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**FROM DOMESTIC CONFINEMENT TO AGENCY: A CRITIQUE
OF FEMININE DISCONTENT AND SELFHOOD IN ZAFAR'S *A
GOOD WIFE***



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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the female enslavement in Zafar's *A Good Wife*, which actually hides the protagonist's personality and depicts her as anonymous or less identifiable. It also elucidates, how a woman shatters all the constituted ideologies to regain her true self. It highlights the continuous conflict between personal desire and communal expectations, where society is continuously forcing women to hide their full potential and lower themselves to meet patriarchal expectations. A qualitative descriptive framework is applied for textual analysis and this study is analyzed through the lens of feminism, which demands women's rights worldwide. The primary is collected from the Zafar's *A Good Wife* in which she describes her life's circumstances while secondary data is collected from other resources such as scholarly articles and journals, books and monographs, textbook and encyclopedias etc. Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* is used as a guide for analysis, it describes that women are persuaded by society to be feminine and confine their lives to their husbands, children or housework. Women are judged on the basis of their outer appearance and restricted from showing their full potential; one can say that they are manipulated on a very broader level. Betty Friedan challenged this false perception in *The Feminine Mystique*. She depicts how many housewives are unhappy and unable to do anything. She called this issue something that has no name but it is something that is present in almost every married women's lives. She criticizes societal ideologies and focuses on women's agency. This research is meaningful as it expresses a woman's struggle in a society that wants to imprison her. The outcomes of this study reveal societal standards and female rebelliousness towards society where she gives more importance to her career and changes her destiny with education.

Keywords: A Good Wife, Agency, Female Rebelliousness, Feminism, Patriarchal Expectations, The Feminine Mystique

INTRODUCTION

Historically, it is evident that women are the most subjugated entity in the whole world, and it is very hard to eliminate them from the world; women are the victims; they suffered a lot both in quantity and quality, but no one noticed their situation because of patriarchal norms that divided gender roles into two groups: women work in domestic sphere and take hold on their duties as a

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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wife and mother, while men are responsible for outdoor activities (public areas). Even literary figures also portrayed them as a useless figures; for instance, Shakespeare's works portrayed them as controllers who pushes men towards illegal activities, like "Macbeth's wife" forces her husband towards corruption or immorality, in the same way another writer Tulsides says that females and animals are equal in status; both of them deserve abuse and punishments (Jaggar and Shrubl, 1978, p.5). Likewise, Bodin gives a lot of importance to familial relationships; "man is the master of the house while female is slave"; she must has to show obedience towards her man's decision; moreover man is destined to rule her because she is "naïve or morally weak minded" and her freedom or independence will bring misfortunes to our society; that's why nature has fixed her destiny. One can says, the patriarchal society has given inferior status to other gender (women) and put all the blames on nature (Bodin, 1945, p. 9), but Mill in her essay already clarified a long ago that it is not nature but the cunning mind of man who made them suppressed (Pandey, 1989). In almost every part of the world, women are not allowed to take part in politics as well as in economic activities, and their domestic roles are also viewed as inferior, however the amount of oppression vary from area to area. Rosaldo says women are placed in lower strata (lowest position); male society doesn't allow them to live their lives according to their demands and further it closes all the ways through which women can attain her position as an active individual; Chodorow in her article explicates that a women is responsible for her children's wellbeing but her children develops in a different way; male is advised to go to outside, and does not assimilate himself in domestic sphere, while a girl usually follows her mother and develops feminine qualities (Rosaldo et al., 1974). In an Indian society, female is included in lowest class; male society made her fragile; in her childhood she is protected by her father, after marriage her sole owner is her husband and in old age, her son. Furthermore, their salaries at work are much lower than those of male entities; in most countries, they have the right to her father's inheritance; in some states, they are murdered by her family members; abuse and harassment are common in most families; and a young bride is forced to marry if she does not bring a good price (dowry) with her. Women lack the authority to make their own decisions; they are completely controlled by male patriarchy, which has rendered them passive and forced them to obey every decision that they make, so women must empower themselves and take control of their situations (Sahay, 1998). According to Sahay's opinion gender inequality is based on teen marriages, abuses, and other factors requires prompt action and elimination from society. Patriarchal culture also provided them the liberty to question anything that made them wonder, and as a result, they began to believe in themselves. According to Hay, it is instilled in women's minds that they will only be considered a good person if they "prioritize the desires of others"; this is the only way they will be considered a morally good person; as a result, most girls spend their entire lives caring for others, which eventually leads to annoyance. Fear of loneliness is also present; males tell them that their existence is nothing without their support; such fear normally exists in divorced women, and if they have children, they feel more depression; this is one of the most important reasons that most girls prefer to live in a subjugated environment (Hay, 1998, pp.27-28).

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Samra Zafar was born in Pakistan in 1989, although she spends most of her time in the United Arab Emirates; her father, despite being a kind man, abuses his wife on several occasions. He loved her daughters, but unexpected circumstances forced him to marry her; after marriage, Samra Zafar relocated to Canada, where she suffered mental and physical abuse from her husband; she was confined in her new home, and her in-laws refused to allow her to pursue an education, but she did not give up hope and continued her struggle against patriarchal society, which sought to limit her. Finally, the only alternative left to her was divorce, so she left her marriage with her two girls when she was twenty-six. After her divorce, she shared her life story with a journalist; the response to her story surprised her, so she decided to write a book about her life, with the help of an editor, Meg Masters, called *A Good Wife*; this book won the award for best nonfiction; in 2020, this book was recognized as one of the best books (out of 21) to read. Furthermore, with the publishing of this book, Samra Zafar is regarded as one of Canada's most powerful women. She is presently residing in Toronto and works at a bank while simultaneously pursuing her dream of attending medical school.

