

**FORCED MARRIAGES AND FEMININE
SUBJECTIVITY: A STUDY OF SOUTH ASIAN
DIASPORIC NOVELS WITH FOCUS ON NADEEM
ASLAM AND MONICA ALI**



By

Supervisor

**Fazal Malik
141-FLL/MSENG/F09**

**Dr. Muhammad Safer Awan
Assistant Professor**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD**

2014





Accession No TH-12739

MS

K

511

823.3543

FAF

- English fiction
- Feminism

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents who have sacrificed their basic amenities of life for imparting me education, and have prayed for me every minute of their lives. I also dedicate it to my wife and my sweet sons, Saad Bin Malik and Talha Bin Malik, whose love has inspired me and kindled the zest of hard work in my heart every single moment of my life. I wish all my family members long and happy lives. Amin.

Acceptance by the *Viva Voce* Committee

Title of the thesis: **Forced Marriages and Feminine Subjectivity: A Study of South Asian Diasporic Novels with Focus on Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali.**

Name of Student: Fazal Malik

Registration No: 141-FLL/MSENG/F09

Accepted by the department of English, Faculty of Languages & Literature, International Islamic University, Islamabad, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Philosophy degree in English.

Viva Voce Committee



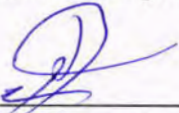
External Examiner

Dr. Shaheena Ayub Bhatti
Associate Professor/Head,
Department of Research &
Publication Cell, NUML,
Islamabad.



Internal Examiner

Dr. Ahsan ur Rehman
Associate Professor
Department of English, IIUI



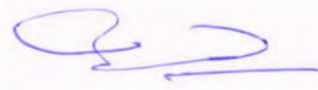
Supervisor

Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan
Assistant Professor
Department of English, IIUI



Dr. Munawar Iqbal Ahmad

Acting Dean
Faculty of Languages & Literature



Dr. Munawar Iqbal Ahmad

Chairman
Department of English, FLL

14 February, 2014

ABSTRACT

Title: Forced Marriages and Feminine Subjectivity: A Study of South Asian Diasporic Novels with Focus on Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali

This study is qualitative in nature and attempts to analyse the issues of forced marriages and feminine subjectivity in Muslim BrAsian community. Since the feminine subjectivities of Muslim BrAsian community are formed at the center of cultural conflict between the host and the diasporic communities, an attempt has also been made to analyse the issues of cultural alienation and assimilation of Muslim BrAsian community vis-a-vis the host community of the UK. This thesis attempts to highlight the responses of the two creative writers Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali towards these issues. Both the writers belong to Muslim BrAsian community themselves. The works selected for the study are *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam and *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali. Through character analysis, I have made an attempt to lay bare the subjectivities of various characters of the selected works, and to analyse their respective responses towards feminine subjectivity, forced and arranged marriages, and cultural alienation and assimilation. Much has been said and written by the Western intelligentsia, feminists and print and electronic media about the phenomenon of forced marriage in Muslim BrAsian community. The dominant crux of their argument is that religion Islam is responsible for the plight of Muslim women in BrAsian community. An attempt has also been made in the thesis to present the true injunctions of Islam about forced marriages, so that to correct the jaundiced Western stance about Islam regarding the position of women, and the issues of forced marriages.

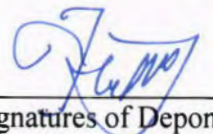
DECLARATION

I, Fazal Malik, son of Abdullah Shah, Registration # 141-FLL/MSENG/ F09, student of MS, in the discipline of English Literature, do hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis “Forced Marriages and Feminine Subjectivity: A Study of South Asian Diasporic Novels with focus on Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali” submitted by me in partial fulfilment of MS degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

This work was carried out and completed at International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.

Dated: May 30, 2012



Signatures of Deponent
FAZAL MALIK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Allah Almighty, who granted me the power and courage to accomplish this thesis.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan for his continuous help and guidance without which completing this research work for MS degree program would not have been possible.

Moreover, I want to offer my sincere thanks to my family who spared me time and provided me verbal and emotional encouragement for completing this thesis.

I would also like to thank Mr. Muhammad Afzal, who helped me in finding material relevant to my study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Dedication	ii
Final Approval	iii
Abstract	iv
Declaration	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Table of Contents	vii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Thesis Statement	5
1.2 Research Questions	5
1.3 Research Methodology	6
1.4 Chapter Division	7
1.5 Significance/rationale of the Study	7
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	12
3. THE ISSUES OF FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY, FORCED AND ARRANGED MARRIAGES AND CULTURAL CLASH IN <i>MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS</i>	42
4. The ISSUES OF CULTURAL ALIENATION, FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY, AND FORCED AND ARRANGED MARRIAGE IN <i>BRICK LANE:</i>	62
CONCLUSION	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	96

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Key terms: diaspora, BrAsian community, forced marriage, feminine subjectivity, feminine objectification, cultural clash, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, *Brick Lane*

The phenomenon of colonialism has brought about many changes in the demography of the world. During colonialism, it was the white colonizers who moved from the West towards parts of the East where they formed colonies. Colonialism deepened the economic imbalance between the Western and the Eastern parts of the world. Resultantly, now in the present era many people from the East move towards the West in the hope of better life. Bennet as cited in Hesse & Sayyid (2006) has referred to this process as “Colonisation in reverse” (p. 20). Not that the shift of population from the East to the West didn’t occur in colonial era, but it occurred on a small scale. This phenomenon of the shift of population from the East to the West has given birth to diasporas in the West. Ashcroft, Griffith, & Tiffin (2004) assert:

The notion of ‘diaspora’ does not seem at first to be the province of post-colonial studies until we examine the deep impact of colonialism upon this phenomenon. The most extreme consequences of imperial dominance can be seen in the radical displacement of peoples through slavery, indenture and settlement. More recently the ‘dispersal’ of significant numbers of people can be seen to be a consequence of the disparity in wealth between the West and the world, extended by the economic imperatives of imperialism and rapidly opening a gap between colonizers and colonized (p.217).

One such diaspora in the West is the south Asian diaspora of the UK which makes an interesting case for study due to its large size, and its active interaction with the host British community. Highlighting the significance of the diasporic experiences in Britain, Brown (2006) comments:

The British case does also have particular significance because through it we can see the emergence of very varied diasporic strands in one country of destination, and track generational change over a lengthy period of settlement. The British experience is also one where south Asian population is very significant in size and proportion of the total population, particularly in certain urban areas and this offers evidence about interactions of significant minorities with the host societies and political structure (p. 7).

The writer further says that these diasporic communities have also brought traces of their own cultural values along with them (p. 87), thus making the locus of diasporas as the site of cultural clash between the diasporic and the host communities. While paraphrasing Appadurai, Giri (2005) asserts:

While it is true that the brave new world of transcultural flows has allowed new forms of community to emerge, these new forms are characterized more by “disjuncture and difference” than by any harmonious sense of acceptance and belonging, thus intensifying the process of conflict and victimization (p. 217).

One such diasporic community in the UK is Muslim diaspora with its own cultural values and traditions, where the issues of forced marriages, feminine objectification, feminine subjectivity¹, and cultural clash and alienation are reported to have cropped up. In his paper on forced marriages in the South Asian diaspora of the UK, An-Na'im (2000) points out, “Conservative estimates suggest that 1,000 women in the UK are annually subjected to forced marriage, either within the UK or during a visit to India, Bangladesh, or Pakistan under the guise of a vacation or visiting a sick relative” (p. 2).

The official policy of the UK is the policy of multiculturalism, where various cultures are supposed to coexist. Pointing to the Multicultural policy of the UK, Phillips (2007) says:

In a much cited speech from 1966, Home Secretary Roy Jenkins had rejected the melting pot ideal that 'turns everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman,' and defined integration 'not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, coupled with cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance (p. 4).

However, Bhaba (1990) finds fault in the policy of multiculturalism and says that if, on the one hand, it encourages cultural diversity, on the other hand, it discourages cultural difference. He says that despite multiculturalism in the UK, racism is widespread (p. 208). He says that the host culture contains the migrant cultures as, "a transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says, 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'" (p. 208).

Feminine subjectivity and forced marriages are the issues which are hotly debated in media and other public forums with reference to BrAsian² community, especially the Muslim diasporic community of the UK. Research indicates that the issue of forced marriages is not confined only to Muslim societies, but is also prevalent in other Eastern or Western societies in one shape or another. In the words of Hester and et all (2008) "While forced marriage is often considered as primarily affecting South Asian communities, the research indicated that it was an issue in a wide range of religious and other communities outside the South Asian Diaspora" (p. 3).

The presence of these issues in BrAsian community makes an interesting case, as it is the locus where the two cultures of the East and the West meet upfront. In the words of Sayyid (2006) “BrAsian occupies an intermediate terrain on the cusp between West and Non-West” (p. 7). In the diasporic context, these issues have gained heightened significance. A number of novels written by British writers of Asian origin portray these issues. The present study attempts to examine the responses of such two creative writers, Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali, to the cultural issues of “forced marriages”, “feminine subjectivity”, “feminine objectification”, “feminine agency” “cultural gap”, and “alienation” in Muslim BrAsian community, as in the words of Brown (2006) “Literature is yet another way of listening to the experiences of migrant South Asians” (p. 5). The present study is limited to two diasporic works of modern era, *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam, and *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali. Nadeem Aslam is a Muslim novelist of Pakistani origin, while Monica Ali is a Muslim novelist of Bangladeshi origin. The issues of “forced marriages”, “feminine subjectivity”, “feminine agency”, “cultural gulf” and “cultural alienation” have been discussed with reference to the Muslim of the UK vis-à-vis the British community.

1. *MAPS for LOST LOVERS*

It is a story of the Pakistani immigrant community residing in an unnamed suburb of northern England. The murder of two lost lovers Chanda and Jugnu looms over the whole story. The incident induces various reactions in different characters, thus bringing forth their respective philosophies about life in a diaspora. The story is replete with the incidents of “forced marriages”,

“cultural clash”, “feminine objectification”, “feminine subjectivity”, and “feminine agency”.

2. BRICK LANE

It is a story of an arranged marriage of a Bangladeshi girl Nazneen, who leaves Bangladesh for London, and submits herself to her fate and to the service of her husband and children. The experience of migration of Nazneen is the ground upon which the whole narrative unfolds, thus placing the text into the conventional genre of exile literature. After much suffering and subjectification, she reasserts her agency, takes control of her life, and chalks out the map of her own life. It is an impressive story of an immigrant girl Nazneen, who undergoes metamorphosis from a shy and submissive girl into a strong and dignified woman. The story also resonates with the themes of cultural conflict and cultural alienation.

