

**International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies**

**The Journal of Project Monma Research Centre**

**Volume 2, Issue 1, September 2016**

**ISSN 2463-2945**



**To cite this article**

**Javed, S. (2016). Portrayal of Sexuality in the Age of Solemnity. *International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies*, 2 (1), pp.19-32.**

International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies, Volume 2, Issue 1, September 2016,  
ISSN 2463-2945

## Portrayal of Sexuality in the Age of Solemnity

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### Abstract

Ismat Chughtai was Urdu's most dauntless and contentious woman writer of the twentieth century and surely the leading figure of the Progressive Writers group. This group of Urdu writers produced various influential works between 1935 and 1955. With the help of her works, Ismat made prominent presence by writing on areas which had not been earlier discussed or explored. She spoke for the exploited lot of the Indian society- the women. She gave to their feelings words and wrote many such works which discuss various issues which were hidden behind a veil. She wrote in a time when women in orthodox Muslim families were supposed to obey quietly the instructions given to them by their elders. Her stories had female characters which gave a blow to the dominant patriarchal ideology that a woman is the sanctum sanctorum of the home and therefore she is restricted from exploring various dimension of active sexualities. This paper deals with prevailing definition of sexuality in the backdrop of patriarchal society and the protagonist's deviation from this dominant definition in the short stories by Ismat Chughtai. The paper has a close focus on two short stories, *Gharwali* (The Homemaker) [1940] and *Til* (The Mole) [1950]. The paper makes an attempt to explore the different incidences in these two stories which shed light on how Ismat discusses the sexuality of the Indian women in the age of sobriety.

**Keywords:** Doughty, explore, gender, outrageous, rebel, sanctum, sexuality, shy, sobriety, women.

### Introduction

We are living in the year 2016, a time when women in India have come out of the closet and have started writing on the tabooed subject of female sexuality. It's the age when women writers have steered away the stereotypical projection of themselves as meek and submissive human beings in beds. The contemporary society has finally accepted women as subjects of desire and not just objects of desire. But what about our past? Have we ever imagined how the subject of women's sexuality was treated earlier? Well, Ismat Chughtai was one such women writer who openly explored the theme of female sexuality in her several works between 1935-55. Her works talk about Indian women dealing with the crisis of identity. She sheds light on the factor that women, belonging to any religion or community, who openly discussed about the sexual desires through their words and actions, were regarded as women with low morals in the society.

Ismat Chughtai was Urdu's<sup>1</sup> most dauntless and contentious woman writer of the twentieth century and surely the leading figure of the Progressive Writers group. The Urdu name of this organization was 'Anjuman Taraqqi Pasand Musannifin' and it was a progressive literary movement in the pre-partition British India. The Urdu writers belonging to this group produced various influential works between 1935 and 1955. (Batra, 2010). These left leaning writers inspired people through their literary pieces to understand the importance of equality and social justice. Their works reflected the Marxist theory and were anti-imperialist. With the help of her works, Ismat made prominent presence by writing on areas which had not been earlier discussed or explored extensively in colonial India. She spoke for the exploited lot of the society- the women, and gave words to their feelings and discussed various issues which were hidden behind a social veil<sup>2</sup>. Ismat wrote in a time when women in orthodox Muslim families were supposed to obey quietly the instructions given to them by their elders. Her stories had female characters which gave a blow to the dominant patriarchal ideology that a woman is the sanctum sanctorum of the home, and, therefore, she is restricted from exploring various dimension of active sexualities (Naqvi, 1993).

My paper deals with prevailing definition of sexuality in the backdrop of patriarchal society and the protagonist's deviation from this dominant definition in the short stories by Ismat Chughtai. The paper has a close focus on two short stories, *Gharwali* (The Homemaker) and *Til* (The Mole). I have made an attempt to explore the different incidences in these two stories which shed light on how Ismat discusses the sexuality of the women in the age of sobriety.

