

The seal of Aligarh Muslim University is a circular emblem. It features a central palm tree with a crescent moon and star above it. The text "ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY" is written in English around the top inner edge, and "ALIGARH" is written in English at the bottom inner edge. The Urdu text "مہتمم یونیورسٹی علی گڑھ" is written in Urdu script around the bottom inner edge. The outer ring of the seal contains twelve stars.

CHAPTER 3
MUSLIM MIDDLE CLASS PATRIARCHY AND ISMAT
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After going through the history of women's status in India we find that women occupied a sacred place in scriptures or religious texts. In those texts, they were destined for the roles of Goddesses and Devi but in practice, they always played subordinate roles. The woman was considered as an entity that had 'no voice or no rights'. She had no role in the decision-making body. She never had her own individual identity. Her existence in society associates either with her father, husband, brother and son. They always remained under this patriarchal dominance. But if we observe the ancient period; the Rig-Veda period, the women had the freedom and equality as compared to the later ages.

In the Rig-Vedic period, women marked their presence in every sphere of lives. The women shared personal and private space with men. Women were not considered inferior. Their roles were not only the supporter for their spouses. They were not the victims of suppression and subjugation. They had their identity or meaningful existence in society. They were not taken as only the helpers or servants for domestic chores. They were regarded as the companions of their husbands. Girls had their role in the decision making bodies of their marriages.

The birth of a female child was celebrated. She was taken as auspicious as a male child. The daughter did not seem like a burden on father. In fact, the father of many daughters was considered fortunate. They had various prayers for daughters like *Kumari puja Kanyasraddhas*. Girls had equal opportunities. They used to get an education like boys. They had their presence in all Vedic prayers, rituals, and ceremonies. We can trace various examples of women Vedic scholars who participated in discussions and debates, Indrani, Maitreyi, Apala, Gosha, Gargi are the few names in this context.

The position of women in early Vedic age was fairly satisfactory. Child marriage and Sati came much later and co-education of boys and girls (going through Upanayana and Brahmacharya) was the rule. Women could perform sacrifices independently and they were not regarded as impediments in rituals. The concept of ideal marriage in

the Vedic period was that of a religious sacrament which made the couple joint owners of the household. Along with prayers for a son are found those for the gift of a beautiful and intelligent daughter. Girl's education passes through the stages of Upanayana and Brahmacharya leading to the marital state. (Tharakan, Tharakan 117)

The decision of marriage used to be taken by the consent of girl at the age of maturity. They had their roles in the selection process of 'bridegroom'. In Vedic age, they had *Swayamvar* or *Gandhar Vivah* where girls had the authority to select their life partners in the presence of their elders. Both sexes could take decisions of their marriage. "There was the system of *Gandharva Vivaha* in which men and women chose life partners of their own accord. It reveals a fairly high level of freedom and equality between the sexes." (Tharakan, Tharakan 118) The unmarried or spinster's girl was especially taken care of by her father or brother. Despite the fact that marriage seemed an important institution in society, few girls remained unmarried by their own consent. The spinster daughter had the share in her father's property or a married girl also had the share in her father's property in the absence of a son. The Vedic married girl was considered as the *Sahadharmini* or *Patni*. She had the role in decision making bodies with her husband. But at the same age we also get the practice where women did not consider as an equal partner. They had subordinate or secondary roles. The concepts of chastity, purity, virtuousness for only women were deeply imbibed in Indian society. In the Vedic age, the chaste woman received the status of Goddess the highest status after father or teacher (*Guru*).

The condition of widows was much better than the later ages; In Vedic age widow's remarriage was acceptable. Though it was legalized in the second marriage they did not get the status of *Grahini* (the owner of the house). There were few terms which were common like *Parapwiva*, *Didhisa* or *Punarbhva* which indicates a widow woman who gets married the second time. Widow's life was not difficult during Vedic age; there is evidence of practising Sati also. Women were honoured in public and private places.

In the post-Vedic age or the later Vedic age the status of women had decreased. Drastic changes occurred during this period. Sati became part of society. Now no longer women regarded as the companions or friends of their husbands. Now

they considered as the sources to satisfy the physical urges. Lives of widows became complicated during this period. During this period men did not give that place to women which were written in religious texts. Girl's education was also devalued. They were not accustomed to join any educational or training centres, so they could only attain the religious teachings. Even society curtailed those freedoms which religion was giving them. Now a female child was no longer welcomed as the auspicious one. The male child was preferred over the female child, but still, they had some voices or roles like in matrimonial matters. They had the rights to choose their partner. The practice of *Swaymvar* was also common in post-Vedic age.

In post-Vedic age, people had the notion that a girl should get married before her attainment of puberty. Drastic changes occurred during this period, the post-Vedic women were also not allowed to take part in religious ceremonies or rituals. They were confined with the household duties. They lost connection with Vedas and religious texts also, so eventually reading of Vedas and performing religious ceremonies became men's duty. Earlier they were allowed to participate in philosophical, intellectual discussions but with the coming of post-Vedic age, women lost this status. The prominent reason for devaluing the educational status of women was marriage. In later Vedic age girls used to get married before puberty. Marriage was the priority for parents, not their education.

The conditions of widows in post-Vedic age were pathetic and miserable. The Hindu laws prescribed few rules and restrictions for widows. They were supposed to sleep on the ground; they were not permitted to eat salt, meat, onion. They were forced to shed their hairs. They were forcibly thrown into the funeral pyre of their husbands. People did it due to the property that she would no longer claim or she would not engage in sexual relationships with other men. They lived the uneasy, hard, difficult and complicated life. Widows were not allowed for remarriage in later Vedic age. They were forced to leave every kind of pleasure or comfort and lead the lives of asperity. They were supposed to remain secluded from any erotic desires. The inhuman treatment to widows, child marriages or pre-puberty marriages, practising of Sati had badly affected the educational status of women. "Decline in the rights and freedom of widows, fall in educational levels of women as well as the greater prevalence of child marriage indicate a substantial reduction in women's status." (Tharakan, Tharakan 120)

Manu, the lawgiver says that a widow should not have relation with any man after the death of her husband. Her chastity and purity would lead her to the path of heaven; otherwise, she would be a curse. Widowhood was looked upon as a curse on women. They could not remarry and this is not the end of the story. They were tortured by society. They were forced to wear a white dress and compelled to shed their hair. They were not allowed to eat fresh food. They were permitted to cook once a time in a single day and sleep on the bare floor. The idea behind this inhuman treatment was to make them unhealthy, pale and weak so that no man would approach her. The society also somehow created a fear for widows. They made their lives so complicated and tormented that due to the pain and sufferings they preferred burning themselves along with their husbands to make their lives less painful.

There were two kinds of Sati practice- 'By force or by will'. Few women wanted to live even after the death of their husbands but they were forced into Sati and there were few women who preferred to follow this custom willingly. They preferred to be thrown into Sati rather than to live an austere life because society created the notion that husband is a woman's protector and without him she has no identity, no existence and once the husband dies the protector goes. The basic essence of a woman's life also goes after the death of her husband. Then she was supposed to burn herself into the funeral pyre along with her husband.

The teachings of Manu place women in two spheres - Mother and wife. According to him the destiny of the female child is to become a mother or wife. Unmarried women were supposed to obey her father or brother and a married woman to her husband and after the death of the husband, her sons. There is no place of women's liberation or freedom in Manu's teaching. From the beginning, she had to depend on men. Their workplaces were the four walls of the houses. They were destined to perform all domestic duties. They were considered as docile, weak, submissive creatures (*Abhala Narees*) powerless women and this patriarchal psychology became the major cause for the degraded status of women.