THESIS STATEMENT

In BrAsian and Muslim diasporic context, the issues of forced marriages and feminine subjectivity have gained increasing significance, forcing a number of writers to address these issues in their creative responses.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What factors do lead to forced marriages in diasporic communities?
2. To what extent does cultural clash/alienation of BrAsian community contribute to the increasing phenomenon of forced marriages?
3. What are the responses of Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali towards the issues of forced marriages in BrAsian community?

4. What kind of gap exists between the actual injunctions of Islam regarding marriages and Islam as practiced by diasporic communities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary data of the study consists of the works *Maps for Lost Lovers* and *Brick Lane*. A theoretical framework has been developed from readings in diasporic studies and feministic literature. The framework has been used to foreground the issues aforementioned, and has been applied to the character analysis in the selected texts. The theoretical concepts of diasporic studies have been applied to the discussion of identity crisis, cultural alienation, cultural conflict and the possibility of cultural assimilation. The women issues of feminine subjectivity, feminine agency, forced and arranged marriages have been discussed within the feminist theoretical framework. The issues of forced marriages in the Muslim societies have been discussed within the framework of Muslim marriage laws in order to find out how much does the phenomena of forced marriages fall inside or outside the ambit of true Islamic injunctions, and whether Islam as a religion condones or condemns forced marriage.

The present study is exploratory, descriptive and analytical in nature. The locus of the present study is Muslim BrAsian Community. The methodology applied is manifest content analysis. The method used in the present study is thematic, in which the character analysis is carried out in the selected works for the themes and motifs relating to the issues of cultural alienation, cultural conflict, feminine subjectivity, feminine agency, objectification, and forced and arranged marriages. The concepts of cultural alienation, feminine

objectification and feminine subjectivity occupy central position in the discussion.

CHAPTER DIVISION

The present study consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Chapter 3: The Issues of Feminine Subjectivity, Forced/Arranged Marriages/ and Cultural Clash in *Maps for Lost Lovers*

Chapter 4: The Issues of Forced/Arranged Marriages, Cultural Alienation and Feminine Subjectivity in *Brick Lane*

Conclusion

SIGNIFICANCE/ RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The present study is an attempt to touch upon very current postcolonial issues of “forced marriages”, “feminine subjectivity”, “feminine agency”, “feminine objectification”, “cultural alienation”, and “cultural assimilation”. The issues and the works selected have wide significance, both local and international, which lends the present study temporal and spatial relevance. The women of the Eastern societies in general and the Muslim societies in particular are largely considered to be suppressed and subjugated, but the case of the women in Muslim diaspora of the UK is different in nature. Not only they, in most cases, face suppression, but the fact which makes their suppression doubly

bitter is that they are living at the very center of the “New Woman” (Pandey, 2003, p. 132) of the West who has shaken off the irrational order of patriarchy. Reportedly, women of the Muslim diaspora are not only forced into patriarchal values, but are also forced into a changed culture, from abroad into home or from home into abroad, which makes their ordeal worse, and their predicament needs separate focus and attention, which is the purpose of the present study.

Often time Muslim culture is dubbed as the culture of women subjugation, where women without any exception are at the mercy of culture and religion, both interpreted by male dominated patriarchal system. Maumoon (1999) points to this jaundiced approach of the West towards Muslim women in the following words:

A homogenous notion of the oppression of women as a group is assumed in many Western feminist writings that seek to produce the image of an ‘average Muslim woman’. This average Muslim woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender and is therefore sexually constrained, ignorant, poor, tradition-bound, religious and domesticated (p. 280).

The present study aims at correcting such faulty approach, and attempts to highlight the diversity of lived experiences of Muslim women in diasporic context thus giving voice to the so far unheard voices.

There exists a tendency in the intelligentsia of the West and the East alike to confuse cultural and social issues with religion. What is purely cultural and social in nature is considered as religious. Mandair (2006) remarks, “South Asian settlers are intimately bound up with the *religious* (italics in original) history of colonization which includes the translation of indigenous categories

and traditions under the rubric of ‘religion.’” (p. 5). While highlighting the suppression of women in the Eastern societies, they take into account only the religious factor and don’t consider the social, cultural and political values of those societies, which are the root causes of the low position of women in those societies. Qutb (1998) states, “The fact is that the miserable plight of the Eastern woman is the result of the economical, social, political and psychological conditions in the East today” (p. 124). The misunderstanding not only lies with the outside observers, but also with the very people of the diaspora, who are the central characters of the drama. In the case of the Muslim diaspora of the UK, the practice of forced marriages and female subjugation is carried out in the name of Islam, while in reality they are either cultural in practice or crop up due to the misunderstanding of the true Islamic precepts. The present study focuses on this aspect also, and attempts to set the related issues in their proper perspectives. The importance of the present study is that it focuses on the women of the “third space” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211) who are still not only the victims of South Asian patriarchal system, but that South Asian patriarchal mode of thinking is cloaked in, and sharpened by religious fervour- the area of study mostly ignored. The present study is not only thought provoking for the local readers but it is helpful for the Western readers in gaining insight into the actual precepts of Islam about the issue of forced marriage.

Notes:

1. Subjectivity and agency of the individual are much debated terms in the critical fields. Writers have pointed out various factors influencing and moulding subjectivity. "Subjectivity is constructed by ideology (Althusser), language (Lacan) or discourse (Foucault), the corollary is that any action performed by that subject must also be to some extent a consequence of those things" (Ashcroft, Griffith, Tiffin, 2001, p. 8). Thus the concept of "Cartesian individualism" of an autonomous self was disrupted by Marxist, psychoanalysts, and post-structuralists. The individual's self was regarded not as a "center" but as a "site" where different dominant discourses competed with one another and produced the subjectivity of the individual. The question arises if the subjectivity of the individual is formed by external hegemonic discourses, is it possible then for the individual to subvert these hegemonic discourses and attain his or her agency and autonomous self where he or she can exercise a free choice. In this regard, Ashcroft, Griffith, Tiffin (2001) remark:

However, many theories in which the importance of political action is paramount take agency for granted. They suggest that although it may be difficult for subjects to escape the effects of those forces that 'construct' them, it is not impossible. The very fact that such forces may be recognized suggests that they may also be countermanded (p. 8-9).

The formation of subjectivity is one of the many aspects which bring colonials and diasporic condition close together.

2. According to the Urban Dictionary the term "BrAsian" is used for British Asians, particularly when describing music which is a fusion of

British & Asian styles. (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/>). Currently, this term 'BrAsian' is used to "designate members of settler communities which articulate a significant part of their identity in term of South Asian heritage." (Sayyid, 2006, p. 5). In the present study I have used the categories of 'Muslim BrAsian community', 'Pakistani BrAsian community' and 'Bangladeshi BrAsian community' in order to differentiate those people belonging to these categories from those who do not belong to them.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter of my study, I have reviewed some book length works, articles, essays, and reviews written on the works selected for my present study. I have arranged this section of my study thematically. My review of literature touches upon the themes of ‘the issues of the formation of diasporas, diasporic identity, the sites of conflicts within BrAsian community, the points of conflict between BrAsian community and the host British community, cultural clash, patriarchy, feminine subjectivity, the subjectivity of Muslim women in the British diaspora, and the concept of feminism in Islam. The review of the aforementioned themes form the backdrop against which I have explored the issues of feminine subjectivity of Muslim women, forced and arranged marriages, feminine agency and cultural clash in BrAsian community. The review of literature also points to the gaps in the current literature on the issues aforementioned, which I have tried to fill in my present study.

Defining diaspora, Brown (2006) in his book *Global South Asian: Introducing the Modern Diaspora* asserts:

The word came into English usage in the late nineteenth century, as a borrowing from a Greek word ...which meant to ‘disperse’ or literally to ‘sow over’, and was used to describe the scattered Greek communities of the ancient Mediterranean world. This was originally a neutral word merely indicating geographical dispersion, but in English it soon took on sinister and catastrophic overtones of forced expulsion of an ethnic and religious minority from its homeland, of persecution and exile. The Jews were the classic example. But in the later twentieth century, as scholars became interested both in older and newer forms of forced and free migration, the word acquired a far looser meaning, describing almost any group of migrants permanently settled outside their place of origin (p. 3).

Of all the diasporas of the world, the South Asian diaspora of the UK is well known, and has been the subject of much study due to its large size and its impact on the host society (Brown, 2006, p. 7). With the end of colonialism the process of mass migration reversed, so that the movement of mass migration started towards the locus of colonial powers rather than vice versa. This process of mass migration from the former colonized nations towards the former colonizer states gave birth to diasporas.

Brown (2006) has focused his work *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora* on "the overseas migratory experience of the people of South Asia" (p. 1). He portrays various patterns of South Asian overseas migration, the causes of these migrations, the multiple experiences of the migrants in terms of their relating to the various host communities, the influence of religio-socio-economic factors on their experiences of relating to the host communities, various patterns of theirs relating to their old homes, and the impact which these migrations have put on the host communities as well as their home communities. The writer says that compelled by political and economic factors, the overseas migration from South Asia towards the West started during the colonial era with miserable indented contract, and has continued through the postcolonial period. Migration under the Indentured Contract was forced and miserable, while migration in postcolonial era has been more voluntary with comparatively better experience in the host communities. The writer points out that migration from South Asia has either been direct to the West or through other colonized countries. He further states:

for most of the first generation migrants there remained a powerful "myth of return", a vision of South Asia as the place to which one would eventually return ...only gradually did this assumption about a final return give way among first generation migrants to a gradual acceptance of permanent migration, of learning to be at home abroad. This change of perspective grew with the birth of a new generation in the diaspora (p. 59).

This opinion is shared by Brah (2006), who also maintains that the early South Asian migrants had the notion of temporary stay in Britain, while a change occurred in the outlook of the South Asian immigrants as the time passed. He remarks:

By the early 1970's Asians from the subcontinent too had come to accept that their stay in this country was unlikely to be temporary. Once a family had been reunited and financial investment made in a house or a business, the 'myth of return' would become largely accepted as such, and attention was directed much more towards life in Britain (p. 48).

Resultantly, BrAsian community is now the permanent part and feature of the UK, where the instances of cultural conflict are found between the host British community and its diasporic BrAsian community, the members of which belong to the former colonies of the UK. While quoting Dutt and et al, Brah (2006) says, "Discussions about culture must be understood within the context of the power relations among different groups. Accordingly, analyses of South Asian culture formations in Britain must be informed by an understanding of the colonial history." (p. 35).

The theme of identity is central to postcolonial and diasporic literature. The identity of the diasporic subject has been the topic of much interest for many writers. Radhakrishnan (1993) says that the concept of nation-state was imposed on the heterogeneous peoples of colonized areas by the colonizers,

and so, heterogeneity or even hybridity is the very part and parcel of postcolonial experience. This hybrid identity has different signification in the lived experiences of different people. The writer differentiates between the metropolitan and postcolonial versions of hybridity in the following words:

The crucial difference that one discerns between metropolitan versions of hybridity and "postcolonial" versions is that, whereas the former are characterized by an intransitive and immanent sense of *jouissance*, the latter are expressions of extreme pain and agonizing dislocations (Radhakrishnan, 1993, p. 753).