Ms. Zafar's *A Good Wife*, portrays the hilarious life's journey of her life, is a memoir-a non-fiction work, related to author's life experiences; unlike autobiography or biography, it focuses on the specific details or events, which change a person's life completely. First person point of view is used throughout the text, where narrator explicates her personal view points, by the usage of such pronouns: I, we and me (Master class, 2021). This text has four sections and seventeen chapters, along with prologue, epilogue and acknowledgements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word "feminism" is not widely used until the 1890s, but women have been expressing feminist ideas much earlier. By the 1700s, women in various parts of the world have been examining unequal treatment. Because of male supremacy, women have historically been relegated to subordinate roles. Feminists' main theme was to revolt against male-determined beliefs; to do so, they had to reestablish/restructure the system via their own efforts and rebuild their position (Raina, 2017). Sociologists have pointed out three main waves of feminism with a fourth wave in the second part of the 21st century that is affected by technology and the internet. Each wave has a specific aim that is driven "by specific events or catalysts," but feminism is a continuous movement "with a wide spectrum of aims" (McCann, 2019, p.11).

The first wave of feminism started in 1800s, and spread into various countries like Europe, India, Iran, but it was most prevalent in United States and Europe, and one clearly saw this in the writings of Wollstonecraft or Mill; it reinforced the idea of new women, which stand against patriarchal dominance, and criticized the barriers that made society implemented in society to make the females, their slaves; further various social reforms were restructured and campaigns were

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started to portray women's frustration in household duties, limited opportunities for work or education, restrictive reproductive autonomy, no property rights and forbidden social agency. The most significant aim of this movement was to give females their voting rights (Malinowska, 2020). It is commonly associated with the Seneca Fall Convention 1848 in the United States. Stanton remarks in the *Declaration of Sentiments* (1848) that the history of humankind is full of repeated “injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman” (Stanton, 1848, p. 1). This is particularly true during that time as the Industrial Revolution created a demand for labor, which many women filled, but they are paid extremely low wages. American women's suffrage efforts inspires global movements. The Seneca Falls Convention influences French women to challenge political restrictions and fuels British suffrage campaigns. Canadian activists have been inspired by Americans linked voting rights to societal benefits. American women have gained the right to vote on August 18, 1920, with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. During the first wave, three different types of feminism were merged radical, liberal and cultural. Radical feminism explicates, patriarchal structure is the basic reason of women's oppression, and one has to completely eliminate it from society. Such kind of feminists consider motherhood and child birth as highly painful processes and emphasized that one must has to use technology to completely eradicate/ eliminate such painful things (Gill and Singh, 2019). Cultural feminism reinforces female attributes (calm nature, sweetness, nurturing) and valued such qualities because for them women's enemy is not social structure or norms but actually men; thus their main motive is to establish a healthy environment, free from male-ideologies (Alcoff, 1988). Liberal feminist's main objective is to maintain equality in legal and political areas; they show negation with the conception of women's natural inferiority because it creates hostile environment (Purwarno et al., 2021).

Feminism's second wave started in 1960s and ended in 1980s; this movement discussed wider range of issues like inequality at work place, reproduction autonomy, female's confinement, educational restrictions and domestic violence. Like previous one, it also opposed those institutions or domains that support male dominance; during that period women were considered as submissive or unintellectual, who needed male-protection; the major feminist authors criticized all these ideologies and emphasized women's potential. "The personal is political"-is a phrase, closely associated with second wave's feminists, explicated that a person's private issues are no more personal; they are political, and must be discussed to outside society. For instance; if a woman is raped or facing domestic violence then it is not a private problem rather one has to discussed it to other people especially media, so that government should take action against it (Cottais and Feldner, 2021). Furthermore, this movement differed from the first one in that it also discussed the rights of non-whites; actually, it was Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), who instigated the second wave of feminism and claimed about the boring and dull routine of those women who were limited inside the four confined walls and were not allowed to do anything productive like carrier or education (Alhumaid, 2019).

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At the end of the 1980s, some people started to say that feminism is no longer needed. They have claimed that women have already achieved equality in education and work. The idea is called post-feminism. However, many feminists like Rebecca Walker, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards disagreed. They believed that women have made mass progress due to second-wave feminism, but true equality has not been achieved. Feminism needs to address new challenges such as the growing influence of neoliberalism. The Riot Grrrl movement emerged in the 1990s in the Pacific Northwest. Rooted in anger and activism, it tackles women's social, political, and economic struggles as stated that it is “female anger” (Mphuthi, 2022). Following the Anita Hill hearings, writer and activist Rebecca Walker penned a powerful article for Ms. Magazine that is marked as a starting point for the third wave of feminism. In the essay, Rebecca calls herself that she isn't the post feminists but she is the “third wave” (Walker, 1992, p. 3). Third wave of feminism covered those aspects which were neglected during second wave; it started in 1990s and later expanded to other fields like gender studies; this era in feminism's history reinforced social justice and individual identity, rather than legal or political activities; it also spoke for women of different colors, and emphasized diverse (multiply) experiences; the major issues that were under-study at that time are: violence, reproduction rights (body rights) and sexual liberty (Raina, 2017). Moreover, the second wave reinforced women's personal identity with the aid of professional careers, while this wave gave them liberty to choose about their life's motives; if a woman finds fulfillment only in a housewife and motherhood's role, no one can force her to go for outside work.

