Chapter VI

Conclusion

‘What is history?’ brooded Gibbon, the great historian of the Roman Empire. ‘Little more than a register of crimes, follies and misfortunes of men.’ At last the hand that rocks the cradle has taken up the pen to set the record straight. In history, there were women too. (Miles 11)

Bapsi Sidhwa proves the statement of Rosalind Miles, one of the most powerful British women writers who have authored The Women’s History of the World which stands testimony to the prowess and intelligentsia of women. Sidhwa’s success in using the English language as the medium of creative urge lies in her device of using irony, customs, and culture; sensational theme may be a major weapon to expose the shame, the follies, the foibles of orthodoxy and the hypocrisy of society. Sidhwa’s language is objective, convincing and simple hence it is found to be readable like the language of newspaper and the magazines.

Sidhwa uses simple English, which may be easy for the comprehension of an ordinary reader. The English used in its structure and expression, is a moderate traditional instrument but appears obstructed from the context it is generated. The social milieu, history, the communal clashes and the social memory are transferred from Indian scenario to a whole different setting of Pakistan—the rural heat flocks of glittering masses, clarity of lights and deadly grey of appalling poverty. The water-tight division in society has been successfully presented with palpable suggestiveness. Sidhwa’s language is nicely adopted to communicate a different world which begins from Indian socio-cultural
situation and ends in Pakistan. With much credential to her language, Sidhwa stands apart among her contemporaries in using subtle humour, She deals with many numbers of themes except the ones chosen for this present study.

The story of a young man Freddy in *The Crow Eaters* who decides to leave his ancestral village, finding no future there and migrates to Punjab for a comfortable livelihood, reflects the truth of millions of people in India migrating from rural area of various metropolitan cities. The endearing family saga provides a vibrant window of life in India under the British colonial rule and the nation on the threshold of historical transformation (1).

As a Parsee, a member of a small minority community, Feroza feels that she can see things objectively and hence says, “My natural inclination to see the strong element of humour even in tragedies”. Sidhwa proudly explains the truth about the population of Parsi community and the immigration that is explained in novel:

> There are hardly hundred and twenty thousand Parsees in the world and still we maintain our identity. A handful of ancestors fled to India. Here they were granted sanctuary by the Prince Yadav Rana on the condition they did not eat meat; wear raw hinders sandal or convert the susceptible masses to his will. Even today we don’t allow conversation to our faith or mixed marriages. (2)

In Parsi community most people do business and Sidhwa points out that this particular community is always prominent in public life. Bapsi Sidhwa has opened the entire door and the windows of this world’s innermost recesses. She tells her story with
rare courage, frankness and good humour. It will certainly endear her to every reader who comes across her book.

Sidhwa depicts characters that are extraordinarily cruel. Her characters are extraordinary and memorable. Faredoon Junglewalla is the popular head of the Parsi community in Lahore. Parsi is usually soft-spoken and is known for prosperity. Due to this quality, Freddy soon became successful businessman. His sale picked up and he began to live in reasonable comfort (23).

The admirable novelist vividly and candidly presents various aspects of Parsi community. The peculiar graveyard known as ‘Tower of Silence’ is one of the unique features of Parsi culture. It is open-roofed atop a hill, where the dead bodies of Parsis are left open in the tower to be eaten by the vultures and other birds. The novelist explains the peculiar features of the Parsis and writes:

Parsees are tiny communities who leave their dead bodies in an open-roofed enclosure adopting hills - to be devoured by vultures. The British romanticized this bizarre graveyard with title ‘Tower of Silence’.

Just a word on the Tower: the marble floor slopes towards the centre where there is a deep hollow. This receives the bones and blood. Underground the hollow lead to four deep wells outside the Tower. There were full of lime and charcoal and Sulphur that provide an excellent filter.

(45)

Like Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal, Sidhwa too chooses ‘Partition as one of themes of the novel, Ice-Candy-Man. The theme of the novel remains like Train to
Pakistan and the socio political situation of India as existing during the period of partition of India. It shows us the existing terror and communal tension in India.

The Pakistani Bride is an interesting and absorbing story of a tribal girl which shows the story telling capabilities of the novelist. It is all about the orphan girl. Zaitoon who lost her family in the communal violence that erupted during the partition of India. She is adopted by Qasim, a Pathan, from a mountain village. Qasim had left his village after the small pox and typhoid took the lives of the entire family. He brought the tiny girl with all possible love and care like his own daughter. Sidhwa has learned about this helpless girl when she was staying on Karakorouan Mountain during her honeymoon.