## **Women in India in the 1940s**

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<sup>1</sup>Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language. The origin of this language is in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, during the early Muslim invasion. It developed due to the intermingling of the occupying armies and the local people. It is also said that Urdu developed from an ancient dialect called khariboli. A lot of Urdu vocabulary comes from Persian and Arabic. It is the national language of Pakistan. It is also spoken in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Fiji, Germany, Guyana, India, Malawi Mauritius, Nepal, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, the UAE, the UK and Zambia.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier women had to face various barriers in living a normal life, for example they were not free to choose their spouse, they were not allowed to work and discussing sexuality issues was considered a grave sin. So, social veil here refers to the social sense and not hiding manually.

The Indian concept of sexuality has emerged over time which can be very well seen in the literary pieces written in every age. A number of literary works highlight the changing concept of Indian female sexuality over the time period. Works like *Kama Sutra* by Vatsyayana, *Upanikesh* by Dr.Sarojini Sahoo, *Gender, Sex and the City: Urdu Rekhti Poetry 1780-1870* by Ruth Vanita and *A Pleasant Kind of Heavy and Other Erotic Stories* by Aranyani<sup>3</sup> are some good examples of this change.

Indian sexuality is manifested specifically in the female section of the society, in their attire, behaviour, literature and sports. Historical analysis reveals a distinct degeneration in women's status. Starting from the childhood to their deaths, women faced various situations where the gender played a very important role. Numerous superstitions like untouchability and women being impure while menstruating were imposed on them which had worsened their lives. The girl child was not sent to school, whereas the boy was. Distinction was made even while feeding them. The boy was offered rich, healthy and tasty plates of meals whereas the girls were told that they don't need that.

Several practices like the purdah system<sup>4</sup>, dowry<sup>5</sup>, the sati tradition of immolating the wife on husband's pyre and child marriage are significant examples to prove the stature of women in India (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013). A respectable woman was one who followed all these practices without questioning them. Since a long time, patriarchy has been dominant in most parts of India, these rules were laid down for women and no men. The females were instructed to wear a veil in front of males (other than their own husbands and maternal male family member) whereas, the men could lay their eyes wherever they wished to. Basically men in all patriarchal

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<sup>3</sup> Aranyani is the pseudonym of the author of the book *A Pleasant Kind of Heavy and Other Erotic Stories*. She is probably a woman who took this pen name to protect herself from being judged by family and society upon writing sexual content. Her identity is not disclosed so most of the critics assume she is a woman.

<sup>4</sup> Purdah system is a religious and social custom practiced by females which is of two forms: woman covering her entire body with some cloth to conceal her form and skin, and physical seclusion from the other sexes. Purdah practicing women can face only close male family members. Religiously purdah system is designed to protect women from being frazzled but patriarchy leads this practice to subjugate women and put limitation to their freedom.

<sup>5</sup> At the time of Indian marriage, the bride's family gives durable goods, cash, real or movable property to the groom's family (his parents, relatives), this is referred as dowry. Earlier dowry was regarded as the wedding gift to the bride but later it became a form of insurance so that her in-laws don't mistreat her. Dowry is illegal in India under Dowry Prohibition Act 1961.

societies in India were expected to take care of their wives and feed them while the wives looked after the whole family. So the scenario was the exchange of women as care-takers and men as protectors who controlled women's choices and sexuality.

