

p-ISSN : 2521-2982 | e-ISSN : 2707-4587

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gpr

DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gpr/.2024(IX)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gpr.2024(IX.I)



# GPR

**GLOBAL POLITICAL REVIEW**  
HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

**VOL. IX, ISSUE I, WINTER (MARCH-2024)**

Article Title

Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields

Global Political Review

p-ISSN: 2521-2982 e-ISSN: 2707-4587

DOI (journal): 10.31703/gpr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gpr.2024(IX)

Issue: I (Winter-March 2024)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I)

Home Page

[www.gprjournal.com](http://www.gprjournal.com)

Volume: IX (2024)

<https://www.gprjournal.com/Current/issues>

Issue: I-Winter (March-2024)

<https://www.gprjournal.com/Current-issues/9/1/2024>

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Abstract

*This research article analyses Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields (2019) using Iris Young's model of 'Five Faces of Oppression'. Baqir's novel highlights the oppressive ideology that forces women to be subservient to male hegemonic values, traditions, and honour. The novel is evaluated to demonstrate the ways through which men exert their powers over women. Young's model shows how women become oppressed and marginalized groups of society and exploited at the hands of cultural norms. This research article will be an effort to create awareness among Pakistani women to believe in themselves and to fight hard to get what is rightfully theirs. Moreover, it will also be an attempt to open doors for future researchers to analyze literary texts through which they can raise such issues of exploitation.*

**Keywords:** Exploitation, Marginalization, Powerlessness, Cultural Imperialism, Violence

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Pages: 1-9

DOI: 10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-I).01

DOI link: [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2024\(IX-I\).01](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I).01)

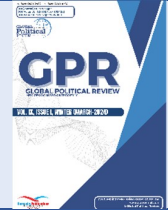
Article link: <http://www.gprjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

Full-text Link: <https://gprjournal.com/fulltext/>

Pdf link: <https://www.gprjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rv1oIA2.pdf>

### Citing this Article

Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields							
01	Author	Abdur Rauf Ahmad Naeem Khan Sardaraz		DOI	10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I).01		
	Pages	1-9	Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Rauf, A., Naeem, A., & Sardaraz, K. (2024). Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields. <i>Global Political Review</i> , IX(1), 1-9. <a href="https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I).01">https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I).01</a>					
	CHICAGO	Rauf, Abdur, Ahmad Naeem, and Khan Sardaraz. 2024. "Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields." <i>Global Political Review</i> IX (1):1-9. doi: 10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I).01.					
	HARVARD	RAUF, A., NAEEM, A. & SARDARAZ, K. 2024. Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields. <i>Global Political Review</i> , IX, 1-9.					
	MHRA	Rauf, Abdur, Ahmad Naeem, and Khan Sardaraz. 2024. 'Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields', <i>Global Political Review</i> , IX: 1-9.					
	MLA	Rauf, Abdur, Ahmad Naeem, and Khan Sardaraz. "Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields." <i>Global Political Review</i> IX.I (2024): 1-9. Print.					
	OXFORD	Rauf, Abdur, Naeem, Ahmad, and Sardaraz, Khan (2024), 'Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields', <i>Global Political Review</i> , IX (1), 1-9.					
	TURABIAN	Rauf, Abdur, Ahmad Naeem, and Khan Sardaraz. "Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's Beyond the Fields." <i>Global Political Review</i> IX, no. I (2024): 1-9. <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I).01">https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2024(IX-I).01</a> .					



Cite Us



## Title

### Five Faces of Oppression in Ayesha Baqir's *Beyond the Fields*

#### Abstract

This research article analyses Ayesha Baqir's *Beyond the Fields* (2019) using Iris Young's model of 'Five Faces of Oppression'. Baqir's novel highlights the oppressive ideology that forces women to be subservient to male hegemonic values, traditions, and honour. The novel is evaluated to demonstrate the ways through which men exert their powers over women. Young's model shows how women become oppressed and marginalized groups of society and exploited at the hands of cultural norms. This research article will be an effort to create awareness among Pakistani women to believe in themselves and to fight hard to get what is rightfully theirs. Moreover, it will also be an attempt to open doors for future researchers to analyze literary texts through which they can raise such issues of exploitation.

