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**SEEKING FREEDOM BEYOND PATRIARCHY: A HUMANIST STUDY OF BEYOND
THE CAYENNE WALL BY SHAILA ABDULLAH**

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Freedom, humanism, patriarchy, suppression, <i>Beyond the Cayenne Wall</i> (2005).</p>	<p>The current study examines collection of short stories <i>Beyond the Cayenne Wall</i> (2005) by Shaila Abdullah, focusing on the female protagonists. The conceptual framework of the study is based on the “humanist approach” by Susan Moller Okin’s “<i>Justice, Gender, and the Family</i>” (1989) to analyze the protagonists’ struggle to reclaim their humanist identity, beyond gender discrimination. The qualitative analysis of the short stories investigates how female characters navigate their traditional roles and set the standards of justice based on the “equality of opportunity” in society by liberating them from chains of patriarchy. The objectives of the current study are to examine female resistance against traditional gender roles, to examine how female characters construct their new identities, and to identify the depiction of the patriarchal constraints in the text and assess how they impact the female characters’ lives and decisions. The findings offered significant information for reaching the desired conclusion about the research issues. In this regard, Okin’s humanist approach “personal is political” seeks to explore that the personal experiences of female protagonists particularly related to gender and familial roles, are deeply intertwined with the political structures and societal norms.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The depiction of women in the literature discussed women in two distinct groups: the submissive woman, who renounces her rights and is deemed a “good” woman. The other is a rebellious woman who asserts her rights and challenges male authority, thus classified as a “bad” woman (Okin, 1999). In literary fiction, the first category is presented as the heroine and the other woman as a vamp, respectively. Woman is born submissive (Garcia, 2021), so, in the history of literary fiction, female characters have been discussed as minor, submissive, and status was given to male characters. But,

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with the passage of time, there is increasing recognition of women's role in literary fiction that shows an excellent evolution in status of female characters. Still, presence of women is vital because they are the center of the universe. Literary fiction centers on women's suffering, hardships, sacrifices, and challenges, highlighting their vital role in narrative development (Parinitha & Lourdusamy, 2022). *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* (2005) is collection of seven short stories. Abdullah delves into lives of Pakistani women grapple with societal constraints; each story presents powerful portrayal of the constraints, conflicts, and inner battles women endure as they navigate social, cultural, and familial expectations.

Abdullah's narratives focus on the struggle for individuality amidst traditional barriers, portraying characters from the diverse backgrounds, rural and urban, educated and uneducated. The life of women is trapped within rigid patriarchal cultures, yet they strive for identity and social justice. The title *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* metaphorically refers to the "wall" of traditional restrictions made for only women, literal and figurative, the "cayenne" escapes to the heat and intensity of their struggles. In Abdullah's short stories, the female characters go beyond "wall", to seek social justice & liberation from the patriarchal constraints. These social constraints are deeply intertwined with social justice, questions of the identity, gender discrimination, and cultural expectations, resonating with feminist perspectives (Thompson, 2020). Shaila Abdullah dares to go Beyond the Cayenne Wall to explore the South Asian cultural conflicts and raise her voice against such taboos like incest, rape, and forced marriage; her protagonists in the tapestry of seven fascinating stories are not victims but real fighters. The research highlights the major themes centred on identity, autonomy and resistance against orthodox and conservative traditions of the Asian societies, promoting male chauvinist culture.

Problem Statement

The evolution of female status in society has undergone significant transformation, particularly in patriarchal contexts where women have historically been neglected & relegated to inferior status (Hirschon, 2020). This paper examines the portrayal of female characters in *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* (2005) by Shaila Abdullah, who challenge traditional narratives nearby female resistance and resilience against patriarchy as patriarchal setup often restricts female freedom, limiting their ability to make independent choices. Still, Abdullah's portrayal of her female characters reveals a shift towards self-determination and autonomy. The research problem addresses the issues of social gender hierarchies, compromised marriages, sexual abduction and violence as necessary tool for patriarchal culture.