Women's sexuality is a prominent indicator of their families and communities' honour. For instance, Kanyadanam (kanya refers to daughter and dana means gift) is an important part of Hindu marriages and it means giving away of a virgin daughter in marriage. Not only this, while marrying the daughters, the parents have to pay a large amount of dowry to groom's family. This is not the case in Indian Muslim marriages; they use the Arabic word jahez for dowry. The Muslim classify dowry in two categories, jahez-e-Fatimi i.e. jahez of Fatima<sup>6</sup> or giving of valuable goods, clothes, jewellery and money to the groom's family.(Sinha, 2008).On the other hand, the boy marrying was just there to receive loads and loads of dowry, the giving away system was not his business. In the medieval India, the conditions of the widows were even worse, their sexuality, their mobility and even their dietary regimen remained under the patriarchal gaze. In certain states of Bengal, the upper caste Hindu women had to follow the tradition of Sati. According to the Sati tradition, when the husband dies, the wife was supposed to sacrifice herself on his pyre whereas if a wife dies no such rule was there for the husband. Even after the introduction of Bengal Sati Regulation, 1829<sup>7</sup> and the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act 1856<sup>8</sup> the widows were kept in seclusion, and were rarely allowed to remarry or live regular lives by their communities and families. They were regarded cursed, the reason of their husband's death. They were socially not allowed to spend a regular life they were not even allowed to eat any rich or spicy food and were only expected to wear white dresses and were not allowed to dress fancy (Lamb, 2000). Despite being so old such traditions still exist and are observed by women in certain parts of Bengal, India (Lamb, 2000).

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<sup>6</sup> Fatima was the youngest daughter of the Prophet Muhammad who received some essential things in the name of dowry- a cot knitted with jute wires, a leather mattress stuffed with date leaves instead of cotton, flour grinder, two pitchers, one big and one small leather bag used for carrying water.

<sup>7</sup> This regulation declared the practise of Sati illegal and punishable.

<sup>8</sup> Widows among the higher castes were socio-culturally forbidden to marry. This Act legalised the marriage of Hindu widows in India. However, no such socio-cultural imposition ever existed on a widower's marriage.

The mental makeup of the Indian society those days was that women are only fit to stay at home to perform the household chores and take care of their affinal families, and they should not go to schools, not play on streets. Their sexuality and decisions were controlled by their families and they were not even free to choose their life partners. Whosoever was bought by their family, whether old, ugly, unemployed- they had to marry him. They were forced to wear burkhas<sup>9</sup> and were not free to roam about freely. They were taken as commodities with which the males used to fulfil their sexual desires. Unlike the women, if they were bored of their wives, they could easily think of marrying again. It was a male modulated society in which they were forced to live the way the men wanted (Kaur & Singh, 2014). The men were allowed to visit prostitutes even after marriages whereas a number of restrictions were imposed upon the females. They openly visited the brothels leaving their wives to take care of the family. The women dare not speak about their sexual preferences., and they just existed to obey. (Khanna, 2014)

A number of novels written by Indian author Munshi Premchand depicted this common scene of husband beating his wife and becoming a hero in doing so. The novel *God of Small Things* by another Indian author Arundhati Roy, says that usually whenever men returned back home late at night, drunken and without senses, they beat up their women.(Roy, 2002).Similarly, in the medieval and colonial period women were largely made to believe that no matter what happens their husband was their god (*Pati Parmeshwar*).

The subject of female sexuality in the Indian colonial era was first taken up by famous male Indian writer Sarat Chandra Chottapadhyay's novel "*Shesh Prashn*" (The Last Question) published in 1931. This was the first book which challenged the patriarchal values by underlining the relevance of a female's sexuality. However, the topic of female sexuality was never taken up by a female writer until then. Tahira Naqvi, a well-known translator of Ismat Chughtai's work, explained in a lecture, in Seattle in 2004 that the editors of the magazine that published "*Lihaaf*" (The Quilt) mistook the name Ismat Chughtai as a male author writing under a pseudonym. As this story depicts a lesbian relationship, nobody was ready to believe that a woman had sent this kind of work which challenged the patriarchal dominant sexual norms.

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<sup>9</sup> Burkha is a long loose garment which is worn by Muslim women to cover the whole body from head to feet. International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies, Volume 2, Issue 1, September 2016, ISSN 2463-2945

After some investigation when the world came to know that it was written by a female author, *Lihaaf* created the most astounding furore (Patel, 2001).

