

A Study Of Feminine Consciousness In The Select Novels Of Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice Candy Man

D. Velvizhi, Dr. P. Santhosh

¹Ph.D.-Research Scholar, Department of English, VELS University, (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai-117

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, VELS University, (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai-117

ABSTRACT

This study on Ice-Candy-Man by Bapsi Sidhwa is intended to conduct an extensive study of many forms of gender-related violence during India's division. Bapsi Sidhwa belongs to a group of female creative writers whose functions traditionally do not represent determined women who want to affirm their independence and autonomy and can take on new tasks and duties perfectly. In Ice-Candy-Man, Sidhwa desires a world free of rules and hierarchy, a civilization founded upon being truly human and built on fairness and equality. This novel Sidhwa depicts a number of women who survived in India during a tumultuous period in 1947, registering themselves as one of the deadliest religious unrests in human history. Sidhwa has authentically reported emotional distress, personal weakness, communal riot barbarism, and violence against women. I will now discuss the effective use of women in the novel as a strategy of combating male aggression and subjugation by women's agency and by unity. She not only observes and analyses men's loss and degradation of attention to women, but the voracity of male sexual impulses and women, because they are reduced to the position of sexual objects. Ice Candy-Man is a story about women's subjugation and exclusion. I will also comment on the treatment of abducted women by patriarchal state to disclose the partitioning social reality in which victims of abuse were outcast by society owing to their changed position as infected sexual beings.

Keywords: *Bapsi Sidhwa, Feminine, Female suppression, marginalization, Social Reality and Identity, and Male-Chauvinism.*

INTRODUCTION

'Sidhwa captures the turmoil of the times, with a brilliant combination of individual growing-up pains and the collective anguish of a newly independent but divided country. 'Sidhwa's work—particularly the dehumanizing effects of communalism she movingly reveals in *Ice-Candy-Man*—is painfully relevant to our present-day India. -*Economic Times*

Bapsi Sidhwa is *Ice Candy Man's* Parsee descent author (1988). She is an outstanding Pakistani post-partition novelist who, as a result of the Indo Pakistan partition in 1947, deals with the topics of societal instability and religious riots and political deadlock. Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice Candy Man* was thoroughly investigated. Each research effort focuses on different theoretical viewpoints and interpretations of the new world, such as feminism, Cultural Marxism, Stylistic and Semiotic Analysis, and women's marginalization and exploitation.

The diversity of interpretation depicts the depth and distinctive characteristics of the novel, adding many meanings and messages to the story. However, the story was investigated and examined in the current setting against the background of feminism and its subsequent consequences. The main goal of the current research work is to use language without reservation to describe the female body.

The same problem can be found in "Ice Candy Man" by Bapsi Sidhwa, where the majority of criticism concentrates on the cruelty of the male elements of society, including the kidnapping by Ayah the Ice Candy Man and the frightening life of Mrs. Seth under the sway of her spouse. Sidhwa's all-time feminist characters have been ignored by most feminist critics, awarding proper nouns only to female protagonists, moral and social assistance, narrative power, strong social and family links, the humiliation and the snub of male characters and making it easy for women to escape and survive at all times of difficulty. Sidhwa also waged a struggle between male characters for feminine beauty, restricting them to turning around women's bodies, such as smoking cigarettes, and providing women with every opportunity to enjoy their seductive and attractive gestures to obtain various favours from men, such as ice candies, dry fruit and paan, for free every now and then. The paper in front of Rodabai's novel "Ice Candy Man" will explore the role of the godmother, who is described as a courageous, influential, domineering, powerful, cruel and victimising woman.

In her work, Bapsi Sidhwa focuses essentially on the problems facing women in a dominating male society. Her uniqueness in portraying women is recognised in the world of literature. She is admired because of her exceptional talent for projecting women in a very natural and persuasive way, which makes it easy for any reader to understand the concerns presented. Her all female characters have a unique moral centre and require an identity and recognition that they have earned. Rodabai is one of these women who is aware of her own identity and status (godmother).She is the woman Sidhwa uses to oppose and revolt against the old, patriarchal social

norms. Nobody can say that women are marginalised or mistreated under the Ice Candy Man, after experiencing Rodabai's personality and social relationships. But the reality of this work is that nearly all the characters are somehow impacted, both male and female, both humiliated, abused, oppressed, killed and excluded.