Highlighting hybridity in the diasporic identity, Ringrose (2007) opines that diasporic identity cannot be summed up under single idea. The lived experiences of the diasporic people have divergent trends. In her essay "Beur' Narratives of Self-Identity: Beyond Boundaries and Binaries", she examines the aspect of "glocality" in identity formation of characters in the works of the Maghribi immigrant writers of France. Based on her study, the writer opines that the diasporic individuals construct their identities mostly by falling into the bi-polar division of "us" and "them", while some individuals transcend the bipolar aspects of either local and global into the amalgam of both i.e. "glocal", still some individuals, faced with multifarious options, embrace more enclosing form of religion. In the case of the French born immigrants, the options of "lifestyles sectors" are many to choose from. The writer also discusses the gender conflict which arises in the younger generation, who while forming their identities draws from many options available to them.

The peculiar traits of diasporic experience can be found not only in the lived experiences of the diasporic individuals, but also in the literature written by

diasporic writers which catch the attention of the scholars working on the diasporic literature. Having a different locus, having been in a different environment, and faced with different kind of challenges, the writing style of the diasporic writers and the content which they focus on is different from the writers who are situated within the boundaries of their homelands. Lau (2005) says, "The literature of diasporic writers differs in style and content from the works of those writing from within South Asia" (P. 237). While talking about the South Asian diasporic writers Lau (2005) says:

They are people who are as multi-cultural as they are multi-lingual. They do not regard themselves as fully belonging in either culture. They try to take the best from both worlds, but suffer the sense of hybridity and cultural entanglement (p. 241).

Balkan, as cited in Lau (2005), sums up this condition of the diasporic writers in the words, "Transplanted, the individual is transformed; the "I" is no longer a speaking subject with a clear history and a distinct voice but rather becomes a composite product of historical antimonies and contradictory impulses" (p. 241).

One of the traits of the diasporic writers is that they have an urge to look back to their original homes. Rushdie in this regard says:

...exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge-which gives rise to profound uncertainties-that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind"... this skewed perspective... is in fact the inevitable consequence of diasporic life because 'it may be that when the Indian writer who writes from outside India tries to reflect that world, he is

obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost (Lau, 2005, p. 242).

Kral (2007) analyses the impact of the new world geography on the psyche of the immigrants with reference to the *Brick Lane* and *The Namesake*. Kral opines that the emergence of the virtual communities in the 21st century has eroded the commitment of the immigrants to the local space. With modern technologies, they keep contact with their mother homelands which hampers their potential for re-rootedness in the host community. The writer also searches the issues of belongingness, in-betweenness, and recreations of alternative identity by the characters of the two works. The writer is of the view that the impression of being virtually everywhere fostered by the process of globalization has induced a sense of ethical and political shortsightedness and non-commitment to their immediate locality in the immigrants, whereby they are prone to cherish fantasized rather than real pictures of the geographies. Women of both the works being more rooted to the local can adjust better than the men who act and think globally. The writer's opinion seem one sided. The writer puts the onus of assimilation on the shoulders of the immigrants alone, and ignores the inherent racism in the host culture which may prove an obstacle in the assimilation of the immigrants in the host culture. Similarly, the potential of adjustment or otherwise of the migrants cannot be ascribed only to the use or non-use of modern gadgets of communications.

Lau (2005) further remarks that diasporic writers not only reflect the life of diasporic community but they also create some ideas and give these ideas currency and legitimacy through circulation (pp. 242-243). One of the

tendencies which are found in the writers of the diaspora is that they generalize or “totalize” the values of some specific group and circulate them as the values of the whole community. Lau says that the identity and mentality of the diasporic community is strongly affected by the factors of ‘tantalization, ‘deterioralization, ‘and dislocation’. The lived experiences of diasporic women thus involve painful difficulty in ‘mediating discrepant worlds’. Lau further says that the identities of diasporic women are formed in response to their home culture either by conforming to it or revolting against it.

The tendency in the diasporic writers to totalize and generalize leads often times to the construction of stereotypes in their works. That is the reason that *Maps for Lost Lovers* and *Brick Lane* have been the focus of much attention with reference to cultural stereotypes. While Reviewing *Maps for Lost Lovers* Weingarten (2011) in her article “Traditional Claustrophobia — Intersections of Gender and Religious Identities in Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers*” asserts that *Maps for Lost Lovers* can be put to various readings. The writer says that the work can be taken as a critique of colonial process, and its essentialized stereotyping of the ‘Other’; it can be read as corroborating the stereotypical image of the claustrophobic diasporic communities; and can also be read from the perspective of subverting the long held patriarchal notion of “immigrant victim women”. Weingarten supports each of the perspective with plausible arguments and explores the rich potentials which the works carries.

Similarly, Perfect (2008) in his article “The Multicultural Bildungsroman: Stereotypes in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” discusses the various readings, to

which *Brick Lane* has been subjected vis-à-vis the representation of stereotypes. The writer says that there are two critical groups, one claiming that *Brick Lane* propagates cultural stereotypes, while the other critical group claims that *Brick Lane* destabilizes stereotypes with knowing irony. The writer says that *Brick Lane* is a realist work of art. The writer stresses that the right perspective to the text is to recognize that Monica Ali has used the stereotypes like that of Hasina as counterpoints only to highlight the integration and empowerment of characters like Nazneen, the preference of Ali being more to celebrate multiculturalism rather than to destabilize cultural stereotypes. The writer ignores that the work of art is a public property and the readers can interpret it any way they like. Similarly, the writer also ignores the fact that the manifest stereotypes constructed in the text may ring too loud in the minds of the common public to allow them to delve deeper into the implied meanings of the text.

Hiddleston (2005) approaches *Brick Lane* from a different standpoint. The writer states that *Brick Lane* should not be taken as piece of realist literature, but should be read from a postmodern stance, whereby the work points to its own artifice, its own constructedness. The writer terms *Brick Lane* as a linguistic experiment in which Monica Ali uses rhetoric of juxtaposing various discourses which are popularly formed and constructed. By representing the Bangladeshi immigrants in stereotypes, she in fact points to the formation and artificiality of such stereotypes and in this lies her satire on cultural clash. However, Hiddleston's reading of *Brick Lane* is elitist reading of the text, and

cannot dilute the reverberation of stereotypes created in the minds of common readers.

Cultural clash between the host community of the UK and BrAsian community has been the focus of much attention from media and academic and political discussions. The topic of cultural and civilizational conflict became every man's subject with the emergence of *Clash of Civilization* by Samuel P. Huntington on political horizon. Huntington is of the view that the fault lines of the present day world lie through the boundaries of civilizations and not through conflicting political and economic ideologies as was the case in the cold war era. Although, he admits that different civilizations have mutual influences upon one another, but he rejects the idea of a worldwide single civilization in the future. He foresees a severe and unflinching clash between Christian and Muslim civilizations, whose symptoms he foresees in the Muslim diasporas of Europe and America. He claims that the future alliances will be made on the basis of the same cultural values, where religion will be the main determinant of culture. He also talks of the resurgence of Islamic identity in the Muslim communities which makes the peaceful coexistence with the people of other civilizations very difficult.

Brown (2006) takes up the issue of cultural conflict and says that two variables affect the adaptability of the migrant ethnic group into the host community, the first being whether the host community is culturally homogeneous or heterogeneous, and the second being whether the migration is into a free nation or formerly colonized nation (pp. 113-114). He concludes

that the instances of cultural clashes are more evident where the migration has been in the culturally homogeneous countries like the UK and the formerly colonized countries like the East African countries. He further opines that the sense of exclusion from the British identity is more acutely felt by the younger British born generation as they are 'caught between two cultures' (p. 92) and have no home to refer to (p. 123). Brah (2006) finds the theory that BrAsian youth are 'caught between two cultures' as problematic on many grounds (p. 53). He points out that admitting this theory of 'caught between two cultures' would mean as if there are two pure cultures, which BrAsian youth are to deal with. He also says that cultural encounter doesn't necessarily mean cultural clash. Both cultures influence each other in multifarious ways and the identity conflict cannot be traced back only to cultural determinant. In the words of Brah, "The question of 'identity conflict' is a very complex one which cannot be reduced to any single determinant. Racism, gender, the specific trajectory of an individual biography are, for instance, no less relevant to understanding processes of identity formation" (pp. 53-54).

Brown (2006) further points out that one of the important features of South Asian diaspora is that they have "settled near kin and others from their region of origins... this preference has generated ethnic areas or enclaves" (p. 78). This "close clustering of people with similar lifestyles and expectations sustains particular ethnic consumption pattern, reconstructing a sense of home in the daily life" (p. 80). The writer says that this clustering together of kith and kin can sometimes be supportive, but also "claustrophobic, over watchful and for some deeply controlling" (p. 81) at other times. The writer

also points to the effect of home culture and religion on the marriage alliances of the diasporic people (p. 83). Marriage is used as a tool for forming social networks (p. 85), and the trend of intra-ethnic and intra-religious marriages has created stark boundaries not only among various minority ethnic groups, but also with the host community, and this very trend is one of the major causes of cultural gap (p. 84). The writer specifically points to the Muslim community of the UK diaspora that they have the prevalent trend of cousin marriages, cousins not only residing in the UK, but also with cousins imported from Pakistan (p. 86).

The representation of cultural gap is one of the major themes on the basis of which the diasporic works are explored. Peters (2005) in his review of *Maps for Lost Lovers* "Wages of living in sin are dire for Pakistani émigrés" takes the text as a realist piece of art and points out that the narrative portrays the psychic loss and the sense of dislocation of the Muslim immigrants of the UK. He further remarks that the clash between Islamic fundamentalism and Western secularism makes the larger theme. Similarly, Robson (2004) in his review "The Deadly Honour" relates *Maps for Lost Lovers* to *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali, whereby, both the texts portray cultural gap between BrAsian community and the host British community. The writer also says that *Maps for Lost Lovers* is a critique on Islam as a religion and exposes the patriarchal tilt of Islam which treats women as inferior to men. Here the writer falls prey to the image of Islam as presented in media, and as observed by the conservative Muslims, who do not know the real spirit of Islam. Similarly, Shamsie (2004) in her review "All you need is love" takes the text as a realist piece of art, and hints to the issues of racism, religious obscurantism,

generation gap, cultural clash, forced and arranged marriages, and women's objectification in *Maps for Lost Lovers*, the themes which the present study aims to explore in detail. On the other hand, Waterman (2010) in his review reads *Maps for Lost Lovers* as an 'artistic enquiry' of Nadeem Aslam, to bust the fixed and stable notion of identity as employed by conservative Muslim BrAsian community. He further remarks that the writer investigates through the novel the reasons which lead to cultural and generational rifts in the diasporic condition, and the possible alternatives available to the younger generation to navigate the flux and modernity.