### **“Gharwali” (The Homemaker)**

It was 76 years ago, in 1940s that Ismat Chughtai’s short story “*Gharwali*” (The Homemaker) came out. This story was a heady satire on the institution of marriage as well as on the etiquettes of the 1940s society. In the Indian society, marriage is considered as an essential step of any individual’s life, especially a woman. At a socio-cultural level it is often observed that a very few women remain single and those who do, are socially looked down. Ismat Chughtai’s *Gharwali* questions the notion of marriage being the prerequisite to womanhood.

‘*Gharwali*’ depicts a story of Lajjo, an orphan woman who comes to realise, as she reaches womanhood that her biggest asset is her body. She solicits her body for money, sometimes for cash, sometimes on credit and other times on charity. “*When she grew up, her body proved to be her only asset.*” (Asaduddin, 2009, p. 79). Lajjo is not at all doubtful or uncertain about her liking towards coitus acts, “*a stranger to bashfulness or the sense of shame*” (Asaduddin, 2009, p. 79). She works as a maid servant who serves food in the dining room and serves her master in the bedroom. She doesn’t have a good reputation<sup>10</sup> in the neighbourhood but at the same time she is desirable to the male section of the society. The men see her as an object with which they can fulfil their sexual desires. They are not ready to give her respect in the day light, they will not accept her in the society but will not leave a single chance to share bed with her, an irony. The story depicts that Lajjo comes to work in a man called Mirza’s house, who is a strait-laced bachelor. As soon as she enters his house she starts charming the young man with her coquetry. Sweet and simple Mirza starts to yearn for Lajjo but is scared of the society. The same society which has laid down a rule which states that a man and a woman can get intimate with each other only after marriage. He is scared of the society which will point fingers at him for operating against the social norms of sexuality before marriage. He fears to violate this rule. Mirza’s

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<sup>10</sup> The definition of a reputed Indian woman in the time when Ismat Chughtai wrote was a woman who was ready to sacrifice her needs and desire for the family, society and almost anyone in the world. A woman who was socially viewed to be promiscuous was not respected.

quandary finds a solution when one night Lajjo makes a move; she herself grabs Mirza and seduces him. He becomes quite fond of Lajjo, making him insecure towards her and soon proposes her for marriage. Lajjo doesn't find this a good idea and pleads him to change his mind but Mirza has made up his mind and is not ready to change his firm decision. Certainly, Mirza loses interest in Lajjo soon after the marriage. On the other hand, Lajjo who has a continuous greed for sex finds a substitute to fulfil her libidinousness. All hell breaks loose when this is no more a secret and comes in Mirza's notice. He takes out his anger in beating her black and blue, instantly gives her a divorce and throws her out. Lajjo is back in her former self, again out on the streets, flirting with every second man she comes across.

The story ends at the time when both realize that they need each other. They think that they were in a better deal before getting married to each other. They were enjoying a better relationship before the tag of husband and wife. So when Mirza thinks of finding a maid for his house, he allows Lajjo to take back her old position. Once again Lajjo sleeps in his kitchen and Mirza feels the same urge towards her, the feeling which had lost in the social contract of marriage. Lajjo knows this patriarchal world, where men try to control a female's sexual desire. She is relieved about the fact that she no more has to carry the burden of marriage on her head. For her the marriage was a cage in which her free spirit was locked (Mitra, 2013).

Though she has been defined as a tractable character by Ismat Chughtai, she is not at all soft spoken like the women of those times. She is well aware of her sexual desires and she doesn't hide them, she is bold enough to flirt with men. She is frank about her physical needs and takes them as basic human needs which need to be fulfilled. She likes to wear a lehnga<sup>11</sup> and cannot bind herself with the string of a shalwar<sup>12</sup> which Mirza asks her to wear. Lajjo is not a woman who is confused about her basic need, she gives priority to them without getting into complicated opinions of modesty and morality laid down by the patriarchal world (Katoria, 2011).