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[Cultural Imperialism](#),  
[Violence](#)

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## Introduction

*Beyond the Fields* is Ayesha Baqir's debut novel set in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The story is about two twin girls, Zara, and Tara, who navigate issues of identity and honour in a society which penalizes the less fortunate and shows no mercy to those who become victims of tragedies like rape and prostitution. The story deals with several significant issues which have already been written about in the literary world. It is commendable to see Ayesha Baqir making a debut by taking on critical themes such as rape, honour, social exclusion/inclusions, and prostitution. However, these themes have all been explored on a peripheral level without dealing

with any one of them in depth. Ayesha Baqir has explicitly portrayed the mentality of the people who were shackled in the cultural norms, and traditions. When Tara gets raped and the people who sat to decide how they can bring justice to Tara, were all portraying a patriarchal mindset. One of them said that the women of our family hold the honour of our family with them. And the moment this honour is gone, no one can restore it. He advised Tara's father to remain mum and behave as if nothing has happened, because, if he tells the people, no one will marry his other daughter and he will lose the honour of his family forever. Another man told Tara's father that, according to a new rule of government, if a rape



victim could not prove her rape by bringing four eyewitnesses, she will be accused of Zina then. Another view held that if it was the landlord's thugs who raped Tara, how can they start an ordeal against such powerful men. One voice said that it would be best for Tara's father to bury his daughter with honour, instead of dishonouring his family in the quest for justice. Surprisingly, Zara's mother put the right to choose their future in the hands of her daughters. Ayesha Baqir ended the novel on a positive and hopeful note to prove that it is in the hands of women themselves to change their lives, stand up for themselves and reclaim their identity.

The current study will be an attempt to bring forth and highlight the oppressions confronted by females in the Pakistani context through the lens of Young's (1988) model of five faces. Moreover, it will also throw light upon how women are treated as commodities which could be bought and sold by the male members of their family. The researcher will also explore Ayesha Baqir's *Beyond the Fields* (2019) to show how women of Pakistan are living in servitude and are constantly being exploited in the name of tradition and honour.

## Literature Review

Gender inequality is a well-known term in today's world. It seems hard to reach the exact origin of this behaviour of gender-based prejudice the women of this world are facing to date. In the same vein, activists, writers, philosophers, mass media and social forums have been doing their part to help women get their rightful rights for decades. Published recently, Ayesha Baqir's *Beyond the Fields* (2019) is yet another attempt by a writer to empower the women of Pakistan and to give a thought-provoking push to the patriarchal mindset of Pakistani people. Written in a simple narrative style, the novel showcases the caged mindsets of the people of the rural area of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

Dalal (2020) believes that *Beyond the Fields* is a quest for women's liberation. She thinks about a question lately asked by women on a social forum what will they prefer to do if it is announced that there would not be any men around them for one day? They replied that they would love to go on a walk alone. Dalal ponders over the situation of our backward world and contemplates that when it is so difficult for an educated, strong, and independent woman to safely go out, then what would be the

conditions of safety for women in areas like villages or underprivileged societies (p. 1)? Syed (2020) highlights some of the evils of Pakistan in one of her poems, where she talks about the rape of small girls, child marriages, honour killings and abortion rights. She talks about how a woman who stands up and speaks for her right is termed a 'slut'. When a woman is bold and confident, she is taken as a threat to her family's honour. When she chooses a man to marry, she is bashed. In Pakistan, small girls are raped every day by the old mullahs. Teenagers are being molested by their teachers and men on the streets. Daughters and sisters are being killed for telling their choice in their marriage.

## Theoretical Design

The present study is designed in Iris Young's model of 'Five Faces of Oppression' (1988) which demonstrates how women are portrayed as an oppressed group of society and have been exploited at the hands of cultural norms. The faces of Young's model are: 1. Exploitation, 2. Marginalization, 3. Powerlessness, 4. Cultural Imperialism and 5. Violence. Young (1988) adduces that oppression of the proletariat class at the hands of the bourgeois is not the only important oppression in the world. Racism, sexism, ageism, and homophobia also exist in our societies and are as despicable as the oppression of the poor. Young sums up that a social group is believed to be under oppression if it undergoes all or a few of these five faces of oppression.

## Discussion and Analysis

The oppression of women is not a problem of any one country, culture or race. It has been there since antiquity and is present to date. Although much has been done to check this oppression, there is a lot to be done still. Baqir's *Beyond the Fields* (2019) is a rendition of the horrors of such oppression in Pakistani culture, where abducting, raping, killing and sabotaging women is a day-to-day matter. They are exploited, and marginalized, their rights and bodies are violated and are left powerless under cultural imperialism.

