



**The Role of Gender, Power, and Resistance in Shaping Female Subjectivity: A Feminist Study of South Asian Women Writers in English**

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Gender, Power, Resistance, Female Subjectivity, South Asian Women Writers	This study examines the complex intersections of gender, power, and resistance in shaping female subjectivity within the works of South Asian women writers in English. South Asian literature has increasingly become a site for negotiating questions of identity, oppression, and empowerment, where women authors challenge patriarchal narratives and reframe cultural discourses through their creative expression. The primary objective of this research is to analyze how female subjectivity is constructed, contested, and redefined in selected texts, with particular attention to feminist theoretical frameworks. The methodology adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach, employing close textual analysis of novels and short stories by writers such as Kamila Shamsie, Arundhati Roy, and Jhumpa Lahiri. The study highlights how themes of resistance, agency, and self-representation emerge in response to patriarchal power structures and socio-political constraints. Findings suggest that these writers not only critique dominant ideologies but also create alternative spaces for women's voices and experiences, contributing to broader feminist discourses in postcolonial literature. The research carries significant implications for understanding how English-language literature from South Asia functions as a medium of resistance, empowerment, and cultural redefinition.
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## 1.0 Introduction

The connection between literature and social reality has and will continue to be a phenomenon because literature tends to critique social, political, and cultural facets of a civilization. South Asia is a case in point with its histories of Colonial rule and subsequent struggles and deeply engrained systems of patriarchy. English literatures produced in South Asia by women constitute a critical and certain genre. These narratives, while extremely personal and collective, also simultaneously serve as a cultural resistance to the oppressive structures that shackle the socio-political fabric of women. The construction of 'female subjectivity' – that is, the construction of women's self-perceptions, self-narratives and self-representations – becomes a site of struggle, negotiation and transformation (Raj 2021). Many readers of South Asian literature about gender and the socio-political context of the region has attempted to provide more articulate and comprehensive understanding and articulation of women's writing in a global context and has therefore attempted to respond to the historically long and dense silence that shrouded the women's issue (Quah and Ridgway 2022).

In the past, the South Asian authors, such as Arundhati Roy, Kamila Shamsie, Jhumpa Lahiri and Bapsi Sidhwa, examined the lives of women in South Asia. For these authors, fiction is more than a story. Such women writers consider fiction as a political tool for engaging with certain patriarchal systems, as well as signaling the ways in which women can resist such systems. This dissertation aims at addressing the absence of research on women authors from South Asia who articulate female subjectivity concerning power and resistance. The researcher aims to comprehend the articulation of women's voices and identities as well as bodies from the patriarchal framework and simultaneously how literature creates avenues for reclaiming agency and restructuring the future. Drawing from feminist literature, this dissertation attempts to trace the constructions, contestations and transformations of subjectivities of women regarding the selected narratives. The texts do not merely 'represent' an issue. They engage with the question of how and in what ways literature echoes and simultaneously offers the means to transform the lived experiences of women in South Asia. In so doing, they engage with the politics of literature, gender and power (Gupta, Brueck et al. 2020).

This projection has been done with respect to three goals. Examine what South Asian women writers do with respect to the gender power relations and their complex impacts on the lives and identities of women within their artworks. Examine what forms of personal and collective, subtle, acts of resistance and performances of reclaiming female subjectivity occur in these texts and what do these texts do to the configuration of female subjectivity. Along with South Asian women's writing, assess the impact of these literary documents on gender, power and resistance, in the region and outside it, in order to enrich the region's intellectual and political frameworks in the context of global feminism and the South Asian women writers. The goals, which are to a significant extent the outcome of exercises based on multiple documents,

seek to bridge the gap between literary studies on women and feminist scholarship, and in doing so, illustrate the enduring connections between the art and the socio-political context (Sengupta and Sinha 2023).