She had a very large hearted concept of the man-woman relationship. For her, love was the most beautiful experience in life. After attaining a certain age, she

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<sup>11</sup> Lehnga is a long skirt which is usually embroidered and pleated.

<sup>12</sup> Shalwar are a form of baggy trousers.

was initiated into it and since then her interest had only grown.: (Asaduddin, 2009, p. 82).

### **“*Til*” (The Mole)**

In the story “*Til*” (The Mole) Ismat Chughtai has taken a younger female protagonist, Rani and a male artist, Ganeshchand Choudhry. Choudhry is trying to draw a masterpiece of an adolescent village girl who happens to be Rani. Right from the beginning of the story the readers can see Rani making efforts to sexually titillate Choudhry. Choudhry is now and again announcing in front of Rani that he is of her father’s age so she should stop trying to excite him. All the endeavours by Rani are childlike and naïve but finally prove to be successful to grab Choudhry’s attention. Rani plays with his emotions, she takes names of other men like Ratna or Chunan who give her a lot of attention, which fills Choudhry with jealousy and makes him angry.

The narrator describes Choudhry as a famous artist for whom women from far-off countries had requested to pose for, both with clothes and even without clothes. But Rani was one such poser who was extremely out of control. She was a girl, whom Choudhry had selected among other villagers to become his model; she was given an honourable position. On the other hand, Rani controlled the men in her village by a mole which she had in her cleavage. She was offered ‘kheel’<sup>13</sup> and ‘gurdhani’<sup>14</sup> by Chunan just to get her in his shack at late hours at night. Another man, Ratna used to accompany her to the nearby pond to catch a glimpse of her mole while bathing. She narrated these stories to Choudhry which infuriated him,

The question now was whether he should endeavour to paint or surrender to the madness that was going to envelop him (Asaduddin, 2009, p. 72).

The result is that Choudhry forgets his social status and rushes to Rani’s hut at night which is empty. Choudhry’s sexual appetite that had been aroused by Rani goes in vain.

Rani then vanishes without informing anybody about her whereabouts. Choudhry’s painting then remains incomplete and his dream of winning the five thousand rupees award at the exhibition

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<sup>13</sup> Puffed paddy rice

<sup>14</sup> Unrefined brown sugar

shatters. Soon Rani is found hiding a “blood-soaked bundle on the road” and the villagers blame Choudhry for violating her. He was sure that his innocence will be proved soon in front of the whole village. He knew he has not committed any sin but he was guilty- “Truth always triumphs. But ... how he wished he were guilty! Well, he was guilty anyway—of being born into this world.” (Asaduddin, 2009, p. 78)

The story ends when Rani clears all the accusations on Choudhry by stating him to be impotent. Hearing this, “*Choudhry’s castration anxiety turns into a neurosis.*” (Mitra, 2013). This leaves Choudhry in a state of complete shock and in the end he is seen drawing “*long, conical, round lines—like a singed mark*”.

## Discussion

Ismat Chughtai is a renowned woman writer of the modern Urdu literature and a prominent figure of the Progressive Writers Movement who was always vociferous to the causes of the female emancipation. In a time when the women were thought to be the submissive angel of the house and thus were confined within the four walls of harem she not only fought for their socio-political rights but also gave vent to the myriad ‘feminine’ experiences. An iconoclast Ismat Chughtai spoke against the dominant ideology of patriarchy and its complex power relation in which males occupy the centre and thus women always inhabit the periphery. In her stories like *The Lihaf*, *Masooma*, *Til* and *Gharwali* and many other such writings she has tried to expose the hypocrisy and doubleness under the veneer of so called middle class sobriety and gentility. (Fleming, 1995)

It is quite interesting to note that Ismat Chughtai has the power to make her female characters face the class struggle. A girl belonging to gutters has the potentials to bring a famous artist on streets. An adolescent girl has the ability to destroy a renowned painter. Like the character of Lajjo in “*Gharwali*”, she also defies the patriarchal values set by the society. Both the characters are not scared to show their freebooting sexuality and they refuse to accept the rules laid down by the patriarchal authorities.