## Exploitation: A Tool to Suppress Women

Young says that exploitation, to put it simply, is a face of oppression when one social group do the labour and another social group enjoys the benefits

of that labour. She adduces that female exploitation is no different than the exploitation of the poor. Women do household chores, look after the physical and emotional needs of their husbands, provide them sexual satisfaction, and take care of the children and in-laws, all these efforts go unacknowledged and unpaid. These are considered her duties. Moreover, they nurture their men; consequently, men perform well at their jobs (p. 276-280). So, the origin of the labour is woman, and the fruits are lavishly eaten by the man.

It simply shows the mentality of Pakistani men who believe their women to be obedient and good if only they blindly follow their commands. Zara's father, like the majority of the Pakistani men, has this superiority complex which doesn't allow him to get financial assistance from his wife. In Pakistan, especially in conservative areas, men are believed to be the sole breadwinners of the house. Women are hardly allowed to step out of their homes to earn. But the same women work like slaves in their homes without getting any remuneration in return. Amma, Zara and Tara are shown working incessantly at home. Zara reminisces that as early as they started walking, their mother had led them on domestic chores. Zara and Tara are shown incessantly working household worlds as if they are house help.

Another apt example of exploitation in the novel is that of a girl's family during marriage affairs. A girl's family is expected to give their daughter as well as a huge dowry to the groom's family. It seems to imply as if their daughter is not enough. She still has to bring a dowry to prove her worth to her in-laws.

When Zara's family is unable to arrange a good dowry for Zara, they have to send their daughter to Lahore so that she can manage to make her dowry herself. Such are the exploitative forces working in her village which reduce women to the status of a slave to cater for the wishes of her expected in-laws. Dowry is shown as something mandatory for a girl. It is taken by village people as the worth of a woman. A girl's happiness and worth after her marriage is decided by the amount of dowry she brings. At Saima Appi's marriage ceremony, her in-laws after seeing the dowry are ready to take 'baraat' back. Her parents literally have to beg for their daughter's future in front of her in-laws. Soon after the marriage, Saima Appi's in-laws associated all their problems with Saima Appi's bad luck. They beat and starved her. The physical and mental exploitation of

Saima Appi is a story of many village houses where women are subjected to unimaginable atrocities.

Women are so submissive due to years and years of exploitation that they themselves behave like slaves in front of men of their household. Amma behaves as if she is her husband's caretaker. She tries to provide as much physical and mental ease for her husband as it is possible for her. At one point, Amma apologizes even if it is not her fault.

He sat down and unfolded his legs, tipping the stack of steel cups over. Tin clanked and water spilled. Bending forward, Amma began to apologise and Tara and I leapt to help her. Why was Amma sorry? She hadn't done anything wrong. I smothered the sparks in my chest. I had other battles to fight. I was named Zara after Abba's younger sister, whom he had left behind. Nani said Zara meant the top, and the best at everything. (p. 41)

Zara and Tara's freedom and education are taken away from them so that they can serve the house well. Time and again Amma reminds Zara to close her books and finish her household chores. Once Zara wants to run out; but Tara reminds her that she has forgotten Amma's recent command. They are supposed to peel potatoes, take out the winter blankets mend them and also set the room for Sakina Masi (p. 100). Throughout the narrative, readers have found women working tirelessly whether it is in their own homes or working as a maid at someone else's place. Tara is working at a brothel. Zara is working as a maid. Zara's coworkers at Jameel Saab's house are young girls working hard to provide basic amenities to their families. Mothers are working incessantly as cooks and maids in their homes. But all their struggles and pains are never acknowledged. It seems that their struggles are never going to end. While the men are given due praise for all the work, they are doing to support their families. Zara's father earns respect, nurture and authority from his family members in return for all the work he does for them.

Hence, the above-mentioned examples from Baqir's *Beyond the Fields* and the consequent discussion show that women are so submissive due to years and years of exploitation that they themselves behave like slaves in front of men of their household and the patriarchal world around them. Once a woman understands her subjugated position, only then she will be able to bring a change in her life.

