

October 2023

## Triumphant or Trapped Pakistani Women? A Feminist Critique of Mueenuddin's "Nawabdin Electrician" and Haq's Song "Chamkeeli"

Amna Khan

*International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws>



Part of the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Khan, Amna (2023) "Triumphant or Trapped Pakistani Women? A Feminist Critique of Mueenuddin's "Nawabdin Electrician" and Haq's Song "Chamkeeli";" *Journal of International Women's Studies*: Vol. 25: Iss. 7, Article 8.

Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol25/iss7/8>

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

This journal and its contents may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Authors share joint copyright with the JIWS. ©2022 Journal of International Women's Studies.

## **Triumphant or Trapped Pakistani Women? A Feminist Critique of Mueenuddin's "Nawabdin Electrician" and Haq's Song "Chamkeeli"**

By Amna Khan<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

In patriarchal societies, women are traditionally subjugated and suppressed in one way or another. Men are privileged and kept at the center. They speak, express, and dream while benefiting from the autonomy provided to them by the phallogocentric system. By contrast, women are marginalized. Patriarchal writers define women as weak, fragile, helpless, docile, submissive, and emotional. However, this paper reveals that in Daniyal Mueenuddin's "Nawabdin Electrician" and Abrar-ul-Haq's song "Chamkeeli," regardless of a change in times and "gender performativity," Pakistani male writers continue to stigmatize women. This study shows that although gender roles are changing, women remain subjugated. My paper claims that whereas women were previously portrayed as submissive, docile, suppressed, uncritical, and mindlessly silent, in these two more recent texts women are represented as uncontrollable, hypersexual, dangerous, mad, violent, hysterically dominating, and madly authoritative. I argue that these recent portrayals do not help or emancipate Pakistani women. In 2019, Advocate Rana Adnan Asghar filed a petition against Haq's song in the Lahore Civil Court, declaring it a scurrilous attack on men's integrity. My study, however, reveals that Haq has depicted incapacitated men in contrast to strong women, as a way to prove that women's emancipation is a potential threat to patriarchy. Thus, rather than demeaning men, Haq's depiction of a madly uncontrollable woman is more critical of women than of men. This implies that Pakistan's dominant patriarchal familial and social structures suppress women more in order to protect men from disgrace. My study reveals that in the time between these texts (2009 to 2019), no significant change has occurred because gender discrimination persists in the works of Pakistani men. This article offers a dismantling of these recent prejudiced female stereotypes in order to achieve a more emancipatory future for women.

*Keywords:* Pakistani male writers, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Abrar-ul-Haq, Patriarchy, Gender performativity, Gender stereotypes.

### **Introduction**

Throughout the world, a tyrannical oppression exercised by the patriarchal social fabric subjugates and suppresses women in one way or another. Men are kept at the center where they enjoy all the rights and luxuries of being free (Leaper & Friedman, 2007, p. 568). They speak, express, and dream while benefiting from the autonomy provided to them by the phallogocentric system. Even the language used privileges men and facilitates their dominance. Women, on the other hand, are kept entangled in the shackles of a patriarchal system (De Beauvoir, 1949/2011, p. 372). They are devoid of any independent action, living as marginalized beings at the mercy of self-centered men. Their very thoughts, dreams, and feelings remain unexpressed. The goals of

---

<sup>1</sup> Ms. Amna Khan is the Gold Medalist of the University of the Punjab with her Master's in English Language and Literature. After her MS English coursework's completion by standing first in her cohort at the International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan, she is working on her thesis. Her research articles have also been published in national and international journals. Her heterogeneous research interests include Gender Studies, studies of Punjabi proverbs, Media Studies, Feminist trauma studies, Female Child Developmental Psychology, and Disability Studies. As a Senior Content Writer, now she is working with numerous International Organizations. Email: amnakhanofficial35@gmail.com.

this research are to examine portrayals of women in Mueenuddin's short story "Nawabdin Electrician" (2009) and Abrar-ul-Haq's song "Chamkeeli" (2019), and to identify the type of traits attributed to women characters in Haq's song "Chamkeeli" and Mueenuddin's story. In both texts, the focalization is patriarchal. Daniyal Mueenuddin and Abrar-ul-Haq draw two different images of Pakistani women due to change in the roles of women throughout the decade. The submissive, docile, silenced, and suppressed women of Pakistan in the short story "Nawabdin Electrician" contrast with the extremely independent women in Haq's song. Patriarchal writers try to define who and what women are, what they feel, what they do, and why they do it. From their privileged patriarchal position, they assume it as their right to portray women in whatever way they wish (Lindsey, 2015, p. 44). Thus, due to the social and cultural domination of men, it is men who have the power to impose gender stereotypes as a marker of normative behavior; women are then forced to conform to these stereotypes.