In both the stories Ismat Chughtai tries to showcase how strong her female characters are, they are aware of their sexual appetite and they don't want to hide them. They are carefree, bold and frank about their liking towards sexual activities. Her stories are set in a time when women were repressed in every manner, socially, economically and sexually. But her character sketches are so powerful that when we read it in the present century we are forced to think how difficult it would have been for her to publish such stories back then.

*The Homemaker* unravels the corruption, hypocrisy of the middle class gentility. It depicts the predicament of its female protagonist Lajjo, she is treated as a commodity which can be easily bought and used for sexual fun. Her existence in the unsavoury world ruled by men equated with her body; a commodified body which becomes a mode of enjoyment to various people. But when it comes to marriage, several boundaries are drawn around her. She is deprived of any individual identity as a woman in the complex binarism of sacred and profane.

In the story *The Mole*, Rani is shown as a girl who uses her mole in the cleavage to lure men. We can see that though Ismat Chughtai's female characters are quite strong and rebellious even if they are looked down by the so called honourable section of the society. They can make men fall for them, whenever they want to. Lajjo makes a religious maulana<sup>15</sup>, who is a devoted man and extremely dedicated towards his religious, fall in for her. He forgets his sacred vows taken by him in the light of his religion of not getting intimate with a woman before marriage. This is haraam<sup>16</sup> according to Mirza's religion, but the power of Lajjo's coquetry skills makes him forget everything. Next we have Rani because of whom an artist, who was renowned for his sketching skills in faraway lands, turns mad by the end of the story. He is the same artist who is shown as the one who will soon win a great prize for his artistic piece but in the end he is seen on road drawing conical round lines. This paper seeks to make a feminist study of the stories *The Mole* and *The Homemaker* and throw light on the deeper complex mechanism of power relations which lead to the objectification the protagonists in both the stories.

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<sup>15</sup> A Muslim man revered for his religious learning or piety

<sup>16</sup> The word Haraam refers to anything or act that is prohibited in the Holy Quran. It refers to a great sin when committed by a Muslim. Along with sex before marriage other examples of haraam are adultery, murder or money obtained through cheating or stealing. It also refers to consuming pork or drinking alcohol.

Ismat Chughtai wrote in the times when even picking up such issues was a great sin and taboo. Her stories reflect how different the times were when she wrote. We step into the world where “*women are turned into commodities, totally disposable, totally dispensable, to be used and discarded.*” (Kudchedka, 1997). Even after so many ages and so much advancement we have the present population of two kinds—one who has stepped out boldly to speak on female sexuality and the other who still frown upon when such topics are picked up for discussion. For instance, according to Sreemoyee Piu Kundu, author of the novel “*Sita’s Curse: The Language of Desire*” in an interview to journalist Shilpa Raina for *The New Indian Express*, published 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2014, “It’s about time we shed these prudish pre-conditioned layers and talk and deal with sexual explicitness in our books and films with a certain degree of refinement and maturity” (Kundu, 2014) but at the same time when the short story “Gharwali” is read out in Urdu, there are some people who are offended and give expressions like “tsk tsk”. For such reactions Ismat Chughtai had said quite earlier only;

“In my stories, I’ve put down everything with objectivity. Now, if some people find them obscene, let them go to hell. It’s my belief that experiences can never be obscene, if they are based on authentic realities of life.” (Asaduddin, 2009, p. xi)

The present century has women who can openly discuss these issues, in fact they can even come out to fight for their rights. We have girls who are challenging the taboos which in early times women had to face. Earlier the girls were not allowed to think about playing sports but now we have some leading ladies in the field of sports. Here I would like to quote a recent sexist interview on the news channel *India Today TV* on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2016, which took place between the famous Indian female tennis player Sania Mirza and a journalist, Rajdeep Sardesai. (Mirza, 2016).

