

Female Oppression and Marginalization in *Ice Candy Man* by Sidhwa and *The Holy Woman* by Shahraz

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Abstract

How women are marginalized during the partition and after the partition is the major theoretical concern of this research. The present research reveals how Sidhwa and Shahraz address the gender oppression in *Ice Candy Man* and *The Holy Woman* respectively. Different researchers also argue that both writers describe the subjection of women to rape, conversion, forced marriages and various sexual abuses during partition and in the days of peace. The social structure of our society regards women as the honor of family. In case of marginalization she suffers the sexual violence; she gets profaned, resulting in the honor killing of the family. Sidhwa and Shahraz represent this oppression, marginalization, and violence as the shameful event. Shahraz and Sidhwa's writings show how the gender oppression work through their bodies. The selected novels of both writers show how the women are oppressed, marginalized, controlled, and exploited by the men under the shade of cultural, social, and religious traditions. This research will expose both the violent and subtle ways in which patriarchy repress the female to control in Pakistani society. The main focus of this research is to show how the works of these two female writers are critically examined to understand their role in exploring the issues of women that they face in this patriarchal society through the literary medium.

Keywords: women, oppression, marginalization, patriarchy, religious, social, traditions.

1. Introduction

This research focuses on how the women in society are oppressed and marginalized by the men as it is viewed by Sidhwa and Shahraz in their novels. This research shall also focus on certain elements of patriarchy and gender bias which cause this marginalization. Simone De Beauvoir uses the term marginalization for women, because she believes that women are always oppressed and marginalized in the society: "woman has ovaries, a uterus: these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature whereas he regards the body of woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it." [1].

However, marginalization means to put or keep someone in a powerless or unimportant position within a society or group. (Definition from free Merriam Webster...)

Women are marginalized in almost all parts of the globe. However, in the independent Pakistan in spite of the constitutional guarantees of equality between sexes, the ground realities tell a different story. Though, education, industrialization, modernization, and globalization all have made certain impact on the situation and status of women, however the distribution of such change remains uneven resulting in widening inequalities between men and women. Therefore, while defining the 'marginalized women' various factors need to be considered including the opportunities, resources, finances, employment, and material status etc. Generally, the women need to find the space for contest and are forced to use the site of marginality to resist and create a new world.

2. Research Methodology

The qualitative mode of research is used to analyze the selected novels, *Ice Candy Man* and *The Holy Women*. Feminism theory is used to challenge the male control over the women. The researcher has followed a descriptive approach and critical study of both novels has been written with a strong feminist perspective.

3. Significance of Research

In this research, the researcher has tried to view how the woman is a signifier of society Honor and how their men folk oppressed and marginalized them for their personal benefits in the light of feminism. This research will explore the women's complex roles in this uneven society, which are viewed in these particular novels. The main aim of this research is to highlight the gender position in a patriarchal society prior to takeover and take after of Pakistan. The critical study of both novels views how the female are oppressed and marginalized socially,

religiously and culturally. In this so called society women are easily trapped by the male who enforces female subordination.

The analysis of both novels reveals a male obsession and attraction with female body. Sidhwa takes a bold step because she deals with the issues of female sexuality being a non-Muslim, while Shahraz with a feministic view carefully deals with the very sensitive issue relating to Pakistani women within the framework of Muslim society. So, Pakistani writers continue their struggles to view the double standards that women are forced to live under.

4. Literature Review

In this research the researcher will critically review the works of prominent writers on feminism, culture, and discrimination against women. Shahraz and Sidhwa has gained fame throughout the world due to their extremely captivating and most imperative work, *The Holy Woman* and *Ice-Candy-Man*, not only contribute to the progress of change that has already started all over the world, involving review of women's rights and status and a radical reform of social thought but also appreciated due to enlightening the critical issues related to women place in social setup of sub-continent.