This message has been prepared with a set of three goals in mind. First, it attempts to do an extensive examination of South Asian women writers which focus on the various forms of literary works in regard to the complexity and the impact of gender power relations on women's identities and lives. Second, it investigates what forms and acts of resistance, personal and collective, subtle and more sharpened, are articulated in these texts and what reconfiguration of female subjectivity do these texts bring about. Third, it undertakes an impact assessment of the South Asian women's literary corpus vis-a-vis these texts in order to determine the region's and world's feminism interlaced with power and gender discourse. The objectives, that are largely outcome of multi document exercises, intend to bridge the gap that exists between the women literary critics and feminist scholar wherein, their attempts strengthen the narrative of feminism with the South Asian women's literary corpus. These objectives are, in a large part, the outcome of exercises based on multiple documents, seek to bridge the gap between literary studies on women and feminist scholarship which illustrate the enduring connections between the artwork and the socio-political context (Bahri and Menozzi 2021).

This work of research is extremely critical to the field of feminism with reference being given to women in South Asia. To the feminist project, this paper is concerned with the power bounded female subjectivity as well as the expression of the power and the structures of the subject by reading literature activism and cultural criticism. This is quite essential in Pakistan, India, and the South Asian diaspora where women are confronted with the difficult dualistic nature of tradition and modernity, family and freedom, oppression and self-assertion. The English literature of women in this region takes very good relative starting point into viewing and responding to such predicaments particularly since it is situated in the local context and a part of a transnational conversation about gender and power. This work is also informative to the practitioners and the students as it has provided a working template on how to teach the South Asian women literature, which is enormously available literature by women in the area, in the context of feministic discourse (Paul, Goswami et al. 2022).

This was also an initiative propelled by a socio cultural need. Where women suffer discrimination, abuse and being silted out, narratives turn into reflections that not only mirror but also say. In the case of the South Asian women writers, the work reduces the opposition and presents a case worth considering about the capabilities of narratives in altering the norms of culture and within a certain culture, eliciting change. It contributes to the feminist discourse demonstrating how literature can transform heretical thoughts and the way it can reform identity, agency and community. In addition, it reaffirms the role of literature in its relationship with the critical matters of justice, freedom, and empowerment. This question has also

significant aspects of being looked into, outside the nation. The fiction of South Asian women in English goes beyond the frontier, and involves transnational feminist, postcolonial and identity discourses. It extends the range of feminist literary discourse doubtlessly and demonstrates the necessity of the challenge of profoundly Eurocentric approach. In current times of the growing globalization and transnational relations, the necessity to acknowledge and welcome many other various strands of feminism is a significant input that leads to the discussion of the public and academic feminism in the guise of equity and inclusivity. Gender, power and resistance in South Asian Women body of writing not only presents individual situations of the women, but also the universal voice, agency and presence struggle that women everywhere face. It also emphasizes the fact that literature is never just a mirror of the reality, but it is a way of awareness, challenge and revolution of the reality and the way of re-constructing it. The work, in this aspect is destined to have an impact in the field of literary studies and the activity of feminism. In this instance, the target audience would be the general and the academic population (Ramzan and Javaid 2025).

## 2.0 Literature Review

Feminism focuses on women 's subjectivity formation, limits, and reconceptualization across various literary histories. In the case of South Asian women and their writing in English, the intricacies involve post colonialism, patriarchy, religion, and transnational feminism. In this literature, the constructs of gender, power, and resistance are not themes but interrelated processes that simultaneously obstruct and facilitate women's agency. Such literatures seem attuned to the complexity and dynamics of women's subjectivity formation, including but not limited to, socialization, familial structures, culture, and the overarching, in essence, patriarchal state. South Asian women, in a reflexive manner, have been writing this geography for the past decades, producing texts that respond to the silences and reconstruct women in dire situations as negotiating agents.

