

CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S *THE PAKISTANI BRIDE*

Amuthapriya, P

M.Phil Scholar,
Department of English,

M. V. Muthiah Government Arts College for Women, Dindigul.

Abstract

Bapsi Sidhwa wrote *The Pakistani Bride* based on an actual story that she had heard about a Punjabi girl. The girl was married to a Himalayan tribal man. However, the girl found it very difficult to live with the tribal man. She escaped from her husband and wandered in the Himalayan Mountains for about fourteen days, later her husband found her, cut off her heads and threw away her body into a river. Likewise, Sidhwa, moves her novel *The Pakistani Bride*. She belongs to Muslim culture but later she married tribal man so that she could not adopt her to tribal culture and with her husband so she decided to ran away from her husband and went to America and start her life delightful. In this novel Sidhwa deals cultural conflicts.

Bapsi Sidhwa belongs to India, Pakistan and United Nation. She likes to be called as a Punjabi Pakistani-Parsi woman. She started writing at the age of twenty-six, like many other unknown writers. Bapsi Sidhwa was born in an eminent Parsi family of Karachi in 1939. Her first two novels *The Bride* and *The Crow Eaters* bought her reorganisation. She is one of the most promising English novelists from South Asia. She was awarded the Sitara-i-Imtiaz by the government of Pakistan and the National award for English literature by the Pakistani Academy of Leers in 1991. She is the first English writer in Pakistan to receive international acclaim. She is Prominent writer diaspora of Pakistan. As a writer of Parsi origin, Sidhwa deals with Cultural Clash reflected in the work of South Asian Writers.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* throw light on the repression of women in a patriarchal culture. The protagonist Zaitoon is trained as an obedient Muslim girl. By portraying Zaitoon's character Sidhwa emphasizes the fact that in matrimonial affairs, the cultural backgrounds of the bride and the bridegroom must be kept in mind. Zaitoon's marriage fails, because she and her husband represent two totally different cultural backgrounds and, therefore, cultural conflict occurs in their lives. *The Pakistani Bride* have highlighted the role played by culture and social institutions like marriage, along with cultural customs and traditions, in establishing and sustaining male hegemonic control over the women's bodies. Zaitoon and Carol, have suffered because of the caste, class and gender to which they belong.

The characters in *The Pakistani Bride* are taken from a rising lower middle class and elitist group in Pakistan, in *The Pakistani Bride*, the story moves between the Northern tribal culture of Kohistani and the urbanized culture of Lahore, Punjab. It is observed that, in spite of significant differences in class, religion, geography and times, the novels share experiences of patriarchal hegemony. *The Pakistani Bride* is characterized as meaning sexual virility, physical strength or power, ability to mark and defend one's territory but, more importantly, to have complete control over women's bodies. It is pointed out that masculinity in any culture is defined to a large degree in terms of men's power and ability to control women's morality and dominate them in the name of tradition and culture.

The Pakistani Bride expose the double standards of morality in the cultures, which expect women to be modest, exhibiting control and discretion in the expression of their desires. While such morality or culture allows men to commit adultery and infidelity by having premarital and extra-marital relationships, it is observed that the culture imposes restrictions on women, whereas it offers freedom to the men. Sidhwa had tried to attack the dual nature of culture Sidhwa's Zaitoon in *The Pakistani Bride*. Zaitoon's journey as a bride in her husband territory runs parallel to Carol's experience with her husband. The novel ends with both of the brides, Zaitoon and Carol refusing to bow to their expected roles of submissive brides. However, we come across the floating head of a bride in a river which indicates the harsh consequences for brides who dare to challenge their roles as submissive wives. Through such characters as Zaitoon, Carol and many others, the novelist point out the physical, psychological and emotional punishments women are subjected to as a routine part of their daily lives. These punishments are often given on the pretext of offences, insults and even imagined infidelities.

Sidhwa explores the issues of marriage in greater details as the title of her novel *The Pakistani Bride* reveals a great deal about the possible subject- matter of the novel.

Carol, who falls in the love with a Pakistani soldier, stays with him against her parents' permission, because they fear that she gets converted to Islamic culture and may not be able to adjust to the highly conservative culture and tradition. She has experienced, in this culture, "a man may talk only with unmarried women, his mother, sisters, aunts and grandmother." (113). It is observed that even though Zaitoon's marriage is arranged by her father, she finds herself unable to adjust just like Carol in this discriminative culture, whereas Carol fails to understand this distinction of gender and cultural difference and keeps on following her western ways. All these experiences reveal the true condition of women. It is noted that women are tortured, tormented and then killed at the hands of their male counterparts in the name of culture, tradition and honour. It is observed that there are different codes of conduct for males and females in the culture. Therefore, it focuses on different ideas that how they suffer cultural conflict at many levels such as physical, psychological and moral.

Bapsi Sidhwa have presented a realistic picture of human relationships that shows disintegration of the socio-cultural world. Her novel *The Pakistani Bride* have established that not only the low caste women but even the high caste women are also exploited and marginalized and Zaitoon, both of them continuously struggle to liberate themselves from the censors of the patriarchal and cultural bounding. Therefore, the novel is seen depicting the psychological as the well as the cultural crises that encompass the lives of their protagonists. Through the novel how women are suffered with different culture and how they overcome with in that cultural conflict.

Works cited

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