



A Feminism in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*

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Abstract:

A creative writer can use literature as a potent tool to modify and alter the social structure, and Bapsi Sidhwa hopes that her most important and captivating work, *Ice Candy Man*, will help advance the global change that has already begun, including a radical rethinking of social thought and the rights and status of women. Bapsi Sidhwa is a member of the group of female creative authors who have begun to portray strong women for whom traditional roles are insufficient. These women want to assert their independence and autonomy and are completely capable of taking on new tasks and responsibilities. In *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa dreams of a world devoid of domination and hierarchy, one that is truly human and founded on the ideals of fairness and equality. In this novel, the female protagonist, Sidhwa, stands in for a number of women who endured the most violent religious riots in recorded history during the turbulent year of 1947 in India. Sidhwa has accurately shown emotional agony, personal vulnerability, barbaric acts committed during riots of different ethnicities, and violence against women. Lenny, who describes the horrors of violence and her own observations and reactions, has told the entire tale. As women are reduced to the position of sexual objects, she not only watches but also analyses the lustful and demeaning attentions that males pay to them. She also discusses the specific negative social and immoral effects that these actions have on women. A story about female oppression and marginalisation is *Ice Candy Man*. It depicts women's suffering and exploitation in patriarchal society truthfully. It reveals how guys use viciously assaulting women to demonstrate their macho dominance and so satisfy their cravings. On the other hand, it sensitively illustrates how women deal with the suffering and humiliation that is inflicted upon them.

Key words:

Creative female writers, Equal rights and justice, Riots in Communities, Intimidation and Marginalization.

Glimpse of the novel:

After contracting polio as a toddler, a four year old Parsee girl recalls her early years. She spends most of her time with her Hindu ayah Shanta, an Amritsar born eighteen year old. The focus of the story is their relationship because Lenny spends so much time with her Ayah and gains so much insight into adult relationships from being around the voluptuous nanny and her wide range of admirers. Due to the fact that the story takes place between 1943 and 1948, when India attained independence but was divided into two nations, sexual awakening is a prominent issue of the novel, as well as community identity. Ayah's fans represent a diverse group of Lahore's citizens before to Partition. Lenny has many female relations, and there are many characters in this book, but she is closest to Ayah. Lenny is largely unaffected by Partition until she unintentionally reveals Ayah's existence in the home during the chaos of 1947, at which point Ayah is abducted by an enraged Muslim mob. The tone of the book, which is almost entirely written in the present tense, is somewhat cold and distant, reflecting the relationship between the children and their parents. The author explains in a few paragraphs that she created this little girl and her recollections 40 years after the events they describe, which heightens this distance. The present tense is consistently used, which makes the

recollections more vivid, but the insights, vocabulary, and humour are not always those of a young girl. The past tense is only used in the tales the parents tell Lenny and a unique chapter titled "Ranna's narrative." Lenny met Ranna when visiting his village, and she tells the harrowing tale of how the great grandson of Imam Din, the family cook, witnessed the massacre of his whole community and just about made it out alive. Because of the voice change, the story is made more stunning because it would be difficult for an eight year old girl who wasn't present to understand the tremendous brutality through her eyes. The kids are concerned about Ayah's possible fate once Partition and Pakistan become the new reality. Lenny's mother and aunt are involved in caring for fallen ladies who have been assault victims and are now shunned by their families. They then come across Ayah in a car, who has been done up and dressed like a actress. They learn that she is residing with *Ice Candy man*, one of her former lovers who has since changed into an Urdu poet, in the shady Kotha neighbourhood of the ancient city. He pimps her out and brutally represses Ayah. In order to free Ayah and allow her to go back to her home village, Lenny's godmother steps in and helps.

