

SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMAN IN ASIA AND AFRICA: AN EXPOSITION IN THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD BY BUCHI EMECHETA AND THE PAKISTANI BRIDE BY BAPSI SIDHWA

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ABSTRACT- *This research will do a close critical analysis of the African selected novel The Joys of Motherhood by Buchi Emecheta and the Asian Nobel The Pakistani Bride by Bapsi Sidhwa to expose the significance of women in Africa and Asia. The close reading reveals many similarities between the chosen novels in the treatment of woman as a daughter, wife and mother. This study examines the role of women in Igbo and Pakistani society from feminist perspectives to expose that woman as a daughter, wife and mother is subjugated to oppression and exploitation in patriarchal construct. The selected novels reveal, the major challenge faced by the women in Africa and Asia is an unfair treatment and discrimination in society. The purpose of this research is to expose the numerous forces militating against the women, especially in customs, traditional setup and cultural beliefs which are harmful enough to keep women practically at the background. It is hoped to evaluate through this research that the awareness of such practices will eventually expose the social and cultural inequalities that are emerged by such practices in the lives of women in the African and Asian society.*

Key words: Rome of women as mother, feminist perspective, patriarchal construct, discrimination.

1- INTRODUCTION

This research work is a critical analysis of two selected novels, The Joys of Motherhood and The Pakistani Bride from feminist's view to expose the significance of women in Asia and Africa. This study will bring to light the ways in which the image of women is used in the two novels and in what ways the message of feminism is expressed. Emecheta and Sidhwa in the selected novels criticize the patriarchal society for treating women as inferior and regarding them second class citizen, which is a common phenomenon in the backward societies

1.1. Main Research Question

Our main research question is to analyze the status of women in tow continent: Asia and Africa in the context of the Novels of "Joys of Motherhood" by Buchi Emecheta and the "Pakistani Bride" by Bapsi Sidhwa.

1.2. Objective of the study

The objective of the study is as under:-

- i. To analyze the status of women in Asia and Africa.
- ii. To study the similarities and differences in the livings of women in Asia and Africa.
- iii. To suggest the ways how the lives of women may be improved in these two continents.

1.3. Scope of Study

The scope of this study is vast because the exploitation of women is widespread in all societies. There is need to expose these manipulation and oppression so that the oppressed class of women can get their due rights and status.

2- Literature Review

Bapsi Sidhwa's The Pakistani Bride has invited popular and critical attention in literary circle. In doing a literature review AFS Marwah comments that The Pakistani Bride is a profoundly pessimistic composition, concentrating on female suffering experienced by women in male dominated society. Marwah furthers argues that suffering is deeply connected with women and the hold is practiced over it by patriarchal

society. Women in the novel are treated as objects in the hands of men. "The feminism of the Bride is feminism, which aims to break the silence regarding the oppression of women in Pakistani society." (2)

Shazrah Salam finds out that Sidhwa's novel The Pakistani Bride explores the 'cultural mechanism' that is being practiced in Pakistani society through patriarchy, has maintained its hegemonic control over female bodies. Shazrah further elaborates, "Sidhwa's novel show that the three key cultural elements that grant men unabated and absolute authority over the bodies of women in Pakistani society are: the institution of marriage, the concept of honor and the construction of female sexuality." (3)

Gida comments about The Pakistani Bride, "In tribal family, in the case of any marriage life crisis, women cannot think of divorce because it becomes a question of tribal husband's honor. None of the rebellion is tolerable from the women's side. Though the men love their wives but their honor is more sacred to them than the feelings of their women." In this connection guide relates few remarkable women characters of The Pakistani Bride like, Afshan, Zaitoon, Miriam, Carol and Hamida. Novel unfolds the suffocating treatment given to these women by Kohistani community. She concludes that the life in the hills is comparatively problematic than that of the plains. (4)

Critical eyes of literary reviews have judged the approach Emecheta in The Joys of Motherhood with caution. In this regard Colins Amartey has analyzed "The central discussion in The Joys of Motherhood is the unfair treatment of women. She argues in this context that the defining quality of women in Nigerian culture is that they are treated only as vessels to produce children and specially male children" (5)