Hesse and Sayyid (2006) find fault with the dichotomy of host/immigrant community, as narrated by Brown (2006), and remark, "These host-community/immigrant-community accounts provide an overwhelmingly inadequate way of narrating the migratory and settlement experiences of ethnically marked postcolonial subjects across Britain" (p.21). They further say that such accounts serve to:

Sustain the fictions in British public culture of a termination between the imperial past and nationalist present, as well as of a structural and political separation between a racially unmarked indigenous British society and racially marked migrants who become carriers of cultures for British consumption or proscription (2006, p. 21).

The host community of the UK has adopted various policies on governmental and political levels from time to time to deal with the issues of its diasporas and immigrants. Brah (2006) mentions two such models i.e. assimilation and integration (pp. 37-39). He says that the assimilationists assumed the outsiders to be aliens having strange cultures, which with time will shun their archaic ways of lives and will adapt to more British way of life. He says that after

meeting with less success, the assimilation model was abandoned in favour of integration model, which talked of cultural diversity and equal opportunities. According to the writer the integration model also was based on wrong assumption and didn't take into account the socio-economic and political factors which were responsible for inequality among different communities and which gave rise to mutual mistrust (pp. 38-40).

Touching upon the issue of cultural conflict and cultural alienation, Phillips (2007) rejects the previous approaches adopted for the creation of cultural harmony in the UK, and suggests a new approach to culture. He discusses the concept of culture in the diasporic context from a variety of perspectives i.e. political, anthropological, and legal. He conducts an in-depth analysis of the major concerns of diasporic communities in multicultural societies. He opines that the root cause of most of the evils of a multicultural society is the wrong approach to the understanding of the term culture. Mostly applied to non-Western minorities, the term culture is taken as something bounded, reified, and determinant of behavior, whereby the individuals are the puppets in the hands of culture, and whatever they do or think can be explained in terms of their culture. Thus, agency and autonomy are denied to the individuals of non-Western minority cultures. The writer says that such approach to culture alienates various cultures in the diasporic communities, and blocks the way for a harmonious relationship among different cultures. The writer points to contradictions in the arguments for and against multiculturalism, and gives the solution in the shape of multiculturalism without culture, where culture is taken as something that can influence, but does not determine the behaviour of the individuals. He also stresses the need to strengthen individuals rather than

groups, and to keep the options of exit, voice and dialogue open for the individuals of any culture, thus minimizing the oppressive modes of cultures.

The arguments analyzed and the practical steps forwarded by Phillips (2007) carry much weight. He not only proposes different remedies for diluting the force of culture, but is also cognizant of the various hiccups which may prove cumbersome in the implementation of those strategies. His arguments are well balanced and can help a long way in busting the stereotyping tendency of the Western intelligentsia with respect to the members of minority cultures.

The present study attempts to explore the responses of the diasporic fiction writers towards the cultural conflict between the host community of the UK and Muslim BrAsian community. , and thus adds another dimension to the theories about cultural conflict between the host and immigrant communities.

Brown (2006) points to another form of stress in the diasporic families, the stress that erupts at the fault lines of gender and generation related issues in the South Asian diaspora. He remarks that the new British born generation is more liberal and assimilative, while the older generation has more conservative patriarchal attitudes. He says that the reason why such gender and generation related issues occur more in the diasporic population is that their youth are caught between "two cultures" (p. 92). He further says that the female gets the worse treatment and is more tightly controlled, and sometimes killed in the name of honour, due to the conservative perception of close connection between gender and family honour (p. 92). Ethnic enclaves bring with them strong sense of honour and esteem, and the diasporic individuals are much concerned about their honour and repute not only in their immediate

neighborhood, but also back in Pakistan, and any news about them reaches to their homeland in no time (p. 87). Women are considered as "the repository of family honour" and any kind of change in their outlook is deemed "as dangerous to patriarchal society" (p. 88). The attitudes of the migrant groups have been largely influenced by the timing and nature of their migration. Later migrants from their urban home areas show more flexible and positive attitudes (p. 88). Brown (2006) while juxtaposing the practice of arranged marriages in BrAsian community with that of forced marriages, presents it as another symptom of generation gap in BrAsian community, and says that the practice of arranged and forced marriages involving both physical and emotional pressure got prevalence in the South Asian diaspora at a time when the second generation stepped into puberty (p. 135).

However, Brah (2006) does not agree with this assessment (p. 54). He calls the debate on inter-generational conflict in BrAsian community as another variance of the theme of cultural clash, where "uncertainties of lifecycle transitions are explained primarily by attributing them to the effects of 'inter-generational' conflict" (p. 54). He asserts, "Inter-generational differences should not be conflated with conflict" (p. 54). He further says that the field study shows that the majority of the South Asian parents are sympathetic towards the problems of their youth, and the instances of generational conflict within BrAsian community are not more than that of other communities, including the white host community (p. 54). He mentions the constructions of Asian youth as a site of cultural clash by the British media, schools, professionals and politicians (p. 54), who at one point were considered as

more assimilative and Westernized than their predecessors, but now as “more of a threat” after the 9/11 attacks (p. 59).

One generalized or totalizing idea in the West about the Eastern cultures is that of the prevalence of patriarchy in the Eastern societies. Beechey (1979) in her article “On Patriarchy” analyses the term patriarchy and throws fruitful light on the concept of patriarchy from the standpoint of various branches of feminism i.e. radical feminism, revolutionary feminism and Marxist feminism. The writer evaluates Kate Millet’s concept about patriarchy from the point of view of radical feminism and concludes that Millet, while rejecting the biological determinism, only asserts the male domination and its various manifestations in patriarchal order, but does not point out the real causes of the formation of dominant-subordinate positions in the patriarchal societies. The revolutionary feminists explain gender differences in terms of biological differences, and distinguish between the economic class system based on the relations of production, and the sex class system based on the relations of reproduction. Revolutionary feminists argue that it is the control over the relations of reproduction which gives men superiority over men. Beechey terms the patriarchal concepts of revolutionary feminism as narrow, generalized and unclear about their ultimate goals. Materialistic feminists, like Christine Delphy, talk of the existence of two autonomous modes of production, the industrial and the family mode of production, both exploitative in their own spheres, and ignores any relationship between the two. Marxists feminists try to understand the relationship between patriarchy and other organizations of modes of production, and term social relation of reproduction as the cause of women’s oppression. They relate family to production. Juliet

Mitchell ignores the historical development of patriarchy and sees patriarchy as an ideology and universal phenomenon of human culture, which is constructed due to the incest taboos within the nuclear family, thus making women as exchange objects. But Juliet Mitchell's treatment of patriarchy as an ideology has limitations as it cannot be reconciled with the historically specific modes and relations of production. Equating patriarchy with the origin of culture makes patriarchy as an inescapable phenomenon. The writer also discusses those feminists who hold that patriarchy occurs due to the ideological and political interpretations of biological differentiations. The writer concludes that the relations of production and the relations of reproduction are closely related and are not as independent and autonomous as viewed by Marxist feminists. The writer gives a comprehensive picture of the various schools of thought of feminism but does not draw a unified and clear conclusion.

The concept of patriarchy is widely equated with the non-Western communities and gets much attention in the Western media and academia. In the Asian societies generally and the Muslim societies especially, patriarchy is presented to be the order of the day. The extent of attention which the instances of patriarchy in the Muslim societies gets from the Western public and academia is evident from the wide circulation of the biography of Nujood Ali (2010), *"I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced"*. Nujood is a Yemni village Muslim girl who reasserted her agency and got control of her subjectivity after having been the victim of a cruel patriarchy. She was pushed into an arranged marriage at the age of 10. "In Khardji, the village where I was born, women are not taught how to make choices." (p. 6). "Here it's always the oldest, and

TH-12739

the men, who have the last word” (p. 30). This work also shows how women are denied any agency and are treated as if they are mere objects to be purchased and sold at will. This objectification of women is evident from the tradition of “sighar” where the younger sister of the groom is married to the brother of the bridegroom. To be one’s wife is enough to allow one to have every right of command over her. While immature Nujood resists the sexual advances of her husband, her mother-in-law eggs her son, “Hit her even harder, she must listen to you ...she’s your wife” (p. 28). She ran away after a few months of her marriage and secured her divorce through the help of court. Not only she became free herself but she intends to become a lawyer to work for the freedom of others like her. The concept of women being considered as the repository of family honour is also found in this biography. When Nujood filed a case for her divorce her family felt that their honour had been stained. They threatened Shadda, Nujood’s lawyer, in the following terms. “You’ve sullied the reputation of our family, you have stained our honour” (p. 38). Even Mona, Nujood’s elder sister, was married hastily and forcibly to her rapist “in the name of honour” (p. 43). Unlike Mona, Nujood reasserted her agency in the end, “kicked down a closed door” (p. 53), and set example for others to follow.

The biography of Nujood is relevant to the present study as it sheds enough light on the way patriarchy is presented to work in most of the rural areas of many Islamic countries, and it tells us how a woman is objectified and marginalized, and how unusual strength does it take for a woman to reassert the agency and autonomy of her will. In her biography she mentions from time to time the cruel aspects of patriarchy where the male members of the

family have a final say in everything including the matters which are crucial to lives of women.

Wilson (2005) in “Family and Change: The Contemporary Second-Generation British Asian Fiction” explores the theme of family in three BrAsian diasporic works, including *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali. The writer analyses the stance to family unit in *Brick Lane* that how Nazneen is first entangled in the folds of traditional family unit and is the victim of her original patriarchal norms. With the passage of time Nazneen explores alternatives to her suffocating family constraints, gets contact with the outside world through the help of Karim, repositions her own identity, and cuts for herself a place in the diasporic space. The essay is limited in its scope and only deals with the theme of family, but is helpful in understanding the self discovery process of the main protagonist, Nazneen

Feminism, though working for the emancipation of women from the clutches of dominant patriarchal discourse, is at times fraught with many contradictions and methodological errors. Mohanty (1988) points out the mistaken approach of the Western feminist writers towards the women of the third world countries. The writer says that the Western feminists ignore the particular historical and sociological factors responsible for the subordinate position and ‘inferiority’ of the ‘Third World’ women, and present a homogenized and monolithic image of their object status. The Western feminists juxtapose their concepts of the ‘Third World’ to the image of the ‘Third World’ woman. These Western feminists, while discussing the ‘Third World’ women have preconceived notions of womanhood and male violence.

They think of the 'Third World' women as universally dependent, and at the mercy of familial system and repressive religious ideology. So, the writer rightly concludes that a context specific differentiated analysis of the status of women is required.

