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PATHETIC CONDITIONS OF WOMENS IN BAPSI SIDHWA *THE PAKISTANI BRIDE*

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ABSTRACT

In a patriarchal traditional society woman is considered as a commodity product, a lifelong slave to a family and society. Women is the symbol of love and affection. Women was oppressed in every sphere of her life through her husband, kids and kins. Marriage was not exchange of soul and heart, it was been a mode of transaction where master-slave relation is followed in martial life. Domestic violence is subjugated to all the women in every class division ranges from slapping, kicking, murder, molestation. It seems to be high in patriarchal set up culture. Social codes in patriarchal set up culture creates hurdles in women life and there is no upliftment for women. In this novel Sidhwa projected how the society has been exploiting women for decade in the name of culture and religion.

Key Words: Bapsi Sidhwa, Marriage-slave, oppression of women, patriarchal society

Bapsi Sidhwa, Pakistani writer is an author of four international novels; *The Crow Eater*(1978),*The Pakistani Bride*(1982),*Ice candy Man* (1989), *An American Brat* (1993).All her novels contains variety of themes like partition, feminism, culture identiy, parsi community etc. Sidhwa's concern with woman make her to portray the womanhood in Islamic background region of Pakistan. In this novel *The Pakistani Bride* Sidhwa projected the silenced pains and desolations which torture women in Pakistan. Sidhwa mirrors the horrifying barbaric side of the tribal patriarchal Islamic culure of kohistan, village in the west side of Pakistan.

The Pakistani Bride is a finest and heart melting novel of Sidhwa. It describes the traumatic experience of a girl named Zaitoon, who has been brought up in Lahore city married to a village man in Kohistan. Due to the riots of partition, Zaitoon parents were murdered by the mob and she was adopted by Qasim who brings up her as his own daughter. Qasim moved to Lahore city with young Zaitoon and faced many difficulties to settle there. He used Zaitoon as a tool to get back to his tribal people by selling her for rupees Five hundred and few goats in the marriage contract. .Zaitoon life was trapped like a parrot in the name of marriage. Women's are transported from one place to another.Marriage is not sacred one, it is not based on love and emotion.It's like a trade from father to husband. They have to follow the rules of her Father and Husband, like a dog which have to obey their master. Marriage is a transaction of body, not soul and heart.

The stories of Zaitoon, Carol and Hamida shows how they are trapped in the patriarchal set up society in the name of marriage. Zaitoon was beaten severely on the second day of marriage by her husband Sakhi because she and her father Qasim was landed to the Kohistan village with the help Ashiq the Jawan of the camp. Sakhi who was observing through woods questioned and beat zaitoon brutally. Zaitoon who was grown up listening to the wonderful, fanciful and romantic stories which Qasim told her about his people in the mountains, begins to dream about these mountain people and longs to be with them. To her, the marriage offers her a chance to be united with people who believes her own. After observing the lifestyle of tribal people she soon gets disillusioned and all her expectation and romantic beliefs are shattered. Compassion, kindness, love and warmths, these emotions are virtually unknown to him. His brutality and wickedness is shown on the limelight by the treatment he done to his ox.

Applying leverage with the plough, he set the ox to pull. It strained with all its might, Skidding in the effort, but the rock did not shift. Sakhi pushed and prodded the ox Cruelly with his staff. The exhausted beast tried again and again. Then it skidded to its stomach and refuse to budge. (171-172)

Zaitoon also subjected to similar cruel treatment in the hands of her husband. The master slave relation has been followed in Husband- Wife relation. The animalistic behaviour is seen in the Sakhi words 'You are my woman! I'll teach you to obey me ! Zaitoon stumbled and sprawled face down".(172-173). Zaitoon forsee her trapped marriage to a loveless, brutality husband makes her life into a desert

On the other hand Carol who is not a central character of the novel, not been able to cope well with the repressed sexuality of Pakistani society because of her westernized culture. Farukh is always jealous of the attention his American wife getting in his educated and liberal circle. Farukh's jealousy widens the gap between him and his wife Carol. The gap makes Carol to develop illicit relationship with Major Shaihb of the Kohistan village camp. The Major who fully knows about the punishment for the flirtation of married women to the Man. Instead of disapprove the relation he used Carol for his sexual appetite

