

Representation Of Sexual Exploitation In Bapsi Sidhwa's Novel Water

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Abstract: *This research sheds light on Susan Brownmiller's literary theory "Against Our Will: Women, Men, and Rape" in the context of Bapsi Sidhwa's, novel 'Water'. Rape is one of the most horrific crimes in our culture, and victims are often the only ones who are negatively affected by it. The evil of rape has so drastically affected the lives of women in a patriarchal society that it is no wonder to find its clear depiction in literature and society. The novel 'Water' (2006) has highlighted child marriage and the unprotected sorrows of Indian women before independence. This study examines how marriage becomes a turning point in the lives of female characters in the selected text. How they are tortured in ashrams in particular and the ideological tensions they face in Indian society in general. The study is qualitative in nature, and the tool used for the analysis of the text is Content Analysis.*

Key Words: Bapsi Sidhwa, Water, Marriage, Dowager, Independence, Deepa Mehta

Introduction

Rape is a highly gendered form of violence. In the majority of legal authorities, it is described as a sort of sexual assault or sexual violation by a culprit against a victim without the victim's consent. Rape is the most horrific act committed against a women's integrity and honor. It destroys the mental and physical peace of victim and pushes the victim into an emotional crisis. Perpetrator has many excuses for rape like she asked for it, immoral women get raped, men don't get raped or that only the "weak" get raped, blaming victims' dress, history and mental state. (Eigenberg & Garland, 2008).

According to the victim's perspective, rape can occur if a woman decides not to have intimate intercourse with a specific

male and he continues anyhow against her will (Leahy, 2014). Rape cannot be envisioned as a matter of female consent or refusal (Brownmiller, 1975). In many cultures, victims of rape have a high threat of further acts of violence or fears of violence. This could be done by the rapist, their friends, or family. Threats against those who have been assaulted may be made with the intention of stopping the victim from reporting the rape, punishing them for doing so, or pressuring them into withdrawing their complaint. (Zimmerling, 2003) The victim's relatives would want to avoid "bringing shame" on the family and might even threaten them (Pascale, 2011). In communities where a woman virginity is extremely valued and seen to be necessary before marriage, this is unquestionably the case; in severe cases, rape

victims are murdered in morality killings (Mina & Wreder, 2015). Victims of this heinous act does not come forward because of society's norms and family honor because they feel humiliated and ashamed that their integrity is taken away from them. This major issue is highlighted in the Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Water* (2006).

Bapsi Sidhwa is one of the prominent Pakistani American novelists who writes in English. She is also a women's rights activist. She is the author of five novels that reflect her own experience of the Indian subcontinent's partition, abuse and exploitations of females. Her collection of novels includes *Cracking India* (1998), *The Crow Eaters* (1978), *An American Brat* (1993), *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), and *Water* (2006). These novels received the Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard (1986), the Lila Wallace Readers Digest Writer's Award (1994), and A National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1987), the Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Star of Excellence) Award, (1991, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts) and the Sir Syed Day Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Literature (2013). The well-known novelist Bapsi Sidhwa and similarly famous film maker Deepa Mehta share a distinctive artistic bond: Mehta adopted Sidhwa's work *Cracking India* as the basis for her outstanding movie *Earth* (1998), and Sidhwa turned Mehta's debatable movie *Water* into a book.

The novel *Water* is set in 1938, it is about lives of Indian dowagers and how they live in ashrams followed by the life story of an eight years old Chuyia, left at a dowager ashram after the demise of her aged life partner. She is forcefully dragged into prostitution for the sake of shelter, food and money. Kalyani, a beautiful dowager prostitute, who is the bread winner of the ashram, fell for young superior class Gandhi idealist, the forbidden affair bravely challenges Hindu tradition which poses a danger to the delicate power dynamics within the ashram. Susan Brownmiller work *Against our will: Men,*