I heard this story of a little girl from the Punjabi who was taken across Indus River into the unadministrated territory. I was staying in a little army camp and they told me the story of a new bride, she ran away. She was found and killed by her husband in Indus River. (3)

She used realism as her theme so that her story gets the life in front of the audience. In 1982 and before, when much of advanced medicines were not available in villages, Sidhwa shows how lakhs and lakhs of infants die every year in Pakistan due to spread of diarrhea, small pox and other diseases. Also she shows how Qasim and Afsan lost their three children like thousands of suffering masses of the country. The novelist explains:

By the time he was thirty-four, Qasim and Afsan has lost three children, two to typhoid and one in a fall of ledge. It did not matter reply, because two sons and a daughter survived a fair enough average, then a fugitive
from Soviet Kirgiz visited. He left the next boy and within a month they learned that he had died of small pox. (12)

The cultural interrelation of Hindu-Muslim communities is highlighted by the novelist. Usually a Muslim does not believe in “God” and “Goddess” yet Qasim and his wife, like other villagers believed that the small-pox had erupted in the village due to anger of ‘goddess’ (Mata) and Afshan told her husband Qasim, “Zaitoon is not eating, ‘Mata’ has honoured her with a visit” (13).

Communal tension that was existing during the Partition of India has been presented vividly in the novel. Sidhwa shows that panic-stricken families were abandoning their animals and other possessions in a bid to catch the train at Ludhiana Station to leave for ever to Pakistan. The novelist writes:

The train at Ludhiana station already swarmed with Muslims who had boarded it at earlier stops. Zohra glanced back at their mound of engage now scattered and indistinguishable among the mounting the litter of tins trunks and bundles. Their goats have already run off. (18)

Antisocial elements took undue advantage of the situation and settle their old scores. They looted away huge properties. Many Hindus were killed and other Hindus to settle an old score and blamed the rioters. Sikhs also killed other Sikhs in order to express their old grudges communal riot.

Feminism is also a theme in the novel of Bapsi Sidhwa. Sidhwa reacts sharply against the exploitation of women. She expresses her deep concern over exploitation of prostitutes and dancing girls in. She satirizes the standard of the Muslim community too. Women in the community are kept in ‘burkha’ to protect them from glancing of men
women are turned into prostitutes and dancing girls are compelled to display their body before sex-starved men for a little money. Sex is one of the favourite themes of Bapsi Sidhwa. She never hesitates to discourse sexual acts in detail the course of her presentation. In *The Pakistani Bride*, Zaitoon is married with Sakhi, a tribal youth who deflowered her mercilessly at the first night after marriage. The novelist describes sexual acts candidly and writes: “Sakhi was above her, she lusted to graft herself to him and not knowing even how to add him to her stiff beneath him. Sakhi tried to penetrate her abstracted by her straight stifled; he sat back on his heels. His heart is well with tenderness and pride at his brides’ obvious innocence” (163).

Jealousy, like love, is also a part of human mentality. Sakhi starts burning with rage and jealousy when the army jawan holds the hands of Zaitoon. It is quite intolerable for him to see a stranger holding the hands of his fiancée. The novelist writes: “Sakhi was seething with jealousy… the Jawan grip on the girl arm, her laughter and ease in his company – the persistent vision inflamed him” (165).

Carol an American woman loves passionately Mustaq, a Pakistani married with dependents. Carol often insists Mushtaq to divorce his wife so that she could marry him. She knew how married man can easily divorce his wife by saying ‘Talak’ three times and waiting for three month. Sidhwa reflects pitiable and helpless condition of Muslim woman and says in the words of Carol, “it is easy for you Muslim men. All you have to do this wife is to say ‘Talak’ three times and wait for three months. I know it” (181). The novelist is keenly aware of environmental pollution caused by the deforestation and cutting the trees at the large scale. She shows how the rich merchants are mercilessly exploiting forest by cutting tree at large scale. The novelist says, “One by one hacked by
ancient settlers the tree that once stood here had been destroyed. Later, whole hills purchased by wealthy merchants were stripped. Logos flooded through the hills to the plains until no tree was left” (162).

The atrocity on housewives by their husbands and their near relatives is also an issue in the novel. Women are beaten up mercilessly by their husbands on flimsy grounds. Sakhi beat his wife Zaitoon for a flimsy reason that she waved her hands to the Army Jawan to see him off. Zaitoon left home and wandered in the hard roof of the mountain to reach the bridge where the military camp was situated.