Zine (2008) traces the politics of identity construction, contestation and consumption of Muslim women from various subject positions of Orientalists, Patriarchal, Islamists, feminist and academicians. She contends that these often contradictory discourses limit the agency of Muslim women and are hegemonic, essentialized and narrow in scope. Muslim women identities are not fixed and static, and cannot be squeezed into a single totalizing category. She says that even the neologism of "Muslim women" is political.

Incited by the subordinate representation of women in the Muslim diaspora of the UK, the intelligentsia of the West has focused much on Islam as a religion to find out whether it is Islam itself which is responsible for the subordination of women, or patriarchy moulds and distorts it to its own interests. Keddie (1990) explores the status of women in the Muslim countries from the pre-Islamic period till the present day. On the basis of her study she claims that many of the customs like seclusion, polygamy and veiling have come from the pre-Islamic patriarchal and in-egalitarian culture of the countries surrounding Arabian Peninsula, where veil and seclusion were considered as signs of prestige. She also claims the women of pre-Islamic and early Islamic era had more freedom of activity than the women of today's Muslim countries. According to the writer, the Laws of the Quran going in favour of women have been mostly ignored, and mostly those interpretations of the Quran have

been strictly followed by patriarchal societies which in some way can turn the balance in favour of men. She also points to the diversity in the approach of different Muslim countries towards the status of women vis-a-vis men. Although, the article in some areas sounds biased, but on the whole, it provides a great and comprehensive trace of the status of women in Islamic countries throughout history. It also shows the selective approach of patriarchy towards religion.

The Western feminists show much concerns about the subordination of Muslim women to male dominated patriarchal discourses of the Muslim communities, but are often totalizing and generalizing in their approach. Maumoon (1999) in her article "Islamism and Gender Activism: Muslim Women's Quest for Autonomy" explores the trends of Islamic feminism within the framework of Islam as against to the Western feministic discourse. The article rightly says that the activism of women in Islamic societies have diluted the patriarchal interpretation of Islam. Western feminists are enslaved within the perspective of "Third World 'Other'" while dealing with Muslim women, and produce, publish and consume reified notions of Muslim women's universal subordination. The article projects alternative and 'other' voice to the dominant hegemonic Eurocentric discourse of feminism. The article also accounts for the rising Muslim identity in the diasporic context.

Ahmad (2006) problematizes the application of the concept of patriarchy by the West to non-Western communities and states, "'Patriarchy theory' is a good example of a 'grand' and over-arching Western feminist concept that is often discussed in relation to non-Western families" (p. 279). She is critical is

of representations of BrAsian family and marriage in the populist media and the Western academic texts, and says that such representation promotes “discourse of pathology and stereotypes” (p. 272). She mentions that the Western media and academic circles adopt interpretative framework of patriarchy in relation to BrAsian women and their marriages which “tend to produce pathologised discourses of BrAsian families, that imply that all South Asian family structures and gender relationships are inherently oppressive...and in which women are mere ‘objects’ or ‘victims’ rather than active subjects” (p. 279). She adds that the diversity in the marriage practices, and oppositional voices within BrAsian community are ignored, and despite their acknowledgment that the acts of forced marriages in BrAsian families are very rare, “the continued emphasis of both the media and politician on the minority occurrence acts to negatively and disproportionately highlight and problematise ‘arranged’ marriages and thus BrAsian families” (p. 278). The writer also mentions the confusion which appears in the Western public debates around the definitions of ‘arranged’ versus ‘forced’ marriage, and terms it as “betraying a certain hegemonic assumed superiority that prioritises ‘Western’ concepts of modernity over others (p. 273). The writer points to the limitations of patriarchy theory that it promotes extreme binaries, ignores the diversity not only within BrAsian community as a whole, but also within the individual families and promotes “hegemonic, colonialist-inspired discourse of Western cultural superiority” (p. 282). The writer also objects to the way in which the concepts of ‘izzat’ and ‘sharam’ have been represented in the Western public debates. She says that such ‘regulative’ and ‘deterministic’ discourse fails to give attention to the “expanding concepts like ‘izzat’ and

'sharam' to encompass female centered narratives of personal honour or shame...or to offer alternative accounts that might suggest shifting boundaries and dynamic conceptualizations (p. 283). Brah (2006) draws attention to another dimension whereby the practice of arranged marriage in BrAsian community has been used as pretext to impose restrictions on the immigration of the South Asians to the UK (p. 51). He terms it as "a widespread abuse of this cultural practice by Asians...in which the proponents of the rules selected a cultural abuse, namely arranged marriage, and exploited it to their own advantage" (pp. 50-51).

Feminist and diasporic literature has said much about the identity formation of the diaporic subjects and Muslim women, but the analysis of the subjectivities of Muslim women in BrAsian community from the standpoint of the diasporic creative writers is still an area which needs to be explored. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap.

Religion is another parameter along which BrAsian community of the UK is categorized and analysed. While quoting Asad, Mandair (2006) terms the "reproduction of religious traditions" in the diasporic communities of Britain "as a site of postcolonial contestation" (p. 94). The writer further stresses, "There is a much stronger, and often invisible, connection between religion, enunciation and subjectivity than is normally recognized" (p. 94). He calls this "enunciation of the subjectivity of the South Asians in strictly religious terms" as "mimicking a colonial gesture" (p. 94), whereby, the imperial Britain codified different cultural groups of the colonized South Asia into strict religious categories, which had no instance in the pre-colonial subcontinent.

The writer concludes, "South Asian settlers are intimately bound up with the *religious* history of colonization which includes the translation of indigenous categories and traditions under the rubric of religion" (p. 105). Brown (2006) terms the turning of the diasporic communities to religion as a remedy "to manage the changing world in which they find themselves" (p. 94), and to make themselves "at home in the diaspora" (p. 96). He differentiates between the influence of Hinduism and Islam on their followers, and says that Islam, based on belief and core text unlike Hinduism, is unlikely to adapt itself to the changed environment (p. 94). He, especially, mentions the Muslim diaspora of the UK, where there are fewer opportunities available to the Muslim youth to learn their religion in a free intellectual manner, and this lack of proper guidance in religion may lead the youth to extremist positions (p. 109). Many internal and external factors can affect the attitudes of the diasporic community as in the words of Brown (2006) "Low socio-economic status, and the changing worlds of international and national politics can profoundly change the experience of living in the diaspora, as can the internal dynamics of diaspora communities" (p.148). These factors of religion and international politics are pointed to by Upstone (2007) in her article "Same Old, Same Old", where she asserts that although *Brick Lane* marks a shift from the postcolonial theoretical framework and migratory fiction, but the shift is not complete. It still has not reached the stage to celebrate the full confidence of the British born Asians, and is haunted by the alienation of cultural ethnic minority. The writer says that the staying back of Nazneen and Shahana in London shows the reconciliation of the Migrant and the British born. But this sense of belonging is disrupted by the awareness of new identity, that of a

British Muslim identity after the event of 9/11, where the British Muslims feel the sense of alienation.

Feminists, throughout the world, work for the liberation of women, as in the words of Turtle, "Feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal relationship between men and women, and who want to change it" (Haque, 2004, p. 4), but Moghadam says, "Any historical study of feminism shows that the meaning of feminism has changed over time and from place to place, and is often disputed" (Haque, 2004, p. 4). The relationship of feminism with Islam and Islamic societies has given rise to much debate and contradictory opinions among the feminists and intellectuals. The two extreme positions about Islamic feminism are well summarized by Moghissi (1999), who says that one group of writers strongly "rejects the possibility of co-existence between Islam and feminism. They are not impressed by Islam's internal variations or the impact of local economic, cultural and ethnic factors in nuancing the effects of traditional practices on women's subordination" (p. 49). To this group of writers the only way left to the liberation of women lies in the complete de-Islamization of the society. While on the other hand is the group of the writers who "see Islamic feminism as a feminism true to its society's traditions', and -'a resistance to cultural conversion', endeavouring to release Western women's claim on feminism" (p. 50). Haque (2004) says, "In Muslim world countries, the term feminism brings with it pejorative attitudes so much so that Western feminism is perceived synonymously with colonialism and Western capitalism" (p. 4). While citing Majid and Ahmad, she further says that Islam does not restrict the freedom and rights of women and that

“prejudices against women being incorporated into Islamic Law from a number of religious and cultural traditions, including the Judaic, Christian and Iranian” (p. 5). She also cites Al Faruqi, who says, “for Muslim women, the source of difficulties experienced is not necessarily Islam and its traditions, but certain ideological institutions in societies, ignorance and distortion of the true Islam and its exploitation by individuals in power” (p.14). She concludes that the spirit of Islam promotes the well being of women within the Islamic framework, and in many cases to much greater extent than is the project of the Western feminism. This view is contradicted by writers like Moghissi (1999), who while talking about Islamic feminism opines, “How could a religion which is based on gender hierarchy be adopted as the framework for struggle of gender democracy and women's equality with men?” (p. 42). Moghissi claims, “No amount of twisting and bending can reconcile the Qur'anic injunctions and instructions about women's rights and obligations with the idea of gender equality” (p. 55). The writer further says, “Islamic' feminism has no 'coherent, self-identified and/or easily identifiable' ideology or movement” (p. 43). Mojab (1994) goes a step ahead and says that Islamic feminism, “far from being an alternative, is a compromise with patriarchy” (p. 34). While Cooke (2007) asserts that the label Islamic feminist is not a fixed and bounded identity, rather it shows a new, contingent and doubly committed subject position, much like a postcolonial woman, who searches for her identity through the interplay of seemingly incompatible and contradictory subject positions (p. 25).

The fiction writers of both the West and the East have been in the vanguard for furthering the cause of women. Pandey (2003) in *Feminism in Contemporary British and Indian English Fiction* has tried to show “the interaction between feminist theory and narrative practice in a selection of works of fiction by Indian and British women writers” (p. 166). She traces the feminists’ position through the centuries regarding the issues of women. She highlights comparisons between the writers of the West and the East regarding their treatment of sexual politics, andro-centricism, women psyche, patriarchal relationships and women subjectivity through their fictional characters in their works. Belonging to different cultural moorings, the writers of both the countries still interrogate the same problems faced by women of their respective countries. Pandey shows that a wide gap exists between “woman’s idealized concept” pronounced by various religions and mythologies “and her situation in real life” (p. 3). On the basis of her study of the selected works, she claims that women in the West have gained their economic independence and unlike Indian women their problems are mostly psychological rather than economical.

While presenting the opinions of the selected writers about female psyche and her quest for identity, she remarks, “To Dorris Lessing the first distinctive feature of self development is the conscious and unavoidable segregation of the single individual from the undifferentiated herd” (Pandey, 2003, p. 31).