Sidhwa and Shahraz have not concentrated on just one factor of women's lives; rather they have taken women from every section of society and have shown particular sufferings and problems. At times, upper-class women are the role models and yet other times they may suffer from many social and psychological issues. Nonetheless, rich or otherwise, most still suffer from many social taboos and political problems. In order to highlight the sufferings and the struggles of women, these writers make their female characters undergo a difficult set of circumstances to train them in the art of life. These circumstances make these women better in understanding their responsibilities to society and also importantly their responsibility to themselves. They learn the art of living and hence liberate themselves from the unnecessary restrictions posed on them by traditional social systems. Feminist voices were first raised in Western fiction, which later on paved the way for emancipation and empowerment of women in general. The Pakistani fiction writers have also set a base and pace for feminism in this region of the world and hopefully it will succeed [2].

The Cultural Articulation of patriarchy:

“The selective implementation of Islam has been responsible for the entertainment of an all pervasive patriarchal system of inequality and subjugation.” [3].

Sidhwa nurtures her voice against ancient Hindus laws such as child marriage, the class system, force marriages, and religious calamities. All these things only apply on women and men are allowed to re-marry, keep mistresses, or visit prostitute. Sidhwa stresses on changing attitude of men after independence. She has not attaches any particular nationality with her. She hated the changed attitude of men and the age-old rigid conviction that existed in religion in our society but it does not mean she is anti-religious. She interprets the both male and female characters in society as natural as they are found in the Indo-Pak. She views that male have domination over female due to their unawareness and suppression [4].

Sidhwa desires a world free from domination and order, a world that based on the principles of justice and impartiality. Sidhwa in her novel presents a series of female characters who suffered during the period of partition of 1947. Emotional disorder, individual dimness, brutalities of communal unrests and violence inflicted on women has been devotedly projected by Sidhwa. The whole story has been recounted by Lenny who narrates the fears of violence and her personal reflection and reactions. She not only observes but examines man's lascivious and humiliating attentions towards women, greediness of male sexual needs, women as they are abridged to the status of sexual matters and relates the strange disadvantages, societal and malevolent, to which they are exposed. *Ice-Candy Man* is an epic of female suppression and marginalization [5].

Asim Siddique not only evaluates the work of Shahraz but also highlights many Pakistani critics such as Sana Imtiaz and Shirin Zubair how bring postcolonial theory to her work. A German critic Karin Vogt reads *The Holy Woman* from the female perspective. Masood ul Hasan, an Indian critic considers the evaluation of Western view on Muslim issues remains an important concern of Shahraz. Mohammad Ezroua, a Moroccan critic analysis the response of Moroccan students to the conflict between tradition and modernity in the work of this British- Pakistani writer. In fact Shahraz work is still evolving. In this interview she talks about different aspects of her novel *The Holy Woman*. She also describes her love for the character Zarri Bano. She tries to view to present a strong woman and it is her greatest desire to raise awareness about Islam without negotiating on her art. Shahraz does not feel shy while speaking on touchy issues like the muddle of tribal and the Islamic in popular imagination. She talks about her work she provides a rare peep into her private world of writing. All through this interview her sincerity and curiosity shines forth [6].

5. Oppression and Marginalization in Both Novels

This research on Sidhwa's novel *Ice Candy Man* and Shahraz's novel *The Holy Woman* views how female are governed, oppressed, and marginalized by the patriarchal society and how their lives are determined by the

patriarchal structure. This research will focus on the character of Lenny and her Hindu Ayah, who was the care taker of Lenny. Through Lenny Sidhwa observes how the Ayah was victimized by those people who were friends before partition and then she reveals how the harsh realities have to face being a woman in a patriarchal society. On the other hand, Shahraz tries to view how women are oppressed and marginalized by their men folk who follow the traditions of their clan. She also tries to show how these women spend their lives under these tribal customs and how the men victimized their women for their own worldly benefits.

Qaisra Shahraz views in her novel '*The Holy Woman*' how the women's life is restricted, oppressed and marginalized under the patriarchal norms. This novel views, how the female body and sexuality is centered under the feudal and social structures of society. Shahraz also highlights how the women are helpless and they are easily trapped and forced to accept the subordination of male members.

Like Sidhwa's female characters, Shahraz female characters find their bodies as a mean of oppression, exploitation, and marginalization. Under all these things they find their identities lost.