Another critic Molarla Ogundipe Lesile maintains "Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood is nothing but feminism, experience and fate of women is portrayed in a male dominated society. Emechelta endeavors to promote the

position of Nigerian women from being only housewife and child bearing machine to independent women.”(6)

African researcher Marieh Umeh analyses that equal rights of all citizen are unimaginable in Nigeria and Emecheta is indeed, “right on target in her consistent impassioned attack on female victimization and deprivation in the face of male self-actualization and deprivation in the power”(7) From the above critical comments and evidences of the reviewers it is concluded that much of the literary criticism concerning selected novels, *The Pakistani Bride* and *The Joys of Motherhood* focus on the description of women plight and their role in Pakistani and African society. Critics have concentrated on the position and discrimination of one sex.

3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In analyzing the novels theory of feminism will be applied as a tool. The feminist approach to literature is preferred in this work since the selected novels portray the experiences of women in the society. Feminism is an ideology that finds a fertile ground in Africa and Asia in the treatment of women. “It provides the opportunity of evaluating attitudes and misconceptions about women, which have been buttressed all along both by African culture and misogynous tradition of European colonial masters” (1) For this research APA style will be followed. Qualitative mode of research will be used.

3.1 - Justification of the Study

This study is embarking on to estimate the position of woman as a daughter, wife and mother in Asian and African society as depicted by Sidhwa and Emecheta in *The Pakistani Bride* and *The Joys of Motherhood* from feminist view. The main concern of this research is to explore the gender position in patriarchal locale. Another significance of this study is the fresh argument which will rise as regards the marginalized position of women in the Asian and African novels.

3.4. Analytical Techniques: Basically, this study is qualitative in nature in which we have compared the living standard, status and position of women in Asian and African continent. We use comparative analysis as a technique to examine the situation of women in these continents.

4- Significance of woman in Asia and Africa: an Exposition

In this section the researcher will expose the significance of women in Asia and Africa as depicted by Emecheta and Sidhwa in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The Pakistani Bride*. The question: whether Africa and Asia are traditionally gender based? The answer is yes, in Africa and Asia the traditional culture of both Muslims and non Muslims is gender based. Though the women are the backbones of our society due to the significant role performed by them, but they are perceived only as subordinates to men. Both writers Buchi Emecheta and Bapsi Sidhwa in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The Pakistani Bride* criticize indigenous patriarchal rules which force women to internalize their value and superiority through the institutions of family and tradition. In African and Asian society significant role of women, as daughter, wife and mother can only be estimated through their relationship with men. In both novels women’s position is portrayed in traditional as well as in urban setting. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta portrays Africa particularly the Igbo society during colonization. She also

explains the role of women in Igbo society. The writer shows that Igbo assign no significant role to their women. They are only for household activities, to give birth to children, and to bring them up. Their duty is to obey their husbands and never to question their authority. Men are even allowed to beat their wives harshly on their minor negligence. Emecheta criticizes the patriarchal society for treating women as inferior and regarding them second class citizen. In *The Pakistani Bride*, Bapsi Sidhwa depicts the role of women as daughter, wife and mother in Pakistani urban and tribal society. She demonstrates women as suffering, but successful. Asian (Pakistani) society can be called patriarchal due to the harsh treatment toward women in the name of cultural tradition and religion. Woman in Pakistani tribal society is subjugated by father, husband, brother and son. Both novels focus closely that how women in different positions as a daughter, wife and mother are treated in African and Asian society.

4.1- Position of Woman as Daughter

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, the position of woman in Igbo society as daughter is flexible that varies from daughter to daughter. On an initial stage we see Ona, the only living child of Obi Umuna, she is being treated by her father as male daughter because he himself has no living son. Ona was a beautiful young woman who managed to unite arrogance and stubbornness. Her father was a chief, he preferred her as a male – daughter. People find it strange that Obi Umunna always unashamedly keeps his daughter with him. He exclaimed that “his little girl was his ornament.” Agbadi then said, jokingly “Why don’t you wear her around your neck, like an ona ‘priceless jewel?’”(P.11) Ona received great respect and importance as the daughter of a local chief. Generally in Igbo society as daughter, girls don’t receive much value and honor. Obi Umunna, maintained about his daughter Ona, that “she must never marry, his daughter was never going to stoop to any man. She was free to have many men, however, and if she bore a son, he would take her father’s name, thereby rectifying the omission nature made” (P.12).