**Sardesai:** Amidst all the celebrityhood, when is Sania going to settle down? Is it going to be in Dubai? Is it going to be in any other country? What about motherhood... building a family... I don’t see all that in the book, it seems like you don’t want to retire just yet to settle down.

**Mirza:** You don’t think I’m settled?

**Sardesai:** You don’t talk about retirement, about raising a family, about motherhood, what’s life beyond tennis is going to be...

**Mirza:** You sound disappointed that I’m not choosing motherhood over being number one in the world at this point of time. But I’ll answer your question anyway, that’s the question I face all the time as a woman, that all women have to face — the first is marriage and then it’s motherhood. Unfortunately, that’s when we’re settled, and no matter how many Wimbledons we win or number ones in

the world we become, we don't become settled. But eventually it will happen, not right now. And when it does happen I'll be the first one to tell everybody when I plan to do that.

**Sardesai:** I must apologise, I framed that question very badly. I promise you, you're right, I would never ask this question to a male athlete...

**Mirza:** I'm so glad, you're the first journalist to apologise to me on national television.

It's just that today we have men who at least have the decency to apologize for such questions. But still we can analyse the situation here that though the player being number one in the world is not considered to have achieved full settlement, until she gives birth to a child. Essentialist ideas of marriage and motherhood are still articulated as dominant social discourses.

## Conclusion

The suffering of Indian women remained unheard for thousands of years. Culture, age old value systems and manipulated religious scriptures ensure their marginalized position. The biased writers, philosophers exclude women from the arena of literature and silent about women issues and problems. Around 1940 Ismat Chughtai produced certain works which shook the world. Her writings shifted the focus from the male perspective to female perspective and raised women related issues through her female protagonists. Her stories challenged all the patriarchal institutions which worked for the marginalized status of the females. Emergence of women writers writing about female sexuality reversed the traditional mode of writing. Among the great Urdu writers Ismat Chughtai holds a distinct position. She through her writing skills explores how patriarchy affects the inner world of Indian women. This paper takes into account two works of Ismat Chughtai *Gharwali* and *Til*. These two stories present a microcosm of India society with its all social and cultural beliefs. This paper highlights the various forms of female defiance women choose for generating an identity in a male governed society. It, also presents a brief account of feminism with the help of the two stories. This paper also sheds light on the strong character selection done by Ismat Chughtai in her stories. Though she wrote in times when her writing style was criticized by many people, but her female characters were quite rebellious who were not ready to be subjugated. Though her stories are set in patriarchal social setup but her protagonist are quite repressive and are able to escape the situations controlled usually by the males. The stories belong

to the time when women were repressed economically, socially and sexually but her so called misbehaving female characters are successful in facing these repressive forces.

Though slowly and steadily but we are moving towards a society which is not just ruled by the males. We have females who are not ready to get married at a young age, there are women who prioritise their education and career over marriage and motherhood. In contemporary times large numbers of women joining paid workforce have the courage to face different forms of discrimination on a daily basis in this male dominant society. This paper focuses mainly on how low the females were regarded, if they spoke about their sexuality. It makes us realize the difference between the world today and the one in which Ismat Chughtai wrote. The scenario is no more the same as it used to be, women are coming forward with their issues and they want them to be solved. They are not shy to speak about their sexuality and choices. The timid behaviour which was imposed upon them is slowly fading as they are being bought up in ways which make them bold enough to face horrific situations. Women are achieving good positions and respect at work-places, they are doing wonders in the field of sports, science and technology and medicine. Even in thankfully, we are moving towards a better world as compared to the one which her stories depict.

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Salma Javed, 2016

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International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies, Volume 2, Issue 1, September 2016,  
ISSN 2463-2945