women, and Rape (1975) has provided a platform to shed light on this novel. Susan Brownmiller is an American journalist, author and feminist activist best known for her book *Against our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975). It is an activist book in which Brownmiller reasons about rape that "it is nothing extra or less than a conscious procedure of panic by which all men keep all women in a state of horror" (Miller, 1975, p.p. 5-8). It is a highly controversial book because Brownmiller has identified a number of extremely deep-rooted myths of rape: that it is inspired by irrepressible male desire rather than violence and that women cry rape with ease and joy (Miller, 1975). Brownmiller has given a detailed description of the events of rape and sexual violence dating back to the olden Babylonians, as well as traditions of wartime rape in the present era. Her emphasis on rape as a method of war and other forms of politically aware struggle framed sexual violence as a collective social problem with the intention of humiliating and degrading the victim. Her emphasis on gender role education and criticism of the promotion of sexual violence in the media make her theory of rape a tool for societal control.

Research Objectives

1. To holistically analyze the abuse of women masked by Hindu perception in a society.
2. To highlight the difficulties of women reflects on the teachings of the Hindu religion as highlighted by Sidhwa in the selected work.
3. To draw attention to the sexual abuse that society's patriarchal figures control.

Research Questions

1. How does the sexual abuse against dowager in India disguised as a cultural norm?

2. How does Sidhwa's description of women's difficulties reflect the teachings of the Hindu religion?
3. How sexual abuse is controlled by patriarchal figure in Hindu society?

Literature Review

Literature reviews are secondary sources that do not report on novel or exploratory work. Such reviews, which are most often seen in academic journals and are distinctive from of book reviews, may also appear in the same publication and are most often related to academic literature. Almost every academic field's research is based on a review of the works (Galvan, 2015). A literature review is an investigation of scholarly sources on a specific subject. It gives an outline of current information, helping you to find applicable theories, methodologies, and research work. (McCombes, 2019)

The novel *Water* was published in 2006. It was adapted from Deepa Mehta film *Water*. Bapsi turned the film into a novel which examines the difficulty of Hindu dowagers in late 1930s in India who are forced to live in poverty after the death of their husbands. Exploration of discrimination and exploitation of women in which they were pushed to boundaries and treated indifferently. Dowagers were considered as an outcast in a society. Separate ashrams were built for them. Anyway, Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani novelist who writes in English and is a resident of the United States. She is best known for her collaborative work with Indian-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta. Sidhwa authored both *Ice candy* (1980) and *Water* (2006), highlighting the partition and pre partition woes of the people of the time. Of them the latter is based on Deepa Mehta's film. Sidhwa has a passion for history and for truth telling which is observed throughout her works. Her books often focus on life in colonial India, the history of partition, experiences of Parsi community etc.

Beauviour, (1956) States that women are free to make their own choices and take responsibility. The roles associated with women are not given to them by birth or by the virtue of their biology but rather it's socially constructed. She further elaborates that there were times when women were not even entitled to be called as human; women are still defined as other creatures that are not the same as men. Brownmiller, (1993) stated in her book against our will that for men rape is not an act of lust or passion but it is a tool to oppress women and keep them in fear. She describes the majority of rapes in WWII, Vietnam war, Nanjing massacre, and many more.

Bart, (1975) described the definition of rape myths as prejudicial, stereotype, and false beliefs about rape that it is never the victims' fault when being forced into sexual encounters, according to their clothes, age and certain types of women gets rapes who hang out in bars, sleep around or have male friends. Green, (1988) supported Blackstone's unities that husband and wife becomes one single identity on marriage, a woman loses her own civil identity and becomes a property of their husband and it gives ticket to the husband to violate or seize his property called wife.

Smith, (2004) Argues that the meaning of rape differs according to aspects of time and place Nonetheless Rape is acknowledged as a crime committed by men under duress against another individual against their will, it is not always the outcome of lust or desire, but mostly rape is a way to exercise their control over females to maintain their position of control. Kumar & Dalal, (2018) States that according to Hindu marriage act Sexual interaction by a man with his own spouse who is not under 15 years old is not assault. This legal sanction provides a right for men to have sex forcefully with their spouses and not be held responsible for the assault.