## Marginalization: Emasculating Women's Rights

Young (1988) says that maybe it is marginalization which is the deadliest form of oppression. Young (1988) defines marginalization as follows, "A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life, potentially then subject to severe material deprivation and even extermination" (p. 281). She says that those people of the society who are dependent on some other members of the society, such as women, poor people, insane or feeble-minded and also children, are mostly deprived of the same citizenship rights which the independent people of the society enjoy. She adduces that the dependency of some groups should not deprive them of their equal rights and respect. She believes that it is normal for an emotionally fragile, physically weak, recovering woman from childbirth, sick and children to be dependent on someone for support. This dependency should not devalue them as a person.

Almost all the women in the village remain at their homes except Shakeela Chachi, who runs a vegetable store with her son and husband. Amma's position in the house is that of a robot. She has been doing whatever she is programmed to do since her childhood. She never interferes with any of her husband's decisions. That is why there are no fights between the husband and wife. She readily bows down before each and every decision of her husband. When she finds out that her husband is not happy with her decision to cultivate a vegetable garden, she readily surrenders.

Tara is unable to understand the fact that they are not allowed to make decisions about their lives by themselves. It will be totally immoral if she tells her parents that she likes Salman and he, too, likes her. She takes that bond as a blessing; because she has been believing this since her childhood. No one ever thought out of the box. Whoever thinks out of the box in their village, like Chiragh, has to suffer tremendously. Seeing Saima Appi's marriage, Zara explains a girl's life as follows, "Were our lives a race from our parents' house to our husbands' house? Done and over, even before we had started to run, understood what we were capable of, or what we wanted from life?" (p. 98). She knows that no one will ever ask them about their choices and aims. They are born just to get married. They are a burden

which needs to be shifted from our parents' house to the in-laws.

When Saima Appi was engaged, she did not even see the boy she was going to marry. For many days, Zara's mother taught Saima Appi to serve tea and how to make sweetmeats (p. 73). It seems as if the only purpose of a woman is to make others happy. Being a daughter, a wife and then a daughter-in-law, she has to think of others. Only then she will be able to make some place for herself to live in this world. But if she thinks to rebel by getting an education or choosing her own spouse, she will be doomed. Once while travelling to Khalid Chacha's house, Zara's family got late. On their way, the tonga-walla said that travelling at this time of the day is full of perils due to an increased number of dacoits in the village. Zara's father stopped him saying that he should not discuss such stuff in front of the women (p. 153). Women are taken as domestic beings, who should not hear what is happening in the world around them.

The novel also shows how a woman who is disowned by her family for bringing shame to them by any of her wrong conduct is relegated by society. She is not treated like a human even. Chiragh's condition is enough of a proof to show the rotten condition of our culture which doesn't say anything to a man who is an adulterer but disowns a female adulterer. Chiragh has been shunned by her community as if she is a defilement, while her lover is living a life of happiness and satisfaction.

Women are so marginalized that it has become their habit to stay sidelined. Zara remembers, "Our courtyard was crowded with two chapatis, one for Abba and the other for our guests. Amma only sat on the charpai when Abba was out. When he was home, she hovered around him or squatted by the cooking pit" (p. 35). It seems as if Amma has no existence or identity, and she seems satisfied with that. Vijayavani (2018) says that we keep on saying that women and men are essential constituents of a society; but a woman is always marginalized by her husband, family relations and by the society at large (p. 108).

Thus, the above discussion portrays that women in *Beyond the Fields* are so marginalized that even their say is not considered in their own life's decisions. They are at the receiving end when it comes to their lives.

### Powerlessness: Effacement of Women

Young (1988) says that people are said to be powerless when they are situated in society in such a way that they only take orders and very rarely get the right to give orders. She adduces that some people possess power while others do not. The ones who possess power utilize their power to suppress others all the time.

As in the novel, when a blind girl was raped, the judge closed the case saying that the girl must be having some affair to get pregnant.