My research is of particular interest because Abrar-ul-Haq's song "Chamkeeli" is a Punjabi song, and no Punjabi song has yet been analyzed in Pakistan. Haq's song "Chamkeeli" has been viewed 20 million times on YouTube. According to a research study entitled "Estimating Population of Pakistan" conducted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics Islamabad (2020), the total population of Pakistan is approximately 270 million, whereas Hugh Johnston's research shows that Punjabi is spoken by more than 91,454,609 people all over Pakistan (Johnston, 1988, p. 104). Furthermore, around 125 million people all over the world speak Punjabi (Khokhlova, 2014, p. 38). The Punjabi people form the largest ethnolinguistic group in South Asia, especially in Pakistan and India. Punjabis live across the globe in Canada, Germany, Australia, and the United Kingdom. The members of this group speak Punjabi as their mother tongue inherited from their Indo-Aryan family origins. Therefore, for my research, it becomes more significant to examine the kind of portrayals of women that may be influencing approximately 102 million Punjabis all around the world.

On the surface, Haq presents an image of a Pakistani woman Chamkeeli, who is uncontrollably free. Chamkeeli wants to have a love marriage, something that is not culturally acceptable in Pakistan. She also is seemingly portrayed to be a woman who speaks her mind. Instead of taking any advice from patriarchal figures in her home, Chamkeeli does not take into consideration their authoritative position in her life. She challenges their authority, and roles are reversed as Chamkeeli makes her own decisions. In my interpretation, however, she is depicted as a danger to the honor and respect of her family. She is shown as a threat to patriarchy. It appears that Chamkeeli has also become a danger to the family's reputation. The problem here, I argue, is that though gender roles are changing, the position of women is still stigmatized. Earlier, women were submissive, docile, suppressed, uncritical, and mindlessly silent. Now, they are uncontrollable, hypersexual, dangerous, mad, violent, hysterically dominating, and madly authoritative. Because the point of view in both texts is patriarchal, the texts stigmatize Pakistani women's attitudes, actions, feelings, thoughts, desires, behaviors, decisions, and choices, whatever they are. Hence, I claim that these portrayals do not help Pakistani women and do not seem to be emancipatory. Rather, Mueenuddin's image of a docile and subjugated Pakistani woman and Abrar-ul-Haq's depiction of a madly uncontrollable woman both serve the interests of Pakistan's dominant patriarchal familial and social structure; they suppress in order to save men from loss of status. Even though 10 years passed between the publication of these texts and gender roles supposedly changing, my study suggests that the depiction of women in Pakistani literature written by men still serves to continue the suppression of Pakistani women.

In various parts of the world, women face varying forms of patriarchal subjugation that aim to mold them into “ideal” females (Mehmood, 2019, p. 121). If they deviate from the classic roles assigned to women, they are maltreated, victimized, and silenced. Women are rarely given the opportunity to speak for and represent themselves (Bhattacharya, 2014, p. 182). The male-oriented society expects them to act as good listeners and, therefore, systematically suppresses independent thought among women. By contrast, men are systematically projected as authoritative speakers to sustain their dominance in society. For example, Pakistani Anglophone fiction often portrays women as weak, helpless, vulnerable, docile, and suppressed (Waheed, 2019, p. 12). By silencing the internal worlds of women, men are given the sole voices. They not only share their thoughts from their privileged position but also take the liberty of representing women. They strive to rule not only women’s bodies but also their minds along with their actions (Leaper & Friedman, 2007, p. 571). Because of this assumed social and cultural superiority, men arrogate to themselves the role of the only powerful and rational creatures on the face of planet Earth and proceed to stigmatize women’s existence.