The central issue lies in understanding that how characters' experiences, offering insights into their quest for the freedom beyond patriarchal confines, including societal expectations and familial obligations. By employing the Okin's humanist approach, which emphasizes on the idea of social justice beyond gender discrimination, this study seeks to analyze that how Abdullah's characters navigate and ultimately break free from societal constraints, thereby redefining their identities and roles within both personal and broader societal contexts, utilising Okin's "personal is political". In this connection, the present research study aims to explore through female characters, the quest

for the self-actualization by humanist perspective to confront against the traditional norms and patriarchal oppression.

Research Questions

1. How do Abdulla's female characters navigate and resist the patriarchal constraints in their lives?
2. How does Okin's idea "personal is political" intertwined with the construction of new female identities through personal choices and societal influences?
3. What specific patriarchal constraints are challenged by female protagonists in Abdulla's stories, and how do these challenges manifest in their actions?

Significance of Study

Shail Abdullah (b. 1971) significantly marks her stories essential for feminist research because she narrates women's empowerment and rights within context of South Asian cultural backgrounds. The study of humanist feminist by Okin highlights the "standards of justice" (p.189) on the humanist grounds beyond gender discrimination. The feminist study is always based on women's experiences & perspectives that seek to challenge traditional narratives [Reckitt \(2022\)](#). Her female protagonists challenge traditional gender roles and advocates for their rights. Abdullah's narratives influence social perceptions and contributes to broader discussions about the intersectionality of gender and culture. The collection of short stories *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* is significant for the current study because this is not a typical feminist story of women's misery but a tapestry of women's resilience who confront the harsh realities of societal pressures and make decisions for themselves ([Ali, et. al., 2021](#)). These short stories depict the female protagonists' quest for their rights despite the external restrictions, reflecting their courage and internal journeys toward self-discovery, which are at the heart of narratives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In past studies, the trajectory of female characters and their issues are always depicted through a male chauvinist lens. The feministic movements hold agenda that women are treated differently and oppressively in every era, so with these movements & many feminist critics, [Simone de Beauvoir \(1908-1986\)](#), [Colette Guillemin \(1934-2017\)](#), [Cixous \(1937-1964\)](#), [Spivak \(1942-1977\)](#) and [Okin \(1946- 2004\)](#) also question the existing social structure and raise issue of patriarchal constraints in society and voicelessness of women. The study of feminism provides a critical lens to examine the multifaceted experiences of women, focusing on the exploitation, misuse, and suffering they endure due to entrenched traditional norms and societal values. This perspective knows by [Tyson \(2023\)](#) and supports the feminist view that women are treated oppressively in "post-colony or metropolis", and this social oppression affects the whole community and that women's oppression is not merely result of individual circumstances but is deeply rooted in cultural norms & practices that perpetuate inequality. Women often face systemic barriers that limit their access to resources, education, and employment opportunities.

The presentation of women in Pakistani fiction manifests the untiring struggle to gain respectful status in society ([Mohajan, 2022](#)). Women from marginalized communities may face additional

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layers of discrimination that exacerbate their exploitation and they are always shown as victims against social and traditional norms regarding their marriage rights, choices of life, and protection against honour killing (Waldby, 2020). The feminist studies highlighting basic human rights for women that Okin endorsed in her work *Justice, Gender and Family* to make a detrimental impact on the women's autonomy, and overall well-being. The feminist studies play the crucial role in challenging harmful traditional customs that contribute to women's oppression. By advocating for legal reforms, educational initiatives, and awareness campaigns, feminist movements strive to dismantle patriarchal structures that uphold these injustices. These women are often confined not only by the literal walls of their homes but also by the metaphorical walls of societal expectations & gender roles. In this regard, this activism not only seeks to empower women but also aims to foster broader societal change by encouraging critical reflection on cultural practices that harm rather than protect.

The collection of short stories *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* by Shaila Abdulla has fictionalized the fascinating stories of female protagonists from South Asian Patriarchal system to demonstrate their struggles, and achievements rather than failures. Humanism, with its emphasis on human dignity, agency, and the quest for personal freedom, provides a framework to understand the resistance and resilience exhibited by the female characters in the Abdullah's stories. Abdullah have placed the mirror in front of present society of South Asia to show the dark side of the society where women's life has become victim of social norms and political binding. The collection of short stories *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* is based on real life experiences of South Asian women, addresses significant social issues such as forced marriage, domestic violence, and gender roles, often touching on taboo subjects like incest & divorce. In this drive, many critics have praised author's empathetic portrayals of the female protagonists, the challenges they face with courage and resilience. Many critics note style of Abdullah as she depicts these women are not merely victims but fighters who strive to alter their fates.