The texts in the essays and scholarly articles delve into the gendered constructs of roles, identities, and behaviors, particularly regarding women. The South Asian writing appears to revolve around a subjectivity that is culturally and socially embedded in constructs of sacrifice, honor, and purity. This, in turn, confines women to the domain of domesticity. It is typical for older texts to center around self-glorifying, self-sacrificial, dutiful, or submissive wives and glorified mothers, along with a highly censored interpretation of the social and gender roles of women. It is also true, however, that from a feminist perspective, these constructions transform women into traditional, passive, and reifying objects with a void self. It is this oversimplified criticism that South Asian women poets and novelists writing in English sought to challenge with mitigating women's formerly silenced and neglected efforts toward social, political, and gendered oppression. Extensive literature illustrates a more organized and sophisticated effort that seeks to reclaim the female voice and counteract the historical silencing and

marginalization. This literature also exposes the narrow repercussions of gender oppression on conditioned subjectivity that seeks to unmask the unaskable (Chakraborty and Adhikari 2020).

Conversations regarding the geography of power invariably discuss intersectionality. In the context of South Asia, power is often gendered, patriarchal, and sewn into the family, religion, and state systems. Such power relations frame women's self-identities, which are constructed and localized within the subordination of fathers, husbands and community men. There is evidence of South Asian women writers analyzing these relations by situating the women in their narratives within both spatial and public frameworks that police restriction, education, and autonomy (Arshad 2023). Within these societal structures, women exercise forms of resistance, which can include, acts of defiance, redefinitions of mothering, and more, as well as subtle disobedience. Literature, in turn, has suggested power is not monolithic and will always give rise to a counter movement. Therefore, the subjectivity of a woman is a paradox. It is both a point of domination and a point of resistance. They do not disengage from patriarchal power. Rather, they are able to, from time, to time, reverse it (Hussein and Hussain 2019).

As with all works concerning South Asian women, the issue of resistance captures the attention of scholars. Yet, not all resistance needs to be pronounced and dramatic. It may be quiet, hidden in the folds of mundanity and routine. The refusal to marry with a character, the pursuit of education, or the expression of sexual desire, for instance, all enable patriarchal societies to be defied and challenged on many levels. The existing research about the theme expresses how the writers deploy narrative techniques like 'fractured' narratives, stream of consciousness, and the use of myth and folklore to center the margins. Such techniques disrupt canonized literary form in a manner similar to how patriarchal structures in the text are disrupted. The problem of resistance, then, is both thematic and stylistic, woven into the very fabric of the texts produced by South Asian women.

The two analytical perspectives of literature study the intertwining colonial and postcolonial dynamics in the construction of female subjectivity. For instance, how with the onset of colonial rule, the Western concepts of femininity and domesticity and the accompanying stratification and order of the genders were socially and legally superimposed upon the South Asian societies. The postcolonial state in question, with all its contradictions in the autonomy and individuality of women, was still able to maintain and institutionalize the domination of the body and the domestic sphere, casting it as traditional and nationalistic (Hashmi, Arshad et al. 2023). In this case, women were made to serve as the signifiers of the nation in terms of culture and ethnic propriety. South Asian women writers negotiate the duality of colonialism and nationalism, the literature of which speaks to the uneasy and violent control over women's bodies which they seem unable to free themselves from, the control of which they situate within the colonial discourse. It is this sort of literature which suggests that the predicament of female subjectivity is only demonstrable in the articulation of these entwined relations of power and the ways in which women are made to carry the cultural 'weight' of the entire nation. It is also

worth mentioning that these are the writers who reconstruct women as dynamic participants in the sphere of culture, which subjects them to unapologetic displacement from the passive position of the defenders of national identity, which is total articulation of personal and autonomous subjectivities (Hussein and Hussain 2019).