On the one hand, this stigmatization and suppression are systematically created, operated, distributed, and perpetuated among the masses by multiple Althusserian Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) such as families, schools, books, music, religion, economy, television, art, advertisements, technology, and movies (Althusser, 2010, p. 212). In Pakistan, due to these discriminatory ideologies, women are kept confined within the four walls of their homes (Hussain et al., 2015, p. 9). Even within their homes, they face discriminatory behavior from their families, including parents, husbands, in-laws, and relatives. Sana Ali concludes in her research study that even those women who get the opportunity to work in public spheres, are portrayed as subordinate and passive (2018, p. 7). On the other hand, the research conducted to analyze media images of women in newspapers reveals that Pakistani women are often reported as victims of domestic violence and hence dependent on their menfolk for their survival (Ali & Batool, 2015, p. 710). In all these instances, women appear to be defined by their relation to men, while men are defined by their individual creative and rational thoughts. The structure of patriarchal families, society, culture, arts, television, advertisements, and movies often stereotype women as being weak, fragile, helpless, docile, submissive, and emotional.

By contrast, these ISAs could possibly play a role in dismantling these negative portrayals of women in both private and public spheres. In Pakistan, several Anglophone female writers, such as Sara Shagufta, Rukhsana Ahmed, Uzma Aslam, and Soniah Kamal have woven the characters of emancipated women into their works. Moreover, some television dramas and soap operas have started contesting the submissive and subjugated portrayals of women. In these dramas, women are shown as struggling between freeing themselves from oppressive patriarchy and altering female gender roles to obtain liberty. According to Jyoti Mehra’s research study, the 2011 Pakistani drama serial *Humsafar* can be considered a signpost in the alternative depiction of Pakistani women in the media. Mehra places Pakistani women at the “crossroads of east-west cultures” (2019, p. 633). They appear to be fighting for their rights to speak their minds and contesting patriarchal portrayals as well. They initiated debate to bring change regarding the social perception of women. By contrast, the study conducted by Ashfaq and Shafiq reveals that many Pakistani dramas such as *Mann Mayal* (2016), *Zara Yaad Kar* (2016), *Besharam* (2016), *Dil Lagi* (2016), and *Ali Ki Ammi* (2016) tend to adopt reactionary positions (2018, p. 58). Here, instead of acting as “ideal” Pakistani women who are confined within their homes and are illiterate, emotional, and suppressed, women characters in these dramas have revolted against these stereotypes. These dramas depict women as extremely liberal, bold, fearless, highly educated,

ambitious, independent, and worldly-wise. It might be assumed that this change in the depiction of female roles hints at the changing attitudes of society towards women.

However, the above-mentioned research studies fail to unmask the politics behind these recent patriarchal portrayals of women. Although the several studies mentioned here demonstrate that many literary writings along with media depictions suggest that Pakistani women have started to gain freedom, the ideological underpinnings of these portrayals of extremely bold and uncontrollable women are still unexplored. Thus, in the Pakistani context especially, no single work is found addressing the agenda behind portraying these subjugated and emancipated images in Daniyal Mueenuddin's short story "Nawabdin Electrician" and Abrar-ul-Haq's song "Chamkeeli." Therefore, I aim to examine what kind of portrayals of women are embedded in the narrative trajectories of these two texts and how the emancipation of women is, in fact, being stigmatized.

### **Gender Performativity**

To probe this research problem in depth, my argument is grounded in the theoretical framework of gender performativity. This theoretical concept was proposed by Judith Butler in her seminal feminist work *Gender Trouble*, in which she very aptly categorizes gender and sex. According to her, sex is biologically determined while gender is culturally and socially constructed. Butler states, "Sex and gender are social constructs and historical products reified as natural by the gender system" (1990/2006, p. 34). Moreover, she claims that the cultural construction of identity through repetitive "stylized acts" is called gender. These stylized acts can be body gestures, actions, and particular diction of both sexes. When people from a particular group speak or act, they perform gender. This performance of gender is fabricated and socially constructed, but it is presented as a neutral and natural entity. With the repetition of these acts, they are continually reproduced so that these gendered beliefs become internalized later when their authenticity is established through force of habit (Butler, 1990/2006, p. 39). This then becomes a cultural reality and is inherited by the coming generations. This reality is mutually shared and acknowledged by social groups. People are pressured by the culture to limit their desires to these already established categories. Society and culture demand that individuals comply with the conventionally established gendered patterns.