In the Igbo tradition a woman could gain powerful status as a male – daughter. This term is used for a woman who remains in her father’s home, who is not succeeding in giving birth to legitimate heir, that is, a son. In this condition son of a male – daughter becomes the heir of mother’s father’s property. From this angle indirectly Ona was a successful male – daughter of Obi Omunna. But behind this honor, she was exploited by her father for not enjoying liberty of womanhood. “Because her father had no son, she had been dedicated to the gods to produce children in his name, not that of any husband” (P. 18). As a male-daughter, she was bound by force, not to marry any man even to her lover Agbadi, as she had given promise to her father. Although Ona and Agbadi wanted to live together, but they cannot until Ona’s father permit her to marry. Agbadi roars in aggression to Ona’s father, “How much do you want for her? What else do you expect? Is it her fault that you have no son” (p.26). This promise crushed Ona internally she expresses her grief, “Oh, how torn she was between two men, she had to be loyal to her father, as well as to her lover Agbadi” (P. 18).

In reality Ona’s father has used her as an animal of sacrifice for his personal wish. She is denied the honor of being a

married woman of her own choice. As a result of this oppression, she allowed Agbadi to sexually humiliate her in his compound. At her deathbed, Ona advises Agbadi for their daughter, Nnu Ego, to allow her the liberty to marry a man of her choice, "You see that I was not destined to live with you. But you are stubborn, my father was stubborn, and I am stubborn. You love our daughter Nnu Ego, you allow her to have a life of her own, a husband if she wants one. Allow her to be a woman" (P.28). So Ona, "a priceless jewel" as a daughter was treated as a commodity by her father.

Ona's daughter, Nnu Ego was favorite and first daughter of Agbadi. Nnu Ego, the protagonist was apparently proud of her father. Her status of being a daughter of a local chief and great warrior was admitted fact. At the age of sixteen, her marriage was settled with Amatokwu. In this marriage, Agbadi excelled himself. He accepted the normal bride price, but he spent a lot of wealth on dowry and food. "It was indeed a night of wealth display" (P. 30). Nnu Ego 'pet child' of Agbadi was failed woman as wife. She was ashamed of her failure to get children for Amatokwu. She was treated as a failed woman from her husband and his family. Amatokwu degrades her, "But now, if you can't produce sons, at least you can help harvest yams" (P. 33). Nnu Ego's pride was much affected due to such treatment. She laments, when came you see her father. Agbadi consoles his daughter, "Don't worry, daughter, if you find life unbearable, you can always come here to live" (P. 33).

In Igbo culture as a daughter, women always keep links with their back and even try to support their parents in their old age. After her failure in a first marriage to give birth to children, Nnu Ego was married again to Nnaife, a lazy person. Nnu Ego felt herself superior to her second husband due to ill match, "If you had dared come to my father's compound to ask for me, my brother would have thrown you out" (P.49). In Igbo culture origin of women after marriage is not forgotten. They are called with the name of their fathers or mothers. Nnaife often addresses Nnu Ego as daughter of Agbadi. "It hasn't been easy, living with daughter of Agbadi" (P.198).

Nnu Ego was given a very warm welcome when she visits her father's compound after ten years of marriage. After the death of her father she spends seven months with her people. Her people called her "good daughter". She was very happy to see her father after long absence, "Oh, Father.....look at my children, Father, I have sons, and daughters", Agbadi was satisfied to see his daughter, "Yes, magnificent. A full woman, full of children. It is well" (P.153). Two chapters entitled 'A Good Daughter' and 'A Daughter's Honour' shows that Nnu Ego fulfills the duties of good daughter. As a daughter after marriage women occupy some respect from their parental people.