Sexual assault and rape affect people of

all social classes and occur in all societies. Between 6 and 59% of ladies who have ever experienced sexual manhandling from their companions or accomplices are estimated to have been victims of assault. According to two population-based estimates from South Africa, 28% and 37% of men have committed assault, respectively. High-income countries appear to have lower levels of assault execution than low- and middle-income countries. In most cases, the assailant is known to the victim, and ladies and young ladies are altogether more likely to be the victims than men are (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013).

Rape is one of the foremost practices of exploitation. Assault is an illegal act that regularly involves coercing or undermining sexual action against the victim's will. Assault may be a broad issue. (Gordon, 2002). According to statistics obtained by the UN from official sources, each year, police report more than 250,000 instances of rape or tried rape. The given information encompassed 65 nations. According to a United Nations survey, 14.3% of the 100 women who had experienced sexual abuse in their lifetimes had sought to be raped, and 2.3% had actually been raped (Anderson, 2022).

Afghanistan recorded 160 occurrences of rape and 240 cases of honor killings in 2012. In 2013, a guy attacked a lady and tried to rape her; as a response, the female's family carried out an honor killing in which they both died. Rape is a crime that is subject to legal prosecution, but in reality, it is reported very rarely (Ghani, 2013).

Non-consensual sexual intercourse is referred to as rape in Victoria and New South Wales. All of these crimes are gender-neutral and apply to marriage. Throughout Australia, the documented incidence of rape of over 100,000 individuals is extremely high. It is, however, reducing (S. Harrendorf, M. Heiskanen & S. Malby, 2010).

For a portion of the survey, men in

China's urban and rural areas were questioned whether they had ever coerced a lady into intimacy. In China, 9.3% of men claim to have committed a sexual assault on a woman in the past year. Sexual inequality was regarded as the driving force by 86%. Of them 46% claimed it was done out of rage or revenge, while 57% claimed it was done for amusement or boredom. The lowest proportion in the research, 25%, of individuals who had been raped initially said they had done so while they were teenagers (Chan, 2009).

The occurrence of rape in Pakistan has been remarkable and has increased recently. In 2002, the anti-terrorism Supreme Court hanged six males as well as multiple rapists. The Lahore High Court cleared five of the six convicted in 2005, citing "insufficient evidence." In 2011, a female was raped on the instructions of a village congress, which serves as a subordinate-level judicial body. A teenage girl was burned alive while she pleaded being raped. A Pakistan Muslim League (PML) MPA named Malik Ahmed Saeed Khan was accused of raping women and selling them on the black market (Ahsan, 2017).

The overall crime rate in Saudi Arabia is 100 times lower than in the United States. The rate of forced rape was 0.33 per people in 1981. According to Badr-el-din Ali, this might be because Saudi Arabia has a syntomic condition of principles, where everybody unquestioningly follows the same principles (ALI, 1985). The frequency of war rape during the Syrian Civil War has remained linked to honor killings, forced marriages, and underage marriages as a result of the marginalization of victims by their families and communities. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) estimates that since the conflict began, about 6,000 women have been raped (Nasar & Sema, 2014).

Sobharani, (2017) Violence and exploitation is rooted in Indian society as

well as in culture and history. The culture of Indian society is structured in a way that leads to exploitation of women. Further she explains how in the novel water life of four dowagers take turn and how are they forced into prostitution by the roots of patriarchal society.

Amanat & Rehman (2015) Women are recognized by their marital status and men's authority over women. They are exploited and assaulted and are often recognized by their sexual past as in the novel the lives of Kalyani and Chuyia are portrayed. Both are forced into child marriage and then into prostitution by Madhumati to earn bread for ashram.

Nandhini (2017) explains the trauma of the child marriage of Chuyia and Kalyani melancholy, marital disharmony, double standards, and hypocrisy of Brahmanical tradition of patriarchal society how it effects the life of a Indian women daily.