Framework of Study

Susan Moller Okin presented her political philosophy in her book *Gender Justice & Family* (1989). This political philosophy is based on a humanist approach that emphasizes her opposition to social hierarchies, focusing on the fixed social and traditional roles for women. Okin's humanist approach serves to accentuate her anti-caste position and push traditional gender roles away from social hierarchies. Okin asserts her political philosophy that humanism, based on "social justice" that goes beyond gender discrimination and works "for the development of a fully humanist theory of justice" (p. 28). Okin's humanist approach provides a structure of "society that in all the spheres of our lives, from the most public to most personal, we would strive to live by truly humanist principles of justice" (p. 29). The characters long for an existence where they can assert their individuality and autonomy, challenging limits imposed by patriarchal norms. Humanist theory brings attention to how gender roles, power dynamics and societal attitudes shape personal relationships & choices, even in private domain, "personal is political" (p.15) suggests need for political theories of justice to consider impact of gender & family structures, as they are intimately linked to more significant issues of equality and fairness in society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the current study is based on the conceptual framework of Susan Moller Okin's political philosophy "humanist" feminist approach, presented in *Gender Justice and Family* (1989). This qualitative study investigates the female protagonists from collection of short stories *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* (2005) by Shaila Abdullah, focusing on textual analysis. The study assesses how Abdullah's narrative reflects the complexities of women's experiences in a patriarchal society by utilizing Okin's conceptual framework. The study identifies key themes related to female agency, identity formation, and resistance against patriarchal norms by focusing character development to illustrate female protagonists' decisions and actions and her journey towards self-empowerment. In this regard, findings from textual analysis of *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* and Okin's theoretical applications determine the findings of the study about the evolution of female status as depicted in Abdullah's work. Abdullah openly deals with social taboo subjects in her stories, like rape, sexual abduction, sexual harassment, forced marriage, and women trapped in bad marriages or struggling for their individuality.

Data Collection

Shaila Abdullah (b. 1971) is a Pakistani-American author currently residing in the United States. Shaila Abdullah has authored six books, including the novel *Saffron Dreams* (2010), a collection of short stories, *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* (2005), a few essays, and four children's books: *The Doll Whisperer* (2011), *My Friend Suhana*, (2013), *Rani in Search of a Rainbow* (2014), and *Manual for Marco* (2015). Her writing has earned multiple accolades, such as Patras Bukhari Award, Golden Quill Award and Norumbega Jury Prize for Outstanding Fiction. *Beyond Cayenne Wall* (2005) is Shaila Abdullah's most celebrated debut book that has reached horizons of literary interpretation. This book comprises seven short stories depicting an exotic series of genuine lives of women in South Asia. All seven stories are interwoven with themes taking the reader from hopelessness to hope, cowardness to courage & bravery, fear to fearlessness, lastly, stray to revival. The following are the seven stories: (i) Amulet for the Caged Dove, (ii) Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust, (iii) Crimson Calling, (iv) Moment of Reckoning, (v) Demons of Past, (vi) Forever Dusk, and (vii) The Arrangement. These stories depict the conventional women with unconventional choices patriarchal culture of South Asian society.

Critical Summary of Short Stories

Shaila Abdullah stunningly weaved a tapestry of beautiful stories of subalterns about her struggle against social injustices. The first story, *Amulet for the Caged Dove*, reveals Abdullah presents her female protagonist Tannu as an example of a South Asian daughter-in-law who is not only forced to marry at a concise age when a girl dreams of her fantasy. Tannu is pushed to face harsh reality in terms of marriage, having a baby, and donating her baby to Shah Dullah's Shrine. Abdullah also highlights the evil factor in the new span of life that if a newly wedded bride is not able to produce a male offspring within a short time of arranged marriage, she is ostracized, degraded, and blamed. While she is supposed to do all the work, in spite of that, she faces food discrimination and is treated as enslaved person and pursuit of freedom in the face of oppression. Tannu accepts her matrimonial injustices except for sacrificing her baby to the shrine; this cruelty pushes her to break the boundary and go beyond the cayenne wall to save her baby. Abdullah's second story; *Ashes to Ashes, Dust to*

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Dust, narrates the story of Dhool, who is exploited twice, as a mother and as a wife. She is a rag picker and gatekeeper of a paper factory; Billa, a notorious and impudent man, asks for Bhatta (bribe) from all rag pickers.