In studies view, *Ice Candy Man* allows the female to realize the oppression that works through their bodies and they physically and mentally challenge this oppression. Here Sidhwa views through the character of Ayah, how she bears the oppression of male members that becomes the victory for Ice Candy Man and shame for Hindus. Ayah physically escape from Ice Candy Man and Lenny's escape from her cousin's sexual molestation show the refusal of the female that they are not only sexual objects. The character of Lenny, Ayah, Godmother, Lenny's mother and many other characters of female described their own tales. Lenny's disability, Muchoo's behavior with her daughter and forced marriage, Ayah's sexual victimization and Lenny's mother sufferings in the face of her husband's disloyalty shows both the violent and subtle oppressions women suffer in a male dominated society.

Shahraz views the female oppression, in the case of Zarri Bano as she is enforced by her father to become the 'Shahzadi Ibadat' consequently. Zarri Bano's modern and educated life is replaced by feudal customs and religious devotion. Shahraz also views that the women remain bound in the male-constructed boundaries and male have the deciding power.

In the start of the novel Sidhwa demonstrates, Ayah was the most desired but later she victimized under the guise of partition riots. Ice Candy Man's love with Ayah and later turns into a maddening obsession reveals the male control over the female body. Anaya The female body and sexual violation in these words:

"As in other moments of collective violence, it was the systematic rape of women that trauma and body obviously linked. Women were raped and mutilated during the mayhem of the partition because their female bodies provided a space over which the competitive games of men were played out" [7].

As we know that Lenny is a polio-stricken baby of eight years and Ayah brings relief to her from the pain after taking her at the different places of Lahore city. When Lenny and Ayah go outside, Lenny observes the meeting of Ayah with different people such as Ice Candy Man, Zoo keeper, Sharbat Khan, Masseur and the cook etc. Sidhwa represents Ayah as a jolly woman who roams freely on the roads of Lahore. She wears tight fitting sari that appeal to her admirers. So, Ayah's body becomes a source of more attention throughout the novel as Lenny observes it:

"Ayah is chocolate- brown and short. Everything about her is eighteen years old and round and plump. Even her face. Full-blown cheeks, pouting mouth and smooth forehead curve to form a circle with her head. And, as if her looks were not stunning enough, she has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under her cheap colorful saris and the half- spheres beneath her short sari-blouses". (*Ice Candy Man*, P.3)

Ayah's body draws the attention of people and Lenny is impressed by her interaction with the men. As the partition came nearer and the communal riots start, the Hindus and Sikhs became the enemy of Muslims. They began to slaughter the Muslims, particularly women. The women were consciously raped. They cut their breasts and vaginas and parceled to each other to declare the victory of one community and shame for the other. Kabir [7] describes the female body and sexual violation in these words:

"As in other moments of collective, it was the systematic rape of women that trauma and body obviously linked. Women were raped and mutilated during the mayhem of the partition because their female bodies provide a space over which the competitive games of men were played out."

Shahraz's whole novel revolves around the protagonist Zarri Bano. She is even an active member of women's organization at her university but in her own case she remains helpless and accepts the cruel decision of her father and grand-father. Her father is a feudal landlord and has an authoritative personality. After the death of his only son, he decides to make his beloved daughter the '*Holy Woman*'. It is an old tradition which is still practiced among the feudal in the Sindh province. The main purpose of this tradition is to prevent family property going out of family through the daughters

How the feudal lords have established their power through the possession of hundreds of acres of land. They have full control over their women from birth to death. So, women are always bartered through marriage and the feudal lords gain their materialistic gains. The title of the novel also shows how the woman is made the '*princess of worship*' or the '*Holy Woman*'. The marriage with '*Holy Quran*' is mostly practiced in Sindh but

this custom has no value in Islam. Even Zarri Bano is an educated woman, but there is no difference between her life and many other illiterate women who spend their lives under the control of their male members. Mumtaz and Shaheed shed light on the life of women of elite families: “Weather a Pakistani woman belongs to the elite or the toiling masses, weather she lives in the remote village of the tribal areas cut from change, or in the dynamic environment of Karachi, her life is governed by the same rules of patriarchy which cut across class and regional differences to create some measure of uniformity and similarity” [8].