An outline of feminism:

A feminist is someone who bases their actions and opinions on feminism. A cultural, political, and philosophical movement known as feminism attempts to emancipate women by recognising their oppression. The fight to accomplish this goal is driven by the conviction that women should have the same opportunities and rights as men. Feminist criticism challenges ingrained patriarchal attitudes, phallogocentric beliefs, and male interpretation in literature. It also casts doubt on widely held male stereotypes about the character and emotions of women. This theory concentrates on gender politics, power dynamics, and sexuality in an effort to understand the nature of inequality. Discrimination, stereotypes, objectification, oppression, and patriarchy were among the themes that feminism tackled. In *Ice Candy Man*, the female mentality and experiences are conveyed with a singular freshness and elegance, serving as a vital testament to a gynocentric vision of reality. This novel clearly demonstrates how Sidhwa transforms the female protagonists into the moral core, whilst the majority of the male characters either act passively or engage in violent behaviour. In *Ice Candy Man*, the feminine characters pulsate with a will and life of their own. The most major female character in this book is Lenny, who is a "girl child."

Creative female writers:

Among contemporary feminist writers, Bapsi Sidhwa continues to be a powerful voice. She is the lone Parsee woman written on the subject of the partition. Being a Parsee, Sidhwa draws attention to the constantly evolving situation of her Parsee polity and culture through her writings. Sidhwa's influential novel, *Ice Candy Man*, is based on the partition of India. She discusses the partition crisis, the Parsee community, issues facing Asian women, and the concept of marriage in her book. In 1991, *Ice candy man* was released in America under the name *Cracking India*. This novel brings feminist concerns about women's difficulties to light, notably their experiences of victimisation and repression in patriarchal countries. The majority of its protagonists are female, and each one of them stands for a way of life that either upholds patriarchal principles or subtly questions their repressiveness. The first case is presented by Mother, Mucho, and the Slave sisters. The chance for redemption is shown by the mother's new position as a welfare campaigner, Ayah's sexuality and sprit of resiliency, and Godmother's admirable traits. When the British declared the split of the Sub Continent into India and Pakistan in August 1947, the area was transformed into a dreadful place. As a result, many people violently and in large numbers crossed the border. This unprecedented level of global migration resulted in violent crimes like murders, rapes, and other forms of bestiality. Numerous authors were inspired by this tragic and fleeting incident to build a tragic tale exposing the unspeakable atrocities of sectarian violence between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The notion of "woman as victim" has been a key tool in the portrayal of violence in literature about the Partition.

Equal rights and justice:

In a patriarchal society, masculinity is tied to superiority while femininity is linked to inferiority. While masculinity denotes dominance, strength, power, and self-assertion, feminine represents self neglect, inactivity, passivity, and passivity. Since ancient times, it has been believed that a woman's responsibility is to take care of the home, raise the family, and provide for them. Women have historically been ostracised and viewed as inferior, and this is an incontrovertible fact. Their rights are not granted to them. Sidhwa asserts that significant social change is necessary in order to see women as fully human beings with souls, passions, and emotions. She supports that women should make the most of their abilities outside of the home in order to be uniquely themselves. Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* subverts the inherent components

of patriarchy, even if it is apparently a heroic centered novel, by giving female will, choice, and strength more weight than usual in addition to feminine traits like compassion and motherhood. Strong female characters in *Ice Candy Man* advocate for the cessation of discrimination against women, place an emphasis on preparing them for a lifetime of independence, and speak out against willing submission to men. The women in *Ice Candy Man* are eagerly assertive about their independent handling of situations in addition to being aware of their own desires. The main character in the fictional *Ice Candy man* universe is Lenny, a young Parsee girl. The narrator's lameness suggests a limitation that a woman creative writer must overcome, yet when the protagonist decides to use the pen, writing is seen as an intellectual endeavour reserved for men and outside of women's daily routines; servile domesticity. Her recovery symbolises Bapsi Sidhwa's victory over the obstacle that prevented her from engaging in her intellectual activity of writing. Lenny serves as the book's narrator, which gives the female perspective on the nature of the surrounding reality weight and legitimacy. An unbridgeable emotional gap between the sexes is tacitly suggested by *Ice Candy Man*. It basically highlights the gender gap, which is more extreme and antagonistic than racial fundamentalism, when women and children are violently molested under the pretext of communal vengeance. Once they become victims of male violence, like Lenny's two Ayahs, women are powerless to seek compensation from their own family.