Dhool, like a few rag pickers, does not share her hard-earned money with him and is treated like a thief. On other hand, her greedy husband Dilawar accepts the proposal for Tara, his eleven-year-old daughter. Beerbal has paid enough money for this match. Beerbal is oldie with about a decade left of his life, and Dilawar has sold his daughter to an older man. Dhool blasts that she will not let it happen, but Dilawar challenges her that she cannot stop him from doing so, & incoming fortnight, he has given him positive words. It makes Dhool out of control, and she starts raining powerful blows and kicks him out of the door, closes the door, faces the children with courage, and finally saves her daughter. Not only does the social culture of society reveal that the responsibility of her household matters overburdens women, but of her men responsibility. Her husband Dilawar, old man Beerbal, who married her teenage daughter Tara, and Billa, the villain of story, are epitome of patriarchy. The ignoring attitude of Dilawar towards the responsibilities towards her and their children drags her life toward suffering & victimization. Dilawar's thinks his wife and daughter, as his subordinates, and both have no power. Abdullah changes the concept that the women are fragile and bow down before injustice.

She turns to rebel against social injustice and becomes a shadow like in the hot summer days of her children. She tries her best to save her daughter from early marriage. She breaks the laws of silence, voicelessness and subjugation of women. Abdullah presents Dhool with manly powers and traits who never accept defeat. Dhool refuses to give bribes, fight for their own rights, earn money for children, and cope with the harsh realities of life, this is the best example put forward by Abdullah to show that when a woman breaks the silence, she is more capable, daring, and courageous than men. The third short story, *Crimson Calling*, presents Mrs. Ansari's sufferings due to her husband's unjust attitude. In this linking, Minnah shares her life with her grey-eyed professor, whom she likes; her Ma (mother) is a breadwinner for her family, works in school, and in the evening, she attends stitching classes to maintain her home expenses. She seeks admission to the local school in Lahore, but they do not have enough money to take her to school and bring a new uniform; her mother added an inch of cloth to her uniform for the last three years. However, his father is blind to them; he sleeps until all hours of the day like a king in the castle and then joins his cronies in a card game. Whenever he needs money from my Ma, he makes plans and commitments to go to Dubai to earn money for them.

However, Ma has no money to send him to Dubai, and it leads to a physical, abusive fight. One day, my father left us for Dubai, taking all our savings and gold jewelry and mortgaging the home. He often demands money from Dubai but divorces Ma when Ma cannot provide him with more money. This story proves that men have unjust supremacy, and they exploit their authority over women. He financially exploits his own family and leaves them for his desires. It is evident through stories that women have been dehumanized, treated as animals with no mercy and no rights, often sold out like animals, voiceless like animals, and caged like birds; main reason for her existence is just usefulness for the males. They are at the mercy of males, like the puppets in their hands. In matriarchal rule,

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one woman is the protagonist, and the other is the antagonist; a mighty woman destroys the other women's rights. That is why, in a patriarchal setup, men do not want to share power with women and want to dominate women in every aspect of life particularly in the lives of women fighting for their rightful place in world. In *Moment of Reckoning*, Abdullah unveils social and domestic injustices, female characters; Shiwali and Ayesha represent the women who have been married by the will of their parents.