Another fundamental element encompassed in the works is the representation of sexuality and the female form. Most stories in South Asia construct the female body as a site of honour and shame and a subject of constant surveillance. Some works of literature by women describe how they rest the body as a site of defiance, eroticism, and self-identity. South Asian women writers attempt to disrupt the silence surrounding taboo female experiences and focus on menstruation, childbirth, and sexual empowerment. Literature that analyze these bodies of work observe that the female form is crucial in the struggle over subjectivity, for it is the instrument of power and the domain of counter-control. These women writers who illustrate women as the ones who exercise dominion over their bodies challenge the prevailing sociocultural notions which describe women as mere vessels of culture and submissive to the oppression of patriarchy (Batool and Hayat 2025).

Furthermore, the majority of feminist literature has focused on the idea of conflict within a family across generations as a site for negotiating gendered subjectivity. Mothers, daughters, and grandmothers appear to be symbols of various degrees of tradition, modernity, and resistance. Feminists have pointed out how South Asian women writers have explored intergenerational narratives to discuss continuity and rupture in women's lives. For example, older women are more likely to embody the dualistic, patriarchal roles of a woman, while the younger generation has to negotiate the modernity and the family. Such contradictions render subjectivity as a process to be understood, rather than as a fixed position. Explanatory approaches articulate that woman's identity is not the product of a lineal descent, rather, through negotiation, conflict, and change, identity is constructed (Chaudhary and Dutt 2022).

This part of the Inquiry focuses on the role of language and speech in constructing someone's identity. South Asian women writers tend to view writing in English as a self-contradiction. While English serves as a global passport to readers and feminist discourse, it risks a complete disengagement with a zero- contextualized local reality or worse, being a cultural imperialist. It is proposed that women writers resolve that contradiction by using English, South Asian idioms, structures, and sensibilities, and polyglot English, to express their restricted lives. Such English, unto itself a local language, empowers a woman to express her multiple selfhoods, global and local. The literature suggests that women do not remain passive to colonization and patriarchy which they seek to respond to with language and writing. The focus is on the dynamics of memory, trauma and women's selfhood, their interrelations and intersections. The 'horrors of history' as partition, wars, displacement, and communal violence which occurred in the South Asian subcontinent has deeply impacted women's lives. Feminist scholars study women's writing as trauma and the silenced histories, which were violently

erased in the official documents. These texts highlight women's memories and their attempts to regain self-agency through storytelling. These women have suffered trauma and have tried to reconstruct the narrative. The perspectives underline that the narratives are not merely personal, but political in nature, as they assert against communal amnesia and reclaim the narrative of women as historic figures. These women assert their narratives against historical amnesia (Alam 2021).

The literature also focuses migration and diaspora. South Asian women writers in the diaspora have new gendered expectations to negotiate in host societies, as well as the politics of race and ethnicity. These women resist the patriarchal structures in their countries of origin as well as the Western hegemonic depiction of South Asian women as submissive. These analyses complicate and expand upon the idea of resistance by illustrating how women's lives are not shaped in isolation but as the result of the interconnection of myriad, intricate, and shifting networks of power. As indicated by the literature on South Asian women writers writing in English, female subjectivity is not singular, but rather shaped by multiple and, at times, contradictory constructions involving gender, power, and resistance. The process of female subjectivity is constantly in flux, contested, and reconfigured in relation to self-determination and domination. Women, and women writers, do not merely absorb the world, but rather, through their narratives create new articulations of existence and belonging. In both global and local contexts, women's writing is approached from a more integrated frame. A type of boundary is gender, a type of domination is power, and the challenge of domination is resistance. In such a case, a contested female subjectivity of identity is produced. The distinguishing feature of South Asian women writers in English is the ability to weave all of these elements into their narratives which place women at the very center of the local and global cultural, and political, change and transformation. Their writings, as illustrated in the analytical literature, subvert dominant structures by presenting women not as passive subjects, but as active, meaning-making agents of change and transformation in the world (Gupta 2023).