The decline in women's education, the practice of pre-puberty marriage and a whole lot of other institutional and conceptual influences of the period cumulatively established the supremacy of the male over the female and pushed Indian women into dependency and

subjugation. The crowning point of this great decline is the Law of Manu which clearly states: in childhood, a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be independent. According to the code of Manu a woman's business is to tend to her husband and to worship him as a god. (Tharakan, Tharakan 119)

After conquering India the Muslim rulers imposed their rules on Indian women who were already facing the evil practices like child marriage, *Devdasi* custom, Sati , an austere life of widow introduced by Hindu society itself; so in a way Indian women became victims by two social systems- one by Hindu society and the other by Muslims. With the coming of Muslim rulers in India the status of women decreased for there. It remained pathetic till the Indian Renaissance or British reforms. The advancement of Muslim rulers added to the insecurities or atrocities in women's lives. The concept of *Purdah* was introduced in India by Muslim rulers. The custom of *Purdah* did not affect the Muslim women only but it also affected the lives of Hindu women who were already suffering due to the rigid customs of Indian society itself. In the *Purdah* system they were expected to cover their entire bodies. Under the *Purdah* system women lost their public lives and became the prisoner within the four walls of the house. " The Muslim invasions from the eleventh century AD onwards did not help in the alleviation of women's condition.....the Muslim period saw the popularization of the *Burkha (Purdah)* and seclusion of women, polygamy and unilateral right of divorce for men." (Tharakan, Tharakan 120)

The point here is that nothing was wrong with the *Purdah* system if it just covers their bodies. Gradually the physical *Purdah* became the *Purdah* of mind. It did not veil their body but also their minds. Child marriages were the common practices among Muslims and Hindus. So they could not get proper education due to this. Earlier women had the voices in the selection processes of bridegrooms known as *Swayamvar*' but now she had no voice, no role in the whole process of her marriage. She was a mere puppet.

Indian women suffered from pitiable condition till the coming of the British Raj. When they came, there were witness many social evil practices against women. The *Purdah* and child marriage showed its negative impact on women. Because of this

system, they could not get the opportunities of education and lack of education led to their imprisoned life. They were confined within the four walls. The British found this system irrational. They changed the social, economic political and educational system which brought relief to women; they opened missionaries not for boys but for girls also. At the same time, few Indians also did work for the betterment of women. This is known as the Indian Renaissance. The story of suppression or oppression continued till the nineteenth century when the English came to India or some Indian reformers themselves brought the waves of Indian Renaissance. The prominent leaders of Indian Renaissance were Raja Ram Mohan Roy who established the Brahma Samaj, Ishwar Chanrad Vidyasagar found the Arya Samaj, Dayanand Saraswati, Keshab Chandra Sen, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, and Swami Vivekanand. They all contributed to the improvement of Indian women. Not only the Indian Renaissance did work for women, but the National Movement also brought out women from the four walls of their houses. Women like Sarojni Naidu, Vijaylakshmi Pandit, Kasturba Gandhi marked their presences.

The British brought the 'Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929'; this act abandoned the practice of child marriage, which increased the status of female education because child marriage was the major hindrances in female education. The 'Civil Indian Marriage Act 1872' brought more relaxation to women. The 14 December 1829 Act is significant and this abolished the Sati custom. After introducing this act the practice of Sati became a major crime. The 'Hindu Widow Remarriage Act' rescued the widows from the inhuman treatment. The Indian women who were earlier suppressed became more empowered by the coming of these reforms. 'The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act 1937' added more stability to them.

The process of women empowerment and reforms do not end here. After the independence in 1947 the Indian Constitution made several laws for the improvement of women's status. The constitution of India sustained the notion of equality between men and women. There are several articles and sections which give freedom, liberty or equality to women. Constitutional article 16 and 17, states against the indifference or decimations on the basis of cast, sex, race and religion. It focuses more on the equal opportunities for men and women. Article 325 or 326 gives political rights to women. They can vote, they can contest the election, and they can hold any political

position. Various acts were added such as 'Hindu Succession Act 1956' 'Dowry Prohibition Act 1961' in our constitution. Lots of provisions and laws were made for the protection of women but the story of women suppression did not end with the coming of these laws.

Still the women of the rural areas, the uneducated ones became the victim of atrocities' and they do not raise their voices. The reason might be that they were not aware of their fundamental rights which the constitution gave them. In fact, in some cases, educated women also do not raise their voice because of the societal pressures. In Indian society, there are lots of myths, folklore, epics of legendary women who were docile and submissive and who tolerated all kinds of torments. Not only men but women also heard these stories from the beginning and they have grown up hearing the stories of the Goddesses and epic women. Cinema too has played a very significant role to convey the idealized images of women to the public.

Indian cinema takes the stories from the epics and religious scriptures' and exhibits it. Through cinema, they create images of idealized women based on the epic women who would have all the idealized traits. In Indian history, there are two epics 'Ramayana and Mahabharata', Ramayana conveys the story of a perfect idealized wife Sita who does not leave her husband even in his miseries. Sita gets married to Rama and after their marriage Keikey one of the stepmothers of Rama asks her husband, King Dasaratha to exile Rama for 14 years so that her son Bharat would become the king. Rama willingly accepts this and goes for exile. Sita also joins him and goes with him. This incidence is known as *Vanvas*. Rama's younger brother Lakshman also accompanies them. They make abode in the forest and lives a banished life. In the absence of Rama and Lakshman, the king of Lanka, Ravan comes and grabs Sita. Then Rama fights against him for his wife. Eventually, they win and kill Ravan. They arrive in Ayudhaya after fourteen years. The people start to raise questions on Sita's chastity. Then Sita goes through from the fire bath to prove her purity. This fire bath was a sort of test to prove her purity that during her confinement no man has touched her. So the of chastity and purity of Sita became the legend in society and men started to imagine to have a chaste wife like Sita. Indians have heard these sorts of stories since their childhood and so this value system is imbibed in them. Eastern society started to compare a woman's chastity and purity with Sita. If

any woman found guilty she is supposed to go through by the fire bath like Sita. (Nandakumar)

Since it is so much a part of everyday life, people internalize the values in these stories for life. According to Pattanaik (2009) epics and stories that people hear all their lives, create subjective realities in their minds and these subjective realities are internalized, leading to the construction of their worldviews and perceptions. These worldviews then begin to dominate their ideas attitudes beliefs and approaches to life situations including management and business. (Nandakumar 45)

Another epic is Mahabharata which is the story of two sets of cousins, Pandavas and Kauravas. The Kauravas were selfish and plot the game of gambling where Pandavas suffer great losses. After losing all wealth and property they gamble on Draupadi. Then she was fetched into the court and was insulted by pulling her saree. This incidence is known as the '*Chir Haran*' of Draupadi. The point here is that a woman is considered as the personal property of a man who can use her for gambling. The Draupadi's case gives light to the fact that women are not safe in society. Incidences like rape, kidnapping, molestation and harassment can happen to them. In Indian cinema, such incidences occur with female protagonists where the male protagonists appear as the hero or the saviour of women.