Significance of daughters as presented in *The Joys of Motherhood* fluctuates from daughter to daughter. Generally, a daughter has her specific position and duties. Daughters are always considered inferior to sons. Birth of female baby is not welcomed in Igbo society. When Nnu Ego gave birth to twin daughters, Nnaife said, "Nnu Ego, what are these? Could you not have done better" (P. 127). Nnaife did not even suggest the name of his twin daughters, "Twin don't deserve special names, This one came first so is Taiwo and this one is

Kehinde – 'She who came second' (P. 127). Few weeks later when Adaku, Nnaife's second wife gave birth to a baby son, Nnaife was very happy. In naming ceremony, he suggests the name of the baby boy. Unfortunately son died within few days. Adaku becomes very sad and comments, son is worth more than ten daughters. She remains unhappy throughout her life with Nnaife because she has two daughters and no son. The irony is that daughters are not welcomed, but the bride price of their marriage is welcomed happily by their parents. Adaku consoles Nnu Ego, at the birth of her twin daughters that don't worry, "In twelve years time, when their bride price start rolling in, you'll begin to sing another tune" (P. 127). Overall, this debate finds out that daughters always have a second position in Igbo society than sons.

In Asian and African society daughters are supposed to perform their domestic duties from childhood. Their foremost duty is to help their mothers in household chores. We witness this in *The Joys of Motherhood*, when Adaku said to her daughter, Dumbi and Oshia to bring water for cooking. Dumbi at once obediently takes her bucket for water, but Oshia ignored, "I'm not going! I am a boy. Why should I help with the cooking? That's a woman's job" (P. 128)

Sidhwa has also exposed in *The Pakistani Bride* that girls (daughters) are trained from childhood that they must be expert in domestic duties. After all they have to run their homes after marriage. When Zaitoon was eleven years old, she was insisted by her father to stop going to school and she agreed. It was considered a time to learn household duties, "From her (Miriam) Zaitoon learned to cook, sew, shop and keep her room tidy" (P.45). Miriam argues to Nikka about Zaitoon's training, "Poor child ... had she a mother, she'll be learning to cook and sew ... does Bhai Qasim think he's rearing a boy? He ought to give some thought of her marriage" (P.42).

Usually girls (daughters) are not considered worthy to educate in school, from the start they are trained to run the houses and are taught the responsibilities of a good wife. Nnu Ego says to her daughters, "But you are girls! They are boys. You will have to sell (wood) to put them (boys) in a good position in life, so that they will be able to look after the family" (P. 176).

The above extract that shows why parents are reluctant to send their daughters to school. Due to the lack of money, Nnu Ego could not send her four daughters in school. She laments that, "my only regret is that I did not have enough money to let the girls stay at school," (P. 213-2014). But with the same budget she spends a big amount for the education of Oshia and Adim. Oshia goes to study in America and Adam in Canada. This discrimination between sons and daughters make boys realize that they are superior than girls and throughout their lives act accordingly.

In the family setting depicted in *The Pakistani Bride* too girls' education was also not encouraged by parents. After completing basic early education girls are decided to stop their activities of school. When zaitoon had attended school for full five years it was decided by Qasim, Nikka and Miriam that it is "such a foolish waste of the girl's time, ... Now that she's learned to read the Holy Quran, what will she do with more reading and writing – boil and drink it? She's

not going to become a baboo or an officer! No, Allah willing, she'll get married and have children." (P.42)

A Daughter in The Pakistani Bride and The Joys of Motherhood are treated as an object in patriarchal society. Afshan, Zaitoon as well as Ona and Nnu Ego are exploited in the name of traditional and parental norms of submission of daughters. In Igbo and Pakistani society Afshan, Zaitoon, Ona and Nnu Ego play their part as docile daughters and do what is instructed to them by men folk. Daughters are not encouraged to have open choice in marriage decision. Marriage partners are decided and marriages are arranged in African and Asian societies by fathers and men of the family. Zaitoon's and Afshan's marriage was of lone parental choice. In Afshan's marriage Sidhwa describes, "Thrice she was asked if she would accept Qasim, the son of Arbab as her husband and thrice an old aunt murmured 'yes' on her behalf" (P.2).