Ohira (2021) she effectively demonstrates in the novel Water how the dowager's body is a location where a patriarchal society can take advantage of the contradictory meanings of her sexuality. She further investigates the truth about dowagers in the 1930s and provides a detailed description of the prejudicial practices and attitudes toward them that are still prevalent in Indian society today.

According to Santhosh (2021), Sidhwa displays a greater understanding of her female characters, who reside in a dowager ashram, by showing them as five stages of a woman's life in a circle that experiences repression of emotions and desires to various degrees, rather than as distinct characters with linked lives.

Analysis

Content analysis is research that uses categorization and classification of speech, written material, interviews, photographs, or other kinds of communication. In the beginning, the study was done physically by

calculating the number of posts dedicated to a subject in the first printed press at the end of the nineteenth century. The method was originally used in 1893 by a university scholar who was looking for outlines throughout Shakespeare's works. (Sumpter, 2001).

This chapter focuses on the novel's elements of sexual abuse, which are the major causes of women's suffering and exploitation. It also highlights the mistreatment of women in patriarchal societies.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual mistreatment is characterized as any sexual action that happens against the victim's will. It is additionally known as "sexual attack" or "sexual savagery" and includes assault, coerced verbal sex, and undesirable sexual contact. (Green,2002). Molestation, also known as sexual manhandling or sex abuse, is damaging sexual behavior committed by one individual against another. It frequently includes putting constraints on or taking advantage of another person. Unlike "sexual abuse," which can refer to a series of sexual assaults, "molestation" usually refers to a single instance of sexual assault on a young child. (Manly, Stewart & Finaldi, 2021). The word "sexual assault" which denotes to "any genital, verbal, or sodomising by a part of the perpetrator's body or by an object, using constraint or without the victim's consent," (Ama, 1995).

Sexual Assault Types

1. Sexual assault refers to all sexual offenses. Any sexual activity or comment made without both parties consent.
2. Rape is defined as the entrance of a physical organ or an object into a woman's sexual organs without her consent.
3. The act of sodomy refers to the unauthorized insertion of a body part or item into a person's mouth or anus.

4. The unauthorized placement of a physical organ or an object in a woman's sex organs is defined as attempted rape
5. Rape perpetrated by multiple attackers is known as "gang rape."
6. A serial rape is a series of rapes committed by the same offender over time.
7. Sexual assault by a family member is known as incest. (Ama, 1995).

Statistics on Rape by Countries

When comparing numbers across the EU, it's important to remember that different nations keep their records in different ways and that state rules on what constitutes rape vary widely. As a result, statistics only reflect the number of crimes that are recorded, not those that have actually occurred. According to police statistics, England and Wales had the highest rate of violent sexual offences per 100,000 people in 2015 (130), followed by Sweden (120) and Belgium (120). (Nearly 66) The National Council for Crime Prevention of Sweden previously cited stricter rape laws passed in 2005 and 2013 as the reason for the increase in recorded sex crimes in the ten years before 2015 (Beswick, 2017).

The weaponization of females' figures has long been a feature of South Asia, with the region's three most populous nations emerging as a result of mass rapes in 1947 and 1971. In Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India, gender-based violence is common, and structural changes are necessary to protect women and alter societal and legal norms about gender and violence. In Bangladesh, there are 11.682 rape incidences for every 100,000 individuals or 9.82 rapes per 100,000 people. As of 2020, India had a rape rate of 1.80, with 22,172 incidences per 100,000 people. In 2018, the Pakistani NGO Sahil recorded 3,832 incidences of child abuse, an increase of 11% over 2017. (3,445 cases) (Shahid, R, Sarkar, K & Khan, A, 2021).