The point here is why only these ways are used to exhibit male as the protector or saviour. The concept, man as the 'protector' of a woman who needs protection, is deeply rooted in the psychology of men and women which creates an imbalance in society. We also have more powerful and empowered Goddesses than Sita and Draupadi, like Kali and Durga. They eradicated the devils on this earth but neither the cinema nor literature or other media use these mythical figures to illustrate women's power because one reason might be men who always want submissive wives who can go through the fire bath or can be gambled. In society, any woman like Kali or Durga is not accepted who can assert their identity or fight against the evils. Men want to tame women and keep the controlling power in their hands. This is the reason they want women like Sita and Draupadi. The audience also likes to see these characters and that's why the popular culture (films, media, and literature) uses the examples of epic women who would be acceptable by the audience. (Nandakumar)

Women in all these epics and other mythological stories have been portrayed as being obedient, subservient, complying dutiful and enduring. Many a time they have been portrayed as being property to be gambled with or owned and these ideas tend to carry on in modern adapted ways into cinema creating a new set of stereotypes. This is how epic prototypes that conform to male fantasy. Become character stereotypes of women in Indian cinema. (Nandakumar 53)

Writers like Ismat Chughtai, Rasheed Jahan, Sadat Hasan Manto, Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain, Nayantara Sahgal, Q. N. Haider, Kamla Das, Anita Desai, Bharti Mukherjee and many others wrote against these stereotype images of women. They raised the basic issues of women; their fictional characters are based on real women and men. In order to understand Ismat Chughtai's feminist stance, we have to examine her life, as there is a strong connection between her writings and her biography. She confronted the same situation where society demanded her to be a submissive girl but each time she refused to be cowed down by society. She raised her voice. She fought for her basic rights.

Ismat Chughtai belongs to the group of those story writers (*Afsana Nigars*) who came after Prem Chand. Bedi, Manto, Krishan Chand are her contemporary writers. Ismat marked her presence in Urdu literature by her bold, penetrating and lively style. She played a constitutive role in the progress of Urdu short fiction. She picked the conflicts and disputes of middle-class Muslim society and penned those controversies. Her fiction mirrors her notions of women emancipation by portraying the characters of ordinary middle-class women. She tried to writing those issues which were hidden.

One of Urdu's boldest and most outspoken women writers, Ismat Chughtai played an important role in the development of modern Urdu short story as we know it today. Not only did she make strides in the areas of style and technique, but she also led her female contemporaries on a remarkable journey of self-awareness and undaunted creative expression. One must not forget that in the India of the thirties and forties, writing by and about women was tentative; it was generally held that literature has no place in women's lives. Making a break with tradition, Ismat proved that this was a fallacy. (Naqvi vii)

Her characters do not belong to any other planet but they are among it us. Ismat learnt a lot from her own experiences. Her very idea of women empowerment which she has put forward through her fiction came out from her own understanding of life, so in order to understand her fiction; we must go through her biographical details which made her a rebellious and reckless writer.

It is her power of close observation that helps Ismat Chughtai pick up seemingly trivial but immensely interesting and relevant details about people and their lives that are then woven into her stories. This ability is in evidence in story after story and allows her to expose the lives of the poor and the oppressed, and not just the middle class. (Asaduddin xxii)

Ismat Chughtai was born in an average middle-class family on 21 August 1915 in Badaun, a small city in U.P. Her father was Khan Bahadur Mirza Qaseem Beg Chughtai and her mother was Nusrat Khanam. She belonged to the dynasty of Changez Khan from her paternal side and from her maternal side to Hazrat Usman and Saleem Chishti. Ismat inherited virtues and qualities from her ancestors; Ismat's darling Q.N. Hyder has given her a title of 'Lady Changez Khan' in one of her articles. "Sometimes, I would call her 'Lady Changez Khan' because, in the battlefield of Urdu literature, she was a 'Chughtai' –an equestrian and an archer who never missed the mark." (Hyder 130)

Her father held the post of deputy collector in various places of U. P. and Rajasthan during the British Raj. He was a reliable and trustworthy officer of British Government who honoured him with the title of 'Khan Bahadur' in 1911. Her mother was a perfect idealized Indian wife who throughout her life remained submissive and docile. The major reason for such suppression is the lack of education. But her mother's situation was far much better than the other women of her age.

Ismat was the ninth child among ten children. Perhaps it was not as much difficult for Ismat's mother to give birth to ten children than to grow up them in a proper way. When Ismat's time came near her mother lost interest in her own bigoted children. In the introduction of *Vintage Chughtai* Tahira Naqvi has given a detailed description of the moments of her birth.

Ismat Chughtai was deprived by motherly affection. She could not find that love, warmth and tenderness which are the right of every child and this deprivation had always scraped her sensitive soul. Ismat herself realizes this negligence; she grew up like an on foot soldier among the bunch of children without any love, affection and devotion. Neither could she show her airs (*Nakhre*) nor did anyone give her amulet. She never felt herself an important part of someone's life.

A very small incidence of her childhood narrates that once while she was listening Marsiyas (elegies) in Majlis (gathering of Muslims especially shias), she was scared after listening to the entire incidence of Ali Asghar's martyr when the arrow was goaded into his throat. Ismat was shouting and crying even after returning home. When she came back she kept asking the same question to everyone that why did they prick the arrow in the throat? Why not in hand or in another part, but nobody thought that it is reasonable to give her an answer. They did not try to console her with love and affection. In fact, they used abusive and reproached language. They scolded her and left Ismat sobbing and sighing. Her mother did not console her with love and affection. This and similar other incidences left a negative impact on her innocent mind and soul and it became the part and parcel of her personality. The unhappy displeased treatment which she received at her own home from her own family can be traced in her fiction. This small incidence reveals that she was neglected and deprived of motherly love and affection. This deprivation also developed psychological complexes in her personality. She could not find herself an important part of anybody's life. The character of Shaman in 'Crooked Line' also suffers this deprivation and negligence. This shows that her biographical incidences left a great impression on her fiction.

Ismat's birth was like the coming of an unexpected guest at her house. A sweeper cut her cord so her brothers and sisters called her the daughter of a sweeper; she was stubborn and obstinate so people also called her by the name of *Bhutni*. Her sister had grown her up but when her sister got married, she was left an orphan. Her mother was inattentive towards her. Ismat was nurtured either by her nurse or by her sister but when her nurse went away and her sister got married she felt lonely and helpless because she was greatly attached to her sister. In her childhood, she frequently had the dreams of a small girl walking in darkness and that girl was Ismat

herself. These bitter pungent and acrimonious memories of her childhood left a negative impact on her mind and soul.

Ismat's elder sisters were expert in managing the house, knitting, stitching, needlework, embroidery. They learnt Urdu, Farsi and *Quran* at home. In comparison, to her sisters, Ismat was a solvent. Ismat was a kind of a girl who deviated herself from domestic duties which her sisters did. "My sisters were very competent .apart from Urdu, Persian and *Quran-Sharif*, they were well instructed in embroidery, stitching, knitting and cooking. In contrast, I was a total good –for – nothing. I was neither in the habit of stifling my desires nor had I any interest in such activities." (Chughtai 24)

Ismat had been grown up with her brothers. Whenever her rights were violated by her brothers she did complain to her father about their behaviour. One pillar among the others which gave her strength was her father also. Ismat seemed a headache for her brothers and this is the reason her brothers reproached her. Ismat got the company of her brothers due to the absence of her sisters and she participated with them in games. She also used to climb on trees, ride cycle and horse with her brothers. She had the strong support of her father. In her brother's company, she got a free and stressed out atmosphere which gave her courage, boldness and self-confidence. These traits were the mailing stone which made Ismat a rebellious and a reckless spirit.

However, for Ismat Apa, this could hardly be termed as a deterrent. Not only did she choose to question everything that came along, from early on, she challenged, fought and often won small battles against her elder brothers. Whether it was learning to climb guava trees, or riding the family horse.....since her three sisters were much older, Apa grew up in the company of her brothers. She would follow them in all their activities and even attempt to better them. Being teased for being a girl by her brothers and cousins only fuelled the passion to demonstrate that she was in no way inferior. (Negi 10)

The free atmosphere of home and the company of her brothers made her reckless. Her obstinacy and stubbornness became the prominent part of her personality. This rebelliousness had sensitized her especially for the rights of women. Her sensitivity increased with the passage of time which she has discussed with decency and

indecent in her fiction. In her own life, she fought for her rights. In her childhood, they had a white mare. Only her brothers used to ride on it, one by one with grace and dignity. Ismat used to watch that mare with greedy eyes because she was not allowed to ride. Her parents thought that riding is a male pursuit. But Ismat always had the strong desire to get a chance to ride; she thought that there is no difference between a girl and a boy. She did not tolerate that unequal treatment. She demanded that white mare for herself. According to her, this was the first incidence when she fought for her right instead of remaining silent and suppressed. She raised her voice and expressed her desires.