By the early 2010s, a new, fourth wave of feminism has begun to emerge, which is built on the intersectional focus and sex positive principles of the third wave. This wave is largely led by millennials, Generation Z, and many within this movement have been raised in families and cultures shaped by the gains of the second and third waves of feminism. Hashtag activism involves using hashtags with recognizable phrases to amplify digital campaigns. These hashtags allow activists to connect with audiences through real-time updates, sharing photos, and spreading information. In 2014, Nigerian feminists used #BringBackOurGirls to draw attention to the abduction of 276 schoolgirls. The #MeToo movement is an awareness hashtag activism centered on sexual harassment and abuse, particularly in the workplace. It gained significant momentum in 2017 after news reports exposed sexual abuse by American film producer Harvey Weinstein. The movement closely discussed the issues of sexual harassment, murders, violence and claims justice for female gender both in the US and globally. The movement seeks justice for survivors through criminal and civil court systems. Within its first year, the movement led to the dismissal of numerous prominent men who were publicly accused of sexual wrongdoings. With the rise of the fourth wave of feminism, the rights of sex workers also rise, giving this marginalized section of society a voice. In the 1970s, American sex workers' rights activist Carol Leigh introduced the term “sex work” to replace the stigmatized term “prostitute” with language that afford more dignity (Britannica, 2024). In the present time, despite the progress, individuals who voluntarily engage in sex work still face significant stigma and lack of access to protection. In 2016, *Amnesty*

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

International reinforced this stance by publishing its policy and research on protecting sex workers pointing that sex workers are at heightened risk of a whole host of human rights abuses (Mutasha, 2016). The fourth wave of feminism still continues today advocating for women rights globally. Feminist theory has been broadened into various forms such white feminism, postcolonial feminism, ecofeminism and black feminism. However, with the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, TF VAWG has been seen in every part of the world.

Bukuru in *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth* discusses how cultural and religion negatively affects a person's life; further he also draw a comparison between "Samra's father and husband"; this work portrays, "religion is used as a tool to justify female's beating"; further protagonist is forced to wear hijab and continuously tortured in the name of her religion; Samra's mother-in-law supports abuse; she uses the verses of the Quran and explicates to her that intimate partner abuse is completely allowed in Islam (Bukuru, 2020, p115). Bukuru also compares s her husband with her father; although both of them are Muslim, yet Ahmed was controlling "narrow-minded and abusive person" who always put restrictions on her and wanted her to confine in patriarchal society, while Samra's father was totally opposite; he loved their daughters, gave them full autonomy; he was supportive of girl's education and believes in expressing one's individuality; it was one of the reasons that made her free from Ahmed's shadow (p.119). In marriage male and female have equal responsibilities but our culture puts all the responsibilities on women's shoulders and men do not have any responsibilities; they roam freely without any restriction. Pakistani culture considers woman as man's property and an unmarried woman is worthless without her husband; it was these traditions that forced her to take her life towards the end of the work, and these situations happened due to the unavailability of proper human structure. Jafri in *International Journal of Research Culture Society* elucidates the personal life's experiences of Samra Zafar; how she gains freedom from her "subjugated" married life; how religion, culture and education deeply impacted her life; normally Muslim girls do not have enough courage to portray their life's events, but Zafar's bravely explicates her tale; at early age , she married to a much older person who restricts her freedom and autonomy, and forced her to live her life in domesticity; She faces "verbal and physical abuse" but she did not give up and continued education; in the end, after her divorce, she won the biggest scholarship and attains a comfortable living for herself; her community group of students also provides help and made it possible for her to achieve success (Jafri, 2022, p.20-22). In a nutshell, Zafar's novel depicted patriarchal domination, conventional women's duties, and terrifying circumstances with great fortitude.

Onyeso in *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth* describes Islamic culture and religion. According to her, religion leaves a strong negative impact on women as it considered abuse an acceptable action or does not provide autonomy so that they can express themselves freely; hijab is a women's choice only she can decide that she will wear it or not. Females must show sympathy to those who are suffering from the same circumstances; as Zafar's mother-in-law suffered at the