For marriage decision Zaitoon begged in fierce whisper to her father, "Abba, take me back... if I must marry, marry me to someone from the plains...I will die rather than live here" (P.13). Qasim gets furious at this response of his daughter, "I've given my words ... it is dearer to me than life. If you besmirch it, I will kill you with my bare hand" (P.137).

Nnu Ego's first and second marriage in the same way was decided by her father and later she was informed about decision. Nnu Ego like traditional submissive daughter accepts her father's choice about marriage and says, "I wish I did not have to go so far away from you, Father, but if you wish it so, so it will be" (P.38).

We focus on the position of daughter in African and Asian society as presented in The Joys of Motherhood and The Pakistani Bride. In The Pakistani Bride Bapsi Sidhwa has given a vivid picture of the role of daughter in Asian society that resembles on certain ground with the description of daughter in The Joys of Motherhood by Buchi. Although Sidhwa has not given an elaborate description of female as daughters yet they are shown under their fathers control and authority. Sidhwa and Emecheta have convinced that Asian and African daughters are docile and shy. They accept their parental choice cheerfully as Ona and Nnu Ego Afshan and Zaitoon lead their lives on parental line.

4.2 Position of woman as wife

Woman as wife has a crucial social role in Asia and Africa, in spite of the hard way of life she has to lead. Woman's position as wife fluctuates according to traditional norms and values. Bapsi Sidhwa and Buchi Emecheta reflect in The Pakistani Bride and The Joys of Motherhood, the position and role of Igbo and Pakistani wife in a very persuasive way. It is noted that traditional education in Africa and Asia teaches a girl to think herself primarily as wife and a mother. From initial stage girls are trained that onward they have to perform a tough duty of wife and mother. Molara Ogundipe Leslie asserts that: "The woman as a daughter or a sister has greater status and more right in her own lineage, married she becomes a possession, voiceless and often rightness in her husband's family except for what accrue to her through her children. (Molara Ogundipe Leslie. 1984: 50)

In Igbo and Pakistani Tradition wife is considered commodity and possession of husband. By giving a woman a title of wife, the patriarchal society oppresses her more than before.

This title demands itself more expectations and responsibilities. It seems this title enslaves a woman and she is unable to complain. In The Pakistani Bride Bapsi Sidhwa portrays Sakhi's feeling as husband of Zaitoon, "Sakhi surveyed his diffident bride with mounting excitement. Here was a woman all his own, he thought with proprietorial lust and pride" (P.139).

On another occasion Sakhi becomes furious at Zaitoon and shouts, "You are my woman! I'll teach you to obey me!...he hissed" (P.149). Evidence of treating woman as an object of possession is also visible in The Joys of Motherhood. Nnaife argues Nnu Ego "What did you say? I did not pay your bride price? Am I not your owner? If you are going to be my wife, you must accept my work, my way of life. You must understand that" (P. 48.49). Although side story of Farukh and Carol is about civilized and educated couple, but feeling of possession also exist there. At the demand of Farukh, "She (Carol) gave up her job. 'I don't like to see you waiting on all kinds of man.' Farukh had said. He also made it plain he did not want her to go out with anyone but himself" (P.91).

Above textual evidence prove that women and specially wives in The Joys of Motherhood and The Pakistani Bride are expected to spend their lives according to the standard determined to them by their husbands. Man's position in any way is superior to woman. Woman as wife must accept male superiority. Nnaife's friend Ubani consoles him at the death of his first son and highlights his upper position than women, "A women may be ugly and grow old, but a man is never ugly and never old. He matures with age and is dignified" (P.71). In The Joys of Motherhood Nnu Ego finds her second husband ugly and unattractive. Her friend Ato consoles her saying, "No, he is a man, and you know men are never ugly" (P.75).