Whenever I felt that my rights had been infringed I presented my case in my father's court for adjudication.....I taped the boys, learnt to climb trees and to trace on the bicycle everywhere. At each step, I was made to bite the dust. For instance, each of my brothers took turns riding our horse but as soon as I sat on it, they would start grumbling .when I played Gilli-danda. I would lose miserably. If I insisted on playing football, I got kicked in the face. My brothers always complained about my stubbornness. I was only a headache for them. (Negi 10,11)

The rebelliousness and recklessness which were the part and parcel of Ismat's personality was the offshoot of the companionship of her brothers and also the social circumstances which she was witnessing every day. On one hand she was influenced by the literal and reasonable thoughts of her family and on the other hand her childhood also which was spent seeing the unequal and unjust treatment of the society, especially the intolerable behaviour with women affected her. Ismat felt suffocated by the conservative atmosphere of Agra. There she met with those girls who fear even from their own breathes. She did not develop a friendship with them, abhorred those old women who objected to Ismat when she played with her brothers. In '*Punjab Shahee*' Street of Agra, she witnessed women whose husbands beat them and they did not raise their voices. They silently tolerated the injustice and felt as if they were being grinded in mill day and night, or as they are dumb and deaf animal and not a human being. The depraved status of women encroached her soul. These and similar other incidences became the stuff of her stories.

Ismat's brothers were her childhood companions so her likes and dislikes, even her activities were similar to her brothers. Her mother did not like Ismat's activities which she considered as manly traits not suitable for women. Her mother wanted to confine her within a circle made for women. But she did not let herself cowed down by her mother. She did not follow the straight line drawn for women by society. She made her own crooked line; she wanted to crush all the obstacles which were coming in her ways. She was constant and firmly determined in her decisions. Although she was grown up with her brothers, she received unequal treatment and therefore decided to prove her worth.

Ismat was a keen observer of society and whatever she observed she portrayed all those incidences into her fiction. One of Ismat's childhood friend Mangu got married very early but she was not leading a happy married life because she could not produce a son. She came to her parental house along with her three daughters. She narrated her story to Ismat that how her mother in law and her husband beat her because she could not give birth to a son. Her mother -in -law asked her son to remarry so that they would have a son by his second wife. Mango shares her concerns with Ismat if her husband would get married, then where would she go? Her parents would not keep her at their house due to the financial crisis and how she would survive into this world without any financial assistance? After a few years when she came back this Mangu was different from the earlier one. When Ismat asked her about this change she told her that she was under the cast of some evil shadows and in that state, she once beat her husband and her mother in law, then a man who was expert in casting off the evil spirits came. He told her husband that her mother in law is inauspicious for his family and if she continues to stay with them, then he would become the father of seven daughters then her husband decided to stay alone with Mangu. He left his mother and shifted elsewhere with Mangu. Mangu was the true example of a helpless woman. There are various other examples similar to Mangu, where Ismat observed the society's desolate and an unpleasant picture. The women of her neighbourhood also received tortures either by their husbands or by their in-laws. These women spend their nights and days in domestic work so that their in-laws and husbands provide there bread, shelter and clothes.

Mangu could come out from her miserable situation because somehow her luck helped her. There are many women who are living a life like Mangu and

throughout they suffer. Ismat picked the stuff around her and portrayed them in her stories. Ismat has given the idea of women empowerment and women emancipation. She believed that only education can help such women to come out from their circumstances because education provides the opportunity to become financially independent.

Her family was progressive but this progressiveness was only for boys. They had the old traditional conservative mentality for female education. "Our family was Progressive, but this attitude was acceptable only for boys. I was after all just a girl. Every woman in the family –mother, aunt, sister- was terrorized .society had fixed a station for her. If she overstepped these limits; she would have to pay the price. Too much education was dangerous." (Chughtai 28)

Among her family members only her father and brother favoured her education. Other members had same old conservative opinion on female education. Initially, Ismat was taught Farsi like her elder sisters but her thrust of knowledge could not fulfil, she wanted to learn English like her brothers. Ismat craved to get a proper formal education which she received but she did not get everything in platter like her brothers.

She had to fight for her education and she fought. She proved wrong society's conception for female education which believed that family's status would be defamed if their women get educated. They believed that sending them into boarding is very much similar to converting them into Christianity or allowing them to become prostitutes.

The virulence with which women's education was resisted is seen in the case of her elder sisters who were sent to boarding school by their father. The entire family stood together against himthe comment made by ostensibly sensible people in her extended family that educating girls was worse than prostituting them only indicated the lengths to which people were ready to go in their opposition to women's education. (Assaduddin xix)

Ismat believed that this conservatism and rigidity will never let a woman to be educated. This is the old perished notions which have paralyzed the society. But

Ismat was an optimist; she tried her best to bring positivity from this darkness. She never let despair and dejection defeat her.

Instead of educating Ismat, her mother had plans for her marriage. Ismat came to know about her mother's plan when she gave her a letter to put on Abba Miya's desk. Before keeping the letter, she opened and read that letter which was written on her behalf, a message from her side to Abba Miya. Along with the letter she also found a picture of a young boy. Now she was sure that her mother is planning for her marriage. But at this point in time, Ismat was dreaming to get an education rather than marriage. She wrote a letter to her brother and requested him to stop her mother but he replied by saying that he knows the boy who is his friend's younger brother who is a deputy collector and belongs to a reputed family of Moradabad. They have seen Ismat in her childhood and if she wants to continue her studies she can appear in exams as a private candidate. Instead of giving up her dreams this advice gave more strength to her plans.

In order to get rid of this trouble Ismat wrote a letter to her cousin Jugnu where she requested him to send a letter to her parents where he would express his desire for Ismat. She knew that Jugnu is an eligible bachelor whose parents usually want for their daughters. When her parents received a letter from Jugnu, they stopped searching marriage proposals for Ismat. So in that way, her plan succeeded and she got time to complete her education. This small incident shows the depth of her determination, her wit and intelligence. Once she decided something then she did that, no matter what conditions were there.

Now her mother was arranging dowry for her, on the other hand, she was planning to get admission in Aligarh. Ismat expressed her desire to her father that she wants to get admission in Aligarh but she received the expected answer that what would she do by getting a higher education? He suggested her that she should learn some domestic traits like stitching, cooking, and knitting like her elder sisters. She gave a threat by saying that she would go to some missionary and convert to Christianity and then they will allow her for education. She pretended as if she was on a hunger strike.

After seeing Ismat's firm determination and her desperate desire for education, her father allowed her by giving her some money which he had collected for her

marriage. Abba Miya's act reveals that somehow he was pressurized by societal norms but when he saw his daughter's firm determination he preferred education over marriage. "Seeing her passion for education, he finally agreed to send her to school at Aligarh. For Ismat, it was the first major step towards empowerment." (Asaduddin XV)

Ismat was different from the other girls of her age. She never followed the defined role which was made for woman. She bravely and courageously fought for her rights. This reveals her devotion and commitment to her dreams. She had the crystal idea that if a woman wants to liberate herself from the cages of a man then she should educate herself for then she would no longer be dependent on any men for bread and for her survival. When she fought for her education she was just only thirteen or fifteen years old. She was not worldly-wise but the depth of her dreams gave her the strength to fight against all the hindrances.