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

hands of her husband, so she must have to stand against her husband's action, but in reality she supports her husband's violent rages and told her to tolerate everything with courage and never ever thought about living, but Samra faces depression and eventually leaves her husband, but after separation she still faces the negative comments from society, including being referred to as an unfaithful lady. Culture also had an impact on her social life; she wanted to get an education, but cultural norms forced her to marry right away because older women are unlikely to find a good partner; additionally, obedience and submissiveness are highly valued; a woman must submit herself to her husband at all costs; she is her husband's property even Islamic community placed a lot of obligations on the shoulders of women, with no contribution from men; but, for Onyeso, marriage works only when both partners make an effort to resolve their issues (Onyeso, 2023). Mary and Priya in *World Journal of English Language* demonstrate how socialization (intermingling with community members) can strengthen a person and help him solve any problem by making connections; the main character has been abused her entire life, first in childhood by relatives or friends, and then by her husband, who wants to make her obedient, submissive, and a mere object. Zafar's friends and mentor helped her in overcoming her fear and with them, she was able to design her own unique path. Lenore E. Walker's framework of 'The Cycle of Violence' is applied here that illustrates that dominating husbands subjugates or tortures their partners, for the sake of maintaining authority over them, and Ms. Zafar found out about her abusive condition through her counsellor, who told her about 'The Power and the Control Wheel', who told her that how this abuse cycle starts in a person's life and Zafar observed that she was facing same situation: in the first tension building phase, Abuser will build fear in her about the outside world and make her weak minded; Ahmed puts fear in her mind about outside world in the name of protectionism, then abuser will start his physical and mental torture, in the third phase, he will repent of his misdeeds and calmness or peace appear in the life of abused individual- Ahmed sees Samra talking with Fahad, and suddenly becomes caring or loving; in actually, he was afraid that Samra will leave him (Mary and Priya, 2023). Through this, Samra recognized that Ahmed was exploiting her for his personal profit and that there was no way to make things better, so she left; researchers emphasize that with the help of a good environment, one may extricate herself from brutal/cruel conditions. In short, this memoir is an inspiration for those who are in the same circumstances; they should have learned from the protagonist and changed their conditions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Betty Naomi Goldstein (1921-2006) was born in the United States of America at the house of Jews; she was a brilliant student, started writing about political activities at such a young age. She always saw the frustration on her mother's face as she was unable to achieve her career; by observing the disturbed life of her mother, she decided to act differently, unlike traditional women. She graduated from Smith college and then attended University of California, for a little period, and moved to New York; She also worked as a newspaper editor and then married to Carl Friedan; after

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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few years, she left her job and adopted the role of housewife, but felt frustration so she decided to determine other people's views in this regard; in her survey she was wondered and astonished when she observed that all the women were facing the same issue no-name; so she wrote *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), where she encouraged other females to pursue their goals. In 1966, she attained the position of president in National Organization for women, where she emphasized gender equality in legal areas. She spoke for abortion rights and explicated that it is not a criminal act rather it will be helpful for both mother and child; in 1973, the Supreme Court hold on hearing and legalized abortion procedure.

The Feminine Mystique (1963) has clarified the pre-conception about women's feminine roles, it also illustrates that women are forced to live a subjugated life and are not allowed to use their strengths or energies. This book has emphasized those females, who were suffering from the problem of no-name so that they fought for their rights and establish their own personal identity. Friedan has described the strategies of experts; they tell them, the solution of “no name” trouble resides inside the kitchen; they should have to make their kitchens more beautiful and found solace in doing kitchen works. It is the reason that mostly women today are not working for their potential or future, rather they are working to help their husbands in household expenses (Friedan, 1963, p.13). One more strategy that conventional critics use is “God's power”; they tell the American ladies that they should have to handle themselves to supreme power, God has designed the specific roles for each gender and they have to feel happy that their lives are much easier and if a woman does not satisfy with this answer too then she is dismissed by telling that she is a thankless lady as there are lot of women in this world who want to live like them (p.19). The women are advised that their roles are designed naturally and they should have to feel happy that they are women. They are advised to adjust their lives according to their “pre-determined roles”, and because of these scenarios mostly American women have painfully adopted their roles of housewives and ignored their inner voices (p. 21). Betty Friedan has explicated that all the “American women” wanted to live their lives like a housewives; their only vision was to live happily with their husbands or children; they glorified themselves in their particular traditional roles of house-ladies and felt sorrow for those who dreamed to have a career (pp. 13-14). Moreover, Friedan interviews the “ladies of Smith College” and analyses that education is something unnecessary for them; their only dream is to get a man and live happily in his company (p. 145).

The Feminine Mystique (1963) also encouraged the ladies to live through their family members and accept their natural roles, instead of going outside to make their new-individuality. Friedan has stressed that, although, during her time, young girls loved their mothers however still they did not want to be like them, they saw the frustration on their faces, when they were not allowed to make their personal careers and those mothers also did not want their daughters to live their lives like them; “Friedan's mother” also wanted that her girl would grow and establish her position in public domain, but in-spite of all this, these mothers were unable to provide them an

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

accurate example so that they will adjust their lives according to it (Friedan, 1963, p. 65). Betty Goldstein describes female limitations in extracurricular activities like as basketball and bicycle riding, which were also restricted and another reason for their lost individuality. She argues as “Victorian culture” did not permit women to fulfil their sexual needs or think about them; similarly, our “modern culture” also restricts girls to fulfil their basic need of individuality as a human being (p. 69). While talking about female subjugation, Friedan also elucidated about the ancient journey of enthusiastic females who wanted to prove their potentials to male society, and considered that women are not an empty object or passive figures; they have their rights; this was a rebelliousness against male defined social criterions, who repressed women’s rights and made them their slaves. Fanny Wright and Ernestine were the two females who stood against “patriarchal order” and emphasized female’s growth through professional careers, but they were portrayed as “loose women”; society criticized everyone who spoke in favour of girls, even religion is used to fulfill the personal motives of patriarchy, which states that women have much higher missions and sacred duties than that of men; she has to devoted her life for family (p. 78). “An assembly man in America” opposed the application of woman’s property rights and stated that earnings and inheritance are made for only males because God assigned them as his representative, further woman is made from man’s side, so both of them are not equal; by attentively listening his views the assembly rejected that petition (p. 79). Lucy Stone was one of those woman who had a “rebellious spirit”; she “cut her hairs” and changed her dressing style from conventional one to loose-fitting pants; at that time women had no place so when she was born, her mother depressed and said it is a girl, from her childhood she observed that her father is the patriarch of the house, and everyone had to obey him; this was the notion that stand her for female rights (p.81). Ms. Stanton is another name in female’s movement who after marriage faced frustration and isolation in household chores and after analyzing her situation conducted a meeting for those who were facing same problem. Howe also started her passionate journey after marriage when she analyzed that her husband want a “housewife” who can take care of him and children, and she accepted this as her destiny but after meeting Lucy stone she changed her decision (p. 86). In short, these women were revolutionist, but now a days, females are encouraged to accept the basic tenets of feminine mystique, career becomes a dirty world, and any women who stood for their rights are named as Lucy Stoners.