Man's superiority over his wife in The Pakistani Bride is shown through the socio cultural force of husband. Husband whether he is Qasim, Sakhi or Farukh has overwhelming sense of superiority. A man is judged by how well he can control woman. Cultural requirements and expectations direct woman how she should lead her life as a wife. Sidhwa's women as wives are compelled within the enclosures of male defined rules. The male hegemony over the female body in Pakistan is deep rooted and complex matter. Zaitoon as wife finds her body a site of physical and sexual abuse by her husband. Sakhi's behavior towards Zaitoon is so humiliating and barbaric that it forces her to take extreme decision of running away from the brutal cell of tribal norms. Sidhwa captures these ill treatments of woman under the name of superiority and honor. As Sofia Sanchez Grant notes, "The female body as a site of expression has always been the means by which patriarchy exerts control over women" (Sanchez-Grant 2008, P.78). In Igbo and Pakistani society there is no place for unfaithful wife. Unfaithful wife is punished severely. Sidhwa makes it clear that Pakistani husband considers infidelity in his wife a sin which may be punished by killing her. In The Pakistani Bride Major Mushtaq makes it clear to carol that she too will face the same destiny if she is found unfaithful to her husband and he comes to know about it. Major asserts, "Women get killed for one reason or other... imagined insults, family honor infidelity ... (P.195). Carol asked astonishingly, "Do you

think farukh would kill me? Major replied, who knows? I might, if you were my wife” (P.195).

When Sakhi come to know the absence of his wife, His heart was a furnace of anger. “My God. If she has run away....He swore aloud, and in impotent rage beat his fists on his forehead. I know that bitch would run away.” (P.164) There is no excuse for unfaithful woman whether she is daughter or wife. Zaitoon being fully aware of this situation takes this great risk. She is well aware of Sakhi and his pride and sense of honor. But there was no other way out from the barbaric treatment of brutal man. Zaitoon’s escape from her husband’s home poses a direct challenge to a settled patriarchal order of Sakhi’s tribe.

Emecheta has exposed the similar situation in *The Joys of Motherhood* through Adaku, (second wife of Nnaife) and Kehinde (daughter of Nnaife). Nnu Ego was shocked when Adaku told her that she is going to leave Nnaife house in his absence and says, “I am going to be a prostitute”. “The news that Adaku had abdicated her responsibility (as wife) and became a public woman spread through Lagos like wildfire” (P.168, 170). This act was hated not only by the men who called Adaku ‘unfaithful’ and ‘ambitious’ women, even women were amazed at such decision. Nnu Ego became furious at Adaku, “Stop! Stop!” “Don’t forget that we have young girls sleeping in this room and don’t you dare insult me by saying such things in my hearing” (P.168). After this shameful act Nnu Ego, “Stopped going to Adaku in the market, but before she had accepted all the edibles from Adaku’s old stall” (P.171). This insulting act of Adaku was despised by everyone in the surrounding. Later in the novel Kehinde’s act of running from her house to marry the boyfriend of her choice made Nnaife so barbaric that Nnu Ego thought, “he was going to kill her, cut her up into bits” (P.208). Anger make Nnaife “so agile, so quick – reaching for the big cutlass” he shouts, “I’ll butcher him”(P.209) Nnaife’s anger was at peak that he attacked the man’s shoulder with cutlass. In the presence of policemen he threatens the senior man of Kehinde’s in-laws, “I shall be released in a day or two, but I shall come and kill you” (P.210).

It is clear through above textual proves that women are treated harshly and are killed in the name of honour, shame, disobedience. The irony is that the situation that excites men toward killing passion is not treated with same anger when it is committed by men. Visits of Qasim and Nikka to Hira Mandi for sensual pleasure, Major Musthaq’s flirt with Carol, tribals rape of Zaitoon, incidents of rape during partition of Pakistan and India, Agbadi’s sensual pleasure with her mistress Ona in the presence of his wives, Oshia’s marriage with white girl remain hidden from patriarchal eyes and criticism.

4.3 Position of Woman as Mother

Mother’s status throughout the world is very prestigious, close and associative. Generally the value of mother is indisputable. Nigerian sociologist Oyeronke Oyewumi states that ‘when a woman gives birth to a child, two entities are born, a baby and a mother’ (2003, 1). To be a mother is the most worthy position a woman can have. Woman’s importance, identity, respect and security is closely linked with motherhood. It is stated in the last chapter of *The Joys of*