In both novels, women become the signifiers for the honor of their families. During partition there were many cases in which women were not ready to commit suicide but they were emotionally appealed by their family members to commit suicide. Thus, in this disturbing partition women’s bodies were freely oppressed and marginalized by the opposing men on both sides and in this way they calm down their anger and frustration. At this stage, we can say that Sidhwa views during partition religious conflict fought in the battlefield on women’s bodies. Menon and Bhasin describes that this victimization and oppression of women become a national concern: “Women’s sexuality as it had been violated by abduction transgressed by forced conversion at marriage and exploited by impermissible cohabitation...How to dispose of the troublesome question of women’s sexuality” [9].

When Lenny observes the body of Ayah, Lenny herself became more aware of her own body. Now, Lenny does not accept her body as ‘disabled’. Even her body is polio stricken but Lenny confesses that it has many benefits: “Having polio in infancy is like born under a lucky star. It has many advantages”. (Ice Candy Man, P.10) Lenny says, because she is disabled so, she attains more affection, attention and love from mother, Godmother and Ayah. Lenny says: “Mother massages my leg. Lie diagonally on the bed, my small raised foot between her breasts. She leans forward and pushes back the ball of my foot. She applies all her fragile strength to stretch the stubborn tendon”. (Ice Candy Man, P.40. Lenny says even people sympathies with me but I suffer pain. Lenny also compares her body with her brother and says: “I am skinny, wizened, sallow, wiggly-haired, and ugly. He is the most beautiful thing, animal, person, building, river or mountain that I have seen. He is formed of gold mercury”. (Ice Candy Man, P.22)

Lenny’s attitude towards her body is in the result of the people’s remarks which she hears around her. For example when Lenny is taking tea with Godmother, she recalls: “Drinking tea, I am told, makes one darker. I’m dark enough. Everyone says, “It’s a pity Adi’s fair and Lenny so dark. He’s a boy. Anyone will marry him”.(Ice Candy Man, P.78)

These comments show her hopelessness of gender marginalization through her body and color. She comes to know that a girl should have fair complex than the boy. So, even she is enjoying a social attention due to her disability but the society does not spare her by the gender marginalization. In the early stage of the novel we come to know that her doctor also advised her mother that they should not take any tension about the schooling of Lenny, because this will affect the nerve system of Lenny and he said: “She’s doing fine without school, isn’t she? Says the doctor, ‘Don’t pressure her...her nerves could be affected. She doesn’t need to become a professor.’ He turns to me. ‘Do you want to become a professor?’ I shake my head in a firm negative. ‘She’ll marry—have children—lead a carefree, happy life. No need to strain her with studies and exams, he advises: thereby sealing my fate.” (Ice Candy Man, P.15). Lenny says that her doctor confines her fate to the four walls of the house. He had marginalized her fate and life in the men made society. In other words, her educational development is easily dismissed by her biological duties. Sidhwa however tries to view the rigid attitude of man against the woman’s education. She further gives example of this social oppression and discrimination through the character of Papoo. Papoo is a sweeper’s daughter and she spends her days in doing the hard domestics tasks. She is always abused by her mother: “Muccho manages to pound her daughter with her fists and with swift, vicious kicks. Her hands protecting her head Papoo rolls in a ragged ball in the dust, screaming, ‘Hai, I’m dead”.(Ice Candy Man, P.44) Papoo always bears the anger and frustration of her mother. She is unconscious female figure. Sidhwa portray Muccho as an unjust mother who shows neither love nor tolerance for her daughter:

“Bitch! Haramzadi! May you die! And Muccho’s grasping hand reaches for the root of her daughter’s braid. The gaunt, bitter fingers close on the hair, yanking cruelly, and Papoo bows back and staggers backwards at an improbable angle. She falls is sitting on her small buttocks, her legs straight out; still holding the jolted and blinking infant on her hip and the broom in her hand”.(Ice Candy Man, P.44)

If we deeply observe the character of Papoo’s mother, we come to know that Muccho is submissive to her husband. She knows very well that woman in our society is always marginalized by the man and in this way she wants to mold her daughter in a similar way. Lenny very well knows that one day Muccho would kill her daughter, she says: “I hate Muccho. I cannot understand her cruelty to her own daughter. I know that someday she will kill her. Form the improbable angle of Papoo’s twisted limbs, I’m sure she has already done so”. (Ice Candy Man, P.45)