In such patriarchal authority, no woman can even think about refusal, because it will be taken as a matter of honour and respect, it will challenge the father's decision. This decision makes or destroys one's life, but this is not a severe issue for society. Shiwali represents the subordinate women who never argue or argue for the fight rights. Although Shiwali does not want to marry Arbaz, Ayesha challenges patriarchal rule, injustice, and authority by choosing her happiness over their rules. Women know realities of their existence and outside their realities, often yearning for a different way of life. Sometimes, they are also trapped in cultural obligations and are punished severely for making them an example for other women who think of being rebels. *Demons of the Past*, narrates most serious issue and taboo in Pakistan, a forbidden act of paedophile; a father sexually abuses his daughter. It is a general perception in South Asian culture that masculinized structure reflects the rule of the father, where culture is judicious, stable, and predictable. Feminized culture reflects female nature as Mother Earth concerns herself with brooding, nurturing but temperamental and unpredictable nature.

In *Demons of the Past*, Abdullah reveals how daughters are treated when they own their wishes. Minal becomes the victim of her father's fury and have been beaten and sexually abused by her father. The tragedy of Minal becomes more adverse when she becomes pregnant, and her father blames her for having a sexual affair with her male friend. Central to humanist reading of *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* is the portrayal of women seeking autonomy over their lives and identities. Minal has no choice but to live, but the death of her father creates a sympathetic feeling for her mother, and she starts living with her. Minal is Abdullah's most dejected but bravest protagonist, her doleful tale remains between the cayenne walls of her house. Through the characters' struggles for identity, autonomy, and voice, Abdullah presents a critique of the cultural and societal forces that constrain women, while also celebrating their resilience and potential for self-empowerment. The stories of *Forever Dusk* and *The Arrangements* are based on a stable and controlled patriarchal structure, and female characters are full of love and obedience. Thus, Abdullah reveals both sides, the negative and positive sides of the patriarchal structure. These stories reveal the emotional side of the women.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The social gender hierarchy is one of significant perspectives, to explore Okin's humanist approach through the short stories of *Beyond the Cayenne Wall*. Shaila Abdullah has portrayed an accurate picture of patriarchal constraints in South Asian culture that marginalises women. In all these short stories, the female characters are portrayed as mere objects within the patriarchal framework. In *Amulet for Caged Dove*, character of Tannu and in *Dust-To-Dust Ashes to Ashes*, the character of dhool, appear as sexual objects, their fates controlled by male figures who view them as vessels for

reproduction rather than as the individuals with autonomy. Abdullah has discussed the traditional roles as social taboos that feat women and treat her as this objectification is deeply entrenched in the rural Punjabi culture, where women's value is often tied to their ability to bear male. Billa exploits Dhool for Bhatta (bribe), so the female is the victim of all the male folk. In *Crimson Calling*, another victim of patriarchy is Mrs Ansari, a breadwinner of her children and her husband who is a parasite on her hard-earned money and ignores his responsibilities as a father. He acts like a king in the castle and joins his cronies in card games. Mrs Ansari struggles to ensure her children's future. In following story, moment of reckoning, the life of Shiwali reveals cultural and traditional roles of man and woman.

A woman is seen as submissive to male authority, powerless, weak, and helpless in making decisions about her own life; even for trivial household issues, she has to look towards men (Agha, 2021). In *Demons of the Past*, man's side's brutality, lusty, oppressive nature is revealed. Father of Minal is the epitome of lust and power, which is the fundamental element of patriarchy. *Forever Dusk* reveals that there is no life of a woman's own, a voiceless creature; her parents make her decisions first, then her husband, and in the last stage, when she gets old, her children decide how to live. This story throws the irony of life that there is no home for women, the personal life of protagonist is directly affecting the lives of family members. The arrangements reveal the same irony of the woman's life, how a woman is a puppet in the hands of social order. The second aspect is "compromised marriages" in Asian culture, teenage marriages, forced marriages, mismatches of marriage, and money-based marriages are widespread. As in her first story, she reveals the thought of Tannu (*Amulet for Caged Dove*) that if her mother disagrees, she will be in the midst of her friends. Dhool and her daughter Tara (*Dust to Dust, Ashes to Ashes*) are also victims of early marriage and mismatched marriage. Minnah (*Crimson Calling*) is an example of arranged marriage, which is quite successful in South Asian countries.