Moreover, some of Dorris Lessing’s characters see marriage as an encroachment on female identity (p. 34), and women can gain their identity through pleasing themselves rather than pleasing others (p. 35). Margaret

Drabble considers the role of gender to be important in preventing women from getting their identity and freedom from patriarchy (p. 32). Some of Drabble characters find their identity and self realization through bondage and surrendering (p. 39).

While discussing Indian women, the writer remarks that Indian women are defined by the social roles that they play, and have no separate identity. Their status is worse than the Western women and they themselves require help from their children and husbands. They are mere adjuncts to their male relatives (p. 41). Many of Kamala Markandaya female characters find the expression of their identity by losing it in service (p. 43). Similarly, many of Shashe Deshpande female characters also achieve the glorification of their personality through extinction (p. 47).

Marriage, the writer says, is an individual act in the West while in India it is a social act. In the Western society, marriage is spurred by personal choices and love, while in the Eastern culture; marriages are mostly arranged which the writer calls as "arranged rape". Women are "trained in silence". The writer considers marriage as the tool of patriarchy, whereby it is sanctified to continue the enchainment of woman. "Marriage produces a single social unit, where differences among individuals are seemingly dissolved under one name-the name of the father." (p. 56). Shashe Deshpande points to the ritual of name change of girl after her marriage. Women in the East are objectified and they are "cooed, caressed and fondled" (p. 84) as if they are dolls. One of Shashe Deshpande's characters remarks about Indian marriage, "Behind the façade of romanticism, sentiment and tradition, what was marriage after all,

but two people brought together after cold blooded bargaining to meet, mate and reproduce so that the generation might continue” (Pandey, 2003, p. 86).

On the basis of the study of the selected writers Mitey Pandey says that motherhood is another weapon in the armoury of patriarchal order through which the enslavement of the women is perpetuated. Being a pleasurable instinct in itself, motherhood has been corrupted by patriarchy which uses it for its own motives. Motherhood before marriage, and lack of motherhood after marriage, is considered as a stigma in Indian culture. In Indian context the identity of a mother is dissolved in the identity of her children.

The writer also mentions the arrival of ‘New Woman’ especially in the Western culture. The new woman is more active, rational rather than emotional, is aware of her consciousness, tries to shake off the irrational values of patriarchy, and to make her existential choices. She is aware of the dual standards of patriarchy where sexual lapses are permissible only to men.

Pandey has tried to show the different nature of the problems of women of the two poles through the analysis of the fictions from both the West and the East, but she is silent about the subjectivity of the diasporic woman, a woman whose roots lie in the East but who is located in the West. Giri (2005) remarks, “The fact that diasporic displacements propel our uprooted bodies across the world’s variously entrenched borders does not mean that our minds will follow suit” (p. 221). The exploration of the subjectivities of women of Muslim BrAsian community as presented by the diasporic fiction writers is the gap which the present study attempts to fill. Similarly, much has been said by scholars, feminists and cultural theorists about the issues of feminine

subjectivity, forced marriages, and cultural conflict, but the exploration of the responses of the selected diasporic creative writers towards these issues is an area which can give us much insight, and which the present study attempts to undertake.

The literature review shows the responses of the writers belonging to various academic spheres of anthropology, feminism and postcolonialism towards the issues of cultural alienations, forced marriages and feminine subjectivities in Muslim BrAsian community. The fact which has been much ignored is the response of the fiction writers towards these issues. Analyzing the response of the creative writers towards the issues of cultural alienations, forced marriages and feminine subjectivities in Muslim community can lend much insight into these issues, and this is the aim of the present study.

CHAPTER 3

THE ISSUES OF FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY, FORCED/ARRANGED MARRIAGES AND CULTURAL CLASH IN *MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS*:

The life of exile moves according to a different calendar, and is less seasonal and settled than life at home (Said, 2006, pp. 439-442)

The sense of loss in the lives of Pakistani BrAsian community is introduced right in the beginning of the *Maps for Lost Lovers*. While Shamas is greeting the first snow of the season, the writer says “Among the innumerable other losses, to come to England was to lose a season” (*MLL*, p. 5).

Maps for Lost Lovers depicts, through fictional characters, many of the strains and stresses which the Muslim diaspora of the UK passes through, as a group, and as individuals. In a diasporic community various cultures have to reside side by side, so clash among them is not uncommon, as Appadurai remarks, “One man’s imagined community is another man’s political prison” (Waterman, 2010, p. 27). Especially, the individuals of the minority culture become more protective about their cultural selves, and become suspicious of the majority culture. The minority culture feels itself threatened at times. In the words of Said (2006):

At bottom, exile is a jealous state. With very little to possess, you hold on to what you have with aggressive defensiveness. What you achieve in exile is precisely what you have no wish to share, and it is in the drawing of lines around you and your compatriots that the least attractive aspects of being an exile emerge: an exaggerated sense of group solidarity as well as a passionate hostility towards outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you (pp. 439-442).

This cultural trauma which inflicts the immigrant's life is defined by Neil J.

Smelser as:

A memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is (a) laden with negative affect, (b) represented as indelible, and (c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions (Waterman, 2010, p. 20).

In the first place, the name "Dasht-e-Tanhaii", variously defined as 'the wilderness of solitude' or 'the desert of loneliness' (p. 29) given to the town itself shows the unease and sense of cultural alienation of BrAsian people in the host community. In the words of Ashcroft and et al (2001) "To name a place is to announce discursive control over it by the very act of inscription" (p. 183).

Although, the people of this town have migrated from their home cultures and have earned here some "semblance of dignity" (*MLL*, p. 9), still, they don't feel home-like comfort and suffer from loneliness. In order to give this British town a flavour of their original locations, and to lessen the feeling of homesickness, the people of this town have named the streets and roads after the names of places of their home community, like "Faiz Street", "Omar Khayam Road" etc. This shows that the immigrants fear assimilation into the host culture. The writer remarks to this fact in the words, "Roaming the planet looking for solace, they have settled in small towns that make them feel smaller still, and cities that have tall buildings and even taller loneliness" (*MLL*, p. 9). Weingarten (2011) supports this supposition in the words, "The appropriation of the metropolitan neighbourhood by the diasporic South Asian community, along with the setting of strict limits to isolate it from the rest of

the town, reverses the imperialist colonization of the immigrants' home countries" (p. 5).

The novel is mostly presented from the point of view of the characters of the Muslim community, so we have ready access to the fears and misconceptions which they carry against the host culture. The writer searches the minds of the immigrants with subtle irony. Many of the immigrants out here feel that they have more lost rather than gained through this migration. Waterman (2010) remarks, "On one level *Maps for Lost Lovers* is a "clash of civilizations" novel, in Samuel Huntington's sense" (p. 18).

The theme of cultural alienation and cultural gap in *Maps for Lost Lovers* is more so explored through the character of Kaukab rather than through anyone else. She is presented as the most conservative and orthodox character of the novel. She feels that not only the human language of both Pakistan and England is different, but the things also speak different languages in both the countries. Kaukab, while referring to this fact remarks, "In England the heart said boom boom instead of dhak dhak, a gun said bang instead of thah, things fell with a 'thud' not dharma, small bell said "jingle" instead of chan chan, the train said "choo choo" instead of chuk chuk..." (*MLL*, p. 36).

Kaukab's eldest son Charagh voluntarily goes through vasectomy, but Kaukab ascribes it to the conspiracy of the West to keep the number of Muslims from increasing (*MLL*, p. 59). When a little boy asks Kaukab in the street whether it is true that Jugnu's place of urine was glowing in the dark like his hands, Kaukab "puts the boy's obscenity and impertinence down to the corrupting influence of the Western society" (*MLL*, p. 61)

Kaukab and many other immigrants, especially women, have very little day to day contact with the people of the host community. "The 'thank you' she (Kaukab) murmurs to the flower-deliveryman is her third exchange with a white person this year; there were five last year; none the year before, if she remembers correctly; three the year before that" (*MLL*, p. 69).

When Charagh's art teacher recommends him for the field of art rather than medical sciences, Kaukab is enraged and declares it as the conspiracy of the white people to indulge the immigrants' children into wasteful activities, and stop them from reaching higher position in life (*MLL*, p. 123). Having failed to enter a medical college, Charagh suffers from depression, and is referred by his doctor to a psychiatrist, but Kaukab doesn't approve of it and says, "A young girl in the neighbourhood had been sent to a psychiatrist by the doctor and had within months rebelled against her parents and left home" (*MLL*, p. 124).

When Shamas broaches the matter of shifting to Pakistan to Kaukab, she remarks, "There is nothing on this planet that I loathe more than this country (England), but I wouldn't go to live in Pakistani as long as my children are here. This accursed land has taken my children away from me" (*MLL*, p. 146). When she comes to know about the discussion of Freud's theories about parent child relationship, Kaukab is dismayed and says, "This immoral and decadent civilization was intent on soiling everything that was pure and transcendental about human existence" (*MLL*, p. 292).

The perception of the majority of the immigrants of the locality about the white people is negative. Deploring the negative impact of the host culture on

youngster, the women of “Dasht-e-Tanhaii” call England a “deplorable country” and “the nest of devilry” (*MLL*, p. 30). The investigation of the murders of Jugnu and Chanda by the British police back in Pakistan is looked at with suspicion by one of the immigrant women and declares, “The white police are interested in us Pakistanis only when there is a chance to prove that we are savages who slaughter our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters” (*MLL*, p. 41). The fear and suspicion about the white people is ingrained in the minds of the kids so that when a child doesn’t behave, he is threatened to be handed over to a white person (*MLL*, p. 72). The clerics at the mosque call upon the Muslims to stay away from the white girls as they are “faeces-filled sacks ...and to wait for the hours of paradise” (*MLL*, p. 126).

The character of Shamas stands at an opposite pole from that of Kaukab’s. He is liberal and tolerant towards other cultures. Shamas is the director of Community Relations Council and helps BrAsian community to negotiate with the White World, when and as the need arises (*MLL*, p. 15). He not only works as a bridge between the Muslims and the Whites, but also between the Muslims and other religious minorities. That’s why he is equally respected across all cultural groups. But, even Shamas fails to integrate at the family as well as at the community level. If Kaukab is too much conservative and is the prisoner of the past, Shamas is too much idealistic and thinks of the future. Thus, both Kaukab and Shamas overlook the realities of the present. If on one hand, Kaukab’s religious obscurantism is an obstacle towards cultural assimilation, then on another hand Shamas’ secularism and idealism also does not prove helpful to improve the lot of his people, and to bridge the gulf

between different cultures. Ujala complains against his parents in the following words:

What about your responsibilities to the people who were around you here in the present? Those around her (Kaukab) were less important to her than those that lay buried below her feet, and for him (Shamas) the important ones were the ones that hovered above his head-those yet to be born (MLL, p. 324).