The tales of her struggle does not end here at each and every step she had to fight, sometimes against her family sometimes against the outsider. In Aligarh, she got admission in class ninth but Ismat wanted to enrol herself in class tenth and here again by her boldness firm determination and courage she succeeded. Alabi (wife of Sheikh Abdullah founder of Women's College, Aligarh) eventually helped her and she was enrolled in class tenth. She had the calibre to fight against any situation.

Ismat also had the leadership quality. She was famous among other students. She was the president of the Debating Society. She very actively participated in sports, debates and discussions while she was in Aligarh. " Hostel life meant a new kind of freedom for her, freedom to mould her life the way she wantedshe took an active part in debates and elocutions that sharpened her wit and taught her how to win arguments and gain an advantage over her adversaries." (Asadaduddin xv)

A storm was aroused by few religious groups after the publication of *Angarey*. Rasheed Jahan was one of the contributors of *Angarey*. He targeted Abdullah family and accused Sheikh Abdullah Sahib and called Women's College as a House of Prostitute. This is corrupting the society and it should be closed though women's college was a great contribution of Shaikh Abdullah Sahab, which was imparting the light of knowledge in the darkness.

In order to search the indecency and obscenity, Ismat read *Angarey* but she did not find a single word which could prove the obscenity. She gave an answer to Molvi Saheb by writing an article in which she told him that Muslim girls are already deprived and backward and if somehow they get an opportunity of educating themselves then these Molvis restrain them. If this college will close then you will find our dead bodies Ismat further wrote that they are not alone in this fight, outside the college we have six thousand brothers who would protect us, after getting this message six thousand boys took stand against Molvi sahib and beat him. It was not Ismat's victory alone but it was the victory of all women who had the desire of education. By this act, she built a gap between the girls of Abdullah College and the boys of the university. This very incidence and other incidence are enough to prove that she had all the traits of a good leader. She always handled the situation and addressed the girls like a true leader. She very wisely and brilliantly presented girl's issues to the teachers and to the administration as well.

After completing her F.A. from Aligarh she was planning to study at I.T. College Lucknow but here again she faced the similar situation when she proposed her further plans. This time also she applied the same trick of hunger strike. After four days her father allowed her for further studies. In *Kaghazi Hain Pairhan Mere* she has written that first time she saw cemented roads in Lucknow. She was astonished on seeing the dignified and grand building of I.T. College Lucknow. Here she was influenced by an English professor. The liberated and educated atmosphere of Lucknow College polished her talents which gave consistency and staidness to her dreams. Here, she got a chance to talk to the opposite sex which broke her hesitation. According to the customs of I T College the senior girls used to pass the lamp to their juniors by saying that it is the light of knowledge which should not vanish. Ismat kept lightening the lamp by giving marvellous fiction to the world. Education made her a writer, a social scientist.

After completing her studies from Lucknow, she went to Jawara and stayed for one year but staying in Jawara was like a horrible dream. Here she had seen an administrative system which was corrupt from head to toe. Somehow she could liberate herself from the control of Nawab. After Jawara she went to Baraeli where she was appointed as the headmistress of Islamia College, from Baraeli she went to Aligarh for B.T. After getting her degree Ismat went to Jodhpur. Here, she was again

appointed the headmistress Bareilly. This was her third posting from Jodhpur. She shifted to Mumbai where she was appointed as a school inspector. In Mumbai, Ismat met with Shahid Latif who was a story writer. Her friendship developed with Shahid. They were enjoying each other's company which her brother did not like. He asked Jugnu to propose to Ismat. When Jugnu proposed to her Ismat replied you are very honest and gentle person, you helped me in my critical situation how can I spoil your life? She knows that Jugnu needs a docile, soft-spoken, simple and domestic girl. She knows she is not made for that role. This is the best part of her personality that she accepted her weaknesses. She told to Shahid that she is not that traditional wife who consoles her husband. She is not an obedient or virtuous a woman. In short, she was not a 'husband worshipper' woman. She is a woman who has the courage to speak out her mind before a person with whom she is getting married.

Ismat had two daughters from Shahid, Seema and Sabreena. Her elder daughter Seema married a Hindu boy who died very early but she did not take even a single penny from her husband's property. Seema made an advertisement film with her few friends and send her son to abroad for graduation. Her second daughter married a *Parsi* boy. Ismat's two nephews married Parsi and Hindu girls. This gesture shows a liberal and a radical picture of her family.

In April 1967, Shahid died but she took his death very practically. When people came to console her, she said this is the way of the world. Birth and death is natural processes. She took an example from her drawing room furniture to illustrate her point that when this furniture would be out of fashion she will replace it with new furniture. When a human being becomes old and useless then they die and a new generation comes. This shows that she was a practical woman and took everything realistically. She was lively and energetic even in her old age. In this age, she wrote with the same passion and spirit as she wrote in her young age. But Ismat left writing when she got mentally and physically weak. She gave her incomplete stories to the publication house. This indicated that she resigned from her writing career. When an interviewer asked her why she did not write? She replied, she has written enough now let a new generation come and write.

On 24 October 1991 Ismat was found dead on her bed. Before her death, she once said to Q. N. Hayder that she fears from the darkness of the grave and she will

feel suffocation in the grave. Q. N. Hayder answered her by saying, in our graves we would be dead so how can you or anybody feel suffocation? Then Ismat said 'nobody knows at which moment Allah relive our dead bodies.' So she expressed her wish that she would prefer to burn. She made two wills 'burn my dead body', or 'do' not spread the news of my death'. So, on her death, few people could come such as her daughters or her grandson.

Ismat Apa would often say, 'I am very scared of the grave. They bury you beneath a pile of mud. One would suffocate.' Once I asked how one could choke when one was not breathing. 'Oh no! How do you know, your breathing may come back anytime. I'd rather be cremated.' It was to Ismat Apa's credit that she actually practised what she preached. (Hyder 133)

There is an old saying that death is in the hands of alive. Living beings have the full authority over the dead bodies. But Ismat changed this concept also. Her cremation took place according to her will. It meant her complete authority over herself. When she was alive she did not hear anybody's words. She did what she thought was right. Before her death she wrote a letter to Sri Gangadhar in which she revealed her desire that she wants to be burnt, she will not prefer to cover her dead body in the grave. This is her body, her mind, her heart and her soul and so she should have a complete right over it. After her death, she was cremated according to her will. Throughout her life, she and her writings remained in controversies and her death also became the most controversial issue.

SHE DIED AS SHE LIVED, in the midst of controversy, doing her own thing. The news that she had left instructions that she was to be cremated became a cause for heated debate in both India and Pakistan and even those who knew her, who expected her to be unpredictable, were taken by surprise. (37 Naqvi)

Ismat had visited various countries like Chekoslavia, Finland, England, Russia, and China where people were attracted by her charismatic personality. Ismat never shared her pain with others. In extreme anguish and misery, she used to play Rami or chewed betel or smoke cigarettes. The one word she hated in her life was 'sympathy'. She was irritated when people sympathised with her. She neither

sympathised others nor did she expect it from anyone. Her contribution to Urdu literature is incredible. Her writings are excellent and remarkable even in the contemporary scenario. This elevates her status as a great writer of Urdu fiction.