### **3.0 Methodology**

The present study examined the power relations, gender and resistance, and the construction of female subjectivity within the literary scope of South Asian women writers. It takes a qualitative approach and is anchored on Feminist Literary Criticism. Such a framework is appropriate in this instance due to the multiple layers and the deep intertextuality available on the subject. Instead of focusing on numbers, this study seeks to understand the nuances in the silencing and shaping of women's voices in order to explain the paradox of subjectivity as it is created in the literature.

The central works are the novels, short stories, and poetry from South Asian women authors who deal with the themes of gendered subjugation, patriarchal oppression, and resistance. Texts are chosen because of their relevance to the feminist discourse and stature within the South Asian Literary tradition, with a specific concentration on women's writing. The

analysis is done via close reading, concentrating on the narrative, characterization, and specific linguistic and thematic elements. This aids in uncovering how literary forms, as a result of power relations, become sites of resistance to the dominant paradigm and illuminate the conditions of women.

This analytical framework used feminist and postcolonial theory to examine these texts culturally and historically. Within the framework of colonial legacies and nationalistic movements, and contemporary socio-cultural realities, the study illustrates how female subjectivity is constructed and reconstructed across and within myriad overlapping power systems. This approach emphasizes reflexivity and self-awareness regarding the researcher's stance vis-a-vis the texts in question. This stance is in line with the analysis's intent to remain critically aware of the limitless, as well as the limited, parameters of the direction women's English writings provide in articulating resistance and reformulating subjectivity.

## Results

### 4.1 Depictions of Gendered Oppression in the Works of South Asian Women Writers.

Women Writers in South Asia construct English discourses on the oppression of women within the family and the larger society and politics. They Focus on the ways in which the everyday practices of patriarchy intrude into the lives of women, and the ways in which women are kept in a state of subjugation through moral and behavioral, cultural and social policing. The subjugation in question does not begin and end with physical violence. There is in addition the violence of a peculiar form of psych, which the feminine construct of the virtues of subservience, obedience and modesty, passive, and active of themselves and of each other. Writers who focus on depicting the images of home show how these constructs make women co-creators of their slavery. These women writers, have an overarching focus, like a noose around their fiction, silencing these elusive practices, enabling the reader to have a clear view of the dominant social system effecting patriarchal control, Not the borders rule but the reining system and linear sections and the subtle.

In fact, the accounts go beyond documenting the subjugation of women to the capture of the emotional and psychological turmoil that women go through with the imposition. The female protagonists show an attempt to realize that they are deeply marginalized. Albeit not successfully, they do try to combat this. The mere fact that one embraces one's subjugation subjective enough. It illustrates a point of self-definition and resistance, and a form of self-assertion, or self-claim. There are several instances in which the authors show the young women's resistance to arranged marriages, and to the subjugation of education, which signify the first lines of fractures that begin to form in an otherwise rigid patriarchal system. Literature, therefore, is able to show women not only as victimized, passive objects of something external, but as women who are actively engaged in self-definition.

The texts often analyze attitudes of women of the same generation to illustrate the evolution of oppression. While older women are seen as having to crown patriarchal values and imposed them to the young, their passive acceptance of oppression tends to be the only coping mechanism available to them in the environments where they are constrained. Analyzing the women in question through the lens of their age allows for distortion of simplistic narratives of oppression and proposes the baffling idea of women on one hand supporting the patriarchal system, which on the other, they are trying to dismantle, and these numerous truths only deepen the subjective experience and show how the movement within intensely patriarchal systems carries the negotiation within cultural and kin systems. The also discuss the varying nature and degree of oppression by class, caste and education. A rich woman may be kept in seclusion and unable to work, but is 'protected' from the social stigma of being 'disreputable'. The working-class woman, however, has to contend with oppression of her gender and class. These complexities demonstrate the notion of oppression is not 'one-size-fits-all' but a broad set of techniques that impact women differently from one another depending on their social standing. South Asian women writers articulate the intricacies of oppression by situating women's experiences within competing frameworks, thereby demonstrating the multiplicity of women's lives and the ways in which their identities are formed through overlapping systems of domination.

