**Doubly Marginalised Minority Women**

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Pakistani working women, even after earning money for themselves and ensuring a certain level of independence for them, are still living a marginalized life. If the working woman belongs to any minority community, she is doubly marginalised. Such a woman is Alice Bhatti in the novel Our Lady of Alice Bhatti by Mohammed Hanif published in 2011 by Vintage Books. Alice Bhatti is the voice of not only marginalised working women but also doubly marginalised working women belonging to minority communities. The rapid progress in science, technology and social sciences in the 21st century has not brought a significant change in the socio-political attitude of people in general towards working women, especially minority women.

Hanif is a Pakistani postcolonial writer who focuses on the socio-political issues of Pakistan and writes with the angle of social reforms to alleviate suffering for the powerless and the marginalized. For example, in his novel A Case of Exploding Mangoes, he dwells on the life of Pakistani people under a dictatorship and its repercussions. He also discussed a similar socio-political situation in his next novel Red Birds, but at a broader canvass of international wars, terrorism and the common people whose lives have been rendered meaningless because of international politics.

Alice Bhatti, a nurse working at the Christian mission hospital, lost her mother in her childhood and was brought up by her father Joseph Bhatti. She developed a strong faith in her religion and the same faith lent her courage to deal with difficult situations and even could fight and attack anyone for her safety. She deals in a befitting and powerful manner with the son of Qazalbash (the actress), under treatment in the Sacred, the hospital where Alice is working as a paramedic. She is very professional and successful in her attitude. She is courageous enough to deal with tough and rough patients.

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After her brief stints of love and romance with a faculty at Nursing school, she falls for a police tout, Mr Teddy, even when Mr Noor, a Male nurse was also in love with her. Teddy initially proved a good lover but his misfortunes kept him away from his wife and home. Alice got pregnant and wanted to keep her baby and her work safe, which was being thwarted by the lifestyle of her husband, who failed to appear for so many days. Alice returns to her hospital and her colleague nurse. But very soon Teddy becomes suspicious of her disappearance, and looks for her and believes that his wife has become faithless to him for love of Noor. He arranges to throw acid on his wife and his baby in her belly without knowing this on the advice of his police boss.

Allice Bhatti’s father and her Christian community instead of getting Teddy arrested begin to believe that Allice has been lifted by God as a saint. So, a working woman even after her bravery, courage, qualification, skills and independence could not survive in a society that believed in violence for the solution of troubles emerging out of a man and woman relationship. Even a little speck of doubt makes Teddy, like Othello of Shakespeare, a killer of his love and the mother of his own baby. He murders not just one human but also a human soul yet to see the world. He did not bother to think, discuss and talk about the whole issue because his frustration arose out of his inability to locate a runaway criminal. He failed to exercise his wisdom because his association with the police inspector made the patriarch in him wake up with full fury and he, therefore decided to avenge his passion by throwing acid on his wife.

Hanif builds a picture of the patriarchal attitude of the society towards women in general and especially to the working women because it necessitates contact with other male members of the society. Working women in postcolonial societies are generally not considered good and noblewomen by the traditional patriarchal setup and are, therefore, mostly fall a victim to the prejudiced patriarchal power. If the working woman is from a minority community, she is even vulnerable because of the weakness associated with her socio-political status. This issue has its own repercussions and undermines the socio-political status of women, especially minority working women in Pakistan. This challenges all the progress made by the feminist movement because it has failed to provide protection and safety to the working women in Pakistan. There are the incidents of acid throwing, honour killing, rape and mental and physical abuse of the working women entailing that education, empowerment and financial independence of women has not changed the traditional structures of Pakistani society because of long-standing socio-political norms in Pakistan, especially, but generally in almost postcolonial societies. These societies have already been riddled with marginalizing caste and class systems, which have been further strengthened because the legacies of colonialism keep on stressing themselves. The marginalization of women and especially working women from minority communities become especially vulnerable as has been portrayed by Mohammed Hanif.

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