Education made a woman’s disciplined and independent-with full autonomy, but unfortunately women’s prescribed roles acting as a barrier for their success; she is defined on the basis of her marriage status, and her whole life revolves and dependent on her husband’s decisions; society made every effort to make women submissive, banned everything that make her strong and constantly encouraged them to live through their family members. Literary work written by patriarchs also emphasized female’s restricted lives, “*The Lonely Crowd*”, there is no place for women’s contributions in society, so it is better for them to live inside the home (Friedan, 1963, p. 171). In 1960s, for restricting women in house, educators hold a campaign which stressed that

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women should have to stop education until their children grow; they also considered early marriages, an acceptable thing, however, those girls who became trapped in such kinds of preconceptions are deeply suffered in the end because of purposelessness, nonexistence and noninvolvement unworldly affairs, and they continuously suffered because they choose femininity as a whole thing and never care about their individual identity. Through her experience Friedan explicated that although “feminine mystique” created lot of hindrances for females, but still intellectual women are getting it because they know the importance of education, besides this is not someone’s private issue, but it is a public problem and strict actions are required for those who stop women (p. 351). She stressed out part time education for those who cannot get full time studies because of family’s responsibilities; colleges must have to give them some leverage so that they complete their some work through home assignments; it is the only way which can save women from becoming “dilettante”; and most importantly scholarship program is necessary for those who are facing money or time issues; such strategy will help them and paved their ways for better future (pp. 357-358). Friedan explicates that a woman's solution of her emptiness or frustration resides within herself, even her psychoanalyst can only guide her about the right way; a woman must has to find her own identity and do some productive work which will be helpful for her in future; she must has to design her own future plan in which she can prioritize to her house life of husband and family as well as to her work that will construct her personal identity. “Feminine mystique” creates a false perception that a woman can find her own individuality only if she divorces her husband or leaves her children, but Friedan has clarified this notion and said, it is not a hard task for a woman to maintain both her family or career, but social norms want to confine woman, that's why they create hindrances (p. 330). The most necessary thing is woman's contribution in outside world; it is the only way that will ease her life. Moreover if a mother makes a “right choice” about her future, it is common that her daughter, by looking at her mom's experience, will also move towards right direction (p. 355). Society’s plots against women in two ways: firstly, Society tells them to choose either “career or motherhood, both of them are impossible” and secondly, if men allow women to work, they advise them to work only by following their ways; in this way, they can stop women from making their own identity, but *The Feminine Mystique* emphasized woman to use their full power and manage everything with complete sincerity and the women who follow the new plan and make their own identity are the complete-women because they contribute in society and do not consider their conventional roles as everything (pp.361- 362).

In the epilogue of this book, Ms. Betty Friedan elucidates the need of gaining financial security as it is the only way through which women can participate and give equal contribution to society, along with men; for this, they must have to abolish all the restrictions that suppressing them, moreover if a woman is doing a job and is not gaining any wages than she has no worth in society, because only financial stability can make a woman free from worldly constraints (Friedan, 1963, pp. 370-371). She claims that male patriarchy confines females inside the four restricted walls, and does not allow them to do anything according to their desires, as a result a lot of ladies

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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who want to separate from their husbands unable to do such courageous action because they do not know about survival strategies in this male patriarchal society. Friedan highlights the time period when she wanted to end her marriage with “Carl”, but fear of loneliness forced her to live in frustration or torment and she decides to live with her husband in that marriage, where love did not exist but hatred was present everywhere; she decided to establish an organization which would work for female's right and changing society was an easy option for her (pp. 366-367). Moreover this movement boosted her confidence she becomes able to leave her marriage, she was no more that little woman who were scared she leaves behind all her fears; even before writing this book, she was afraid of flying but she was ready to fly over the oceans. To put it simply, Friedan acquired strength and eliminated all forms of fear from her life, as well as attempting to eradicate the fears of other females through his outstanding book.