Here Lenny symbolically wants to tell us that this physical twisting of Papoo’s limbs shows the emotional and psychological suppression of man in this so called society. Sometimes Pappoo tries to escape

unconsciously while beating from her mother Lenny observes this and describes: “Skipping nimbly from her mother’s lungs, Papoo jerks her boyish hips and makes dark, grinning faces and rude and mocking sounds and gestures. All at once she pretends to go limp and, again rolling her eyes up to show their whites, crumples defenseless to the ground; and then spinning like a bundle of rags in a gale, flinging, jeering. Now tantalizingly close, now just out of reach”. (Ice Candy Man, P.45)

In this way, Sidhwa views that Papoo’s body becomes an outlet of oppression and frustration of her mother and in this way her mother let down her catharsis. Lenny’s mother also blames to herself for Lenny’s disability and her mother also works to put her limbs straight. So, Papoo is a strong and it is not easy for Muccho to break her body, Lenny’s body also goes through different kinds of operation and a lot of exercises to bring back it into the right shape. At the end, we can say that the bodies of Lenny and Papoo are the sites of struggle and in this way they mold their bodies into feminine mold. Papoo’s mother tries to break the wilderness spirit of Papoo and she marries her with middle aged dwarf. Lenny views that Papoo was so small when her marriage took place. She sits calmly during her marriage ceremony: “Papoo sits up, shoving her ghoongat back drowsily, and looks at me with a strange cock-eyed grin, as if she is drunk”.(Ice Candy Man, P.182) Muccho binds her daughter’s life in the supervision of man. She has to perform her gender role as mother. Thus Sidhwa tries to show how women are marginalized and it is expected from them to do their domestic chores and obey their male members. Lenny’s mother also occupies a very submissive role. Lenny says:

“I hear the metallic peal of Father’s cycle bell and rush out to welcome him. Mother rushes out of another door. It is almost three in the afternoon: Father is late for lunch. Together we slobber all over him as Father, with a phoney frown and a tight little twist of a smile beneath his moustache, places the cycle on its stand and removes the ledgers clamped to the carrier. Mother removes his sola-topi and slips off the handkerchief tied round his forehead to keep the sweat from his eyes. She brushes his wet curls back”. (Ice Candy Man, P.75). Lenny views that my mother always tries to please her husband because she thinks it is her duty as an obedient wife. Lenny also learns all these tricks from her mother, how to please her father and says:

“And when Mother pauses, on cue, I repeat any remarks I’m supposed to have made: and ham up the performance with further innocently insightful observations. Father rewards me with solemn nods, champing smiles and monosyllables”. (Ice Candy Man, P. 76). Thus Lenny as a girl quickly learns that her father holds a strong position in the house whereas my mother is bound to work according to the needs of her husband. Shahraz’s Zarri Bano spends her life as a ‘*Holy Woman*’ to save the property of her family and in this way she has been marginalized by her family members. Zarri Bano’s mother is also oppressed and marginalized like Lenny’s mother by the family members. When she protests against the decision of her husband, then her husband asks her: “Do you think that you, a female, can prevent it? The scales are weighed against you, woman”. (The Holy Woman, P.67). She remains helpless and expresses: “I am a mother, but a traitor”.(The Holy Woman, P.70) We also notice, that her marriage life throughout the novel remains under fears and anxieties. Shahzada always feared that her husband does not like her and he can bring the new wife. She expresses her fear to her daughter in these words:

“I lived with a fear in the early years of my married life. As you know, your father was a very good-looking man and very aware of it compared to him, I was quite plain. His good looks terrified me at times, I was jealous of any woman he came across, especially if they happened to be better-looking than me. I was always afraid that he might fall in love and bring home a second wife”. (The Holy Woman, P.444)

So, as a wife she holds an unstable position. Her husband oppressed her and asks her that he will divorce you if you advocate her daughter. Zarri Bano’s mother is totally depending on her husband and her husband’s status and prestige bind her to follow him. She says:

