



# VOICE OF MUSLIM WOMAN IN THE NOVEL BREAKING TIES BY SARA ABUBAKAR

**Dr. Praveena Alabanoor**

Guest Lecturer

Dept. of English

GFGC Lingasugur, Karnataka, India

## **Abstract:**

Sarah Abubakar was a well-known author and writer who was successful in revealing the unfair and patriarchal laws that the Islamic faith imposes on its female community. Her straightforward writings highlight the negative effects of societal and religious norms that solely affect the woman's community and also Muslim community, which is constructed for men's convenience. Her novels shed light on the patriarchal norms and male dominance that exist in the culture and focus on the oppression and discrimination suffered by Muslim women in Kerala and Karnataka. The feminist work "Breaking Ties," which depicts the Muslim women's subaltern experience and how patriarchy, oppression, marginalization, and gender inequality exploited the life of a young, naive girl, will be examined in this essay.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, Gender discrimination, Oppression, Inequality, Marginalization, suppression, women discrimination.

The famous Kannada novel "Chandragiri Theeradalli" by writer Sarah Abubakar was later translated into English under the title "Breaking Ties," by Vanamala Vishwanatha. The book gives readers an account of the wretched lives of Muslim women in Kerala and Coastal Karnataka. The writer was a member of the same Muslim community as well. She passed the matriculation exam and became the first girl in her village to do so. Her work is straightforward and focuses on the horrible lives of Muslim women and how they are denied the ability to assert their freedom and equality in the social, political, economical and religious spheres as well as to participate in any important or minor life decisions.

This book has had a significant influence on Muslim patriarchal society, challenging the societal injustices that deprive women of their freedom and voice. The novel tells the story of a silent girl whose life has been ruined by her father's patriarchal decisions and the religious laws that prevent her from making her own decisions.

This book shows the world that how a woman sacrificed her entire life for the sake of Muslim (Patriarchal) society and specially Muslim culture, how she becomes a puppet in the hands of a patriarchal society, losing her true happiness and living her life according to the wishes of the males in it. The story revolves around a young girl named Nadira, who is the daughter of Mahammad Khan the villainy character in the novel. Nadira married at the age of fourteen, and her fight to live her own life as she saw fit, despite her cruel father's laws. The novel's other important characters include Nadira's mother Fatima and husband Rashid.

The book can be studied as a religious point of view because it portrays Muslim women as helpless objects of suppression by her own community rituals, rules and regulations. The narrative addresses divorce, social concerns, marital rape, and how women are denied the ability to choose the most important aspects of their lives. This book provides an account of the issues that Muslim women confront and highlights the suppression of illiterate women, the oppression of the impoverished, and the Muslim patriarchy's exploitation of their existence.

The story illustrates how the Muslim community and male dominated society oppress and discriminate against Muslim women. In this book, the themes of hypocrisy and double standards are highly pertinent. Women's freedoms have been severely curtailed and their right to an education has been completely eliminated due to the unjust Muslim rules and regulations within the community. When they are not in their home, they are expected to wear burkas. T

he women are married at a young age, before they have any idea about marriage. In the book Fatima, Nadira's mother marries Khan at the age of eleven, indicating that she is still a young child. These laws are the product of a patriarchal society ruled by men, who write them in a way that best suits their needs rather than considering the freedoms and rights that women enjoy in the absence of any form of control over them.

In Nadira's case, an unjust rule is imposed on Muslim women when they need to remarry their husband Rashid. The rule states that the woman must marry another man for a night and spend the next day with him before being able to obtain a divorce or Talaq the following morning. Furthermore, the woman must wait three months to find out if she is pregnant. If she becomes pregnant, she must live with him for a year before she can wed her first husband again. This is one of the cruel kind of religious laws pertaining to marriage, and women are not allowed to make these kinds of decisions. Instead, they are expected to follow these laws without taking into account their own physical or mental needs; this does not apply to men.

The men are granted total freedom in deciding whether to get married or get a divorce. They can end a marriage by simply saying the word "Talaq" three times, which seems like a meaningless thing, and they can file for divorce without getting anyone's approval. The Muslim community blindly accepts and abides by every regulation in their religious system, but occasionally they also think that a rule is needless or incorrect, but they are unable to speak out against the ruling class and their own culture. Because Muslim

society views women as ideal wives who should never leave the house, taking care of husbands, kids, and the elderly, cooking, cleaning, and doing all household chores without complaining, women have been denied to get education and have had many other freedoms restricted.

We can understand from the novel that young Nadira was exploited by social norms, religious doctrine, and patriarchal dominance without having a say in her life decisions. The tragic tale of fourteen-year-old Muslim girl Nadira, who is illiterate and from a Muslim family, is told in the novel. She cheerfully performs all household chores and obeys her father without question, and all of a sudden, she gets married to Rashid.

The problem arose when Khan, her father, approached Rashid and requested money for his second daughter's marriage, but Rashid was unable to provide it. This new life was somehow started very happily and continued for a year. Enraged by this incident, Khan brought Nadira and her child back to his house without asking Nadira or telling Rashid about it. Later, when Rashid went to ask Khan to bring his wife back to his home, Khan skillfully used his influence to extract talaq from him and made up the story that Nadira no longer wanted to live with him.

Nadira later came to the conclusion that her father was the reason behind the breakup with Rashid. Eventually, Nadira and Rashid managed to get in touch via letter, though she struggled to write and read since she is illiterate. Khan ultimately made the decision to assist her in getting married to Rashid again after Rashid's mother visited her later and took their child to Rashid's home. However, after discussing this with their community's top official, he came to know that there are certain steps that must be taken before getting married again. In order to obtain the talaq the following day, she must marry another person, spend the night with him, and live with him if she becomes pregnant. She can then remarry her first husband.

However, Nadira was not happy with this rule and reluctantly consented to marry someone for a single day. Khan, with the help of his friend, searched a suitable candidate for a one-day marriage. However, Nadira finds it awkward and highly annoying to spend the night with a stranger. She went outside to the Chandragiri River's bank in an attempt to escape that circumstance. After reflecting for a while about her husband and child, she decided she couldn't spend the night with another man and dove into the river to escape the harsh realities of life.

The story focuses on the creation of religious laws, norms, and practices that the patriarchal hegemony has conveniently imposed against women. The book challenges the patriarchal system and calls for women's justice, freedom and reform. The question, which highlights complete disregard for the woman as an equal partner in marriage or her feelings, implies resistance to patriarchal ideology.

The protagonist, an illiterate Muslim girl Nadira, is unable to write her story of suffering and humiliation because she is silenced by the patriarchy that rules women's lives in the name of religion. The author addresses Muslim women's plight within the exclusive Islamic marriage customs and practices in the

first half of the book, and in the second half she makes recommendations for a Muslim girl to attend school and take education.

The twin narratives in the first and second sections together form an inward critique of Muslim patriarchy. The triple oppression of family, society, and religion is highlighted in the novel, leading the protagonist to seek solace in death as a means of escaping. By emphasizing a strong female personality based on her inner strength rather than her family's and society's expectations, Abubakar appears to challenge this ignorance. She takes issue with men's cultural and religious inclinations toward male brotherhood. By highlighting her strong female character who compromises with all imaginable identities to uphold her beliefs and actions, she challenges the dominance of Muslim patriarchal society.

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