Mrs. Ansari's marriage reveals a compromising marriage that ruins a woman's life. Where only a woman has to suffer, struggle & sacrifice. Shiwali (*Moment of Reckoning*) is victim of unwillingness because she does not like Arbaz to spend all her life with. However, she has to bear this throughout her life. She has no power to make her own choice in the patriarchal system. Minal (*Demons of the Past*) is an example of a patriarchal, inhumane, and brutal act that ruins the life of a woman. Not only has she been devoid of her right to marry a man of her own choice, but she has been punished for thinking it so. Her mother is a submissive wife who does not dare to speak a word against the will of her husband. Mansi is symbol of a typical wife who dares not think to go beyond the happiness of her husband and their parents. Even though she sends her mother back home alone to avoid a sense of humiliation, she cannot keep her in her home in presence of her in-laws. This exposes that after marriage, a woman has no home of her own. Nyssa is living a happy married life. Equally, her friend gets divorced for vain match. Through her stories, Abdulla reveals almost every type of marriage and how a woman, though happily or unhappily, has to leave her father's home and shift to her husband's home.

Abdullah bluntly speaks about the social taboos, including sexual abuse, sexual harassments and sexual abduction, in her short stories. Sexual harassment/abduction is one of the major social taboo

in south Asian culture. This is an extreme dishonour tag on the victimized girl's character or family's honour. A woman is considered a body more than a human being. The irony about victimization is that despite punishing the culprit, the victimized woman is penalized by marrying an inefficient man or being murdered. It is sarcastic that a victimized woman has considered stigma on the honour of her family's name and has been punished twice. The whole life of that woman is ruined, but the culprit of this heinous crime will not be abused even more than to be punished. So, the code of happy marital life determines the purity and sanity of women. Premarital virginity determines her happy life because of the reproductive system. The other form of sexual abduction/harassment in South Asian culture is forced marriages or selling of brides (Nadeau & Rayamajhi, 2022) as the dogmatic cultural norms do not let women breathe freely. He mentioned these atrocious norms in different aspects. The first aspect of sexual abduction accords in very first story, Amulet for the Caged Dove, in a very mild way.

Tannu is accidentally sexually abducted by a milkman. That is not a deliberate venture by innocent Tannu, but it brings a twist to her life. To save herself from the damned consequences, she embarks on an expedition to save her child from being a rat child in Shah Dullah's shrine. In contrast to the Tannu's experience Abdullah highlights the aspect that to dishonor any woman; she is sexually challenged and sexually revenged. Thus, the harsh experience of Dhool in the book's second story unveils the cruel attitude of male chauvinist society. Dhool in *Dust to Dust, Ashes to Ashes* throws light on iridescent aspects of sexual abduction. Dhool's compromising marriage and her children draw her to earn food for them. She has been sexually revenged by Billa. In *Beyond the Cayenne Wall*, Shaila Abdullah crafts a powerful humanist narrative that explores the lives of Pakistani women as they seek freedom beyond the confines of patriarchy. Abdullah reveals the helplessness of women who have been forcefully compelled into matrimonial relationships, and the sufferings and victimization after marriages make their lives pathetic. Infatuation is another reason for sexual abduction; therefore, Minnah in *Crimson Calling* becomes emotional and spends a night with her professor for consolation. Afterwards, she regrets her sexual experience with a man who has no space for her in his life. Thus, in *Moment of Reckoning*, Shiwali and Ayesha have sexual relations before marriage.

The relationship before marriage is based on love or infatuation, but after the forceful marriages, women are constantly sexually used and abducted. Moreover, she loses her value in her husband's home if she cannot produce a child. Most barbaric situation faced by Minal in *The Demons of Past* is her sexual harassment by her father. This barbarism results in her pregnancy. This victimization has ruined Minal's life, which ends in seclusion. The character Shiwali in *Moment of Reckoning* exemplifies this theme. Initially portrayed as normal girl, her identity shifts severely after marriage, where she becomes an obedient figure, molded by societal expectations into a submissive role. This transformation climaxes psychological impact of patriarchal norms, that dictate that women must conform to specific behaviors and responsibilities. So, these stories reveal male chauvinist attitudes towards bodies of women that are more objectified than living objects. Abdullah's stance on sexual abduction is unequivocal, that subaltern (Spivak) suffers & is sexually abducted by men. Okin humanist approach is based on social justice, while violence is measured needed tool for patriarchal

system, Okin emphasizes on equal rights of men and women, as this equality negate the authority of men over women.