Those who mimic the normative beliefs of gender are admired and hence are provided security in society. However, those who do not perform the norms are pushed to marginal positions in society and are thus penalized and stigmatized. Men and women become subjects to perform, repeat, and reinforce gendered identities. This determines what will be called a feminine or masculine idea, concept, action, gesture, or language. Butler states that gender is "not massively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy" (1990/2006, p. 122). So, it needs constant performance by the individual actors in a society or culture to keep itself alive. Identity is determined by the culture and society of the individuals. To attain cultural acceptance, it is required to perform, reinforce, and respect these normatively gendered ideas. Any deviant individuals are punished and driven to the margins.

Nonetheless, Butler believes that gender offers a "space of action" to dismantle its own normativity (1990/2006, p. 135). According to her, in any society, gender roles are established with the recurrence and repetition of certain kinds of tasks and actions in relation to different sexes. The binary categories of men and women, female and male, superior and inferior are created by the attribution of these tasks to each sex. Therefore, with the change in these roles, the concept of

gender can also be changed. But the problem under investigation in my research is that, despite a change in the portrayal of Pakistani women's roles, their existence is still stigmatized.

The Content Analysis Method is employed to examine the selected texts. In regard to the research questions, the recurrent patterns in these texts are explored. These patterns lead to the division of texts into thematic categories. These categories are based on the traits attributed to women in the above-mentioned texts. The portrayal and treatment of female characters are also analyzed critically.

### **Patriarchal Focalization: Instigation or Emancipation?**

The implicit recurrent patterns detected through the data analysis of Daniyal Mueenuddin's short story "Nawabdin Electrician" reveal that Pakistani women are depicted as submissive, docile, silenced, and suppressed. Mueenuddin has exercised his self-claimed patriarchal authority to portray stereotypical images of Pakistani women in his story. He has presented Nawabdin's wife as a child-producing machine. She is shown to be imbecilic, vacuous, and injudicious. Nawabdin values her because of her acceptance of the role of producing more children. She has already had twelve daughters and is adored by her husband due to her "unsurpassed fertility" (Mueenuddin, p. 2). As Mueenuddin writes,

Nawab had married early in life a sweet woman, whom he adored, but of unsurpassed fertility, and she proceeded to bear him children...All daughters, one after another after another, until finally came to the looked-for son, leaving Nawab with a complete set of twelve girls, ranging from infant to age eleven. (p. 2)

This shows a stereotypical portrayal of an uncritical rural woman who has no sense of family-planning as she lives in a backward desert behind Multan. Due to her excessive number of pregnancies, she has burdened Nawabdin's life, as he has to arrange dowries for twelve daughters. Besides poverty, their daughters' birth has greatly increased their miseries. Mueenuddin, thus, portrays Pakistani women as a burden to their families and society. As he says,

For an electrician and mechanic... No moneylender in his right mind would, at any rate of interest whatsoever, advance a sufficient sum to buy the necessary items: for each daughter, beds, a dresser, trunks, electric fans, dishes, six suits of clothes for the groom, six for the bride, perhaps a television, and on and on and on. (p. 3)

In these lines, Mueenuddin presents women as a problem for their parents in Pakistan. The politics of these demeaning portrayals can be understood by incorporating Chandra Talpade Mohanty's idea that third-world intellectuals impose Western designs on the lived experiences of the subaltern to authenticate oriental stereotypes (2003, p. 521). These derogatory images of Pakistani women in Mueenuddin's story appear to devalue their existence in society and perpetuate disrespect towards them. They are not helping to maintain the culturally sacred status assigned to women as mothers and daughters of the nation. Rather, women are demeaned with the undignified status of being a burden. Similar results are shown in Ali & Batool's (2015) research that analyzed media images of women in newspapers to reveal that Pakistani women are dependent on their men for survival (p. 23).

Mueenuddin's story also objectifies the female gender as merely a child-producing machine that is uncritical, emotional, and mindless. Women are portrayed as performing

stereotypical acts of suppressed beings. As Judith Butler states, gender is “not massively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy” (1990/2006, p. 54). Based on Butler’s concept, it can be inferred that gender-specific acts are constantly performed by the individual socio-cultural actors, in this case Nawabdin’s wife and daughters, to keep them alive in Pakistani society (Butler, 1990/2006, p. 39). Women have become subjects to perform, repeat, and reinforce gendered identities. To maintain cultural acceptance, these women are required to comply with the traditional performance and reinforcement of these normative gendered ideas by behaving as submissive suppressed subjects. Therefore, Mueenuddin uses his patriarchal authority to depict Pakistani women as mindless, uncritical, and irrational. This gendered performance as a submissive woman is fabricated and constructed by the writer. It is also presented in a way that appears neutral and natural to the readers.