Sidhwa is intensely aware of socio-cultural aspects of Parsee community and therefore presents day-to-day life and political, social and religious surroundings of the Parsee community. Sidhwa is a minute observer of society and therefore not even minor incidents can escape her attention. Usually dresses reflect the culture of a community but some poverty also counts for such factor. Lenny, Ayah, Shanta Bibi did not wear Punjabi clothes despite being Punjabi, because they could not afford to maintain sari or such other dresses. The situation of Ayah reflects the problem and predicament of thousands of poor people, Sidhwa writes:

Shanta bibi, you’re Punjabi, aren’t you? ‘For the most part’, Ayah agrees warily’. Then why don’t you wear Punjabi clothes?’ Through it has never strikes me as a stranger before; I’m so accustomed to Ayah only in a Sari. I see the logic of his and wonder about it. ‘Array Baba, says Ayah spreading her hands in a fetching sister’, do you know what salary Ayah who wear the Punjabi cloths get? Half the salary of the Goan Ayah who wear Saris! I’m not so simple! (29)
The sense of insecurity among the minority Parsee community has also been brought to the notice of the readers. Partition of India has created a reign of fear and insecurity among the minority communities. Col. Barucha therefore feels that the Parsees living in Lahore will not be safe if the place is ruled by the Muslims. Like other members of minority community, he too feels that the Parsees in Lahore should shift to Bombay where a majority of Parsees live. The novelist shows the bitter reality:

We will cast our lot with whoever rules Lahore! Continue the colonel. If the Muslim should rule Lahore wouldn’t we be safer going to Bombay where most Parsee live? Ask a tremulous voice weakened by a thirteen-hundred year old memory of conversation by the Arab sword. A slight nervousness stirs amidst the rumours. There is much turning of heads, shifting on seats and whispering. (39-40)

Politics is one of the most important factors of society. The novelist therefore does not hesitate to discuss the political situation in the novel. She criticizes Congress leaders who started sitting on dharna and blocking the rail tracks as a measure of protest against the communal riots. Due to mishandling of situation, the Muslim-Hindu communal riot turned into Muslim-Sikhs riot. Police forces were engaged in shifting them from the railway track. The novelist as a great champion of softening minority community shows the turmoil in Lahore:

Killings, rioting and bottom charge by the police… long marches by mobs …. The Congress-wallahs have started new stunt … they sit down on the rail tracks-women and children, too. The polite lift them off the tracks …. But one of these days and steam engine run over them…Once aroused,
the English are savages….Then there is Hindus – Muslim trouble, he says,
after a pause. Ugly trouble …It is spreading … it is spreading Sikh-
Muslim trouble also. (56)

Muslim leaders were adding fuel to the fire of communal tension. Communal
violence arose among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Sidhwa spreads the message of
communal harmony by characterization of Jagjeet Singh who is seen committed to the
cause of his fellow Muslims even at the cost of his life. Imman Din has also great faith in
his commitment. The novelist explains the situation:

The Man is knocked down. His lips are drawn away from rotting, pan-
stained teeth in a scream, The men move back and in small cleaning I
see his leg sticking out of his dhoti right up to the groin-each thin-brown
leg tied to a jeep. (135)

Sidhwa ironically satirizes the sex-starved people of society and therefore calls
the ‘kotha’ as the “cultural pulse of city”, or a “place of the poets inspired”. Sidhwa
depicts the suffering women’s characters in her novel Ice-Candy-Man. In an American
Brat Sidhwa shows how Feroza and David have sex before marriage. She points out the
American culture by Feroza and Jo. Sidhwa beautifully sketches the American culture in
her novel An American brat. Sidhwa’s heroines are brave.

Bapsi Sidhwa had an unhappy childhood. Dickens was hit hard by penury.
Sidhwa was affected by the polio. Her sensitivity, however found solace in the company
of the books. She was not able to go to school. But she read extensively which helped her
to become a novelist. The Crow Eaters is all about the Parsis. This novel has a unique
place in the history of English Fiction as it is the first internationally published novel
which shows the different aspects of the Parsi life in detail. *The Crow Eaters* has influenced not only a new generation of Parsi writers but also many Indian and Pakistani writers who introduce Parsi characters in their works. In the early part of the novel there is a brief description of violence ensuing from partition. Sidhwa blames the British for dividing India arbitrarily. As she lambasts the earth is not easy to carve up.