Majjo Phuppi shook her fists. "A sixteen-year-old blind girl has been sentenced to fifty lashes and a prison sentence. Her crime? That she was raped by a businessman and his son while her mother, their maid, was at the market. Upon discovering her daughter was pregnant, the poor mother took the case to court. But the judge let the businessman and his son go free, saying she must have been with someone to get pregnant. (p. 269)

Tara's narration of her rape incident is a true representation of a woman's powerlessness. She says, "I lashed out but he covered my mouth with his hand and threw me to the ground" (p. 262). Tara narrates how she was again powerless in front of her husband. She says,

"He raped me, again and again. It made no difference to him whether I resisted or cried. He would be quicker if I didn't. He laughed and said the marriage ceremony was a sham. He could do anything he liked with me". Tara's voice was flat. "Then there were other men. He said he had to recover the money he had spent on me. (p. 263)

The use of the word 'helpless' resonates with the helplessness of women before men and the patriarchal system at most parts of their lives. No one asked Saima Appi about her choice of spouse. When Zara sees Saima Appi all set in her bridal apparel, she deems her a buffalo who is ready to go to her owner. "A thick gold chain looped from her nose to her ears, reminding me of a buffalo being led away by its owner" (p. 94).

The powerlessness of women is explicitly shown when Zara responded to Saima Appi's experience of domestic violence saying why she did not raise her voice. Saima Appi replied that they all said it was her fault. Zara then says that it was always a woman's fault. It always happens that women are going to be blamed for every wrong or mischief. Zara says, "My

aunt. Chiragh. Tara. Saima Appi. Each and every time, it was always our fault" (p. 157). When a *Rishta* party left, Zara felt extremely free. She did not feel shackled with a dupatta over her head more than she felt shackled in the culture of hunting *Rishtas* where every mother wanted a fair-skinned girl bringing in loads of dowry. They had nothing to do with a girl's intellectual capabilities.

Charpais creaked, voices died, and the door shut with a thud. I bolted up, and the chador dropped to my waist. Gulping mouthfuls of air, I drank in the colours around me; they were sharper and brighter than before, the grass greener, the sky bluer. I wasn't going to be caged again (p. 131).

Law is shown to be powerless before the powerful rich class. In Tara's rape case, her family did not even go to the police station to file an FIR. Rahi (1983) says that when a rich, feudal or capitalist woman is raped, the whole state machinery is exhausted to punish the guilty. But no such efforts are made when an ordinary woman is raped. Ordinary people nowadays are able to recognize such double standards prevalent in law (as cited in Gangoli, 2007).

Men encase our honour in a glass showcase and then shatter it with rocks. They put us under burkas and then stripped us. What kind of justice is that? They suck honour from us like marrow from the bone to strengthen their power, their name. Why don't they look for honour within themselves?" I passed and looked at Tara. "What happened to you was wrong. But there was no law, no system, not even one person. Nothing to help us. So, I did what I had to, to get you back?" (p. 265).

Hence, it is clearly shown in the novel that in Pakistan the moment a girl is born, she is powerless before the discriminatory and misogynistic behaviour of the world around her, and she must battle every single moment of her life with all the discriminatory and subjugating forces around her.

### Cultural Imperialism: Men as Ruling Class

Young (1988) says, "Cultural imperialism consists in the universalization of one group's experience and culture, and its establishment as a norm... As a result, the dominant cultural products of the society, that is, most widely disseminated, express the experience, values, goals and achievements of the groups that produce them" (p. 285).

Chiragh's case is a prime example of that. She eloped with her lover, Anwar. Anwar had promised her that he would marry her; but, when his family tracked him down, he abandoned her. There was a buzz about abortion. Chiragh's family did not forgive her mistake, left the village and moved to some other place. Anwar then got married to a girl of her mother's choice. Moulvi Sahab wanted Chiragh not to come back to the village, but the Pir of the village permitted her to return. He said, "If she had no man or family to protect her, he would be her protector. Nobody knew what that meant. He had two wives and half a dozen children" (p. 78). These words by Pir showcase the wretched mentality of the so-called honourable men of the village. A woman who is alone becomes a free deal for everyone. Zara felt extremely sad about Chiragh's condition. She imagined how far their mere trinkets could take her. Zara knew that Chiragh was the one who was being punished. No one from the whole village would ever forgive her. There were multiple stories Zara had heard where girls were buried alive and were set on fire because they dishonoured their families by any of their decisions. Zara advocates for Chiragh saying that it was not only Chiragh who was with Anwar, he too was with her. Why does anybody not consider that? People are celebrating Anwar's marriage, but Chiragh has been shunned as a disease. Contrarily, in Zara's village, realities are built on the basis of traditional norms and cultural values. Men of the village were good because they were men. Women on the other hand need to be submissive, cooperative and an embodiment chaste to find some worth in the village.