An overview of her works: *Bachpan* (1937) *Dheet* (1938, her soliloquy) *Kafir* (1938) *Gainda* (1938) *Neera* (1939) *Uske Khuwab* (1940) *Bin bulaye Mehman* (1940) *Kaliyan* (1941, collection of short stories) *Lihaaf* (1942) *Chotein* (1942, collection of short stories also include the preface written by Krishan Chander) *Chui Mui* (1952, collection of short stories, reportage and 14 essays) *Nanni ki Nani* (1954) *Muttee Maalish* (1956) *Chauthi ka Joda* (1961) *Zahar ka Payala* (1965) *Teesra Haath* (1980) *Peni* (1983) *Muqaddas Farz* (1983) *Jo Amman Mili to Kahani mili* (1984) *Kanya Daan* (1985) *Sundersi* (1986) *Mokha* (1987) *Aakhri Kahani* (1992, last story of Ismat published in Biswin Sadi after her death) *Fasadi* (1938) collection of six Radio plays (1955) *Intikhab* (1939) *Dhani Bakein* (1945) *Dozakhi* (1960) *Tanhai ka Zahar* (1977) *Ziddi* (1939) *Dil ki Duniya* (1962) *Teen Anaari* (1964) *Ajeeb Admi* (1968) *Baandi* (1971) *Jangli Kabootar* (1971) *Tehri Lakeer* (1945) *Masooma* (1962) *Saudaai* (1966) *Ek Qatra-e-khhon* (1976) *Kaghazi Hain Pairhan Mere* (1979) Her contribution in Films are *Ziddi* (1948, Dev Anand and Kamini Kaushal) *Aarzo* (1950 Dilip Kumar and Kamni Kaushal) *Sheesh* (1952 Sajjan and Nargis) *Faraib* (1953 Kishor Kumar and Shakuntala) *Sone ki Chidiya* (1958 Talat Menmood and Nutan) *Garam Hawa* (1973 Balraj Sahani and Geeta Sidhartha) *Junoon* (1973 Shashi Kapoor and Jennifer Kendal)

Ismat read French and Russian fiction writers like Tolstoy, Gorky, Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Balzac Zola and Maupassant. She also read Bernard Shaw, Shakespeare, and Wordsworth. She acknowledged that she was influenced by Shaw. The two literary personalities who were inspirations for Ismat were Azeem Beg Chughtai, her brother and Rashid Jahan daughter of Sheikh Abdullah.

Azeem Beg was the only person in her family who encouraged her for writing. He also taught her English, Urdu, history, the *Quran* and *Hadith*. He used to give her few paragraphs to translate from English to Urdu and from Urdu to English. Ismat wrote *Dozakhi* which is the portrayal of Azeem Beg.

Before Ismat Chughtai, a few women writers wrote on women's issues. They focused on female's education. They might be inspired by Indian Renaissance or

British reforms but when Ismat started to write she touched the taboo issues. The writers before her had the urge to improve the status of women. They especially targeted the *Purdah* ridden women but they were also conscious of their limitations. They consciously adapted the style, language and theme for their works. They kept in mind the *Haya and Sharam* (shyness and timidity) of women. They were not supposed to write anything which could distort the image of an ideal mother, wife, sister or a daughter.

Rasheed Jahan's *Angarey* created the controversy in society. She was accused of vulgarity, obscenity, or indecent writing. Likewise, Rasheed Jahan's *Angarey* Ismat Chughtai's *Lihaaf* was banned due to the same accusation. She was criticised that how a Muslim middle-class woman does could write on lesbianism? Women at that time even were not supposed to talk openly about their sexuality so how does a woman from 'Sharif' family could write on taboo topics. Ismat considered Rasheed Jahan her mentor. The fearlessness and the recklessness we trace in her writings is in one way or the other a gift of Rasheed Jahan. Likewise, Jahan Ismat hated the conservative orthodox narrow mentality of the eastern people.

Ismat wrote especially on a patriarchal system which creates the image of an Ideal woman. She not only read Rasheed Jahan but was inspired by her life also. The themes which she touched, Ismat explored more into that and gave minute details. Saadat Hasan Manto was Ismat's close friend. He also wrote with the same passion and dedication in the literary arenas. When scholars talk about Ismat they also talk about Manto. Manto himself was the admirer of Ismat's blunt and fearless style of writing. When Ismat was expecting Manto commented that it is hard for him to believe on Ismat's pregnancy due to her bold feminist stance but Ismat made it clear to him that talking about the rights of women does not mean that she is against the image of motherhood. Her feminist approach does not distort or bring chaos in the family. She emphasized women to consider as human beings. Rasheed Jahan, Manto and Ismat wrote in a similar line all three had written fearlessly without considering the results of their writings. The characters of these writers are marginalized. The similarity among them is that all three of them become the target of Muslim orthodox society. The accusations of obscene indecency and vulgarity are common in their writings.

When Ismat first saw Rasheed Jahan, she was wearing a sleeveless blouse in winter and others were wearing coats and heavy woollens. Apart from her physical appearance she was also impressed by her words and thoughts when she heard her first time. At that time she was known for *Angarey*. The influence of Rasheed Jahan brought changes in Ismat's imagination which broke the image of her romantic heroes.

If Azeem Beg nursed her literary talents from an early age Rasheed Jahan divested her of all romantic and fanciful notions about man-woman relationships and brought her in touch with the reality of everyday life in which women occupied a secondary position. Ismat Chughtai acknowledges the handsome heroes and pretty heroines of my stories the candle like fingers, the lime blossoms and crimson outfits all vanished into thin air. The earthly Rasheed Jahan simply shattered all my ivory idols to pieces.....Life, stark, necked stood before me. (Asaduddin xviii)

The influence of Rasheed Jahan changed her perception and attitude. Ismat accepted her as a role model. The young female characters of Ismat's stories extracted various qualities from Rasheed Jahan. "In 1937 Rasheed apa became the Rasheed Jahan of *Angarey* (flames) now children too could read her slandering words. And then my handsome doctor hero of the long slender fingers, the orange blossoms and crimson coverlets, all disappeared in a puff of air. The Rasheed apa who was cast in clay destroyed all my marble statues." (Naqvi 107)

Ismat first met her at her school in Aligarh. She was astonished by her blunt and straight words. She assembled those traits into the women of her stories. The Second time she met with her was in a meeting of progressive writer's association at Lucknow in 1936.

Life appeared before me all its nakedness. Those who have met Rasheed Apa know her well. If those very people encounter the heroines of my stories they will assume that she and Rasheed apa are twins because I simply picked Rasheed apa up and placed her on the shelf of my Afsaana; she is the only one who could have been the heroine in the world of my imagination but when I think carefully my stories I realize that I have only been able to seize Rasheed Apa's boldness and her candour. Her rich overwhelmingly impressive personality has evaded my grasp. (Chughtai 107,108)

After the publication of *Angarey*, the AIPWA organized a conference in Lucknow in 1936. The motto of this conference was to extend the canvas where the writers could write for the betterment of society and nation. Since last few years, the institutional space was limited due to certain restrictions. The progressive writer's association basically wanted to break the certain imposed limitations on the writers. They believed in 'Art for Life sake' not 'Art for Art's sake'. They considered literature as a mirror where the true picture of society should be reflected. The country's scenario gave birth to the new literary trend when India was facing the issues of anti-colonialism, national independence, anti-imperialism social and economic revolution. The progressive movement was greatly affected by the communist and socialist ideologies.

Along with Ismat, Manto, Sajjad Zaheer and Krishan Chander belonged to Progressive Writer's Association. She was greatly influenced by the trends of PWA. The writers who felt suffocation or frustrated became active members of PWA. By associating with the progressive movement they found an atmosphere where they could write fearlessly. Ismat herself acknowledges that her association with Progressive Movement benefited her. She belonged to that group of progressive writers who were rebellious, outspoken, obstinate and stubborn. She liked the slogan of this movement 'Progressive Writer's Association'. This indicates that it demanded progress in every sphere of life. The slogan itself shows its radical ideas.