India required a deft and sensitive surgeon but the British steeped in domestic preoccupation hastily and carelessly butchered it. They were not deliberately mischievous-only cruelly negligent! A million Indians died. The earth sealed its clumsy new boundaries in blood as town by town, farm by farm, the border was defined. (14-15)

From the above lines the author illustrates the cause of communal violence, because of partition people struggled against the communal violence. The novelist predicts social conflict here. Partition is considered evil in *The Pakistani Bride*. Freddy becomes rich in *The Crow Eaters* on account of his good deeds. He rejects Yazadi love with Rosy Watson. Yazadi’s life is failure. Yazadi has a good helping tendency but his life was a failure. Yazadi struggles against the society to sustain himself in this world. Yazadi is innocent but to be successful in this world, one should have awareness of the society. This is the main focus in *The Crow Eaters*. Billy’s life is successful in this story, so good things happen through Billy to his family. In *The Pakistani Bride*, Zaitoon suffers in the hands of her husband Sakhi. It explains how women struggle in the male dominated society and suffer a lot. Zaitoon is brought up in a town but married in a Tribal Mountain. So she is unable to adjust to the tribal culture. The author depicts the cultural conflict in society. Carol also faces the same kind of cultural conflict in this novel. She is
brought up in America and married to a Pakistani person. Though it is love marriage she cannot adjust to that tribal society. For crossing the culture men put the women into cruel punishment or death. Men killing women for a petty matter is not reasonable. The author states from the above sentence that male domination is evil.

_The Crow Eaters_ deals with the lives and fortunes of the members of the Junglewalla family in British India. The novel is pervaded by mockery and lampoon provided by physical and verbal inaptness, fantasy and caricature though there are serious touches here and there. _The Pakistani Bride_ portrays an orphan’s struggle for life in the callous and primitive tribal society set in the Karakoram Mountains. It is an account of the interaction between two cultures and the discordance that arises in the intermingling of either section of society. In _Ice-Candy-Man_, the author narrates the story from the child’s point of view. Eight-year old Lenny sees the consequence of partition. As a result of Partition millions of people died, people vacated their native place and hurried away to a new land. People struggled in the communal violence. Because of social and religious conflict there was a lot of confusion. Female kidnapping increased and women were raped without any mercy. Some of the fallen women were rescued in the camp and they were sent to their native places. Hindu Ayah was kidnapped by a Muslim gang and they raped her. After that, the Ice-Candy-Man married her and Ayah became a dancing girl who then was involved in prostitution. Partition and female destruction are considered as main themes. It was a good thing that rescued women were saved by the police and they sent to their native places.

In _An American Brat_ conservative Feroza who was born and brought up in Pakistan went to the U.S.A. In the airport various kinds of inspection made her feel that
she was in a strange country. When she stepped into the shop with Jo, Feroza asked “may I take this please” and for that the salesgirl insulted her. Jo teaches her how to ask in the shop. “May I get this please”, this is the way of asking in America. Jo slowly teaches her the American ways. Shakhi introduced the western music and dancing on the stage. So she slowly switched to the American culture and she fell in love with David. His religion is totally different from hers. This is pointed out by her mother Zareen. When Zareen did not agree for the marriage, David separated from her and took up a job. He went abroad. She was disappointed her disappointment, but she slowly restored her confidence.

Feroza is caught in the cultural conflict and she likes the new culture and she does not want to leave it. Because of religious conflict she is separated from her lover. Religion is marked in this novel as an evil one. Feroza gets self-confidence, she gets the job and she learnt to lead the life in an independent way that is the good thing in this novel. Sex before marriage is an evil in this novel. This is considered to be cultural destruction. At the end of this novel, Feroza decides to stay in America. In future if she will marry a non-Parsi boy she can stay in Bombay. Because there are a lot of Parsi people who settled in Bombay. In An American Brat Sidhwa portrays Parsi community and religious rites and immigrant theme.

In The Crow Eaters, the Parsi community is exposed and there are descriptions regarding Parsi rites and rituals. Faredoon Junglewalla is the central character. He disliked his mother-in-law. He becomes rich by cheating insurance scheme and adopting business tactics. Soli’s death plunges the family into sorrow. When Billy marries Tanya
and gets a son, the family is happy at that wonderful moment. Because they think Soli is reborn in that family. Sidhwa brings comic and tragic aspect of life in the novel.

In the last part of the novel the author presents Billy’s marital life and how he is successful in business. Sidhwa’s *The Crow Eaters* is the first internationally published novel. This novel had description of the Parsi Culture and quest for prosperity and social prestige. Sidhwa presents ideas about Parsi:

I have made friends – love them – for what could be called “ulterior motives” and yet the friendships so made are amongst my sweetest, longest and most sincere. I cherish them still. (11)

The wonderful novelist represents the four Parsi families settled in Lahore. The Toddywallas, the Bankwallas, the Bottlewallas and the Chaiwallas --- none of them practice the trade suggested by their names. The Toddywallas, a large joint family are the proprietors of a prosperous tea stall and Chaiwallas run a bar. Mr. Bottlewallas is a teller in a bank and Mr. Bankwalla conducts the classes for dancing in the Ball room.

Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) is the story of a tribal man. Qasim was ten year-old boy married to Afshan who was an older than Qasim. Her father gives his daughter in marriage for the loan due to Qasim’s father. This shows the feministic conflict in this novel. Afshan accepts the marriage with a smile. She helps her mother-in-law in kitchen. Qasim reaches eighteen years. He gets several children. Zaitoon is his favourite one. Small pox spread over their locality. Zaitoon is affected by it. Except Qasim all the others of the family died. Qasim goes to the bank and work for one and half year. After that he reaches the train. Partition took place, India and Pakistan are separated. Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus are living together before the partition. But after
partition there were clashes between Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus. Millions of people die in that social conflict. Lots of people are killed in the train, Qasim finds Munni in that train and adopts her as his daughter and names her Zaitoon. Zaitoon grows up and she is married to Sakhi, a tribal man.

But the novel mainly highlights the plight of women in the Patriarchal society of Pakistan where they are worse than slaves. They are supposed to cater to the whims and fancies of men. Men are so tyrannical that they abuse even their mothers. Sakhi hit his old mother on the shoulder and legs with a stick when she tried to stop him from beating the ox. When Zaitoon intervened, he struck her on the thighs and head shouting, “you are my women I’ll teach you to obey me!” (172-73). As Rosalind Miles comments:

Our world is the product of male consciousness. How then could women think the unthinkable, in Virginia Woolf’s words, of ‘killing the Angel at the Hearth’? Finally, and this cannot be dodged, women have colluded in their own subordination-too comfortable with the accommodations they had made, too locked into the ways they had found to live with men and with themselves, too wedded to their own often pathetically ingenious and resourceful solutions, they have not only helped to sustain the systems of male dominance but have betrayed their children. Male and female into them too. (14)

In *Pakistani Bride* the protagonist suffers from racial prejudice or from the problem of adjustment whereas in *An American Brat*, Feroza’s unhappiness is mainly caused by her own family. Besides, Sidhwa has added a new dimension to the theme of expatriate experience by exploring the cultural differences which make a person feel
alienated even in his own country. Thus, Sidhwa draws her subjects from widely different aspects of life. She portrays life as she knows and experiences it. She makes even commonplace highly significant. Her plot moves naturally and it is free from artifice. She follows the direct or epic method of narration. Only in *Ice-Candy-Man*, Lenny an eight-year old girl narrates the story. For Lenny, the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all are alike. Moreover, she is a child. Children are always innocent, free, unbiased and truthful. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, partition has been narrated throughout in the present tense. Sidhwa suggests that the phase of mutual distrust and communal hatred in the subcontinent is not over and if India and Pakistan want to move forward, they will have to erase the happening of the unpleasant partition from their memory.

In her fictional tale, Sidhwa retells the story of her community at the turn of the last century, when the nation was under the colonial rule of Britian. The Parsi community sided with Britishers, wheedled them with their loyalty and assistance in return for economic favours and freedom. Sidhwa also sketches the colonial history of the subcontinent which divided the loyalties of the people. The British patronize the Parsis for their own interest in business and economy but never accorded them an equal status. The Parsis were also ‘mimic men’ trying to imbibe the western modes.

A typical family is portrayed by Sidhwa with all its religious beliefs and customs but she does not fail to acknowledge the fact that migration and displacement have its influence on the Parsi psyche and beliefs. For centuries they have lived in India, assimilating themselves into its cultural beliefs and tradition. Faredoon has imbibed the multicultural ambience of the country and the western colonial influence. He has as much reverence for the Bible, Bhagwad Gita and the Quran as for the Avesta. He has an equal
standing in his life and are positioned equally with *The Book of Famous English Proverbs* right above his prayer table. On his prayer table stood pictures of Virgin Mary goddess Laxmi, Buddha, Sita, Christ and Indian saints along with prophet Zarathustra’s image and other items of worship. Like any Indian, he believes in mystics and astrologers and consults them occasionally on the moment of distress. Sidhwa mentions the Hindu custom of making horoscopes prevalent among the community.

The birth of Parsi infants is timed with the precision of Olympic contests. Stop-watch in hand, anxious grandmothers or aunts note the exact second of delivery. This enables Hindu pundits to cast the horoscope with extreme exactitude. (53)

Sidhwa mentions each and every aspect of Parsi life through her narrative, meticulous with her details and personal knowledge. When Behram (Billy) gets engaged to Tanya, the simple ceremony of blessing the couple and finalizing the engagement is portrayed by the novelist. The ceremony restricted only to ladies is accompanied with traditional songs. Later their wedding is solemnized by two priests and vows are taken in accordance with the rites and customs of the Ahura Mazda and the blessing of God are invoked on the couple.

