

Portrayal of Women in *Khatt-e-Marmuz* by Fehmida Riaz and *Chahtain Kesi* by Razia Butt

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Abstract—Women representation in Urdu fiction writing presents variety of women issues in Pakistan. These fiction writings are highly influenced by society, religion, patriarchy and culture. This research is conducted to highlight women portrayal by two female writers of Urdu. One is Fehmida Riaz and the other is Razia Butt's. Fehmida is famous for her feminist writings of which her ideology revolves around women subjugation, touching the most feminine characteristic of women lives "i.e." love, affection and sacrifice. Meanwhile, Razia Butt's writing is about more conventional household women. This comparative research discusses portrayal of women from two different points of views which will reveal the ideology of both writers, status of women & stereotypical image of women. These stories also reflect writer's personal observations, beliefs, goals and expectations.

Keywords—women, feminism, Urdu writings, patriarchy, stereotypical, women portrayal

I. INTRODUCTION

The novels, stories, myths and fictions all use the human character to create interest and pleasure in the reading. In many stories, women are exhibited as queen, princess or fairy but in most conventional writing women are depicted as wife, sister, mother or daughter [1].

Gohar [2] stated that the cultural and traditional values of Pakistan were clearly shown in fiction writings. In stories, mostly women were presented as a true lover, sacrificing housewife who were having all the skills and devotion to manage the family [3]. Women have been shown as the protector of the customs, values, tradition and religion. These stories also provide the helping hand to develop the picture of a "real woman". Beautiful woman was considered as the symbol of the dignity and status so; many wars were being fought to get the woman [4].

Historically, gender as a basic parameter has been highlighted in the writings of various male and female authors [5]. Most likely sex itself as an abstract parameter has constantly assumed as an essential part in Pakistani writing [6]. Negative and stereotyped scholarly presentation of women has consistently been criticized by male and female writers. Negative sexual representation of the female characters was later taken up by numerous writers in which the concept of sexuality and sex are associated with male dominance [7].

Fahmida Riaz was one of the most influential feminist voices in South Asia. During her academic life she was very active in political and social activities. She was born on 28th July, 1945 in the India before partition, a literary family of Meerut, UP [8]. She had been a working woman since her early twenty's. Fehmida Riaz's work is all about social oppression of women [9]. Her style is bold, creative and sometimes critical. She has given words to unspoken emotions of women. She wrote about the unfulfilled sexual desires of women, their strength and power, and discussed unequal relationships of both gender in society [10].

Razia Butt is one of the top novelists of the Pakistan who wrote more than 50 Novels. She was born in Rawalpindi in 1924 [11]. Razia's literary work has highlighted the social issues of middle-class families. Her novels and short stories were based on romance and love and she was famous in creating such characters for readers which would cast a spell on teenage girls [12]. Readers idealize those characters and it was one of the main reasons of her popularity. She illuminated the minds of her readers, by creating such characters that truly represent a special segment of society [13].

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper will try to find the answers of following key research questions such as how female characters are being presented in Urdu literature? Are female characters presented in a stereotypical fashion? What are the dominating roles of women in these fiction writings? What are the commonalities & differences in both fiction writings? These questions will be answered by examining two novels by woman writer who concerns in spiking up on the issue.

III. METHOD

This comparative research is qualitative in nature. Research has employed content analysis to see portrayal of women in fiction writing of Fehmida Riaz & Razia Butt. All fiction writings of these two writers are used as subject for this study. To limit the subject of this research, this research will examine a book titled *Khatt-e-Marmuz* (The Mysterious Letter) by Fehmida Riaz and *Chahtain Kesi* (What Sort of Affection?) by Razia Butt. After reading all stories from each book, the researchers use purposive sampling to select only three stories from each book.