When Sakina Masi considers Zara as her nephew, she suggests to Zara's mother that marrying daughters at an early age, before they start thinking, is really good (p. 97). Zara's mother has shown her to multiple aunts who were searching for 'good girls'. Most of them considered her skin colour, the taste of her tea and the amount of her dowry; but no one could see her intellect. A *rishta wali* once suggested Zara's mother make a deal with some family for *watta-satta* so that she could marry Zara, her dark-skinned daughter, in exchange for Omer. Zara got extremely angry and walked out. She then considers her decision to run out of the discussion place as wrong. She thinks to herself why did she run out? She should have stood up for herself. She wasn't going to marry this way. She will not allow them to trade her off.

The culture of suppressing daughters-in-law and domestic violence has also been shown in the novel at multiple points. Saima Appi was taken as a sign of bad luck by her in-laws. Everything wrong that happened to them was blamed on Saima Appi's bad luck. They starved her, beaten her and enslaved her in a small store. Saima Appi says,

What was I to do? Could I walk out? I wanted to but where could I go? I couldn't go back home. When the rains destroyed the cops, my mother-in-law told me I couldn't come out at all. No one talked to me. They set a plate of food inside the room for me. I thought I would go mad. Finally, when my sister-in-law lost her baby, they whipped me and locked me in the storeroom. I was there for days.

Another despicable cultural practice is also highlighted in the novel where the divorce of a woman is taken as immensely shameful. Kalsoom Chachi clearly stated that her daughter being death is better than being divorced. When Khalid Chacha took Saima Appi along with other family members to *Mela*, Kalsoom Chachi got angry. She asks how can he take the girls with this disaster on their heads. What are people going to say about it? That we are shameless?

The culture of degrading and judging women is clearly visible throughout Saima Appi's marriage. People commented on her dress, her weight, her lipstick shade, the gold she was wearing; in short, each and everything about her was scrutinized. Below are some of the comments of the people who attended the marriage.

When Tara got raped, some near relatives and Moulvi Saab gathered to decide how to bring justice to Tara. Riaz Chacha said that he agrees that criminals should be punished; but, we all need to accept that Yaqoob bhai has something more valuable to lose and that is his honour and family's name. Moreover, if Tara could not prove her rape, she will be declared an adulterer by the court, according to the new Haddood Ordinance. To aggravate the matter, according to the new law, the testimony of a woman is taken as half that of a man. Even if Tara testifies her rape, it will not be enough even then. Riaz Chacha was of the view that what has happened is gone, it is better to concentrate on the future. Amjad Chacha acceded to the viewpoint of Riaz Chacha. He said, "My wife was saying that if this news gets out Yaqoob Bhai won't be able to hold his head up. People will make up stories" (p. 116)

Tara's father said that he did not care about the people. They may say whatever they want to say. Her daughter has been wronged, and he will make sure to get her justice. Riaz Chacha says,

You need to care. You have a responsibility to your family name and your other children." reproached Riaz Chacha. "What's has happened, but think about your other daughter. She can marry anyone now, but who will want to marry her once you speak out? Even close relatives break off relations at such times. Have you forgotten what happened to Chiragh? (p. 116).

In *Little Women*, Zara admires Jo, wishing to be as brave as her one day. She then says that she actually wants to be her instead. We were from different worlds, but she deemed both of them similar from the inside. Zara knew that she wasn't alone. Women across the world are putting efforts to find which way to follow and how to cross hurdles on the path. But, Zara, in the next moment, realizes that both belong to two totally different worlds. When Jo stood up for herself, her family supported her. But the situation is different in her case. Zara says, "My obedience was a yardstick of my parents' standing in our village. If I rebelled, I dishonoured them and my family name" (p. 49).

Amma as well as her friends said that Chiragh was at fault, proclaiming there is no space in this village for such third-class girls. Bari Masi had maintained that if Chiragh had some shame, she would have drowned herself (p. 79).