By contrast, Mueenuddin portrays Nawabdin as a helpless Pakistani father who is striving to manage the burden of arranging dowries for his twelve daughters. He praises Nawabdin’s courage when he writes: “Another man might have thrown up his hands—but not Nawabdin...He looked in the mirror each morning at the face of a warrior going out to do battle” (p. 3). These lines show that the writer has portrayed Nawabdin as a “warrior” who fights to support the women of his family. He worries for the survival of his family regardless of his injuries even at his deathbed, as Nawab says to the thief, “My wife and daughters would have begged in the streets” (p. 16). Here, Mueenuddin shapes his narrative to win the reader’s sympathies for Nawabdin. The writer fulfills his patriarchal obligation of strengthening and reinforcing masculine hegemony. I aim to highlight Mueenuddin’s authorial prejudice in favor of Nawabdin, who is not blamed for the birth of too many daughters even though he is equally responsible. Mueenuddin’s portrayals present a biased viewpoint by making the husband appear as a powerless, debilitated man while blaming the imprudence in family planning on the wife. The writer perpetuates the conventional domination of patriarchy as a fount of wisdom, talent, and reason, while women are marginalized and stigmatized as imbecilic beings.

I also examine the portrayal of women in the Pakistani singer Abrar-ul-Haq’s song “Chamkeeli” (2019). The song was written and directed by Haq himself. In 2019, Haq drew very different images of Pakistani women than the ones presented by Mueenuddin because feminine roles had changed with the passage of 10 years. Compared to the submissive, docile, silenced, and suppressed women in Mueenuddin’s story, the women in Haq’s songs have become stridently independent. The problem remains, however, that the song stigmatizes the actions and gestures of women. Haq’s portrayal of Chamkeeli is still very negative and derogatory. He presents Chamkeeli as an extremely independent creature who has become uncontrollably free, with many negative traits, such as being hypersexual, dangerous, mad, violent, hysterically dominating, and madly authoritative.

The opening lines of Haq’s song are:

*Kudiyān maār giyan maidaan*  
*Main kurban jaani aan*  
*Wotti ley aai baraat*  
*Main kurban jaani aan*

Girls won  
 I am in awe

Bride led Baraat  
I am in awe

These lines imply that it is a very disturbing occasion for the whole society to view a bride leading her *Baraat* (a tradition specific to the sub-continent where the groom arrives at the bride's home on a mare with his relatives beside him). *Baraat* is a gendered action usually performed by the groom in Pakistan, but now the tables are turned as the bride Chamkeeli performs a masculine task. Haq is surprised to see Chamkeeli's very bold action and appears to be lamenting the absence of traditionally submissive and docile Pakistani women. Haq stigmatizes the actions of a courageous woman. These lines support the patriarchal figures in order to suppress the fearless spirits of brave women. Haq may seem to be happy or "in awe," but there are implications that this woman is a dangerous threat to the dominance and sustenance of the masculine hegemonic social structure. Chamkeeli's actions devalue masculinity, as she has come by herself and is not accompanied by her father, brother, or any other male family member. These lines suggest that the singer appears to emancipate Pakistani women by his modern depiction of an independent woman, but he ends up vilifying them.

The image of Chamkeeli becomes more toxic as Haq's song progresses. Haq further says:

*Ho chamkeeli badi harjayi*  
*Ho ehnu chayidae ghar jawaai*  
*Ho vekho kaisa zamana kaisi raat aayi ae*

O Chamkeeli! So coquettish!  
She needs a house husband  
O see! What time, what night has befallen!