In 1936 she first attended the meeting of this association when she was doing B A from Lucknow. The second time she met with the members of this association, in Bombay, when Mulk Raj Anand invited them in 1945. The members of this movement wanted to break the old rigid traditional norms which were useless in contemporary scenario. Ismat open- heartedly accepted the aims and agendas of P.W.A. She was emotionally attached to the members of this association. During the time of partition when her relatives migrated to Pakistan Ismat received love and affection in the company of the members of this movement. Though after few decades the association split, no longer had meetings taken place but there was the group of few intellectuals who had a strong bond with each other. They continued the trends of P.W.A.

Even after partition, it remained alive. According to Ismat the Progressive Movement will live till the writers have the courage to write the truth fearlessly and bluntly. It will be alive until they have the spirit of progressivism. Its existence does not base on few names but is based on those intellectual dreams which remain in the progressive minds, when one interviewer asked her that 'has P.W.A. Died?' She replied that 'do you consider me the part of P.W. A? Look I am alive. Then how can you say it has died? She said this Movement did not start in 1940 and it will die after the death of its members. It started when the first-time man raised his voice against injustices, oppressions, discriminations and inequalities.

It wasn't as if progressivism was born in the year 1935 or 1940, and died at the dispersal of a group of people. The Progressive Movement's foundation stone was laid when the first man in the history of mankind, groaned under the oppression experienced through injustice, the usurpation of his rights, exploitation, inequality and tyranny. As long as there is the possibility of progress on this planet, progressivism will live. Till such time as the big fish swallows the smaller one, progressivism will indeed remain alive. (Chughtai 129)

The writers did not only focus on the political, social and economic realities but they also paid their attention towards the women's issues. The Urdu journal played a significant role raising certain female issues like educational rights of women rather than just preparing them for house management and child rearing. A few women also contributed by sharing their experiences. They raised their voice against the unequal treatment of women. Other women writers contributed by their writings but their canvas was limited. They only talked about those issues which were apparent.

Writers like Rasheed Jahan and later Ismat Chughtai touched these issues. They learnt a lot from their own experiences. They stepped out and observed the society. They received proper schooling and proper higher education. They fought against societal norms. Like Rasheed Jahan's *Angarey* and Ismat's *Lihaaf* was banned on the basis that such fiction is corrupting the 'Sharif' women but it was Ismat Chughtai who preferred to go through the trial rather than remaining quiet. In *Lihaaf* she dealt with the female sexuality which was not familiar in India. Like Rasheed Jahan, she claimed that writer has the authority like God who can treat any theme as

the way she /he wants. For the accusation of obscenity, she declared there is no obscenity in her writing and if anybody finds it then it is not her fault. She has portrayed the society and if obscenity exists in society one must pay attention in eradicating it rather than banning writings like *Lihaaf* and *Angarey*.

The news of the trial brought criticism inside and outside her family. Her father in law sent a letter to Shahid after getting the news of the trial where he advised her to chant the name of Allah, offer *Namaz* or recite Quran rather than writing such vulgarity. "When newspapers published the news Shahid received a touching letter from my father in law which ran thus: 'try to reason with *Dulhan*. Tell her to chant the name of Allah and the prophet. A lawsuit is bad enough that too for obscenity. We are very worried. May God help you?" (Chughtai 2)

Her story *Lihaaf* was published in 1942 before her marriage with Shahid. In December 1944 she received summon against her story. Both Manto and Ismat went together to Lahore. The judge enquired her that did she write this story? She replied yes. In Manto's story *the* word chest was found obscene. He defended himself by saying "a woman's chest must be called breast, not peanuts." (Chughtai 34) when Ismat wrote *Lihaaf* she narrated it to her sister in law. She recognized the character that had been portrayed into it. The character of Begum Jaan was based on a woman with whom she met when she was in Aligarh. Later when she read the story she could identify herself of Begum Jaan. If we closely examine *Lihaaf* then we do not find any word which indicates obscenity. Nothing has been directly said.

The works of Ismat and Rasheed Jahan and many others like them made two significant contributions. First, they extended the canvas of fiction and second they tagged questions on the patriarchal system. Ismat's work emphasize to critical examination of the stured hierarchies of Indian society. The society did not accept her. They raised questions on her but she had gone through all those allegations and considered herself as the great dame of Urdu fiction writing. With the coming of Ismat on the literary scene, new gates have opened which were closed since long ago; new wind of change and challenges blew. The stories of women suppression and oppression inside and outside the four walls came on the surface. Initially, when Ismat started to talk about the forbidden or unacceptable issues she was seen as an obscene,

vulgar and indecent writer because showed the ugly but realistic picture to the patriarchal society which they could not accept.

Various writers like Sadaat Hasan Manto, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Mahommad Hasan Askari, Krishan Chander, and Q.N. Hayder have written on her life, works, her literary style and language. Each writer has picked one specific point of her personality. None could fold up the each point together. If we jot down all the images together then a clear picture of her personality emerges. She is known as one of the rebellious writers because she spoke the truth. She expressed her rebellion with her pen. She did not create any character based on her imagination. Her characters are extracted from the real world.

She thought that the shyness of women is hypocrisy, tolerance is timidity. She hated artificialities like heavy make ups and expensive embroidered dresses. She preferred to remain original, carrying these artificialities according to her are like hiding one's vices. When she went to Russia she met with few girls who were not adorned with heavy make ups, expensive jewellery and dresses. When Ismat asked them they replied that they did not feel the need of adorning themselves because they think that they would not look ugly without makeup. They believe in purity and originality 'Originality of nature, originality of beauty.'

Ismat in her fiction has shown the injustices and intolerable behaviour towards women with anger. The readers in her fiction can see the picture of middle-class women who are suppressed. Ismat wrote about female issues when the canvas of women's writing was limited.

She was a writer (and a good one at that) when women were discouraged from involving themselves in intellectual pursuits; she developed the markings of a feminist in the early forties when the concept of feminism was in its nascent stage, even in the west; she spoke her mind unreservedly; she was afraid of no one, nothing; she was a rebel. (Naqvi 37)

Through her experiences and keen observation, she found that the major reason for women's miserable condition is their economic dependence on men. She can get rid of this slavery if she gets a proper education and can become economically

independent. An uneducated woman who does not have any source of income is bound to tie down herself with her husband even though he tortures her. She does this just to get food, shelter or livelihood. Here her ideology is similar to Virginia Woolf who also advocated for the economically independent woman.

Through her fiction, Ismat introduced the issues and problems of middle-class Muslim society. She wrote against the conventions for those women who were behind the *Purdah*. The female issues which were taboo like sexuality, gender equalities for the women were taken up by Ismat. It was an unconventional act which she did fearlessly. To some extent, we can also consider her a social scientist because through her writings she has shown that how does patriarchy operate and work in the society? Her fearless and steadfast style brought criticism on her writing but never bothered about criticism and that is the reason she is still acclaimed as an unforgettable legendary iconoclast writer.

Ismat did never like *Purdah*. She had the view that physical *Purdah* brings the *Purdah* of mind. It does not only veils women's body but it also covers women's mind. It does not allow them to think and act freely. It does not let them emancipate themselves and this is the reason she vituperated *Purdah* because she considered it a tool of the patriarchy. "The *Purdah* was not merely physical segregation; women themselves internalized the mores of the patriarchal society to such an extent that they evinced symptoms of what may be termed as '*Purdah* of the mind'." (Asaduddin xix) This patriarchal social system always targeted the marginalized ones. Through her fiction, Ismat catechizes this system which discriminates men and women on the basis of sexual differences.