Contents were categorized on following criterion: description of all female characters, minor characters, major characters, operationalization on sentences and manifest analysis on contents. Each sentence of the paragraph was selected as a unit of analysis. Manifest analysis is employed to describes what the informants think, say, and use the words in the story. Frequency of male and female characters presented in these writings, negative and positive attributes and behaviors; physical characteristics are shown in frequencies. Major themes are extracted from written texts. Those sentences were selected which show any physical, mental characteristics about women.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1 Physical characteristics of women in both writings

<i>Physical characteristics in numbers</i>	<i>Razia's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Fehmida's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1 st story	15	50	7	32
2 nd story	12	40	10	45
3 rd story	03	10	05	23
		100		100

Table 2 Stereotypical images of women in both writings

<i>Stereotypical images in numbers</i>	<i>Razia's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Fehmida's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1 st story	20	32	26	65
2 nd story	23	36	11	28
3 rd story	20	32	03	7
		100		100

Table 3 Positive behaviors of female characters in both pieces of writings

<i>Positive behaviors of female characters</i>	<i>Razia's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Fehmida's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1 st story	12	34	21	33
2 nd story	17	49	35	56
3 rd story	06	17	07	11
		100		100

Table 4 Negative behaviors of female characters in both pieces of writings

<i>Negative behaviors of female characters</i>	<i>Razia's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Fehmida's stories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1 st story	06	26	02	33
2 nd story	0	0	04	67
3 rd story	17	74	0	0
		100		100

V. DISCUSSION

This study shows two different writings style of famous writers. Both are female but described women in entirely different ways. Razia Butt is a well-known Urdu writer who is famous for her romantic style. Her stories reveal women's

common characteristics; all the leading characters were symbol of beauty. The content of these stories lies in the fact that all of her stories deal with the concepts like; marriage, motherhood, romance, love and women dependency on men. Relationships are discussed in all writings and more focused one was intimate relationship between men and women. "Love" is one of the most visible concepts that can be seen in almost all stories. Women in her writings are emotional, attention seeker, fragile and feeble minded [14]. Language is emotional even sometimes it reflects the helplessness and dependency of females.

There are some selected sentences which show the language of text;

- She was naive
- She was emotional girl
- She was unable to distinguish her friends and foes.
- She wanted to have a decorated house as well
- The girl who was fickle, pert, negligent and smart now desolate farm
- She had ravishing beauty
- Everyone who looked at her, praised
- Rama says evil for his family with unintelligence and recklessness in front of him
- We will have proposals from the same rank as we have
- Rama also made some charming and pleasant dreams like every young girl
- She was lost in the world of dreams day and night
- She was innate mother
- There were hidden storms of motherhood in her chest
- There is no need to get further education

Fahmida Riaz is a well-known Urdu writer. She wrote some books with innovative ideas. Her famous books are *Godaavari*, *Khatt-e Marmuz*, and *Khana e Aab O Gil*. Her writings influenced a special segment of society who are gender sensitized and have great concern with women issues. She has not only written in Urdu but translated in other languages too including Persian and Sindhi [15]. Her style of writing is unique and has feminine touch. Researcher selected three short stories from her style of discussing women emotions is unique and issues are defined explicitly [16]. Woman as a human is defined in a more open and realistic way who has all emotions and desires like men [17]. These desires are not discussed openly in society, because sexual desires are not allowed to discuss [18]. And in this story a married woman has been discussed with her full emotions and expressed in the way that no one can discuss in normal life fiction book *Khatt- e-Marmuz*.

- Her face was getting numbed with intense emotions
- She is tall, slim and whitish beautiful girl.
- How there was a unique light on her face?
- Her black layers of hair were scattered from braid
- Fragrance of youth was bursting from her fluffy body

- She was courageous and educated
- Performance of office had become bright after coming hardworking and capable girl like Aisha
- There is much obscenity in our women
- Her husband takes every single penny of her income
- They don't have any right on their own incomes
- Suddenly, Ibrahim bhai's hand collide with her thighs
- His hand stopped second time at her thigh
- Then one pinch under her back at her hips

VI. CONCLUSION

This content analysis shows the difference between the writings of two renowned Urdu writers. This could be achieved by analyzing the content involving main characters of each story. With the help of extracted text, ideas and views of the writers could be gauged.

In Fahmida's stories, we find women more progressive and determined. They demonstrate strong competency and are not dependent on anyone. Style is bold, articulate and conspicuous. They can enjoy all kind of freedom as men can. Her focus in life is the betterment of herself, which cannot be taken as selfishness but as self-independence. While the stories of other writer, stereotypical reflection is more prominent. Stories demystify a different picture, where main characters are loyal, submissive, dependent and tractable. They want to have a good life partner, their interest is home making and they sacrifice their lives for their families. Style of writing is conventional and usual.

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