Maps for Lost Lovers has highlighted in detail the strain and stress not only between the Muslim and the English cultures, but also between the Muslim and the Hindu or the Sikh cultures. Such instances of cultural alienation and cultural gap among the minority ethnic groups vis-à-vis one another can also be cited. Kaukab is repugnant to the marriage of a Sikh girl with her brother. Kiran, a Sikh girl, who is in love with Kaukab's brother, is sent back from Karachi when she tries to reach her brother, who is detained in Pakistan lest he should marry Kiran. Kaukab also keeps an eye on the couple when her brother visits 'Dasht-e-Tanhayii'.

On the question of cultural assimilation, there exists a generation gap in Muslim BrAsian community. Applying Tzvetan Todorov's distinction between literal and exemplary memory, the first subordinating the present to the past, while the second – potentially liberating – allows the past to be exploited in the present, Waterman (2010) comments on generation gap in *Maps for Lost Lovers* in the words, "While the children and grandchildren, born in Britain, are generally more open to exemplary memory, it is more often the parents' and grandparents' memories of the past which define – and seriously constrain-this close-knit Pakistani community-in-exile" (p. 19).

The three children of Shamas and Kaukab show the signs of integrations into the host British society, but at the same time they suffer alienation from their parents and their own community. So, even they don't show the possibility of becoming a link between BrAsians and the host community.

The cultural suspicion works both ways. The individuals of the host community do not readily accept the immigrants into their community. There are feelings of hostility and the immigrants are looked at with suspicion. In 1978 the wave of hostility was tangible and the demand was that the immigrants be sent back to their original homes (*MLL*, p. 28). When Kaukab dials a wrong number she gets a response from the other end in the words, "Get off the phone and go back to your country, you Paki bitch" (*MLL*, p. 297).

The cohesion of a cultural group is maintained on the concepts of purity and contamination. The values of one's own culture are deemed pure and every attempt is made to save those values from being contaminated by the influence of other cultures. In the words of Waterman (2010), "Following on the heels of an insular community is the conviction of purity and its attendant fear of contamination from outside, including the preoccupation with reputation on both the individual and collective levels" (p. 22). Kaukab has a special dress for her out goings, and the moment she returns, she changes it as it gets contaminated due to contact with the people of other cultures. If just a casual contact with the outsiders is so much abhorred, then marriage with the people of other cultural and ethnic groups becomes a very serious matter, and

the honour of the family and the ethnic group is stigmatized. Brown (2006)

states:

South Asians bring to their new homes highly developed understandings of honour and esteem as well as firmly established patterns of what is considered good or appropriate behavior in most types of social interaction. These are often tested by experience of migration over time, particularly along the fault lines of gender and generation, when older assumptions about the good man-woman or the good son-daughter are challenged and undermined. When considering these areas of stress it is important to remember that many South Asian families are not only concerned with their repute and honour within their immediate diasporic community but often also have in mind their extended kin back in South Asia (p. 87).

This dichotomy of purity/contamination often leads to arranged/ forced marriages. In line with the arguments of Brown (2006), *Maps for Lost Lovers* depicts that Muslim women of this particular locality are the victims of patriarchy. They are shown as devoid of any autonomy or agency. They are marginalized and are considered as objects with none of their independent consciousness. The immigrants of this small British town are the slaves of their home cultures, and on the basis of the prescriptions of the home culture, divide the members into good and bad. Waterman (2010) points to this fact in the words, "These immigrants seek to reestablish the traditions and customs which they recognize and which contribute to their sense of identity by association through a politics of arbitrary closure" (p. 21).

When Shamas refuses the offer of the bounty hunters to bring Mah Jabin home back, and terms it a crime, the bounty hunters exhort in the words, "Kidnap? Shamas-ji, that is how white people would see it. They of course don't understand our culture. The children and runaway wives have to be brought back home" (*MLL*, p. 250)

Chanda is the one of central characters of the novel, and it is her absence the presence of which is felt. She is the only sister of two brothers having a grocery shop in “Dasht-e-Tanhayii”. Her subjectivity is shaped and moulded by patriarchal values, and she blindly follows the dictates of her patriarchal family for quite some time. According to Millet (1969) “At the most general level patriarchy has been used to refer to male domination and to the power relationships by which men dominate women” (Beechey, 1979, p. 66).

Chanda is thrice married by her brothers and parents, and never has she had any say in any of her three failed marriages. In the end she asserts her agency and decides her own fate. She starts living with Jugnu outside marriage. But she has to pay a high price for her autonomy and agency, and is killed by her brothers in the name of the restoration of family honour. Even Chanda’s father is reported to have said that he is proud of what his sons have done (*MLL*, p. 176). While talking about Muslim BrAsian community, Brown (2006) remarks:

Stresses between parents and children , particularly daughters, over arranged marriages come into the wider public and legal arena where girls run away from home, where there is conflict over forced marriages which often involves taking young girls forcibly back to Pakistan, or in the most extreme and rare cases where there are so-called ‘honour killings’, where family members kill a female relative rather than have her enter a sexual liaison or marriage with someone not deemed suitable by the family (p. 93).

This situation is amply described by Mah Jabin as:

How many times had she (Chanda) been married before she met uncle Jugnu? Twice? Three times? Yes, if it doesn’t work once, try again, because you are bound to hit the target eventually, as long as it is *you* (italics in original) who decides what to do: if the bitch decides to take matters into her own hands and finds someone herself then raise the fucking knives and cut her to pieces (*MLL*, p. 115).

Chanda is killed by her brothers in the name of honour, but Chanda's brother himself has an affair with Kiran, a Sikh girl, and thinks of it as a normal activity as he is a man (*MLL*, p. 344). Such moral lapse is punishable only for a woman, not a man. This shows the double standards of patriarchy. Pointing to this double standard, Waterman (2010) comments, "The standard for female purity is higher than the standard for men" (p. 24).

Kaukab herself has had an arranged marriage in "Sohni Dharti", a town presented in the text to be located in the rural area of Pakistan. Since her marriage has been arranged by her father, that's why she blames her father whenever she feels ill at ease in her marital life. Her subjectivity is shown to have been shaped by patriarchal and obscurant religious values of rural Pakistan. She has not only herself been the victim of patriarchy but is the tool of patriarchy as well. Phillips (2007) while pointing to this fact remarks, "Older women often are co-opted into reinforcing gender inequality" (p. 26).

She herself has resigned to her own fate, but is an active agent in driving and controlling the fates of others. Much of the story is presented from her perspective which is itself an attempt on the part of the writer to give voice to the otherwise silent characters of the society. Kaukab suffers from loneliness and often times keeps secluded to her own shell. The writer remarks, "Kaukab was alone in the house, alone in the house just as she was alone in the world" (*MLL*, p. 35).

But it does not mean that she has no agency or autonomy. In fact she is the one who plays a major role in the decision making of the family. Kaukab

takes on herself the role of the guardian of culture and keeps a vigilant eye on the deviants. It is Kaukab who not only arranges the marriage of her daughter Mah Jabin back in Pakistan with her cousin, but also forces her to keep the relation going without ever inquiring what ordeals her daughter has passed through. Brown (2006), while talking about the tradition of cousin marriages in Pakistani BrAsian community, comments in the following words:

The search for appropriate Muslim marriages for children leads many UK Pakistanis parents, for example, to consider not only kin among the Pakistani groups in the UK, but also back in Pakistani villages where siblings and cousins still feel they have prior claims in marriage and see such marriages as a source to mobility for their children. To deny these claims is, for an immigrant family, to risk family honour and solidarity (p. 86).

Similarly, the living together of Jugnu and Chanda is scorned by her, and when they are on a visit to Pakistan, she telephones the family to inform them of their obscenity. Her eldest son Chagh's marriage with the British girl is not approved by her. She tries to control everything that happens around her so much so that she unwittingly feeds Ujala, her youngest son, with bromide to lessen his libido. So, Kaukab has agency and autonomy, and her character is shown in the text as having been "co-opted into reinforcing" (Phillips, 2007, p. 26) patriarchal values. Weingarten (2011) remarks, "through the character of Kaukab, who stands in opposition to her husband Shamas in every possible way, the novel challenges the idea of a Muslim society dominated by men" (p. 16).

The marriage of Mah Jabin with her cousin is a very complex issue, and it shows the grey area which lies between forced and arranged marriage,

between coercion and consent. After disappointment in her first love, Mah Jabin is heartbroken and wants to go away from the place. Exactly at this time Kaukab floats the idea of her marriage to one of her cousins back in Pakistan. Waterman (2010) points to this issue among the immigrants in such words, "Traditionally, marriages are arranged in this community, precisely with an eye to avoiding miscegenation. This practice is followed to the point of orchestrating a union between cousins whenever possible" (p. 23).

Mah Jabin is just sixteen at that time and agrees to the idea. Her agreement to this arrangement is taken as a positive consent by Kaukab, and she marries her off in haste. Only after marriage does Mah Jabin realize the true consequence of her decision. In the start she resigns to her fate, but then reasserts her subjectivity and leaving her husband, comes back to England. She takes the charge of herself in her own hands, aborts her baby, and starts living on her own terms. Thus her agency and autonomy is restored. Her leaving of husband and aborting of the baby does not indicate any neurotic nature of hers, but these acts are the indication of the reassertion of her subjectivity. These acts are the declaration of her freedom from the suffocating clutches of patriarchy. Kaukab on one occasion beats, and very nearly kills her daughter during an argument over the conduct of her life. While reproaching her mother, Mah Jabin says, "Your laws and codes, the so-called traditions that you have dragged into this country with you like shit on your shoes" (*MLL*, p. 114).

Suraya's subjectivity has been moulded by patriarchy and "a false consciousness" (Maumoon, 1999, p. 274) has been ingrained in her mind. She is married to a person back in Pakistan, and is divorced after a few years by

her husband in a drunken fit (*MLL*, p. 159). She has only one son from that husband. Despite much suffering at the hands of her husband, she again wants to go back to him, but it is prohibited by Islamic law of divorce. Motherhood has become a chain for her, and she presents her body to anyone who may give her a flicker of hope for uniting her with her son. She strikes an affair with Shamas, and commits adultery, which is forbidden in Islam. The writer remarks, "She went through with him in order to be united with son and husband" (*MLL*, p. 254).

She thus moulds an Islamic law for her personal benefit. In doing so, not only her body is debased, but her soul is also tortured. In the end she gets married to a person who has already three wives, and is looking for a son. Although, she takes some decisions on her own, but these decisions are overshadowed by her "false consciousness" (Maumoon, 1999, p. 274), shaped and moulded by patriarchy.