#### **4.2 Power relations within the family and the community**

This south Indian region like any region consists of the family institution of the South Asian women writings as well as its pattern of power and relations of control. Fathers, husbands and brothers are said to be the guardians of the family honor and those who have the dominance in the marriages, education and involvement of women in the community. The family house can thereby no longer be a retreat, but is instead a platform of the mobilized politics at which male authority is in a process of reconstruction. A literature exists, stating the standards of subordination by women, which is the importance of sacrifice and service, of the individual to the collective image of the family. The women in the narratives dwell in a society in which, power can exist in various aspects, although it is highly ritualized. These and countless others, which usurp the freedom of the woman to move and the freedom of the woman to choose the people she allots with her, make the home a micro cosmos of the world, which is dominated of Finnish manliness.

Despite the literature there is, South Asian women authorial voices interactualizing representation and hearing opposites to being submissive and to being hitched to the family. Some soft and weak mother, sister, or grandmother archetypes can be displayed, in most cases, towards younger women, yet in their lives, they can be a metamorphosis as the givers of counsel, support, and even, the art of gentle rebellion. These inter-generational relationships help in the argument that neglect to say family could be the cause of oppression sometimes, but it is also

possible to say it can be the cause of dominion. The dedication to the educational success of their daughters, or the care given to them by mothers who make every effort to avoid involving them in the threatening fallacies of backward traditions, is an illustration of the maternal affection which checks the tyrannies of patriarchy. These stories by definition convey that family control is not restrictive. It is very agitated, negotiated, and even overruled.

The surveillance of power is not done in family spheres only, but women are observed by the representatives of the community, such as neighbours, relatives, religious groups, etc. In the literature, communities westernize the policing of the behavior of women as a strong Arab of patriarchal framework. The subjugation of women through gossip, social scorn or ostracism are evidence that subordination of women, is the preoccupation of the head of the family, but it is also the preoccupation of the whole society. But communities can also contribute to being part of the support system of the women, particularly when the women themselves think collectively. Imagery of solidarity, i.e. the women telling stories and protecting each other, equally offer counter hegemonic critiques on the prevailing master discourses of control and rather, provide other possibilities of subjectivity. The initial writers of South Asian descent who depict the failure of the standalone existence of an individual amidst strong opposing conditions of family and community are female writers. They point out the multiple subject locations that are formed in the anxiety of control and collaborating, domination and opposition, silence and utterance. Such family and community relations defines a fact that the reality of female identity in South Asia is not simply of subordination and liberation, but a complex form of constant struggle of these interconnected relations of control and nurturing.

#### **4.3. Resistance and Performance of Female Agency**

Resistance is a common trait in the writing of South Asian women. Female characters usually take part in both passive and aggressive patriarchal battles. Defying social expectations takes on many forms. Some women manage to shatter the familial glass ceiling and pursue higher studies and professions, or later self-arranged marriages. Others take quieter, more symbolic forms of resistance such as construct the act of personal freedom or non-compliance. Many forms of resistance often labeled as passive, surrender or docile. The reality is that sometimes, agency is manifested in the form of an act of endurance, self-negotiated, or redefined self. Such portrayals assume that subjectivity is a product of tension within oppressive frameworks and women's agency. The aforementioned stories repeatedly connect growing autonomy with self-discovery and the self-assertion of will and voice. Passive characters tend to active ones, with the ability to voice negative opinions and speak their mind, after going through a series of hurdles. There is a creation of something when literature is able to be able the formation of a phrase, whether it is in a form of a protest or an unspoken history.

While defenders of some of the historical accounts admit the perils and consequences women face while challenging patriarchal systems, they do tend to lament the over romanticized

accounts of resistance. This is problematic because resistance can lead to violence, and silencing and alienation which in turn fosters a whole new set of complexities in the story of empowerment. In such cases, the mere act of resistance allows women to understand their potential and ability to change, but also to actively shape their subjectivity. Defenders of South Asian women's writing admit to the strength of their imagination and creativity in framing resistance as a continuum with subtle acts of defiance and open acts of rebellion as endpoints.