ANALYSIS

The Feminine Mystique explicates the situations of 1950s as women's marriage rate was continuously increasing into teens, and they left their schooling for their husbands; fourteen million girls were affianced (engaged) by the age of seventeen; in comparison with men, their attendance rate also decreased, almost sixty percent students, left school, and embraced marriage, because they were afraid that education might lead them to the fate of spinsterhood (Friedan, 1963, p. 12). In *A Good Wife*, the protagonist (Samra Zafar) suffered from the same circumstances: a marriage proposal had come to her when she was in high school and later she married to him at the age of eighteen; her mother brought up the proposal, for the first time, when she was doing her homework. After her disapproval, she repeatedly came to her, and used various ways to force her for teen marriage; firstly, she told her that it is impossible for her to get good education in Pakistan, but after Samra's continuous disapprovals, she tried to convince her by giving the example of her sister Nasreen, who forsake various good proposals at young age just for education, and in the end she did not find an appropriate partner for herself at forty; no good offers were available for her, and because of that she ended up in a loveless or childless marriage; even, her aunt herself spoke to her and pleadingly said, don't "give up a marriage proposal to go to school. Look at what happened to me" (Zafar, 2019, p. 33). Like her mother who had told her that old women do not receive good proposals, she also used the same way: "The best proposals come when you are young", more options will also come but "they would not be as good", and mostly partners find it displeasing that there better halves are seeking professional education, but it is a good thing that her husband is different, and suddenly she uttered the words that made Samra anxious: "Even if he does not let you go, it does not matter, the important thing is that a woman get married" (pp. 35-36). After her engagement, when she had gone to school, one of her friend appeared and said, "You're so lucky!", after that a group of girls approached her and started talking with full enthusiasm; by the end of the week, the entire school was aware that she would be a young bride very soon, and Bangladeshi friend left her; she was not convinced that Samra will continue her studies after marriage (p. 48).

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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During her mehndi's celebration, his cousin with her wife had come to her room and by looking her teary eyes because of sadness told her, everything will be good, just think positively; his wife also consent fully with her spouse's views and uttered, "This is Allah's will" (p. 9). Her cousin brother used religion to elucidate community's personal motives, designed by male dominated society to send women into marriage trap. Her mother also used religion for her personal motives, "This is a gift from Allah; his way of protecting you, Samra, from any kind of danger", and if she refused to accept Allah's will, it would be considered disobedience, and she would be punished, in future, for such act (p. 37). Even after her nikkah, Samra who was ambivalent previously about her marriage, started falling in love with Ahmed, she thought that "marriage was a right choice for her"; she wished to go back to that night when she was extremely afraid about her fixed marriage, and told herself that this decision was best (p. 62). Such views of girls in *A Good Wife* clarified the Betty Friedan's perspective that females give more importance to marriage bed, than that of other productive ambitions.

The protagonist (Samra Zafar) pointed out that, although her in laws had allowed her university education, but after engagement, her sister-in-law become "more disconcerting"; one day she invited her for a sleep-over; in the blanket, they started to talk about her future life when Samra mentioned about her university, Fatima's mood suddenly changed; she told her it will happen but if it does not, "what then?"; Samra observed the "hint of impatience in her voice" and rapidly reminded her about her parent's promise, but Fatima advised, "You just have to realize that the real importance of a woman's life is the care of the home and to be a wife", and she should be grateful that she got this opportunity in an early age (Zafar, 2019, p. 50). Samra Zafar always wanted to give her best in education, but when the proposal of a Canadian man came, she became confused and astonished about her ambivalent situation, as everyone was happy for her, she felt like an ungrateful person, who is complaining on her good luck. Suddenly, she started questioning herself about the life that she always imagined for herself; everyone always told her that she is unique and god-gifted (and will do something better in future), but by observing the experience of her aunt she was showing a little bit interest in marriage. Although she did not believe in the notion of marriage as a woman's destiny, but the question that marriage will save her from the fate of spinsterhood continuously coming to her mind because in this insensible society, an unmarried childless lady deserved only sympathy and cruel laughter; moreover, she thought if this marriage does not happen, she would always be viewed as a failure regardless of her accomplishments and she did not want to be viewed as a failure in anyone's eyes; for her failure thing did not resemble to her personality even it was just terrible to think (pp. 38-39). This situation demonstrates her internal conflict she was confused about her future goals, but in the end following the advices of her surrounding members, she chooses marriage as the most important thing. This is a major similarity between Betty Friedan and Samra Zafar; although in the end both of them realized their mistake, but at first, both chose marriage.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* quote interviews of four women who suffered because of no-name problem; one of them claims that her days are boring and completely unintellectual; she gets up early in the morning and complete her all housework like, cleaning, washing, breakfast and dinner preparation; her most of the time spends in doing her motherly duties (Friedan, 1963, p. 22). After listening her daily routine's tale, Miss Betty claims, the basic problem about such types of women are they do not have any "personal identity", they always known as someone's wife or mother (p. 23). In the prologue, the protagonist of *A Good Wife*, describes her dread routine life; her attitude or accent shows her frustration about her living environment; she wakes up in her bedroom by the sounds of birds, her house looks peaceful (noiseless) and her daughter is sleeping in her bed, while her husband spends his nights, mostly in den. Although her heart is aching with pain every day, but today she is feeling physical pain too; fear is running through her whole body; she feels at any moment, her husband will leave her alone, with her in-laws, in that "cold brick house"; if everything will be normal, Ahmed (her husband), according to his routine, will eat his lunch and silently leave the house through the front door, and her day will become a hell, passed only by cleaning, TV, and pointless conversation; further, she added, in this house "other than grey monotony is scary" (Zafar, 2019, p. ix). After hearing her mom-in-law's footsteps' voice, she starts praying for her boring routine, and ready herself for greeting; she knows that now she will go to kitchen and start her routine life works (p. x).