In Sidhwa’s fiction multiple streams of fact, history and myth meet in harmony representing the story of a community and how people have endured rough time and trying situations, overcoming obstacles and emerging triumphant. Parsee became an integral and prominent part of the subcontinent fabric of life contributing richly to its economy, art and culture. Bapsi Sidhwa’s novels can be rightly referred to as testimony of the entire community and generation of the people and history, tradition and culture.
Marriage is one of the most important decisions of a girl’s life. While being married, a girl steps into the world of uncertainty. If she is lucky to get a good, sensible and accommodating husband then her life may be happy, otherwise not. Zaitoon too, like other girls, becomes nervous and suffers from consternation after hearing about her marriage with a tribal boy, Sakhi, who is the son of Qasim’s cousin. Mirriam disagrees with this decision, because Zaitoon was brought up in the town and she might feel difficult to lead a life in a village. There are a lot of differences between town and village. While Qasim and Zaitoon were on the way to their homeland, they were caught by an army jeep. Zaitoon requested the army people to take them in the jeep. There they met a military man called Ashiq. Ashiq was attracted towards Zaitoon at first sight. When Ashiq spoke to Zaitoon first time, she was also attracted by Ashiq’s approach towards her. But she was forced to marry Sakhi. One day Zaitoon stood near the river side and waved her hands to an army jeep. Sakhi got irritated and hit her with a stone until she fell down with deep injuries. So she decided to run away from the place. On the way she faced so many difficulties. After meeting Zaitoon, Carol, a friend of Zaitoon comments “This girl had no more control over her destiny than a caged animal” (136). Tribals took guns not to search for the girl but to hunt her. Farukh’s friend Mushtaq. Carol had a secret affair with Mushtaq. Mushtaq told Carol about the runaway girl. The whole tribals wanted kill her. Carol was surprised and asked “Hunting her? What will they do, when they find her?” Mushtaq replied, Beat her up probably kill her (223). The girl reaches the camp completely exhausted. Mushtaq covered her with a blanket and went to his house to give treatment to the girl. The girl got the treatment and married Ashiq. Sakhi and his father enquired about the girl. Mushtaq replied that the girl was dead and her body
was not found anywhere. Sakhi believed that his wife was dead. But she was rescued by
the military people. Sakhi announced to his people that he had killed her.

In *The Pakistani Bride* feminism is foremost. Qasim is of a traditional. He is very
keen about his community. He is a tall, fair man. People used to call him Chinaman.

When he first arrived in Jullundur from the mountain, Qasim spoke Hindko, a distorted
mixture of Punjabi and Urdu. Sidhwa has used words and phrases from the native
languages like Chapatti hookah, Manja, Zenana, Payal and Dancing bulbul etc. She has
given a vivid description of distinctive dress of Kohistanis -- the sheepskin waist coats
and shirts made from beaten wool. Different customs, the landscape and mountains are
described by Sidhwa with immense vigour and liveliness and she has brought her world
and people exuberantly to life. The tribal people hate outsiders. There is no police,
clerks or government in that tribal village. Women are seen as sex objects and not as
human beings in the tribal community. This *Pakistani Bride* shows the low status of
women in the Kohistani tribe where girls are given in marriage in exchange for loan due.
Qasim forced his daughter to like his village, mountains, plains, and culture. Zaitoon
disliked marrying Sakhi. She detested her father’s community. In the end of the novel
Qasim are not aware whether his daughter is alive or dead. Sidhwa conveys that it was a
pity that he loves her. Qasim was blamed for forcing his will on somebody that was
bound to end in disaster.

This novel shows how women suffer displacement. Women’s emotions are
crushed by violence. Zaitoon struggled to see the dawn. The author depicts social abuse
of women. Sidhwa successfully illustrates the pain and suffering of women. She has
written dramatically of a particular culture marriage, loyalty, honour and conflict with old
tradition. This novel shows how women have got confidence to articulate their thoughts. The author shows the reader the culture of Pakistan.

Many writers suggest some solution to the degradation of women based on cast, religion and gender. *Ice-Candy-Man* portrays a series of female characters who survived the worst time of 1947 in India. The novel represents the realistic picture of Hindu-Muslim clashes and changing political scenario. Emotional turmoil, weakness, murder brutalities and much more are suffered by women. The whole story is narrated by a female protagonist who shares her personal experiences of partition. She minutely observes men’s intentions towards women, the lustful desires of men and the way they treat women as sexual objects.