Every time anything wrong happened, women were blamed and punished. Even when a woman is raped, the voices around the victim make it hard for her to hold her head high and live with dignity. Sohaila Abdulali, a rape victim, voices her thoughts on how society and culture have wrongly attached family honour to their women. Abdulali (2017) says that when she was raped, it was she who was wounded, not her honour. When she fought to survive that night, she hardly knew the reason she was fighting for. Of course, rape is extremely terrible. But rape is not terrific for all the reasons women are inculcated to believe to be terrifying. It is terrific because one is violated, one is scared, and someone else is in control of one's body and hurts one in an intimate way. Rape is not at all terrific and horrible because one has lost one's virtue. It is not terrific because one's father and brother are being dishonoured for this incident. She rejects the idea

that her virtue is placed in her vagina. If one takes honour out of this equation, rape is still horrible; but this horribleness is at a personal level, not at a societal one. Women who are assaulted should be given empathy for all the trauma they have been through, instead of burdening them with all the societal rubbish on how they are dishonoured and should sense guilt and shame attached to rape. The law needs to provide real penalties to rapists and should protect victims. However, empathy and support could be given only by families and communities. How is it possible for a teenager to participate in her rapist's prosecution if she doesn't have her family's support? How could a wife sue her assailant when for her husband the attack was more of a wrong to him than to his wife?

Oransky and Marecek (2002) in their research analyzed that mostly young boys were giving more importance to a person's capability of dissociating themselves from emotions and feelings so they could look like a man. They also preferred teasing and bullying over decent conduct, because they deemed these hostile deeds would help them look tough. They thought that these actions would earn them applause for being strong and insensitive (p. 196). Just as Zara's father did in the novel. He never shared his financial problems with his family members. He did not accept his wife's help in financial matters; rather, he preferred to solely earn for his family.

Hence, Baqir rightly proved Simone de Beauvoir's words when she said, "Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth" (as cited in Firestone, 1970, p. 156) From Chiragh's wretchedness to Tara's emergency marriage, from domestic violence to education of the girls at village, everything follows the patriarchal mindset of the village.

### **Violence: The Deadliest Crime**

Young (1988) talks about various types of violence: repressive violence by the rich class towards the poor, psychological and emotional violence in the form of harassment and psychological abuse and physical violence in the form of sexual assault, honour killing, and domestic violence.

The traditional breeding of Tara conditioned by her male-dominant social environment, in which she lived, moulded her to accept the physical

assaults of her husband Kamran and sexual brutality, enduring these attacks as a part of her destiny. Not alone family, but the feudal system in our society has also built extreme animosity towards women. The popular proverb of this system *Zan, Zar, Zameen* (woman, money, and land) are considered the main cause of all evil, it shows sheer disregard and objectification for women. If the woman tries to violate the laws of society, she is emotionally blackmailed. If she resists the brutality and speaks out against her oppressor, she is subjected to honour killing. The mother of Tara and her husband inflict such impediment on her. Tara was raised in a conservative society of Pakistan where the clothing of women is decided by the feudal lords and the religion, and laws are moulded and worsened by them.

Whenever men of a family feel that a woman from their household is raising her head and demanding her rights, they shut her mouth up with violent aggression. Zara's father raised his hand on their mother when declared to bring Tara back home. In Pakistan, when a family feels that their daughter is going to tarnish their family name and honour, they cut her throat right away. Maya Angelou rightly remarked that men always feel endangered by the innate power of women. She dauntlessly says that no matter what you men do with us women, we will rise and shine. If you can cut our bodies through your piercing gaze if you can kill us with harsh words, if

you could terrorize us in any possible way, do it. But remember, we won't surrender in front of all these atrocities (Angelou, 1994).

## **Conclusion**

Ayesha Baqir holds an honourable position among English fiction writers in Pakistan. Capable of portraying reality, Ayesha tries to sketch the lives of Pakistani women of the middle class. Their feelings, sufferings, and injustices they face on a daily basis are conveyed to the audience as a realistic story. In her novel, she scrutinizes the mindset of the older generation of women and their prime objectives in life. According to them, a woman's life is nothing to people of older generations, but to marry and conceive kids. Ayesha Baqir is adept at depicting human emotions such as fear, pleasure, happiness, and feelings expressed by female characters. When one goes through her novels it seems like looking into the hidden corners of a woman's mind. The sheer worries of Ayesha regarding the issues of women and their search for identity make her novels feminist-oriented literature. She depicts the strata of Pakistani women and the complex state of things emphatically. The writing style of Ayesha Baqir is popular for her sensitive and courageous handling of substantial and feminist themes impacting the lives of women, which is why her works add a magnificent share to Pakistani literature in English.

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