“I am just a puppet, a mere worthless woman to do your bidding. You and your father are the puppeteers, Habib. You hold my daughter’s fate in your hands. What choice do I have? I can only swing and dangle along in whichever direction you pull and man oeuvre my strings. What can I do to save my daughter from the fate you have destined for her? People say it is their kismet, but it is bullies like you who carve other people’s kismet for them and dictate their destiny- as you told me so gloating the other day. I am shackled to the chains of your male domination, your ressmeh, and your traditions”. (The Holy Woman, P.71)

Shahzada’s obedient behavior strengthens the patriarchal structures that oppressed and marginalized them according to their own benefits. The above remarks of Shahzada also show her marginalized position in the deciding matters of the family. Even all women such as Zarri Bano’s mother, sister, cousin Gulshan, Nighat, Fatima etc collectively discuss the matter of Zarri Bano’s but fail to provide any real help to her. Only her mother shows little resistance but it is quickly snubbed by her husband:

“Silence! You stupid, stupid woman.’ Sitting up, he glared at her, his hand trembling on the quilt.’ You do not know what you are saying.’ He desperately tried to control his anger and the rapid beat of his heart.” (The Holy Woman, P.161)

Her husband did not allow her to speak. Women endure the power of man in this so called patriarchal society. She is very disturbed by her husband’s comments and she turns to Allah and prays for her daughter: “When she

awoke early in the morning to the sound of the muezzin's call to prayer from the nearby mosque, Shahzada wept again.....noted the length of time she had spent in saying her personal prayers- her dua-to-Allah". (The Holy Woman, P.70)

Mumtaz and Shaheed said: "When women do not have access to either knowledge or power they can only turn to the supernatural for help. Women are therefore to be found at the nearest mazar or with a pir in the hope of a son, for the fidelity of a husband, or for the physical well-being of all. Women have nowhere else to turn, and there is no point in turning to each other as each is as helpless as the next" [10].

Shahzada, the mother of Zarri Bano is helpless, even she wants to save her daughter being a Shahzadi Ibadat, but she could not fight against the pressure of her male members of the family because they have not given the liberty to women to participate in making the decision for the betterment of the family affairs. She says: "As a woman, she was of no consequence- her opinion counted for nothing. A law unto themselves, men's words was commands, and they were born to be obeyed. They possessed a successful knack of reasoning, and making everything sound so plausible. In the face of their thinly disguised tyranny one could hope to win or to challenge them. They were always steps ahead of you and very adept at that." (The Holy Woman, P.74)

Even Shahzada holds the position Chaudhrani in the village, but practically she has no authority. She laments and says to Fatima: "I tell you that I am powerless to prevent the tide of events which will likely take place in the next few days." (The Holy Woman, P.75). Here, she wants to show that even I am Chaudharani but I am helpless and even I have wealth and high living standards but I have not decision-making power because my words have no value. The above remarks also show how the women marginalized by the man in the social society.

Through all the female characters Shahraz tries to show how women in the novel remain silent because they know that their 'voice' has no effect on the male. It means they accept the subordination of male members. Habib is not only stand in his decision, his whole clan supports him. Zarri Bano alone faces the biggest challenge of life. She cannot blame her mother and sister because she knows that female voice dies out against the male voice. Zarri Bano says to her sister Ruby and mother:

"They mould our lives and destinies according to their whims and desires. The irony of all ironies, for which I can never forgive myself, is that it has happened to me- a feminist, a defender of women's rights. I have been living in a glass house of make-believe, Mother. Your Sleeping Beauty has been rudely awakened to taste the true world of patriarchal tyranny. Don't look so sad, I absolve you of any guilt. I know you can't help me. I do not hold you responsible for anything." (The Holy Woman, P.87, 88)

These remarks of Zarri Bano's show the oppressed condition of women. The male members of the clan easily crushed the voice of women and all these close relations remain weak and fearful and fail to play a strong role in resisting and challenging the male authority. Deborah Cameron describes how social taboos prevent women from speaking: "Even where it seems that women could speak if they chose, the conditions imposed on their lives by society may make this a difficult or dangerous choice. Silence can also mean censoring yourself for fear of being ridiculed, attacked or ignored." [10].