By observing the historical facts, Friedan described the need of "abortion" in contemporary society, so that the previous mistakes would not be repeated; she emphasized that society must be restructured, so that a girl felt safe, and take an appropriate decision for herself; she reinforced women's body rights, and spoke in favour of abortion and birth contraception (pill) (Friedan, 1963, pp. 371-372). In *A Good Wife*, after moving to Canada, Ms. Samra instantly realized her unexpected pregnancy, she talked to Ahmed and went for medical examination; the female physician, looked at her pitifully and then revealed her positive pregnancy test; as Samra heard the news, she felt like she was swallowing in the ground; doctor explained to her the choice of abortion, but Zafar describes she did not know what the doctor was saying, the abortion concept was completely new to her, she refused and said such thing is not allowed in her religion (Zafar, 2019, p. 80). Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*, writes experts put emphasis on women to devote their whole life in search of husband and taking care of her children; they told them how to handle kids, breastfeeding, and many other things (Friedan, 1963, p.11). Even women are also so obsessed with their children; a lady in New York hospital suffered from heart attack as she found the news that she cannot breastfeed her baby, another woman Betty Ann Countrywoman, whose passion was to become a doctor but with the passage of time like any other woman she wanted a husband and a family so she went to a nursing school become a mother of six babies; he thinks, breast feeding is an innovative process, and through it one can find complete and a strong sense of fulfillment through it (pp. 12-51). In *A Good Wife*, Samra wanted to breastfeed her baby girl, but, during her journey to Indianapolis because of her husband's or in-laws' tantrums, she buy formula bottles and

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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after some battle, Aisha also adopted her new routine; but, protagonist was concerned, she wanted to give the nutritional benefits of breast milk to her newly born, for at least six months. During their vacations in Indianapolis, Samra gave formula bottles to Aisha and once she came back at the apartment, she tried her best to breastfeed her, but day-by-day Aisha shows disinterest because she was used to bottle, and Samra's milk production also decreased, and after their journey, when she reached home, she was devastated from the fact that, Aisha did not needed her, and bond that she created with daughter was broken (Zafar, 2019, p. 116).

Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* described a woman who was other directed, and did not have the freedom "to be herself"; she believed that, other's viewpoints were more important than her own; she did not trusted or valued herself and wanted to behave like others (Friedan, 1963, p. 308). In the starting phase of marriage, Samra was a low-dominance woman, decided to make her life according to the requirements of her in-laws because she thought in this way, she will bring her happy married life back, as "Abba" always told her the qualities of a good wife by giving the example of "Amma", so she decided to live like her; she got up early to make Ahmed's lunch and then again went to sleep for several hours; although Amma disapproved but gave her permission to enjoy sometime according to her own will; she looked after Aisha throughout the day and assisted Amma in kitchen work; once the chores were done, she spent time with Aisha; further soap operas and card play with Amma were her routine life (Zafar, 2019, p. 125). Moreover, after eating dinner, Ahmed go out again with his friends and she cleaned kitchen, put Aisha to bed, and once Amma went to bed, she spent time in completing her school work (a little course work that she was doing through distance learning center) the she "switch on a little CD player" that Ahmed bought for her and then again the whole routine was repeated the next morning. For many days, Samra only talked with Amma; she listened to her perspectives about her friends or late night (dinner) parties (p. 126). Samra gave more importance to Abba's views, and changed herself into a perfect house wife, like Amma was.

Friedan describes women have been running from their own capabilities; because they think if they go back and focus only on their home their lives will be easier (Friedan, 1963, pp. 329-332). In Zafar's memoir, various incidents are present when Samra faced discouragement about her interests in outdoor games from society, which was mostly patriarchal except her father; only man who supported her passion for sports. Once in Ruwais, Samra with her sisters was playing cricket in the street (her father was also there); she was holding bat in her hand, when another person criticized her father, "Tch, Tch, and Zafar", how "can you let your girls play like this?" (Zafar, 2019, p. 10). Even, in middle school, during cricket match on of her girls faced harsh words from her male fellow; boy disrespected her instead of accepting his mistake, "Everyone knows that girls cannot play cricket", although in extreme anger she punched him, but lost her gold-star status (p. 15). When Samara's father mentioned about her interests in cricket or squash; her father-in-law responded with a big denial of such things: young generation love sports, but after marriage Samra,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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cannot do that (p. 42). When after marriage Amma saw her watching cricket on T.V, and craziness about this game, Amma disapproved and told her, for becoming a proper woman, she will has to abandon such hobbies, and at that moment Samra also thought may be her married life might be much better if she “had not been allowed” a lot of hobbies (p. 130). Such incidents clarified the restrictions on women; in every society women are forced to adjust according to the feminine mystique and evaded their personal interests. Although Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* talks about American (Western) women, and Samra Zafar’s memoir talk about Muslim family or culture, but the similarities between them clearly indicate that women in every nation or culture faced suppression, and still there are many women who are unable to take stand for themselves.