#### **4.4. Negotiating Tradition and Modernity in Female Identity**

The analysis reveals the contradictions the creation of female subjectivity and the implementation of modernity and tradition are characterized by. The shining thread of south Asian female writer's fiction is found in heroine quests which attempt to maintain a compromise between culture and modernity. In South Asian women writers literature lie protagonist journeys, which attempt to balance the cultural continualness and modernity. Historically, the roles of service and sacrifice were issued to women through the process of constructing a family and being a part of a society. Modernity though alters the social composition of a society when it gives women education, employment, social mobility, and many other opportunities. A zone of negotiation that is loaded with active reconstruction of subjectivity is formed by the antagonism between the forces.

The authors suggest that women are able to navigate both sides rather than presenting either tradition or modernity as exclusive. The strategic adoption of certain forms of traditions assists in gaining social approval, while the infusion of modernity in their lives expands their agency. For others, the form of modernity such as education and writing provides an access to reconceptualize traditions in ways that offer dignity and autonomy. The subjectivity in both cases is hybrid, and there is no adoption of an either fully traditional or fully modern stance. The negotiation illustrates the realities of South Asian women, whose identities are shaped by complex and interconnecting heritages, cultures, and transnational issues.

#### **4.5 Language, Narrative Voice, and the Construction of Subjectivity**

Among the South Asian women writers, the articulation of female subjectivity hinges on the specific linguistic and narrative elements used. The authors position themselves within the postcolonial context and consider English to be that two-sided sword--finally, freedom as well as conquest. English is probably empowering not only owing to the instrumental ability of the language but the cultural authenticity, as well as the concern of fit in the understanding of who the women are. On this aspect, the women of history and literature attempt to challenge the instilled silences to take the authority of their stories, and this is the reason over the use of English language as a reclaiming and the colonial power as defiant.

The writers adopt fragmented storytelling, dramatized storytelling in the form of stream-of-consciousness and time and space-bending prose to envisage the fractured realities of their female characters. These techniques oppose major realist tropes, and feministically oriented

plots which do not initiate closure and resolution. These forms of subjectivity are actualized in the fluid movement outside of the rigidity and stasis. South Asian female authors by focusing on female psyche and alternative narrative devices are exploring new writing territory whereby the writing process is ironic as the medium of female creation.

#### **4.6 Intersectionality: class, caste, and religion in female subjectivity**

Another dimension of female subjectivity in South Asian women's writing is the intersection of class, caste, and religion. These elements do not provide a monolithic account of the oppression of women; instead, they serve to complicate and diversify it. For instance, in the urban setting, middle class women view the professional sphere as patriarchal and oppressive, while in the rural context, particularly among the economically and caste disadvantaged women, the oppression is much more severe. Religion is particularly central to the submissive, docile dispositions women are socialized into that constructs immodesty as 'to be seen and not heard', and the relations of honor and heterosexuality as subordinate. These differences emphasize the risks involved in attempting to 'simplify' the lives of women, and, in turn, adds to the complex identities of women in South Asia.

As much as other aspects of one's life help to develop, deepen and understand identity politics, particularly in the face of oppression, so too does the very concept of 'layering' or 'intersectionality' add to the richness of the understanding of resistance. The imposition of patriarchy is not the only target that women resist. The entire framework of class, caste, and religion is equally challenged. The literature on subjectivity illuminates how these 'forces' come to the crossroads in and along which women negotiate multiple identities, in these accounts that have hitherto been fragmented. South Asian women writers unravel the complex matrix of oppression and agency, which in turn, expands the reach of feminist discourse to the subjectivity that is not only a matter of gender, but rather a question of intersectionality - a fluid question which gives rise to varied forms of power and diverse modalities of resistance.