Motherhood, “Mothers come first”. (P.222) Becoming a mother is the most important job of woman. It is the highest position that a woman achieves step by step, first as daughter, wife and then mother. G.E Okere, confirms that motherhood is seen as, “an attainment of the peak of the rites of passage into womanhood” (1994, 19). Motherhood is an effective tool which raises the woman’s status high than any other relation. Buchi Emecheta and Bapsi Sidhwa have analyzed the position of mother in African and Asian society with critical eyes. Being a mother is crucial to woman in Igbo and Pakistani society as presented in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The Pakistani Bride*, right from childhood parents pray for their daughters’ a successful life as a mother. As Idayi, Agbadi’s friend, wishes Nnu Ego, “You will live to rock your children’s children, daughter of Agbadi and Ona.” (P.29) In *The Pakistani Bride* Zaitoon at the age of eleven was curious about further process in mature girl’s life. She asks Miriam, “How do I know how babies come – do I have a baby?” Miriam answers, “You will understand everything when the time comes.” (P.45) “Once Zaitoon overheard a woman saying that a ten year old was pregnant. How can that be? She asked incredulously... for after that she yearned for the miracle to strike her as well” (P. 49).

In Igbo society to be a mother is a matter of great honour and joy. Infertile woman is despised in the family and society. When Nnu Ego was not successful to conceive in her first marriage, she receives harsh comments from her husband, “I am a busy man; I have no time to waste my precious male seed on a woman who is infertile. I have to raise children for my line... you don’t appeal to me anymore” (P.32).

Woman and only woman is blamed for infertility. Woman also begins to regard herself as “imperfect and failure.” (P. 33) It is evident in Nnu Ego’s case, she admits before Amatokuwu, “I, m sure the fault is on my side” (P. 31). This indeed was a major cause of her frustration in a first marriage. She laments “It had become her problem and hers alone” (P. 31). She starts to become physically and mentally deteriorate. She was told by her husband to go and work in the farm and was forced to live alone in a far away room. In this situation, “All she wanted was a child to cuddle and love” (P. 34). This obviously causes great stress to women, as it is clear with Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood*. Emecheta has criticized clearly the maltreatment of childless women in Igbo society. Bapsi Sidhwa has depicted frustration of Miriam, a childless woman in *The Pakistani Bride*. In a refugee camp Miriam’s husband Nikka while sharing with Qasim, his family’s situation says, “I have a wife....She’s barren.” To flavor motherly manners Miriam gave maternal love to Zaitoon who was motherless girl. Through Zaitoon Miriam fulfills her thirst of a daughter. “From her (Miriam) Zaitoon learned cooking, sewing and keeping her room tidy” (P.45). Activities of the outer world were opened to Zaitoon through Miriam.

When Qasim arranges Zaitoon’s marriage in a remote area of Kohistan, it was Nikka and Miriam who become upset at this unwise decision of Qasim. Miriam tries to convince Qasim not to sent Zaitoon far away from them, “Brother Qasim, ‘she coaxed, ‘how can a girl, brought up in Lahore, educated – how can she be happy in the mountains? ... She had no control over the tears that slipped down her face” (P. 78).

Miriam becomes emotional and convinces Qasim in a crazed whisper, "Why not marry her to my husband here? Yes, I'll welcome her, we have no children, and she'll be my daughter ... I'm getting old. She will comfort our old age" (P. 79, 80). Miriam tries to persuade Zaitoon, to refuse her father that you are not going to marry a tribal. When she comes to know that all their efforts are useless, even then she shows maternal love with Zaitoon by giving her an offer that "If you're not happy, come straight back to us....we will help you" (P. 82, 83). It is clear in *The Pakistani Bride* that although Miriam was not humiliated like Nnu Ego but she herself was crazy to enjoy motherhood, and to get comfort in old age. It is cleared by Sidhwa that motherhood is linked to the security of old age and family ties in Pakistani society.

Motherhood is crucial to a woman in the Igbo society, for this quest Nnu Ego is married to Nnaife. Her happiness was at peak when she gives birth to a son. She starts loving her ugly and lazy husband, whom she hates earlier. "Only now with this son am I going to start loving this man. He has made me into a real woman – all I want to be, a woman and a mother" (P. 53).