Lenny as a narrator moves from childhood to adolescence and during this course of time she understands the changes that occur in the society and behaviour of men and women. The whole journey helps her to develop a mature vision of life. She has a close look at the relationship between men and women. Being a handicapped girl, her world is restricted to her house. She spends most of her time with her Godmother. Being a child she has no inclination to female possession. She never plays with dolls. Her schooling is stopped by her doctor because she is suffering from polio. Marrying and carrying the responsibilities of domestic affairs are the only aims of women. For ages it has been considered that women’s duty is to look after the house, raise children and give comfort to her family. Sidhwa suggests that the women should be given enough space to realize their true personality.

Simon de Beauvoir holds the opinion that mothers are responsible in inculcating the ‘sense of ‘submission’ in the daughter. Lenny learns that marriage of the girl is of
utmost importance to the parents. Independence and self-identity is for the men. As a child she enjoys the love of her mother and the protection of her father but in the story of the *Ice-Candy-Man* love for Ayah destroys the concept of love. Lenny watches women being raped and men turning into beast. Women fall prey to men. Ayah is an example. In this context, it is relevant to quote from Shashi Deshpande who states that rape is a violation of trust between two people and it is considered the greatest violence.

Lenny is shocked to see the changing faces of men and she becomes aware of religious differences. She comes to know that men of different religion can never become friends again. To take revenge is the sole of purpose of their life. Ayah is kidnapped and Lenny decides to hunt for Ayah, who becomes prey of Hindu-Muslim riots. Throughout the novel, Lenny appears as bold and courageous. Sidhwa has given her feminist touch to her character, which moves forward despite hurdles. Bapsi Sidhwa states that women are always marginalized and they always protests against it. Lenny’s mother is another female character a servile housewife; she limits herself to her home. She represents the traditional women who never express their desire. Through Lenny Sidhwa shows that men have to dilute their ego and women have to be strong. The mindset need to be changed in order to establish equality between sexes. The women characters “subtly but effectively subvert the ingrained elements of patriarchy, privilege, female will, choice, strength along with the feminine qualities of compassion and motherhood.” *Ice-Candy-Man* which can undoubtedly be termed as a feminist novel eulogizes the heroic qualities of women: Godmother rescuing the Ayah in a successful way is a fine example.
Sidhwa exposes the society, which marginalizes women, their growth and development. She has a constructive approach towards women’s betterment. Women have been always being marginalized and considered inferior for centuries. They are not given their rights. A big change is required at social level, which will acknowledge women as human beings having souls, desires and feelings. Women should utilize their potentials beyond the domestic life to have their own individuality. Sidhwa introduces her protagonist Feroza in multiple geographical locations of Pakistan and America. These locations often demand contrasting codes of conduct resulting in conflicting tendencies among the individuals in Diaspora. Sidhwa subtly points out these contrasting tendencies among the individuals.

The first lesson you learn in America is ‘you don’t get something for nothing’, Manek said “If you want to get in to the right college you have to work for it. Nothing is given to you on a plate. You don’t know because nobody works in Pakistan. Not your father, your grandfather or uncles. (135)

Manek teaches her that women cannot rely on anyone but themselves, if they want to survive in America. In Pakistan, the women are dependent on their men folk but Feroza learnt to be self-dependent, when Manek left her alone in the museum: “This taught you more about America than six months of pampering. You’ll see you’ll gain confidence. You can’t rely on anyone but yourself, if you want to live in this country—not even on me” (135).

Feroza believes that people will stare at her if she is physically close to Manek; it is the custom in Pakistan. The reality is exactly opposite in America; America offered
much wider space for socialization among genders. Furthermore, smiling to someone of the opposite sex who is not a blood relative is quite offensive in Pakistani society but courtesy in America. The geography also operates within everyday task such as opening a carton or a plastic bag. American diaspora confers comfort and ease over such minor tasks in the lives of gendered Subalterns, distinguishing their experience across borders:

And each time, Manek saw Feroza wrestle with a Jar or juice bottle or tamper proof vial, he said, “Remember this: If you have to struggle to open something in America, you’re doing wrong. They’ve made everything easy. That’s how a free economy works.” (140)

The appropriate modes of communication result in empowerment. Feroza being a transnational gendered subaltern is unable to communicate in the social accepted code, which she learns later from Jo. “It was almost learning new language and both sometimes wondered if the other knew enough English” (149). A notion of shared heteroglossia is developed within the two women, who are representatives of two different cultures. Under the influence of Jo, Feroza learns abusive language, which she otherwise would not use in Pakistan. “Jo is extraordinary capacity for expletives, which match her other appetite soon had Feroza saying “shit” and “as hole” with the abandon the epitomize for her the heady reality of her being abroad, away from home and even if she knew it was an illusion, a sense of control over her action”(159). Pessar and Mahler (2003) are of the view that immigrant women hold various social positions in a society, which result either their empowerment or the exploitation.