In 1848, women’s rights meeting is conducted in “Seneca Falls”, where feminists claimed that, a woman is dead before law, and all the authorities are in the hands of her husband; he may eliminate her part from all property rights, including the wages she earns; in addition, he has made every effort to made her his slave, and force her to live a life of servitude and dependence (Friedan, 1963, pp. 76-77). Further, a New York assembly man rejected the application of married women's rights in earnings and family’s property by illustrating that man symbolizes the race that God created; which means that man is at “higher position”, while women are “weaker and wicked”; by listening such arguments, the assembly rejected the petition (p. 79). In *A Good Wife* , Samra suffered because of the financial crisis; she had no money and was completely dependent on her husband, who treated her a nobody; one day, she took Aisha to a parent-child drop-in-center, after returning to home, she stopped at a shop to buy something (donut) but after searching a lot, she did not find a single toonie; she did not have any money; her bank account was empty; although her father sent her some dollars, but Ahmed transferred all her money into his own account; he also did not give her any extra money for spending on Aisha’s necessities like diapers; whenever they went shopping, he gave her few dollars (Zafar, 2019, p. 147). Although Samra wanted divorce for a fresh beginning, but she was restless somehow, when she gave her house's keys to agent; she spent the whole morning in disturbed state; she felt that she was doing wrong by separating her daughters from his father; at one point, she begged her mother to call Ahmed. "Tell him I want him back. I'll quit school. I'll be quiet. I do not want to leave" (p.284). She was crying until her mother slapped her and called her neighbor; in her new apartment, she continuously pleading her mother to talk to Ahmed so that he can take her back into his life; it was because of financial scaredness; she had no money and she did not know how to live in the “patriarchal society”, where woman has no place (p.285). The ending pages of Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* explained that, Friedan’s decision of divorce was great; it was the time of May 1969 when she finally found the courage to file for divorce; after divorce she feels less alone than she was previously (Friedan, 1963, p. 379). In Zafar’s memoir, like Friedan, Samra also made the difficult decision to forgot her marriage; as time passed, Ahmed and his social security was of no importance in her life, as she recovered and gained strength, Ahmed’s influence in her life become less and in the end, he was just her children’s father (Zafar, 2019, p. 322). The last few pages of Friedan’s book described her journey

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

towards a brighter future, same thing happened with Samra, she learned to stand for herself-a skill that she had in school, but lost it after marriage. She got John H. Moss Scholarship for graduate course work with the help of Ruby Mack- her department's academic advisor. In early January, she received an email about her "daunting panel interview" with John Rothschild (p.308). During her interview, she responded confidently and gracefully (which is an evidence that she embraced her new self, happily), and at the end won the scholarship. This scholarship was given to only those students, who were good in academics, communal works etc.

The protagonist (Samra Zafar) explicated that, after separation, although she continued her education but because of financial constraints she applied for a part time job at student center. When she was looking for some Western cloths for her job interview, she wanted to look completely different, unlike her university's time, she bought some out of date clothes. Further, she did not want to wear hijab or other traditional South Asian dresses that Ahmed forced her to wear before separation. For her scholarship award ceremony, she worn "a modern black-and-white-dress", applied makeup carefully and straightened her hair; this new Samra was looking completely different from that old (frightened and pitiful) one (Zafar, 2019, p. 312). When she started job at RBC, she also wore her "brand-new Banana Republic business suit", she started laughing or felt happy by thinking about Ahmed's taunt that, she turned into a hotshot (p.318). Samra created her new identity through education and discarded her former identity as an obedient wife and bahu; she not only won the biggest financial scholarship, but also top student award in economics, in 2013, at her graduation reception. As she waited for her name to be called in the Convocation Hall, she recalled all the occasions and day-dreaming (wearing a graduation cap and gown-every time she walked around her bedroom, when she got her diploma from university officials) about the moment of her graduation, and reality was more beautiful then she expected. As she crossed the stage, she remembered her father's words that someday his daughter will be an excellent student at a prestigious university, however, she was happy as well as depressed, because she had spent nearly her entire life anticipating that moment. In the epilogue of memoire, she claimed that, "I was lucky to have university—it gave me a concrete goal and a path out. More than that, it provided an almost instant community and support network when I needed it" (p. 328). As, she received diploma, tears started to run down from her face.

CONCLUSION

Women always gained secondary status in society and portrayed as an object of suppression and enslavement; she considered as inferior, culturally, biologically, and socially than men. Various critics, authors and literary analysts portrayed their lives inside the house, with no contributions in public sphere, but few critics like Mill, whose work, *The Subjection of Women* (1869) also talked about their agency, especially education, and several criticizes the unequal treatment of them. This study deals with female subjugation and agency in Zafar's *A Good Wife*

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

(2019), through Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Zafar's *A Good Wife* (2019) explicates the detailed description of her married life, where her in-laws and husband forced her to live like a conventional woman, instead of doing something productive like education. Zafar portrayed continuous demands or familial expectations, which forced her to become a teen bride in Canada with false hopes of pursuing education in Canadian university. She describes culture is an essential part of society, it creates links for people connectedness, and provide a way through which societal decisions are made; things like religion, language, literature, traditions/customs, etc. are all parts of culture, and in Muslim communities, it is of extreme importance. But in contemporary days westerners' influence are prevailing in Muslim communities, and Muslims, at some point, following their traditions too; the protagonist (Samra Zafar) of this memoir is exactly a portrayal of a girl, who by birth is a Muslim, but culturally she is a western; her life demands are much similar to West. Samra was forced to child marriage, and she shows resistance against this notion; similarly, Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), also share experiences of various women emphasizing the same issues. Zafar's memoir criticizes the brutalities of male dominated society, which includes restrictive reproductive autonomy, confined domestic lives, property rights, economic dependence, etc.; because Samra faced all these things in her life, and in the end she shows resistance and free herself form cultural domains. Academic educational denial from her husband or in-laws, was something that hurts her the most, and in the end, she put efforts and change her destiny with the help of getting education.

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