Women are not only victims in this novel, but they have their own strong references and agencies of power to mend their own ways according to their own choice. All the female protagonists of this novel enjoy their femininity, charming bodies and their influence over men. (p.69)

Rodabai, thus, has a strong personality and a strong character. Sidhwa authorizes her to deal with any circumstances without the aid of a male local member. In addition to protecting women from her own family, she also saves women who have been injured, oppressed and kidnapped. She rebukes the *Ice Candy Man* as she acknowledges his fault and offers to do everything possible to provide happiness for Ayah's wife. She scolds the Ice Candy Man with tremendous anger, while no one in the whole narrative uses these rough words towards any woman. Sidhwa depicts Ice Candy Man and Rodabai as a domineering voice which depicts the true mind of Bapsi Sidhwa to illustrate the strength of women sufficient to make men subservient.

Sidhwa makes her female characters empowered by providing them with multi-layered and all-rounder roles. Her concept of mothering makes the novel prominent and provides strength and empowerment to her female characters. Her mothering concept is universal, not limited to any biological bounds. This mothering concept is communal, societal and familial. This mothering concept makes the females united and strong in this novel. (p. 304)

Sidhwa empowers her female characters that challenge the traditional patriarchy and prefer their own social and family relationships. Lenny's mother and her aunt's godmother both have specific socioeconomic status and societal influence. (p. 70)

FEMINISM: A BRIEF HISTORY

Many writers have raised their voices against the patriarchal mentality and the brainwashing of society. 'Feminism' or 'Womanism' is among the many movements that the downtrodden began to affirm themselves during various times in the history of human life (Walker, 1990; 1992). Feminism is a social, intellectual and political movement which acknowledges and raises a voice against women's oppression. It strives to empower women against oppression, inequality and patriarchal social behavior (Offen, 1988; Dar, 2013). It is hard, therefore, for women, without any gender biases, to achieve equal political, economic and social rights.

Several feminists have been constantly trying to explain the genesis and causes of the oppression of women. Some feminists, such as Marx (2009), Engels (2008), and Beauvoir (1988),

believe that the institution of monogamy and the nuclear family system, in which man has a dominant role, should be abolished. They claim that oppression against women has increased at a certain stage in societal development and is institutionalised by means of a certain patriarchal household. In addition, the oppression of women is societal, not inherent.

STUDIES ON ICE CANDY MAN

The research paradigms on political, social, religious, psychological and postcolonial issues were debated and evaluated from many viewpoints, which caused many concerns in the area of research in which the proposed novel addressed nearly all sides of human life with the use of numerous critical theories, researchers have discussed distinct perspectives

STORY LINE OF THE NOVEL

The tale of the novel is given through the eyes of a Parsee girl named Lenny from Lahore in Pakistan, who is eight years old. The main character, Lenny, shows the women much more and thoroughly after the partition. Her Hindu Ayah is devoted to her and looks after her (Shanta). Ayah is the focus of attraction for men of various professions and beliefs. Their serious followers are the Ice Candy Man (Dilnawaz) and the Masseur (Hassan). During the, strange and heinous violence breaks out. The Sikhs and their women dragged, raped, and brutally murdered the Muslim majority in the village of Pir Pindo. Gurdaspur was sent by train to Lahore, filled with Muslim men's mutilated bodies; no women on the train existed, but two bags full of breasts.

The Ice Candy Man generated an up roar among Muslims, because his sister was travelling on the same train. He wants to avenge the defilement of Ayah by his sisters. He brings Ayah's love out of revenge and kidnaps her from the house of Lenny and takes her into a brothel. She is drawn into prostitution, degradation, rape and gangs. The Ice Candy Man married her later, though, but she lost her spirit and confidence in her close connections. She is saved, then, by Lenny's mom and her godmother, Mrs. Sethi, and by Rudabai. Mr. Sethi brought a new Ayah, named Hamida, to Lenny's care after the abduction of Ayah. Hamida, yet another victim of the partition, was humiliated in the rehabilitation camps during the riots and is now unpalatable to her husband. The rescue and support of female partitions by women Sethi and her godmother were instrumental in getting them home or to rehabilitation programs.