Zubair (2006) notes in her research conducted in southern Punjab that the women preferred the life of celibacy because it brought them socially advantageous position
resulting from their family support. However in the United States, the women exercise agency by being independent about their sexuality. Other than sharing the working space, the boundaries between public and private life is also blurred. The women of the colour in America diaspora have to learn to work outside the four walls of their homes. Jo cooks and keeps the apartment in excellent condition. She also works and earns for herself. The overlapping identities of women color demand different reaction in different situations.

Feroza, being a member of Parsi community, considered herself polluted on smoking for the first time; the transgression of boundaries—bringing Ahura Mazda near her mouth demanded a ritual purification. However the incident proved the one in a series of many such transgressions characteristic of diaspora.

Sidhwa’s genius lies in the fact that she represents American geography, as not a homogenous whole rather it is a combination of various ideologies which vary from one state to another state. Manek tells Feroza that if she gets admission in Birmingham University in the Salt Lake City, she would not be allowed to drink or engage in premarital sex. She would also not be allowed to wear bikinis or shorts. Hence the geographies shape the politics of body, modes of socialization and orientation towards sex. It is the fluidity and hybridity, which makes it acceptable for the anxious family of Feroza in Pakistan. Manek writes them a letter about Mormon values in states of Idaho, where Feroza was getting admission, concluding that the state did not allow the women to engage in premarital sex or consume alcohol or even caffeine, which ultimately convinces her parents. Feroza’s assimilation in the American culture is marked by her discussion with Manek and Jo about cultural orientation towards time, money, life and education highlighting how Pakistani culture is “the other” to the American culture. It
challenges some of the myths associated with women in Pakistani culture, in comparison with American culture. The representation is significant because they highlight the lived experience of the gendered immigrant affected by the geography and economy of America.

Sidhwa represents her female protagonists as having multiple layers of identities. Tracing the circles of marginalization in Pakistan as well as in America, she dwells upon the strategies of the sexual subaltern for exercising agency. The critics of diasporic literature frown upon the notion of a fixed monolithic, universally shared diaspora. Sidhwa’s works stand out as testimony as they describe the various types and levels of marginalization. Furthermore the boundaries between the oppressed and the oppressor are challenged. Located in various social and geographical positions, the women of colour devise ways of exercising agency. While doing so, the standard of “normalcy and “traditionally feminine” are re-conceptualized. Sidhwa’s works cover a larger range of topics, from history to contemporary reality. Thus Sidhwa also expresses feminine entity in these novels besides the eternal conflicts of good and evil.

The present study of Sidhwa’s fictional writings demonstrates that she has addressed all issues associated with transformation of oneself. With her evolving creative vision, the canvas of her thematic content enlarges and the complexity of cultural assimilation acquires a new dimension. The study of Sidhwa works provides still more areas to be probed and explored. It permits future research scope for a comparative study of her novels dealing with migration and expatriations.

Her themes include human relationships and betrayals, puberty and its attendant disillusionments, immigration and cultural hybridity as well as social and political
upheavals. She deals with multifaceted themes in her novels. The eternal conflict
between good and evil is inherent in any literature but this theme is very much obvious in
her fiction.

To sum up precisely, Sidhwa has dealt with issues ranging from history to
contemporary reality. All her novels are powerful and emotive. She is a matured story
teller. Her descriptions are realistic and vivid. She writes in a straightforward and
highly entertaining style. Her language, laced with native words and phrases is racy and
colloquial. Her novels have been translated into several languages and published in
numerous European and Asian countries that shows her popularity across the world and
also the adaptability of her art. Though her literary output is meager, her place as an
English-language novelist in the history of Diasporic Literature is assured. In the first
novel *The Crow Eaters* author illustrates Parsi community and the Fareedoon Junglewalla
family. Yazadi falls in love with Rosy Watson but is rejected by Yazadi father thus the
novelist sketching the religious conflict in this novel. Religious and social conflicts are
delineated in *The Pakistani Bride* Munni becomes orphan and is adopted by Qasim and is
married to Sakhi, a male chauvinist. Munni becomes Zaitoon and she is brought up in
town and married in village. So there are a lot of difference between town and village.
Sidhwa deals with feministic and social conflicts in this novel. In the *Ice-Candy-Man,*
the author asserts that because of religious and social conflicts millions of the people are
dead in the partition between India and Pakistan. In *American Brat* Feroza falls in love
with David who belongs to the Jew community. Feroza is a Parsi so her mother is against
their love. Religious conflict is the main theme in this novel. Also, there are conflicts
between tradition and modernity, past and present, and dependence and freedom. Thus, Sidhwa portrays various kinds of conflicts that affect the lives of people eternally.