Sexual Abuse in Indian society

Indian society is a male dominant society from the very start because of this reason many social evils have existed in Indian society. Most of these social evils have vanished from Indian society, but some of them are still alive and most people still suffer from them (Panday & Yadav, 2022). One of the major social evils of our society is rape, which has been present in India since ancient times and is still prevalent in the modern era. Rape is the most public crime in India (Sakpal, 2020). Victims face great difficulty in getting married and facing their families because most people consider rape the fault of the victim. The perpetrator gets away with it because he is the man, the dominant figure of society. If he rapes a victim, the blame goes to her because she was wearing a short dress or her looks were seductive or she was walking in the dark or she was asking for it. Commonly, victims do not report the incidence because they fear experiencing the cruel effects of out-of-line action by the police and the general public (Malviya, 2020). We live in a society in which men get away with anything and blame it on the women in their society. In India, according to a statistical report of rapes, in every 16 minutes a woman, child, or teen gets raped. An average of 88% of rape cases get reported. Of these 30 thousand rape cases, 80% of rapes were committed by perpetrators known to the victims (Shaurya, 2020). Most of the victims were minors, aged 10 to under 18 years.

Another major type of rape is marital rape or marital abuse. Indian laws allow the marital rape of a girl between the ages of 15 and 18 by her husband. Marital rape is a sign of child marriage, which is a source of trauma for many girls (Yllo & Torres, 2016). Suicide rates in India are on the rise as a result of people losing trust in how the world works, and who to trust and who not to trust. The year 2012 brought India to global attention when a thirteen-year-old young woman was

assaulted on a school bus. (Lakshmi, 2012). Following the episode, the alleged India, which has been frequently highlighted as a disappointment for being unsafe for its women, is viewed as home to a patriarchal society where even in the 21st century, the honest character of women should be controlled by their significant other (Gowen, 2018). Hindu society and culture are especially affected by religion, and to the extent Hindu religious sacred writings are concerned, they show up very threatening towards women. A woman is typically not seen as an independent being; rather, she is seen as having the existence of her partner. In the end, a woman needs the social mask of marriage in order to be accepted by society (Derné, 1994).

Women in Hindu society, according to their religion, should be protected by male figures such as their father, brother, husband, or son. They are not considered independent figures but should be in the shadow of the male figure. Despite this, they are seen as burdens until they get married, despite their young age. The unpleasant weight that was placed on their shoulders by the patriarchal Indian culture has been removed (Komath, 2013). In India, being a dowager is seen as a curse, and dowagers are blamed for the loss of their husbands. In 31% of ashrams in India, women are coerced into prostitution and compelled to feed the ashram's elderly residents. This is how women are treated and perceived. Bapsi Sidhwa provides insight into the life of an Indian dowager (Nussbaum, 2012).

Representation of Sexual Abuse in Novel *Water* (2006)

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water* (2006) is centered on a representative view of females' status, especially the difficulties and exploitation of dowagers in the subcontinent in the 1930s. *Water*, a compelling and incredible tale about a young dowager in British India in the 1930s, Bapsi Sidhwa has already published a

number of stories set in the subcontinent, ranging from *The Crow Eaters* (1978), set in the mid-1900s during the Empire (British rule in India), to *Cracking India* (1988), which recounts the division of India and Pakistan in 1947. (Also known as "*The Ice Candy Man*"). She also cited examples of religious prejudice towards Muslims in the United States in her book, "*American Brat*." The movie *Water* takes place in India in the late 1930s, when Mohandas K. Gandhi, who would eventually become known as Mahatma Gandhi, was already concerned about India's freedom from the British. Meanwhile, he was also concerned about reforming India. The novel is adapted from the storyline for the film *Water*, which was composed and directed by Deepak Mehta, a Canadian-Indian film producer. *Earth*, based on Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, was organized by Mehta. Deepa asked Sidhwa to novelize the film in four months so that both the novel and the film could be released at the exact time. Sidhwa consented to the assignment so the novel and movie would be released around the same time.

Sidhwa's novel *Water* examines the aspects of men's dominance and women's exploitation. Men suppress women in several ways, and one of them is through sexuality. The position of dowagers is the saddest, despite the fact that all females remain subject to menfolk minus a little difference between married women as well as dowagers. Sidhwa illustrates the unpredictable social structure that allows a child dowager to be exploited. Sidhwa draws every one of her characters out finely, so each dowager has her very own honest story to tell. Chuyia is a child bride who has become a dowager as a result of an arranged marriage to a 40-year-old man she never met.