She is shown as a woman with numberless tantrums who is not willing to move to her husband's home after getting married; she demands a house-husband. Here, Chamkeeli challenges the conventional marital structure of Pakistani society in which a woman shifts to her husband's home after marriage. Though Haq is presenting Chamkeeli's action in a very jovial tone, the words imply fear, anger, and stigma towards her action. Haq is awestruck by the changing times and Chamkeeli's changed portrayal, which he depicts as a kind of calamity to Pakistan. Haq is astonished to see her taking an unexpectedly audacious step. Moreover, Haq says:

*Chamkeeli baraat lai ke aap aayi ae*  
*Saare shehar ch duhayi jehi duhayi paayi ae*  
*Chamkeeli baraat lai ke aap aayi ae*  
*Saare shehar ch duhayi jehi duhayi paayi ae*

Chamkeeli has led her Baraat herself  
There is an outcry in city  
Chamkeeli has led her Baraat herself  
There is an outcry in city

Furthermore, instead of the groom leading his Baraat, Chamkeeli is portrayed as a woman leading her Baraat herself. Haq suggests that Chamkeeli's potentially detrimental step has given rise to a



protest in Pakistani society. The repetition of the lines “there is an outcry in the city” emphasizes and stigmatizes Chamkeeli’s untraditional action of leading her Baraat. Through repetition, the seeds of fear are sown in the minds of Pakistani society. As Hussain and associates (2015) aptly say, in Pakistan, due to these ideologies of discrimination, women are kept confined within the four walls of their homes (p. 9).

### **Stigmatized Independence: Between Majors and Minors**

The idea of a hazardous feminist revolt is embedded in Haq’s song “Chamkeeli.” I argue that Haq does not serve Pakistani women’s decades-old freedom fight. Rather, by portraying images of uncontrollable women, he suggests that the masculine dominant social structure should suppress them. The song continues:

*Chamkeeli major munda minor lagda ae*  
*Haye mainu te thoda jeha designer lagda ae*  
*Chamkeeli major munda minor lagda ae*  
*Mainu te thoda jeha designer lagda ae*

Chamkeeli seems major, the boy seems minor  
To me he seems a little designer  
Chamkeeli seems major, the boy seems minor  
To me he seems a little designer

In the patriarchal fabric of Pakistani society, men hold the central position. But, in the song, Chamkeeli revolts against this traditional social hierarchy and positions herself as “major,” whereas the man has become “minor.” Furthermore, as a Pakistani researcher, I am aware of the cultural connotations of the word “designer.” In a Pakistani context, the word refers to something womanish which also means fragile, submissive, passive, and meek. Chamkeeli’s audaciousness is portrayed as a force eroding masculine dominance. It suggests that the central position is now occupied by women, thus leaving men marginalized. Through this change in position, Haq makes fun of these feminized men by calling them “little designers.” He perhaps is hoping to instigate the patriarchs to limit women’s actions, in order to regain and perpetuate their power.

In a verse that addresses the consequence of women’s independence upon the institution of marriage, Haq further says:

*Hoyee munde de hath peele hone*  
*Ajj bhare maidaan ch*  
*Ajj breaking news chalegi*  
*Saare Pakistan ch*

The boy’s marriage is arranged  
Today in a crowded plain  
There will be a breaking news today  
All across Pakistan

The marriage of a girl is usually arranged/fixed by her parents in Pakistan, but in this song, it is the boy who is dependent on his family for the marriage. In contrast, Chamkeeli is a daredevil who

does not need her parents to fix her marriage. I argue that by silencing the internal worlds of women, men are given voices. As Leaper and Friedman (2007) have truthfully said, men not only impose their thoughts from their privileged position but also take the liberty of representing women. They try to rule not only women's bodies but their minds too, along with their actions (p. 583). I argue that Chamkeeli is portrayed as a dangerous woman who puts her family's honor in jeopardy. She has become the authority herself. Haq suggests that this is an unusual and unprecedented act that will be "breaking news" across the country.

In another verse, Haq displays the masculine fear that women might revolt against them by demolishing the patriarchal hierarchical patterns of Pakistani society:

*Dilli wale dhulhanian le gaye the*  
*Saddi cheeti balungda wyaan aayi ae*  
*Chamkeeli baraat lai ke aap aayi ae*  
*Saare shehar ch duhayi jehi duhayi paayi ae*

Delhi-ites had taken the bride away  
Our tigress has come to wed a kitten  
Chamkeeli has led her Baraat herself  
There is an outcry in the city

*Ho main punjaban jatti te mahiya nikka jeha*  
A Punjaban Jatti I am, small my lover is