As Simone de Beauvoir, Ismat was also against the social constructive identity of women. 'One is not born a woman, rather becomes a woman'. A recent social activist Kamla Bhasin has the similar ideas on gender constructive identity. According to her sex is natural but gender is something which society creates. One's Sex belongs to her/his body and their genitals or reproductive organs which are natural determine one's identity as a man or woman but gender is far different from this discourse. It is social, constructive and manmade which can be changed because it is not natural phenomena. "Gender is social –cultural and man-made, gender is social cultural and refers to the masculine and feminine qualities, behaviour patterns, roles and

responsibilities etc. Gender is variable; it changes from time to time culture to culture even family to family. Gender can be changed." (Bhasin 3)

Through her writings, Ismat sensitized the readers for marginalized women who are suppressed by the social constructive phenomena of gender. The gender differences do not allow women to be self-reliant and autonomous. Ismat has not only raised women's issues but she also has created those women characters who are the examples of 'New Women'. These characters are like the clarion call that elevates from their degraded status and find their own identities. Her fiction is a sort of mirror where a woman's social, political economic status can be traced. Her various female characters are illiterate, most of them are victims of child marriages, dowries, and few of them could not produce a son. Her target is to exhibit women's lives from different perspectives and dimensions and to prove that how they become victims of circumstance. According to Ismat education is one of the essential elements of women's emancipation and empowerment.

The unafraid, valiant, courageous and valorous style of writing is a part of Ismat's fiction. She did not give the photographic presentation of women but she goes deep into their psychology. She allows her readers to penetrate into the minds of her characters. So by going deep into the minds of her characters, the readers come to know what women think or feel about their sexuality and about which they cannot talk openly. Ismat talked on those issues of women which a woman could feel but is not allowed to speak. Ismat's style proved beneficial because it provided a better understanding of female sexuality. Her writing sensitizes men and women for those women who struggle and suffer. "Ismat preferred to characterize her writing as photography rather than painting; some of her plots are taken directly from real life with minimal changes, and biographical and historical contexts are extremely important for uncovering the significance of her works." (Asaduddin xv)

After keenly observing the society Ismat explored that it is the patriarchy which works behind the maltreatment or exploitation of women. This patriarchal system is not new but it is deeply rooted in society. In her book 'understanding gender' Kamla Bhasin has explained that how patriarchy works and creates gender discrimination in society.

But in reality, it is quite difficult to establish what is natural and what is socially constructed, because as soon as the child is born families and society begin the process of gendering. In many South Asian cultures the birth of a son has celebrated the birth of a daughter is bemoaned; sons are showed with love, respect, better food and better health care. Boys are encouraged to be tough and outgoing; girls are encouraged to be demure and homebound. There is nothing in a girl's body which stops her from wearing shorts or climbing trees or riding bicycles, and there is nothing in a boy's body which stops him from playing with dolls, looking after younger siblings or helping with cooking or cleaning the house. All these differences are gender differences and they are created by society. (Bhasin 4)

The basic essence of her fiction is to consider a woman as a human being. She emphasized that first; a woman is a human being, an independent citizen, then a daughter, sister, wife or mother. They should have equal opportunities and rights like men. Ismat did not present the female issues objectively. She observed the society with keen eyes. She felt their pain and then presented it in her fiction. The pain which she felt urged her to create such realistic characters. She projected those characters that do not follow society's prescribed rules and regulations. She herself never obeyed restrictions which she found illogical and unreasonable.

Many short stories of Ismat Chughtai dealt with the mechanism of patriarchy that how and where it traps a woman. The patriarchy creates separate public and private spheres of men and women. This categorization starts from day one when a child comes into this world. Patriarchy creates gender constructive identities and associates feminine and masculine attributes to them.

Everyone is born male or female and our sex can be determined simply by looking at our genitalia. But every culture has its ways of valuing girls and boys and assigning those different roles responses and attributes. All the social and cultural packaging that is done for girls and boys from birth onward is gendering. Each society slowly transforms a male or female into a man or woman, into masculine and feminine, with different qualities behaviour pattern, roles,

responsibilities, rights and expectations. Unlike sex which is biological, the gender identities of women and men psychologically and socially- which means historically and culturally-determined.

(Bhasin 2)

Ismat has been criticized that she has written only about female sexuality. After closely examining her works, various other themes also emerge. She has also written about dowry, child marriage, lesbianism, prostitution and women empowerment. Ismat is the product of that country which is known for its diversity, unity and secularism. She has written various stories on Hindu Muslim unity. After the partition of India and Pakistan, people asked her why she stayed in India when her relatives had migrated. Her answer was very simple. She is Muslim only by her religion, she was born and lived in India and so here she has an equal share on its soil, water and in everything. She had close relations with Hindus also. Since her childhood, Ismat had seen various Hindu guests who very frequently visited to her home. In a few short stories she has pictured the Hindu Muslim riots, India and Pakistan's partition but it ends with the unity of both the communities. The way she was cremated is itself an example of her secular approach.

Initially, she read her brother's stories which were followed by Hijab Ismail, Majnu Gorakhpuri, Najaz Ftahpuri. She imagined the fictional characters of those writers as her own self. Initially, she wrote a few romantic stories by imagining herself as the heroine of those stories "Writing in secret, she produced melodramatic stories that would have been regarded as 'dirty' and she knew she would be severely reprimanded if they were discovered. She soon realized that what she had written so far was below par and ineffective, so she tore everything up and embarked on a course of serious study." (Naqvi Ix)

She began her literary career by writing short stories. She learnt a lot from the writers which she read. They taught her how to use the pen but 'where' and 'why' she has to use her pen, she learnt from her keen observation, own experiences, and from her own understanding of life. The society raised many allegations and objections to her writings. When she used to write she kept one notion in her mind that she is just pulling down the curtains to show the things happening behind it.

Ismat introduced a 'New *Zuban*' (language) '*Begmati zubaan*' into a literary world which is full of colloquial flavour, idioms, and paradoxes. She writes about her writings:

The pen is my provider as well as my friend and confidant, a friend who keeps me company in my hours of loneliness. While it was with me I have never felt alone. I can send for any person and at any moment, through this udankhatola and when they arrive I can say anything I want to them- make them laugh, cry, burn them to the cylinder and if I so desire like puppets before me. In those moments I feel some of the power of the creature. (Chughtai 17)

Ismat learnt the art of narrating a story from her elder brother Azim Beg Chughtai. In *Kaghzi Hain Pairhan Mere* she acknowledges that

What I have learnt from him was that if you want to say something, wrap the message neatly in a story or a narrative and you will draw less flank. People will read your stories and be influenced by them.....just as no one can slap you if you say something over the telephone, you can say whatever you want through your stories and no hand can reach for your throat. (Chughtai 13)

The writers of later ages were influenced by Ismat. Women writers adopted the theme which Ismat touched. "Qurrat Hyder, Mumtaz Shireen, Hajiraa Mansoor, Khadija Mastoor, Razia Sahhad Zaheer, Tanseem Salim, Sarla Devi, Sadiqa Begum and Shakila Akhtar were some of the most notable among them." (Naqvi xiii)

Her works did not remain confined to Urdu readers only. Ismat is one of the Urdu writers whose major works have been translated into English which shows her contemporary relevance. Asaddudin and Tahira Naqvi have shared their experiences while they translated Ismat from Urdu to English.

As for the process of translation, it was definitely a challenge to bring into English such a culturally rooted writer.,.....I have tried my best to retain the nuances of the original by striking a balance as far as possible, between the demands of English idiom and the cultural baggage with which the stories are loaded. (Asaduddin xxiv)

Diction is one area where I have felt the need for the greatest scrutiny and attention...one encounters in her stories a vibrant and robust flavour deeply ingrained in her language that must be dealt with adequately if that translation is to have any real merit. In effect, there is not just a story that requires retelling; there is also the question of metaphor and figure of speech that has to be grappled with. (Naqvi 55, 56)

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