Madhumati is the head of the ashram. Life in this ashram was extremely difficult, prone to illness, and unhappy. The situation of the dowagers is depressing since they are the easy prey of priests and individuals from

the upper caste. Every dowager who lives at the ashram has a reason for being there. After her husband's passing, Madhumati experiences pain. She is carried twenty miles into the bush and abandoned after being raped by her brothers-in-law for a week. (Sidhwa, 2006, p.70). She is discovered by Gulabi "soaked in blood and laying in a ditch on the edge of the forest, half-dead from starvation" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.70).

Shakuntala is there to witness not just the passing of her devoted spouse but also the terrible consequence of her infertility. She experienced mistreatment from her in-laws following the death of her spouse. Her stay at her in-law's house for a year was a never-ending hell. Kalyani, who earns money for the ashram by working as a prostitute, While adjusting to her new life as a dowager, Kalyani is not at all like any other resident dowager; yet, in a white sari, she is treated better (new sari etc.), and she keeps her flowing hair. According to Madhumati, every money from Kalyani's labor, "goes to cover the rental fee" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.29).

Numerous events in the novel demonstrate how dowagerhood is nothing more than a curse in Hindu patriarchal society. Dowager's status is degraded to the point that they are no longer considered human beings but mere objects. Even their shadow is considered unlucky for the rest of society. The most pitiful aspect of this is that dowagers are treated horribly, denied their modest wishes, and even used as objects of sex. The aristocracy, according to Rabindra, "provides an unnatural care" for dowagers, which explains why it is so easy for them to coerce dowagers into prostitution because they are aware that the dowagers are helpless and have no other option but to act in this way to earn money for food (Sidhwa, 2006, p.73). Wealthy guys in society engage dowagers in sexual activity, yet only dowagers are held guilty since they are considered threats to society.

In a soliloquy, Bhagya claims that "A

female's gender identity and reproductive success, which [were] so precious to her partner during his existence, are changed at his death into a possible threat to the ethics of society." (Sidhwa, 2006, p.24). It is the cause of dowager's being hated by society. As "there is rape, spouse beating, child rape, and other basic methods of violence planned to preserve males' dominant position over females within the male-controlled system, which has emerged over most of documented past". Males take benefit of their vulnerable circumstances and use them to fulfil their need for sex. (Mercanti, 2011). Even if dowagers are consenting victims of men since they have no other way to support themselves, as Rabindra says, "dowagers, bulls, dangerous steps, and heavenly men," "the dowagers are still accountable for these immoral activities. Enlightenment is yours if you avoid these" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.107).

This remark implies that men are innocent and that these dowagers are carriers of filthy seeds. Men who realize that dowagers need cash to survive and who use their figures in exchange for some pennies fall victim to them and become imprisoned.

The novel follows the same domestic structure model, with a domineering husband. Somnath (Chuyia's father), convinced his other half Bhagya (Chuyia's mother) to allow their six-year-old child, to marry a forty-four-year-old Hira Lal. Somnath informed his partner as follows: "You are the wife and child of Brahmin priests; you must be familiar with our customs. Outside of marriage, the woman has no established presence in our culture." *The role of a woman in life is to marry and bear sons.*" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.8). He continues by stating that daughters are typically seen as "the burden of duty" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.15). On the one hand, as a daughter, a woman's position appears to be of no esteem; she is just a "burden." On the other hand, the clear status of a lady as a spouse appears to be respectable.