THE FOCAL POINT FOR THE RESEARCH

This novel presents women's oppression and victimisation in the pre- and post-partition scenarios through diverse approaches. At home and outside, women are being victimised. Every time a lady struggles, she becomes a victim. The subcontinent's partition brought with it a slew of

misery and brutality for women. Ayah, Hamida, the women of PirPindo Village, the ladies who had fallen in the rehabilitation center, and the victims of the Gurdaspur train were all defiled, abducted, raped, and disturbed. Sidhwa shows a range of women's subjugation based on patriarchal practices and ceremonies.

WOMAN: AN OBJECT

Patriarchal culture has established rituals, traditions, rites and standards that allow men to exclude and subdue women. A woman, regardless of her health and choice, is seen as a machine to design and deliver a new generation. When Ice Candy Man (Dilnawaz) is turned into 'the phone of Allah' a mother comes with her four children. She appears very fragile and feeble, and the Ice Candy Man asked Allah to grant her a son (p. 98-99). Even after four daughters, she desired a younger child for the chance to be a saint, realizing her miserable position in the patriarchal world does not even have a definition without the mention of a male in this social structure. She is an item linked to a man, always defined as being unreasonable, strong, protective and decisive, like her mom, in comparison with a man.

DOMESTITY AND MARRIAGE INJUSTICE TO WOMEN

In a patriarchal society, masculinity is associated with superiority, while femininity is associated with inferiority, and masculinity is associated with power, strength, self-assertion, and control. It has been the role of women to care for the home, bring up children and have comfortable families since time immemorial. It is self-evident that women have always been shunned and regarded as inferior throughout history. Their rights are not granted.

Sidhwa says a huge social shift is necessary, which recognizes that women have souls, needs and feelings as human beings. She states that women should use their talents to have their own personality beyond domestic life. While apparently a heroic tale, Sidhwa's Ice-Candyman discreetly but efficiently subverts the inherent components of patriarchy, such as feminine will and choice, power and feminine compassion and motherhood. Sidhwa's The women in Ice-Candy-Man are not only aware of their desires, but also are eagerly committed to their independent handling of situations, and want discriminatory action against women stopped by their strong characters, emphasising that it is necessary for them to live a long life and speak against willing subjugation of women.

Ice-Candy-Man is a young Parsee girl named Lenny who is deafeningly. The narrator's lameness - a protagonist for disability, a woman who creates a writing face, is a male bastion,

outside of women's routines; domesticity and submission, because the writing of the pen is an intellectual exercise. Her recovery represents triumph - over the constraints on Bapsi Sidhwa's intellectual activities. As the novel's narrator, Lenny provides a feminine perspective on the nature of reality, its weight, and its validity.

Ice-Candy-Man essentially suggests that the sexes are unbridgeable. Violence against women and children under the excuse of community revenge underlines an essentially more absolute and unfriendly gender difference than racial fanaticism. Women cannot hope for the restitution of their own family once they become prey to men's aggression, such as Lenny's two Ayahs. In the entire narrative, Lenny's discussion with her daughter is pathetic:

"What is a fallen woman?" I inquired of my godmother...

"Hamida (the second Ayah) was kidnapped by the Sikhs",

Seriously, said my godmother...When that happens sometimes,

The husband – or his family won't take her back."

"Why? It isn't her fault she was kidnapped. "

Lenny's lameness does not, in any way, become a cause for her psyche to be restricted. She is firm, confrontational at times and holds her own in the crunch. Lenny looks to be audacious, brave and strong throughout this tale, who is not prepared to lay in the community frenzy. She's curious, courageous, challenging and vibrant. In spite of several challenges, Sidhwa gave a feminist touch to her personality. By studying various women's lives, she realised the restrictions of women's lives in the patriarchy. Sidhwa says women's marginalisation continues, and she always protests. Lenny is the only female character; the other is Ayah. In Lenny, she instils concepts of independence and will. It is Ayah who embodies the strength of femininity. Lenny's mother is another significant woman with an image consistent with the conventional Fidel image: a faithful and serving woman who only seems to be able to make her husband laugh. Sidhwa, through Lenny's mother, projects in this work that women should have as many purposes in their lives as they can outside of domesticity. Women have to free themselves from the limits of "femininity," which eliminates their marginalised differences.

