of sacrifices for the sake of men in order to make them happy and make their life full of comfort. They even don't care of their lives but want to serve men. The character of Saleema epitomizes the harsh reality faced by many Pakistani women. Despite dedicating her life to serving her own family and later working as a domestic servant in three different households, her efforts went unappreciated. Instead, she was treated as a mere object of sexual gratification within each household. She was discarded and neglected when she didn't conform to the physical desires of the men involved, leaving her in a state of darkness and isolation.

In her efforts to secure her place in the household of K.K Harouni, she dutifully served Rafik. However, when she found herself in need of his support during her impending childbirth. Sadly, Rafik not only rejected her plea for assistance but also displayed a negative attitude towards her, reflecting a common behavior observed in Patriarchal societies. (Fikree, F. F., Razzak, J. A., & Durocher, J. (2005). Saleema was badly treated and as a result she addicted to pills which destroyed her life within

a short span of time. “WITHIN TWO YEARS she was finished, began using rocket pills, which she once had so much despised” (Mueenuddin, (2009). Further the analysis shows that females are not only treated indifferently when they are working as maid servants but also at their own houses by their father, brother and husband.

Further the analysis confirms gender exploitation in Pakistan and shows the patriarchal mindset of the society. Moreover the analysis proves the struggle of a woman against the cruelty of man but she cannot get rid of it because of the prevailing patriarchy in Pakistan. This is very common in Pakistan that women, lose their dignity and honor and stain their reputation for the sake of men and in return gets nothing but, lamentation. Women in Pakistan are in the strong hold of men at every stage of their lives (Ali, P. A., & Gavino, M. I. B. (2008). Women are often confined within the boundaries set by men, unable to surpass the limitations imposed upon them. This was the case for Saleema, who not only had to adhere to the demands of the house owner but also the male servants. Despite sharing the role of servants, Saleema was expected to obediently cater to the needs and desires of these male servants simply because of their gender.

Saleema obeyed silently everyone because she has internalized the belief of male dominancy. She could not challenge the authority of male because she knew her dependency on male. A significant number of Pakistani women find themselves trapped in degrading and devastating circumstances, often subjected to being used and discarded without regard for their dignity (Wooldridge, 2015). Domestic violence in Pakistan is regarded as a private matter since it takes place within the family. Saleema’s condition throughout the story shows the low worth of Pakistani women. Whole life of woman is spent at the services of man. She takes every responsibility of man but when she needs a helping hand she is left helpless all the time in all the situations. According to Tanvir "Saleema" sheds light on the disadvantaged position of Pakistani women in comparison to men within society. The protagonist, endures abuse from her father, neglect from her husband, exploitation by Hassan, teasing from male servants, and abandonment by Rafik after Harouni's death (Tanvir, 61).

CONCLUSION

In Mueenuddin's short story, the character Saleema accepts the prevailing societal norms, despite belonging to a lower socio-economic background. However, her compliance with these norms leads to significant suffering and tragedy. This portrayal sheds light on the oppressive power relations and rigid social structures that limit individuals' agency and contribute to their marginalization. The story serves as a critique of the prevailing ideologies and social structures that perpetuate inequality, highlighting the devastating consequences faced by those who are unable to challenge or transcend these constraints.

The findings of the present study reveal that gender issues are prevalent in all societies, particularly in Pakistani society most of the women face different issues in various forms. Female servants are treated differently as compared to men and often subjected to maltreatment. Women's rights are not given proper attention, and they are often denied their freedom of speech and action. Saleema's character represented in the study is a true reflection of most Pakistani women, who are expected to follow the instructions of men without question, and their freedom to express themselves or take independent actions is severely restricted. They are bound by the orders of their male counterparts and are often treated as mere objects, with no right to refuse or say "NO" in any matter. The study's findings emphasize the importance of collective efforts in achieving a more inclusive and fair society. It highlights the need for equal treatment and the freedom for all individuals, irrespective of gender, to express their identity without constraints.

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