The patriarchal system is one of significant tools that allow male dominance and female submission in social, political and economic relations, and this social mechanism does not allow women to emerge as a significant entity (Pierik 2022). Patriarchal society was cultivated long ago to continue male supremacy, which creates a great hindrance to the achievements of women in every field of life. The target of patriarchy is to limit women's power and status in society (Khelghat-Doost, 2020). The men folk are considered an authority, and to prove their supremacy, they use violence as a tool. The doleful tales of women's misery have been generated from violence as they have been treated as enslaved people, subordinates, and commodities find ways to assert their independence. Because women are associated with men's honour and are entrusted with protectors, this unequal position generates violence to accept the doomed fate fixed in that culture where the pursuit of freedom becomes a universal theme. Men are allowed to suppress women because of association of a woman's image with their honour (Folbre, 2021), so it is not a cruel act to save one's honour and kill women in name of honour. Primary motive of violence is to make women voiceless, under pressure, puppets in their hands.

Men use violence to control women's bodies. Violence is considered as social evil is used in terms of religion and custom. The tools of violence are honour killing, wife battering, karo-kari, satti, selling brides, bride burning, acid attacks, and murders, mostly witnessed in South Asian culture (Kaushal, 2020). Shaila Abdullah has discussed violence at different levels; she presented the extreme way in the story of Demons of the Past, where Minal faces mental as well as physical violence from her father break the silence of oppression, and articulate their own narratives. Her father has brutally beaten her without any severe consent. On the other hand, her mother's potentials are destroyed by the brutality and wickedness of her father. It is usually observed in Pakistani culture that violence is a form of physical lust, whether it is the fault of a woman or a man; the victim would be a woman only (Bhattacharya, 2020). The stories transcend cultural specificity, offering a universal message about the importance of human dignity, self-determination, and the pursuit of freedom in the face of oppression. Shaila Abdulla provides a list of matriarchal violence faced by Tannu as daughter-in-law. It is evident that either in patriarchy or matriarchy, person who holds power will be brutal, violent and merciless.

CONCLUSION

The research study significantly analyzed Abdullah's *Beyond the Cayenne Wall* as an honest and fearless acknowledgement of the women struggle for her autonomy in the patriarchal South Asian society. The study emphasizes significance of Abdullah's unique contribution to feminist discourse that highlights the ongoing struggle of female resistance against a set role of traditional gender roles. By employing Okin's humanist philosophy, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the idea of "social justice" that the female protagonists achieve in end of the short stories. The study also explores an exciting interplay of "personal is political" by Okin to show the struggle of female character in the social paradigmatic structure, which aligns with Okin's humanist approach. This idea emphasizes that personal experiences, related to gender & familial roles, are deeply intertwined

with political structures and societal norms. For instance, struggle of female protagonists for their identity, autonomy, and societal expectations serves as a microcosm of systemic disparities of South Asian patriarchal system.

Moreover, during moments of crisis, such as divorce, these characters experience the heightened vulnerability; these personal upheavals are not merely individual tragedies but are emblematic of the larger societal neglect of women's rights and needs. The lack of support from male partners during these transitions underscores the political dimensions of their personal lives. So, Abdullah's short stories demonstrate that challenges faced by female protagonists are not isolated incidents but are reflective of a broader political landscape that shapes female protagonist's lives experiences. The hierarchal treatment of women is intertwined with broader societal change that does not allow women to come out of their cocoons. Study explores hidden conflict of female characters through standards of justice would become humanist, as they have never been before. One of most important effects of this would be radically changing situation of women as citizens. (Okin, 2009) underscores the societal constructs surrounding gender and identity, emphasizing that women's roles are shaped by their experiences and choices rather than prearranged by biology or societal expectations. This analysis donates to feminist literary discourse by drawing parallels amid theoretical frameworks and literary representation, emphasizing ongoing relevance of Okin's ideas in contemporary South Asian literature.

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