The lyrics "*Dilli wale dulhanian le gaye the*" (Delhi-ites had taken the bride away) show that the old times are gone when women used to depart from their homes after marriage. Now, they have become "*cheeti*" (tigress), and men are reduced to the status of "*balungda*" (kitten) who need to be wedded. Becoming a helpless kitten is an extremely derogatory jolt for the patriarchal figures of Pakistan. But by depicting women as *cheeti*, Haq is not helping women to advance their emancipatory case; rather, he is creating hurdles by stoking masculine animosity towards them from men whose egos are injured. Similarly, Lindsey (2015) believes that patriarchal writers define and justify who and what they are, what they feel, what they do, and why they do that. From a privileged patriarchal position, they assume it is their right to portray women in whatever way they desire (Lindsey, 2015, p. 44). Moreover, Chamkeeli's position is consolidated when she is called "*a Punjaban Jatti*" which means a strong woman or a well-built robust woman belonging to the *Jhutt* caste in Pakistani society. Contrastingly, her groom is called "*nikka mahiya*" (small lover) which hints he is lacking either height, ability, performance, or mental capacity. Therefore, these lyrics further increase men's fear of losing their power, leading them to adopt defensive measures by suppressing Pakistani women.

Haq also discusses Pakistani folklore about marriage:

*Kaanwa da chamba tum bin adhoora*  
*Inko kabhi na bhulana*  
*Hasta rahe tu susraal mein bhi*  
*Gham ko gale na lagana*

The group of crows is incomplete without you

Never forget them  
May you stay happy in your in-laws' home  
Don't get worried

Haq refers to the beliefs embedded in Pakistani folklore in which a bride is typically compared to “*chiriyān da chamba*” (a group of sparrows) to make her feel that she will be missed in her absence at her parents' home once she has gone to her in-laws. The bride's relatives and family pray to God to keep her happy in her in-laws' home. But, in Haq's song, by saying “*Kaanwa da chamba*” (the group of crows) with apparent humor, the groom is told that his family wishes him to stay happy at his bride's home. Thus, the social and cultural male-dominant structure is turned upside-down. The reversal of the conventional marital structure provokes patriarchal anger and warns men to take action to limit women's liberty. Lastly, the singer says:

*Ho zehreeli badi harjayi*  
*Ho tu taan chaandi ae*  
*Ho ghar jawaai*  
*Oye vekho kaisa zamana*  
*Kaisi raat aayi ae*

Noxious, so coquettish!  
O You needed  
A House-husband  
O see! What time  
What night has befallen

In these concluding lines, Haq portrays Chamkeeli as a “*zehreeli*” (noxious) woman who is “*harjai*” (coquettish) and throws tantrums. These words hint at Chamkeeli's rebellious and poisonous actions. The words are prophesying the death of the patriarchal social structure in the hands of this noxious woman. Similarly, Sana Ali's (2018) research concludes that independent women are portrayed as evil, treacherous, and monstrous in television advertising (p. 7).

Moreover, the action of leading her Baraat herself is repeated throughout the song. Haq is successful in planting the idea of an uncontrollably independent, hysterically dominating, and madly authoritarian woman in the minds of Pakistani society. It inculcates massive fear in men. Hence, I suggest that in Haq's song, Chamkeeli is portrayed as a woman who wants to have a love marriage, something that is not culturally acceptable in Pakistan. Similarly, Ashfaq and Shafiq's study (2018) shows that in many Pakistani dramas, women adopt liberal positions. These dramas depict extremely bold, fearless, highly educated, ambitious, independent, and worldly-wise women (p. 51). Chamkeeli also is a woman who speaks her mind instead of taking advice from patriarchal figures in her home and does not take into consideration their authoritative position in her life. Similarly, Bhattacharya's work (2014) shows that, in cases of deviation from the classic roles of women, they are often maltreated, victimized, and silenced (p. 208). Women are often not given the opportunity to speak for and represent themselves. Chamkeeli, however, challenges masculine authority, and the roles are reversed as she makes her own decisions, but she is depicted as a menace to the honor and reputation of the family. Chamkeeli is portrayed as a threat to patriarchy.