In Ice-Candy-Man, the sterling humanitarian and heroic role of battling for the lives and property of Hindus is played by Lenny's mother and her aunt. The female characters in this story also attract our attention to the truth of women's victimisation and their obligation to define their lives in line with their pre – gender-based responsibilities. The patriarchal partialities of the archetype social view are also presented.

.We can thus conclude that Sidhwa has a universal appeal for women to refrain from using patriarchal postulates since they replicate patriarchy by doing so. She gives a perpetual image of existence in which women's values reign. She depicts women as saviours and not just victims. They do heroic tasks to put order on this chaotic planet. As an author, Sidhwa speaks about women's freedom. That is why the narrative comes to a good conclusion. Women seek to get out of their distress and finally move on to start their lives again in a degraded and tormented situation. That's pure technical genius – perhaps only in the art of a writer who knows about the various intricacies of feminist studies.

CONCLUSION

Bapsi Sidhwa built her female characters extremely skillfully and with all kinds of social faces. The entire story of the novel, *Ice Candy Man*, centres on women's roles and involvement in society. She deliberately instilled a defiant and radical stance and mentality in her female characters. In this book, she emphasises women's difficulties extremely accurately, and she builds her female character through the exaggeration and the spread of feminist problems. Her mindset enables her characters, exclusively in the name of feminine oppression and victimhood, to challenge every just and unjust scenario.

It is possible to conclude that Sidhwa purposefully promoted and brought out the Rodabai and Mucco characters, along with the Slavesister and Papo characters, in order to demonstrate the oppression and oppression of women by another woman. This behavior demonstrates that the old belief that only men are regarded and marked as oppressors and victimizers of women is incorrect in the world, particularly in the culture depicted in "*Ice Candy Man*," because women are suppressed and victimized the majority of the time. The questions become more complicated when only females are involved in violent relationships. Violence against women is sometimes worse than any other sort of violence against women.

REFERENCES

1. Ahmad, Z. (2009). 'Pakistani Feminist Fiction and the Empowerment of Women' *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*, 1 (2), pp. 90-100.
2. Sidhwa, Bapsi. *Ice-Candy-Man*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1989.
3. Dar, S, H. (2013). 'Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*: A Feminist Perspective', *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, Vol. II.
4. Jadika, M. (2004). 'Hyphenated Perspectives on Cracking India: Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*', *South Asian Review*, 25 (02).
5. Agarwal, B.R. —Culture Clash, Confusion and Final Assimilation: A Study of Immigrant experience in *A Change of Skies* by Yasmin Gunaratne, *An American Brat* by Bapsi

- Sidhwa and Jasmine by Bharti Mukherjee. Commonwealth Literature in English. Ed. Amarnath Prasad and Ashok Kumar. Jaipur: Sunrise, 2009. 173-85. Print.
6. The Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa by Rajinder Kumar Dhawan, Prestige Books, 196
 7. Ladies Coupe. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001. Print.
 8. Bhatt, Indira. —Journey towards Freedom: A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's An American Brat & Parsi Fiction. Ed. Novy Kapadia, Jaydipsinh Dodiya and R. K. Dhawan Vol.2. New Delhi: Prestige, 2001.93-99. Print
 9. Brians, Paul. "BapsiSidhwa: Cracking India." Modern South Asian Literature in English. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003. 99-110. Print.
 10. Nair, Anita. The Better Man. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2000. Print.
 11. Shamsie, Muneeza. "BapsiSidhwa." The Literary Encyclopedia. The Literary Dictionary Company Limited. 18 July 2002. Web. 14 Jan. 2012.
 12. Sidhwa, Bapsi. "Why do I write?" *The Novels of BapsiSidhwa*. R.K.Dhawan and NovyKapadia.New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1996. Print.