Shahraz all characters are sharing the same fate with the sense of suppression and marginalization. Zarri Bano becomes a dutiful and desirable daughter. Even her teacher Professor Nighat, the head of feminist organization comes to meet Zarri Bano, and condemns her to become a Holy Woman. She realizes Zarri Bano that even you also remains an active member of this organization and fought for the rights of oppressed females, then how can you accept this role. Zarri Bano tries to satisfy Professor in these words:

"It is very personal and painful. All I can say is that women in our society also become prisoners of female modesty. If a father refuses to grant permission for his daughter to marry, how can she actively pursue marriage? She'll be labeled besharm, a wanton". (The Holy Woman, P.173)

This shows the acceptance of male patriarchal values. She comes to know that family property have more value and her future can be easily bartered. Now, Zarri Bano is married to acres of land and she says to sister Nighat, I become the heiress: "The land is now like a millstone, a hated talisman around my neck. I have gazed at the acres of our land so many times over this past week, unable to take in the fact that my freedom, identity, and womanhood have been bartered for acres of soil." (The Holy Woman, P.172)

In *Ice Candy Man* Sidhwa views as Lenny grows, she recognizes the biological exploitation of women. When Lenny grows she feels changes in her body then confidence also rise in her. She starts to look the world with 'female eyes'. All these quotations show how women are biologically oppressed and marginalized by men. She notices that after taking away Ayah from her house a new Ayah named Hamida comes to work at her home. Lenny discovers that even Hamida has four children but she is refused by her husband. Hamida herself tells Lenny that now she is a '*fallen woman*' because other men have touched her. So, this incident shows how the patriarchal men oppressed and marginalized their women[11].

Sidhwa in the novel tries to view how the women suffered at different levels. During partition the incidents of beating, raping, and victimization have bad effects on the minds of women. Not only were their houses broken during the partition but also their bodies. Sidhwa views how the large scale of sexual victimization of women under the guise of partition actually shows the patriarchal exploitation of female. At the

end we can say that the suppression and marginalization of female body show the men control and domination in the time of peace and war [12].

Like Sidhwa's female characters, Shahraz female characters find their bodies as a mean of oppression, exploitation, and marginalization. Under all these circumstances they find their identities lost. Habib Khan deals Zarri Bano as an object or commodity. He well knows, Zarri Bano's marriage with Skindar means the transfer of land to a strange person. Zarri Bano realizes that even her father has liberal thoughts and allow her to gain university education but when the question come of his ego and tribal customs, he does not hesitate to sacrifice his beloved daughter. Zarri Bano says: "My father made me believe that he would "sell world for me" when in fact he eventually decided to 'sell' me to his male whim and ancient traditions". (The Holy Woman, P.87)

Emotionally, Zarri Bano kills herself and gives birth to a '*Holy Woman*'. She actually goes under a physical transformation. In the novel, we also notice that Zarri Bano is marginalized by wearing a burka. It means, now she cannot marry and have children. She cannot participate in the social activities. Burka means to cut herself from society. Awan & Khalida tries to view that burka defines the boundaries of women's life and it confines the women to remain in the four walls of the house. Oppression and segregation is strictly practiced in different parts of Pakistan such as NWFP, tribal Baluchistan and feudal system of Sindh. In these areas women cannot move outside the house without burka. Women in Pakistan are recognized by the name of her father, husband, or brother. She herself has no identity. She is thus conditioned to see herself as inferior to men and dependent on them with her primary role that of reproduction [13]. The women writers of 20th century freed themselves mentally and physically from the snare of male figures in the shape of fathers, husbands, writers, and professional opponents. They challenged their rivals as an obstacle in seeking identity [14].

6. Conclusion

Sidhwa and Shahraz dealt with the issues that are realistic and found closely in both Muslim and Indian society. They have viewed the image of society with great balance. Both writers have a constructive approach towards women's predicament. Shahraz has successfully balanced and viewed the modern day problems with the Islamic perspective. She viewed throughout the novel the oppression and segregation but on the other hand she also tries to view the true Islamic norms after transforming Zarri Bano in the grab of holy woman. The whole atmosphere of Sidhwa's novel is soaked in blood and wrapped in the burning smoke of India. However, we can say that the both writers raised their voices against the social inequalities, gender differences and biased laws that constantly practiced against women.

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