In Igbo society, not only mothers are honored, but mothers of sons are more privileged than mothers of daughters. A woman who gives birth to female children is denied her role as a woman in Igbo society. Adaku, second wife of Nnaife, remains unhappy because she has only daughters. She bears a series of insults from Nnaife for not giving birth to son. At the death of her son Adaku hysterically says, "O God, why did you not take one of the girls and leave me with my male child? My only man child" (P. 128). As reaction of this maltreatment Adaku takes a drastic step to leave her husband's home and become prostitute. Nnu Ego also comments in dejection at the birth of her twin daughters, "Men – all they were interested in were male babies to keep their names going" (P.186). Emecheta has uncovered the fact that special importance is given to the mothers of sons in African society as shown in *The Joys of Motherhood*. But the irony of this elevated position is exposed by Sidhwa in *The Pakistani Bride*. Although the mother of Sakhi was granted with sons, but she was treated and beaten badly by her son Sakhi. In chapter nineteen Sakhi's mother called her son to crop some wood. He becomes furious at imperative command and shouted, "Can't you see I'm working, you old hag!" (P. 148). Later, when Sakhi's mother tries to stop her son beating the ox violently. Sakhi in insane fury starts to beat his mother, "I'll teach you," he hissed, "I'll teach you meddling woman." A woman wailed from a distance, "for God's sake stop it...you'll kill her" (P. 149).

Nnu Ego also receives above mentioned brutal honor as being a mother of three sons from her husband and sons. "She was the mother of three sons; she was supposed to be happy in her poverty, in her nail – biting agony, in her charring stomach, in her rags, in her cramped room." (P. 167). Nnu Ego's eldest son Oshia after completing his education decides to go to America for further education. He ignores his responsibilities of supporting his family. His father convinces him his responsibilities, "These are your responsibilities ... your mother, who still carries firewood like paid carrier....." Oshia becomes angry, "I don't understand, Father. You mean I should feed them and you too? But you are alive and well

and still working" (P. 200). As a mother of three sons Nnu Ego becomes the victim of motherhood. Sweetness of motherhood makes her life bitter. She claims, "Some fathers..... can reject a bad son, a master can reject his evil servant, a wife can even leave a bad husband, but a mother can never, never reject her son. If he is damned. She is damned with him" (P. 214).

Apparently the mother of son is considered lucky and happy woman, in reality mother of good son is not honoured, but mother of bad son is blamed in society. "When the children were good they belonged to the father, when they were bad, they belonged to the mother. Every woman knew this ;"(P.206). Emecheta and Sidhwa show this difference of appearance and reality related to woman's position in Igbo and Pakistani society. Nnu Ego spends her life to fulfill her duties of a mother. She was so habitual of these duties that she did not know how to be someone else. "I don't know how to be anything else but a mother. How will I talk to a woman with no children? Taking the children from me is like taking away the life. I have always known, the life I am used to" (P.222). The reward of this best performance was that she died alone by the roadside. "She died quietly there, with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her. She had never really made many friends, so busy she been building up her joys as a mother" (P.224). She assumes to think that human death starts a new life, which will never ends [10]. Women, in fact, always act as a torch bearer, which guides their children, their siblings how to survive in hardship and bear miseries [11]. The use of violence and oppression is common in all societies, particularly in underdeveloped societies where they are treated as slaves. But even then women are committed to their families and perform their domestic duties with full devotion because it may give them satisfaction and solace [12]

5- CONCLUSION

The study calculates that womanhood is the strong theme in *The Pakistani Bride* and *The Joys of Motherhood*, but the novels keep a very ambiguous belief of womanhood. Woman as a daughter, wife and mother struggle all her life to achieve respect and serenity, but in all these positions she is subjected to oppression and exploitation. This chapter proves through textual evidences that Emecheta and Sidhwa have painted a clear portrait of woman's sacrifices and achievements as daughter, wife and mother. Sidhwa and Emecheta criticize the patriarchal tradition of viewing Pakistani and Igbo woman as inferior creatures than man. Woman has no identity without men. She always depends on man for her identity. Man's superiority is unchallengeable. Woman can't question the male authority. Although both novelists express their condolences for the difficult lives of women, but it is evident that the significant role of women in the maintenance and reproduction of this society is impossible to transform.

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