Still, Bhagya's reaction makes a completely distinctive perception of what it implies to be a spouse. She could be a loyal spouse who is bound by man-made custom and concedes, "It'll be as you say—you are her father" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 15). This attitude shows women's subordinate status in the Hindu patriarchal society. Somnath restrained his wife by referring to "the Brahmanical Convention (...), a lady is recognized as an individual as it were when she is one with her spouse." She can only become a *saubhgyavati* (lucky woman) and a *sumangali* (auspicious woman) after that" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 14). So, regardless of their status as wife, daughter, or mother, women who are positioned inside the domestic system are subordinated. "Once their daughter has been given as a gift to the bridegroom, "The guardians of a conventional Hindu bride have no rights over their girl." (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 28). Despite Bhagya's strong reservations, her husband Somnath decided to wed her six-year-old child to a forty-four-year old man, with no earlier discourse with her mom or the youngster, then six. After two years, Chuyia's better half dies, and she (excessively youthful, making it impossible to comprehend anything), without retaliating, Chuyia accepts the reality. "A Hindu woman's life changes dramatically after the passing of her husband. She was intended to be dressed in white. She is meant to be ugly to others by wearing this outfit" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.26).

Now stripped of everything and dressed in white and shaved, as per Hindu routine with regards to the period, she is banished to the nearby ashram, a basic two-story house within the poor range of the town in Rawalpur, along the Ganges. In a patriarchal kinship system, men are primarily designated as husbands, brothers, fathers, or sons who impose certain disciplinary standards on their family, which only consists of women, and are exempt from all other responsibilities the traditional practices that portray the

debated and disgraceful condition of dowagers in India in 1935 serve as an example of patriarchal power structures.

Chuyia's father took his daughter to a dowager's ashram. Chuyia begged her father, "Baba, do not take me off," "Somnath stood powerless, surrendered to his destiny and the destiny of his girl" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 50). Her head is shaved, and she is set to do lowliness for the awful fate of having her life accomplice pass on. At the dowager ashram, "Small Mouse" goes over a wide blend of characters in her related dowagers, a few enduring, a few fuming, all great human. After the death of Kalyani, Madhumati seeks a new dowager to serve as a call girl for her. Madhumati called for Chuyia, who was standing uncomfortably in the doorway.

Madhumati put on a hilariously animated air of youthful arrogance and started setting up her new plan to pay for the ashram and her addictions. She turned to Gulabi and said, "I always fulfil my promises." "Don't I?" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.179). Chuyia replied in a low voice, "I want to go home," desperately hoping that Madhumati would really send her home despite her doubts. "Madhumati said by making a false promise "Alright then, Gulabi will take you home" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.179) She sends Chuyia and Gulabi to a customer's outside of Rawalpindi Hajipur, Seth Bhupindernath's residence. Chuyia is drugged by the cruel customer and raped. Chuyia, the unfortunate girl, is assaulted that it takes her a few days to regain her whole sense of sight. Shakuntala finally sends her onboard Gandhi's followers' train to search for a new, liberated life for herself.

Kalyani is an important female character in both the book and the film. Those who pose as well-wishers in society use her for their own gain. They employ religion to serve their own goals. Kalyani is coerced into prostitution by Madhumati because of her poor financial circumstances. Kalyani's prostitution helps Madhumati maintain and

financially feed the ashram. Kalyani is a pretty young woman of nineteen years old. Kalyani is allowed to have locks since it would moderate her attractive appearance, which must be preserved for her sensual trade. The important point to remember is that she is a whore because of her situation, not because of her humanity. Because she follows the advice of the Hindu god Krishna to "*Learn to live lotus, undamaged by the dirty river it blooms in.*" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.131). The filthiness of her business has been unable to corrupt her soul. She is a real illustration of this proverb since she despises the abyss that fate has forced her to fall into. Madhumati sends Kalyani to her alleged customers, the Seths, across the river. Since it has taken a while for Kalyani to heal after the gang-rape for which Madhumati is responsible, she works and endures the brutality of men (Sidhwa, 2006, p.129).