The women were oppressed by both mentally and physically in the patriarchal society. In the patriarchal world womens like Zaitoon, carol and Hamida were worstly treated by their own men .Hamida and her relation with her Sakhi mirrors the condition of women in the hills .She is above forty, had no respect from her son and husband. After the escape of Zaitoon both father and son stop talking to her because of her sympathize with Zaitoon. Sakhi beats his mother when she tries to stop him for beating up continuously the sacred animal Ox. Hamida was beaten up by his own blood. Sakhi not only beat his own mother.He repeatedly beat Zaitoon for silly reasons. After the departure of her father Qasim, Zaitoon start crying for a week due to fear and insecurity. In the mean time Yunis khan mocked Sakhi for his inability to control Zaitoon. Furious Sakhi who was in mental savage condition repeatedly beats zaitoon in her tiny creatures makes her to death condition. Hamida clearly pinpoint Sakhi that he must have given time for Zaitoon to understand the life in the tribal village because she fully grown up in Lahore city. For this Misri Khan, husband of Hamida completely ignores her opinion and ask her to do the chore work alone. There is no place for women's idea to be registered in the Kohistani culture and male dominated society.

Education was completely denied to the girls in partriarchal set up world of Pakistan. Sidhwa clearly depicted how girls education was stopped after she becomes a women .Education always uplift women in the society, through Women her children and family uplifted in the society. But the society was concerned with Man's education only. Divison of barrier happened in education system also. In this novel Zaitoon education was disapproved by Qasim friend Nikka's wife Miriam. She says; Now she learned to read the Holy Quran, what she do with more reading and writing boil and drink it? (p.52). It is nothing to blame on Miriam, womens are used as clay in the conservative society where they think Marriage and bearing child is the duty of women, nothing beyond it .Sidhwa keenly depicted the deniyal education to women in the rigid society. It is also the act of oppression and the pathetic ones is women itlself against to her own gender. It reflect the illiteracy and the social codes of society makes blind of women's eyes.

Bapsi Sidhwa encapsulates the cultural system of patriarchal society. The rules of culture have been spinned according to benefits of Men, there is no space for women. In a single aspect of culture it is easily observed. The fate and future of women who are against the tradition would be in danger. But Major who is having illegal relation with Carol was not questioned by the society or family. But Zaitoon who run away from the home in the tribal village due to brutality nature of her husband, shattered her hope on family life. she decided to run away from the village and reach the Jawan camp, thinks that she will be safe there. The women are against the norms of village tradition, brings dishonor to the family must be killed. Here Major also bring dishonor to the society by having a illegal relation with a married women. But he was not punished and everybody respects him. But for Zaitoon case the clansmen of village set a voyage to search and hunt her. Zaitoon ran away like a deer to save her life from the ferocious flesh eating lions. Men alone enjoy the previlages in the patriarchal set up world.

After observing the painful tribal life of women in the village, Zaitoon reported to Qasim about the difference between the two cultures. She pleads Qasim to take back her with him to the Lahore city. Zaitoon was fully bought up in Lahore city where womens are enjoying small privileges such as shopping, attending family functions, knitting and weaving in group, chatting in neighbors house for a long time. But in the restricted village women have no place to go and she have to do all the chore work like bathing the ox, cleaning the waste.

Life of women in the village is monotonous one. Zaitoon soon realizes the life in the hilly area she plead to his father to take back to her with him;

‘Abba’, she begged in a fierce whisper, ‘take me back. I’ll look after you always.

Will you manage without me and the food? If I must marry, marry me to someone

The plains. That jawan of the camp, Abba, I think he likes me. I will die rather than

Live here. (Sidhwa 157)

Sidhwa has presented women from all strata of society and from all religion. All the religion social codes is obstacles for women. All the limitations exist only for women. In the patriarchal set up world womens voice was not registered till their death. The novel was not against males, but against the patriarchal setup culture which create obstacle in the life of women.

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