#### **5.0 Discussion**

With the help of English authors of South Asian descent, the study describes one of the most complex critiques of the patriarchy, and at the same time rebuilds the subjectivities of the female body against an impressive scope of resistance. The doing of gender in these writings depicts the social identity of women, and immense plethora with which that social identity may be the way-way or hitched derail. The meta-dialectic on compliance/ defiance helps to show the argument that subjectivity is neither a state of absoluteness nor an active state of its existence. Under these conditions, as is detailed in the literature where patriarchy as primary organizational structure, the identity of women is enforced, as the literature emphasizes as never wholly paralyzed or repressive, but is, on the contrary, produced within the relations of control, as well as counter-control, control.

The problem itself remains complicated, but it appears to raise the questions of flexibility and controversial nature of power. In addition, submissive social status of women is still a mantle aspect, its ruptures visible in subtle as well as open manifestations of woman defiance. As a form of writing is itself subversive, in this case, women is given the key to conceptualizing and remaking herself, contrary to what she was told to do. These findings correspond to feminist theories which view literature not only as mirroring reality, but also as the means to critique power and develop new possibilities.

The opposing aspect of feminine self-identity is that it is always built in agonies of self-assertion in accordance to a prescribed culture of the context one finds themselves in. Both writers and characters create elaborate hybrids of the two extremes instead of aligning themselves in such a simplistic way between them. The more rational argument is that in South Asia, the subjectivity of women is not argued in the cultural negation, but is instead, a cultural re-formulation on its way. The blend of contemporary education, such degree of imaginative freedom, and relative rigor to tradition are what depict the process by which women write themselves into bodies. These kinds of representations fail to interrogate the multidimensional realities of complex pluralized on the ground experience, but themselves are challenges to the less troublesome, less dimensional, binary formations.

In this direction of development, narratology and linguistics play a crucial role. The authors use the English and experimental storytelling competence to cut literary niches in which women express their concerns. Instead, the writers have begun to employ dismantling of the literary convention hegemony, which more frequently than not, subjugates women experiential narratives by refinancing the prevailing structural narrative formations. The fact is that the characters also are burdened with the task of building female subjectivity. The form of the text itself is an example of the female subjectivity. These formal innovations that can enlighten and unfreeze the linear cases, patriarchal cases, and dominance discourses concentrate on the discontinuous, flowing, and a dynamic aspect to the lived experience of women and transform literature into performance resistance that recreates the nature and the shape of the text.

Intersectionality theory, incorporated in its new focus towards ontology, assists us understand how the identities of women are interwoven at the periphery of gender, class, caste, and religion. This kind of marginalizing leads to fragmented areas of oppression and the rise of other kinds of agency. The resistance exhibited by a working-class woman and a woman privately educated in the city may take quite different forms, but both exhibit the attempts to build a self in the environment full of vastly unequal forces. Intersectionality theory would contend on behalf of the South Asian prose, however, that the women subject voice is disarticulated, heterogeneous, plural, and certainly not a unified body. Such appreciation presents a challenge to universal feminism, but also it makes us focus on the South Asian particulars which have waited to be confronted with.

Overall the paper has demonstrated that the South Asian writing, written in English, by sexual women writers has served matters vital goals within the feminism discourse in taking subjectivity to a new realms of subjection where negotiation, conflict, and change are assessed in a critical way. They can attest to the fact that female subjectivity does not stand in stasis but is a dynamic process of contesting, tradition, modernity, and other multifaceted interconnected aspects. The authors generate moments of women being agentic and taking on alternate subject positions due to the singular and calculated application of vocabulary and narration technique. Therefore, the texts have not merely to be praised regarding the patriarchal critique but also regarding the feminist perspective which unveils the self-assertive domination of women, counter-subjectivities, and alleged futures.

### Contributions

**Faheem Arshad:** Problem Identification, Literature search

**Aqsa Khan:** Data Analysis and Discussion

**Maria Faheem:** Methodology and Intro

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