She has undergone severe treatment in an effort to obtain money for her survival. In other words, she falls in love with Narayan, a young liberated Hindu who supports Gandhi's leadership and ideology. As soon as Narayan grants her the chance for a new beginning, she begins to get ready without thinking about the consequences. Because Kalyani provides financial support for Madhumati to run the ashram, when she learns that she plans to marry, she becomes concerned for the ashram's existence and yells, "*And how we endure here, no one can question. Not even God*" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.144). It demonstrates that the real issue is endurance, for which the dowagers are enduring life's difficulties. Madhumati imprisons Kalyani, cuts her hair, and torments her after finding out about her plans to get married. She travels to Narayan's town with Shakuntala's help in the faith of an unrestricted life filled with all pleasures, but when she realizes his dad's palace, she discovers that his dad has been one of her customers. Kalyani returns, broken as well as disillusioned, thinking how she could be "A

daughter-in-law who would bring shame and dishonor to Narayan's noble family's home with her every breath would be burdened upon them" (Sidhwa, 2006, p.176) and commits suicide by drowning in the Ganga Stream.

It is clear that Kalyani wants to put her dirty sexual life behind her, yet it is not that which physically abuses her, it is that which confronts her after she has shut it off. After the suicide of Kalyani, Madhumati seeks a young dowager to serve as a call girl for her.

Conclusion

The current study explores the unspoken sufferings experienced by Indian women in the novel *Water* (2006). The characters in the book have been analyzed in the context of Susan Brownmiller's literary theory, "Against our Will: Men, Women, and Rape" (1975), explores the darkest aspects of child marriage and early dowager hood for women. In the current research, qualitative methodology is used to collect the data. The content analysis method is used to analyse the study. Every reader is moved to tears by Chuyia, the sweet little girl. For everyone, childhood is a blessing. However, the child's parents turn it into a curse by setting up her marriage before she enters puberty.

The social practices of our culture and parents are to blame for sabotaging the happiness of the girl child. The poor girls lack the courage to disobey their parents. So they passively submit themselves to their fate without questioning it. As a result, people don't actively resist their fate but instead passively accept it. The male took advantage of the circumstance and abused the helpless child. A different character, Madhumati, forces the young dowager, Kalyani, to become a prostitute in order to support the ashram. The lives of the dowagers are much more pitiful because they are abandoned by society and left at the ashram. Due to their reputation for causing harm to anything they touch, they are not allowed to participate in

any community events. They are prohibited from going to weddings and from passing by stores since it is thought that they will ruin their wealth and well-being. They are viewed as bad luck and destined to lead a miserable, miserable existence in isolation. As has already been mentioned, married women do not necessarily lead amazing lives; rather, they also experience significant suffering. For example, Narayan's mother is fully aware of her husband's extramarital affairs, but she is left with no choice but to bear them.

Some dowagers sing and dance for charity, while others are required to work as call girls, as Kalyani is forced to do by Madhumati since it helps her money-wise. The wealthy guys physically exploit the dowagers. This is not the end of it. Their entire lives are shaped as a result of this exploitation. Madhumati, who was previously kind and compassionate, has been changed into a cold-blooded, heartless lady who has no regrets. She has also shown unpredictable behavior, showing sudden outbursts of anger and emotion. All of these issues derive from her traumatic history, in which she was severely raped by her in-laws and operated as a prostitute in an ashram. In

exchange, she powers Kalyani to do what she has been constrained to do.

Despite her unhappy prostitution activities, Kalyani has a pure heart. When Narayan enters her life, he gives her hope for a brand-new, independent identity. She escapes the ashram after suffering Madhumati's torture and follows Narayan to his house. Since it is discovered that one of her clients is Narayan's dad, her sexual history stands in the way of her happiness. Kalyani's sexual history is clearly what has formed and defined her life, and she is powerless to avoid the consequences of that sexuality. Chuyia has struggled to survive without Shakuntala after being severely drugged and abused, but she eventually gets to escape the miserable dowager after Shakuntala offers her frail body to Narayan in order to give her a fresh life.

Henceforth, this study draws the conclusion that the novel accurately captures the status of women in the subcontinent during the 1930s, especially dowagers. Men hold absolute authority in society, which is fundamentally patriarchal, and women are constrained to lead submissive lives. To survive, women are coerced into prostitution.

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