Riots in communities:

Majority of the time, women themselves integrate the boundary principles into their sense of self. As she matures, Lenny comes to see how women are exploited biologically. When she was younger, she treasured her mother's affection and her father's protection, but the horrible occurrence with *Ice Candy Man* and Ayah shattered all of her romantic notions. She found it strange that *Ice Candy Man* was pressuring his wife Ayah into the prostitute trade. She is terrified by the stories of Hindu and Muslim women who were raped during the riots in 1947. She observes as men transform into creatures with little regard for morality or human ideals. Women, like Ayah, were falling victim to men. Lenny was astounded to discover how easily the human mind, which was made of noble components, could be corrupted. Men were abusing women in order to demonstrate their dominance over one another. Nothing worked in favour of women. Men were becoming violent and hurting each other out of jealousy, hatred, and anger for personal power and prominence.

Intimidation and marginalation:

In a feminist text, the woman performs, controls, and promotes the action through her active involvement and concern, and in the process, she gains the attributes of heroism and glory. In contrast, in a male discourse, the male is given the qualities of heroism, sacrifice, justice, and action while typically the female protagonists remain the recipients of the male bounty and chivalry. The interaction between the narrator and her cousin in *Ice Candy Man* promotes the idea of equality, as she refuses to let him use sexual provocation against her and continues to swoon over her vivacity. Lenny's disability never exerts any kind of psychological pressure on her. She continues to be forceful, occasionally aggressive, and she can hold her own when the chips are down. Lenny makes an impression as someone who is brave, powerful, and unwilling to succumb to the collective frenzy throughout the entire book. She is adventurous, demanding, and vivacious. She is able to comprehend the constraints placed on women's lives in patriarchal society by studying the lives of several women. Sidhwa claims that women are consistently marginalised and that she constantly protests against it. Ayah, a female figure, has had a profound influence on Lenny. Ayah is the embodiment of a strong woman because she gives Lenny the concepts of freedom and will. Lenny's mother is another important female character who embodies the stereotypical image of a Fidel, devoted, and servile wife who appears to be only capable of making fun of her husband. Through Lenny's mother, Sidhwa suggests in this book that women should have a life goal outside of domesticity that they should strive to achieve. In order to eliminate the disparities now present regarding their marginalisation, women must free themselves from the confines of "womanliness." Lenny's mother and aunt take on the heroic and outstanding humanitarian roles in *Ice Candy Man* by defending the lives and property of Hindus. The female characters in this book also call our attention to the reality that women are often victimised and forced to define their life in accordance with pre established gender stereotypes. Additionally, they reveal the patriarchal prejudices that permeate stereotypical societal beliefs. Lenny is aware of these social norms and demonstrates the tenacity to break free of them. She also chronicles the various traumas that women experienced throughout the terrifying and heart breaking days of Partition. Sidhwa exposes in *Ice Candy Man* the patriarchal social practises that hindered women's development and evolution, as well as the psychology of women that has been shaped over many generations of training.

Conclusion:

Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that Sidhwa has a universal appeal to women, urging them to avoid patriarchal postulates because doing so replicates patriarchy. She presents an ongoing picture of a world where women's ideals are made to predominate. Women are portrayed by her as both victims and rescuers. They are portrayed carrying out heroic deeds to restore order to this chaotic planet. Sidhwa discusses the emancipation of women in his novels. Thus, the novel comes to a happy conclusion. Women work hard to overcome their predicament and, at last, leave behind their debilitating and torturous position and begin new in life. This is pure technical genius, perhaps only possible in the work of a writer who is knowledgeable with the various intricacies of feminist studies.

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