## Pakistan and the Freedom of Women

In light of the above-mentioned analysis, it is likely that, though gender roles are changing, the position of women will still be stigmatized in Pakistan. In the 2009 short story “Nawabdin Electrician,” women are submissive, docile, suppressed, uncritical, and mindlessly silent, while in the 2019 song “Chamkeeli,” women are uncontrollable, hypersexual, dangerous, mad, violent, and domineering. In this case, Judith Butler’s theoretical concept of gender performativity does not bring about change in the practical position of women. According to her theory, in any society, gender roles are established with the recurrence and repetition of certain kinds of tasks and actions in relation to different sexes. The binary distinctions of men and women, female and male, superior and inferior are created by the attribution of these tasks to both sexes. Therefore, she implies that with a change in these roles, the concept of gender can also change. But, in my study, the texts under analysis reveal that despite a change in Pakistani women’s portrayal, their existence is still stigmatized. As is shown in both texts, the focalization is patriarchal and stigmatizes Pakistani women’s attitudes, actions, feelings, thoughts, desires, behaviors, and choices. As Mehmood’s study (2019) shows, in Pakistan, diverse ways are employed by the patriarchal figures of the society to mold women into the ideal of femininity (p. 109).

My study shows that these portrayals do not help Pakistani women and do not have emancipatory goals. Rather, I argue, Mueenuddin’s image of a docile and subjugated Pakistani woman and Abrar-ul-Haq’s depiction of a madly uncontrollable woman are equally regrettable in instigating Pakistan’s dominant patriarchal familial and social structure to suppress women in order to protect their privileged position. It is a no-win situation for women either way. My exploration of the narrative trajectories of these two texts reveals that gender performativity does not make any difference in Pakistani patriarchal society and gender roles and concepts continue to be instrumentalized to keep women oppressed.

## References

- Ali, S. (2018). Stereotyping in Consumer Culture: An Analysis of Representing Gender Stereotypical Roles of Women in Television Advertising in Pakistan. *International Journal of Media, Journalism and Mass Communications*, 4(3), 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2454-9479.0404001>
- Ali, R., & Batool, S. (2015). Stereotypical Identities Discourse Analysis of Media Images of Women in Pakistan. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 4(2), 690-717. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/generos.2015.1502>
- Althusser, L. (2010). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (notes towards an investigation). (1970). In I. Szeman & T. Kaposy (Eds.), *Cultural theory: an anthology* (pp. 204-222). Wiley Blackwell.
- Ashfaq, A., & Shafiq, Z. (2018). Contested Images of Perfect Women in Pakistani Television Dramas. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55(1), 45-63.
- Bhattacharya, S. (2014). Status of Women in Pakistan. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 3(2), 179-211.
- Butler, J. (2006). *Gender trouble*. Routledge. (Original work published 1990)
- Chamkeeli*. (2019). Directed by Asad Mumtaz. Sung, composed and written by Abrar-ul-Haq. Performed by Mehwish Hayat and Shahveer Jaffry. Abrar-ul-Haq Official, <https://youtu.be/PbBGDNB2aOA>
- De Beauvoir, S. (2011). *The second sex*. Vintage Books. (Original work published 1949)

- Hussain, M., Naz, A., Khan, W., Daraz, U., & Khan, Q. (2015). Gender Stereotyping in Family: An Institutionalized and Normative Mechanism in Pakhtun Society of Pakistan. *SAGE Open*, 5(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244015595258>
- Johnston, H. (1988). The development of the Punjabi community in Vancouver since 1961. *Canadian Ethnic Studies=Etudes Ethniques Au Canada*, 20(2), 1.
- Khokhlova, L. V. (2014). Majority language death. In H. C. Cardoso (ed.) *Language endangerment and preservation in South Asia* (pp. 19-45). University of Hawai'i Press.
- Leaper, C., & Friedman, C. K. (2007). In J. E. Grusec & P. D. Hastings (Eds.), *Handbook of Socialization: Theory and research* (pp. 561-587). Guilford Press.
- Lindsey, L. L. (2015). *Gender roles: A sociological perspective*. Routledge.
- Mehmood, S. (2019). Voicing The Silences: Women in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 18(1), 113-128.
- Mehra, J. (2019). Analyzing portrayals of modern women and popular culture in television soap operas of Pakistan. *Media Watch*, 10(3), 628-644.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). "Under Western Eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(2), 499-535.
- Mueenuddin, D. (2009). *In other rooms, other wonders*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Waheed, A. (2019). Say 'No' to Female Stereotyping: A Case Study of 'Bhag Amina Bhag.' *Electronic Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1, 8-20.