There is another Muslim girl of the locality, who is in love with a Hindu boy. It's against Islamic law of marriage for a Muslim girl to marry a Hindu boy. In order to thwart that love affair, her family imports a cousin of her from Pakistan, and marries her off to him. She refuses to consummate the marriage, and is raped by the husband at the instigation of her mother (p. 88). A "peer" is called from Pakistan to exorcise the djinns which are supposed to have possessed the girl, and are the cause of her unruly behaviour. She loses her life at the hands of the "Peer", but does not compromise on her autonomy and agency (p. 185).

Reputation counts much with the community of Dasht-e-Tanhaai. Pointing to the obsession of the inhabitants of Dasht-e-Tanhaai with the sense of reputation, the writer says, "The neighbourhood is a place of Byzantine intrigue and emotional espionage, where when two people stop to talk on the street their tongues are like the two halves of a scissor coming together, cutting reputations and good names to shreds" (*MLL*, p. 176). Such are the concerns for reputation that Chanda is killed in the name of honour by her brothers, with the approval of her father. The cleric, guilty of paedophilia, is defended by his seniors and the community on the ground that the reputation of the whole community is at stake.

One of the reasons that Muslim BrAsian community of Dasht-e-Tanhaii cannot assimilate and integrate into the host community is that they are the victims of religious obscurantism. A neurotic behavior due to forced marriage is ascribed to the possession by djinns. The imams of the mosques have little intellectual acumen to train and equip the minds of people for facing the modern challenges. The spiritual leaders themselves are the perpetrators of paedophilia.

If Maps of Lost Lovers has Kaukab, who is the upholder of traditional patriarchal value, and has a strong sense of cultural alienation, it also has Jugnu, who stands for assimilation, is iconoclast himself, and inspires others too, to break all the shackles of traditional values. Charagh, while justifying himself to Kaukab for having published an uncircumcised nude of himself, says, "Jugnu taught me that we should try to break away from all the bonds and ties that manipulative groups have thought up for their own advantage.

Surely, mother, you see the merit of that... I can't paint with handcuffs on"
(*MLL*, p. 321)

Maps for lost Lovers is a literary piece and the picture of Pakistani immigrants it presents cannot be taken for reality. Fiction can work both ways. To some extent it may reflect reality, but on the other hand it can also construct reality. In this regard Lau (2005) comments, "Diasporic literature is not only a reflection of diasporic life; it also plays a part in the propagating of certain ideas and ideals which contribute to the shaping of the identity of the diasporic community" (p. 242).

Furthermore, *Maps for Lost lovers* is a work of art and can be interpreted from many perspectives. It not only highlights the disabilities of BrAsian community to integrate into the host society, but it also brings forth the prejudices and stereotyping tendency of the British community, that it holds against BrAsian community. As Weingartens (2011) comments, "The novel can be read as a critique of both the closed immigrant communities that avert all attempts at integration, and the host cultures that easily fall for prejudices without trying to look behind the façades" (p. 17).

The stereotyping of Muslim BrAsian community by the host British community is made evident by Aslam in the remarks of the Judge, who mentions the religion and background of Chanda's brothers while pronouncing the decision of Chanda's and Jugnu's murder case. The judge remarks, "Their religion and background assured them that, yes, they were murderers but that they had murdered only *sinner*s."(*MLL*, p. 278. original italics)

However, Giri (2005) points to another tendency which may appear in the text of a diasporic writer. He says:

Diasporic culture, no matter how radical or countercultural it may sometimes appear vis-à-vis existing arrangements of metropolitan power, cannot avoid participating in the logic of various normative ideologies, because such ideologies or seductively present throughout the metropolitan social space, including its recesses and margins. Even for a putatively marginalized writer, subscription to a normative view of the world is the surest way to reach a large audience and to claim a foothold in today's media-dominated public sphere, in which important questions about art's merit, taste, and the value (aesthetic as well as commercial) are debated and settled (p. 234).

The fact that *Maps for Lost Lovers* depicts Pakistani Muslim immigrant community of the UK may mislead many readers that all the issues in this community may be the result of Islam. They may infer that the incidents of forced marriages and feminine objectification may have been corroborated by religion Islam. This is erroneous assumption, and is contradicted by the real injunctions of Islam. It has become a fashion in the media to equate Islam with female subordination and forced marriages. Pointing to this phenomenon, Maumoon (1999) says:

A homogenous notion of the oppression of women as a group is assumed in many Western feminist writings that seek to produce the image of an 'average Muslim woman'. This average Muslim woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender and is therefore sexually constrained, ignorant, poor, tradition-bound, religious and domesticated (p. 280).

Islam as a religion is deemed as being gender in-egalitarian. Maumoon (1999) further says, "Many non-Islamist women feel the Islamists' 'return to Islam' to be regressive and backward. These non-Islamist women have internalized the

popular media image of 'fundamentalism' as being fanatical, irrational, anti-modern and misogynistic" (p. 270)

It is taken for granted that wherever there is a Muslim society, the issues of forced marriages are likely to be a rule rather than an exception. The issue of forced marriage is highlighted with added impetus when there is reference to a Muslim community, whether they are Muslim home communities or Muslim diasporas abroad. This is a misunderstanding of the true spirit of Islam. Islam is a 'deen' of free will and consent. There is no coercion in Islam. There are many instances available in the Holy Quran and Ahadiths which show that in the matters of faith, the free will of the individual reigns supreme. Allah says in Surah Al-Baqarah (The Cow): "There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path" (The Noble Quran, 2:256).

If there is no coercion in matters of faith, how can Islam allow coercion in the case of marriage, which is a noble and sacred institution of Islam? Marriage is one of the Sunnahs of the prophet of Islam. Narrated Uqba bin Amir: Allah's Apostle said: "From among all the conditions which you have to fulfill, the conditions which make it legal for you to have sexual relations (i.e. the marriage contract) have the greatest right to be fulfilled" (Volume 3, Book 50, Number 882: Sahih Bukhari).

Kaukab in the novel has an arranged marriage in which she has no say, and accepts silently the decision of her parents. But according to Islam, she had the right of decision. Marriage in Islam occupies a sacred status. Unlike other societies, marriage in Islam is not only a social, but also a religious contract.

Marriage is considered as a sweet bond between a man and a woman. According to Islamic injunctions, marriage is not to be used as a tool for fulfilling other ulterior motives, like the ones we see in the case of Mah Jabin and Chanda. Mah Jabin is married to her cousin for the purpose of cementing the family ties. Chanda is married thrice without her consent for the purposes which suit her family rather than her own well-being. The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) has made the consent of the girl obligatory for the fulfillment of marriage. Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said:

A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission." The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! How can we know her permission?" He said, "Her silence (indicates her permission) (Volume 7, Book 62, Number 67: Sahih Bukhari).

The consent for marriage should be sought in every case, whether the female is widowed, divorced or virgin. A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) reported:

I asked Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) about a virgin whose marriage is solemnized by her guardian, whether it was necessary or not to consult her. Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) said: Yes, she must be consulted. 'A'isha reported: I told him that she feels shy, whereupon Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) said: Her silence implies her consent (Chapter 9: Book 008, Number 3305. Sahih Muslim).

If the girl is unwilling in marriage, the mere willingness of the guardian does not make the marriage contract valid. Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (peace_be_upon_him) said, "An orphan virgin girl should be consulted about herself; if she says nothing that indicates her permission, but if she refuses, the authority of the guardian cannot be exercised against her will. (Sunan Abu-Dawud, Marriage" (Kitab Al-Nikah), Book 11, Number 2088)

In Islam, the male members of the Muslim community are directed to have just and fair treatment with the female members of the community. The harsh treatment which Chanda, Mah Jabin and Suraya receive at the hands of their respective husbands is forbidden in Islam. Islam makes it an important point that the relation between husband and wife should be based on mutual love and respect rather than coercion and cruelty. Allah says:

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect (The Noble Quran 30:21).

Allah Almighty says in Surah An-Nisa' (The Women):

O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the *Mahr* you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse. And live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good (The Noble Quran, 4:19).

The role of the guardian is further limited in the case of marriage of a widow or a divorce woman. The Prophet (peace_be_upon_him) said, "A guardian has no concern with a woman previously married and has no husband, and an orphan girl (i.e. virgin) must be consulted, her silence being her acceptance" (Translation of Sunan Abu-Dawud: Book 11, Number 2095).

In the case of marriage of a girl, the father is not allowed to use his discretionary powers. The mother of the girl should also have her say in the affair. Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

“Consult women about (the marriage of) their daughters” (Translation of Sunan Abu-Dawud: Book 11, Number 2090).

The living together of Chanda with Jugnu outside marriage is strictly forbidden in Islam. Islam cannot be blamed for this ban on extra marital relationship. In fact, if Islam is observed in its letter and spirit, there will be left no reason to compel a boy and girl to live in an illicit manner. If Chanda had been given her right of choice in the selection of marriage partner in the beginning, she would not have ended the way she did.

There is no place for forced marriages in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad made forced marriage invalid when brought to his notice. Narrated Khansa bint Khidam Al-Ansariya, “that her father gave her in marriage when she was a matron and she disliked that marriage. So she went to Allah's Apostle and he declared that marriage invalid” (Volume 7, Book 62, Number 69: Sahih Bukhari).

Islam has given a valuable place to women. If Islam has put certain obligations on women, it has also given the corresponding rights to women, like the right of selection of marriage partner, the right of inheritance, and the right of having sustenance. Islam as a religion cannot be blamed for what its ignorant followers do.

Chapter 4

THE ISSUES OF ARRANGED MARRIAGE, CULTURAL ALIENATION AND FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY IN *BRICK LANE*

Brick Lane by Monica Ali is based on the lives of a Bangladeshi immigrant couple Chanu and Nazneen, Living in Tower Hamlet, and depicts the lives of Bangladeshi immigrants in the Eastern district of Brick Lane.

One of the tendencies of the diasporas in the UK is that the members of the same cultural group live in close proximity to one another, thus forming ethnic enclaves in the host community, and try to recreate their home community abroad .While commenting on the South Asian diaspora of the UK, Brown (2006) says, “(they have) settled near kin and others from their region of origins.... this preference has generated ethnic areas or enclaves” (p. 78). While talking about the cultural enclave of the Bangladeshis in his locality, Chanu remarks, “... they all stick together because they come from the same district. They know each other from the villages, and they come to Tower Hamlets and they think they are back in the village” (*BL*, p. 28). This locality where the Bangladeshi Muslim community has formed “ethnic enclave” is a slum area, where the poor sections of the community lead their miserable lives “four or five Bangladeshis to one room” (*BL*, p. 330) according to an official council statistics. Pointing to the miserable living condition of Bangladeshi immigrants, Chanu remarks, “That’s how they come. They have menial jobs on the ship, doing donkey work, or they stow away like little rats in the hole” (*BL*, p. 28).

One of the dilemmas of being in exile is the cherishing of the 'Going Home Syndrome' (*BL*, p. 456). In the words of Brown (2006), "For most of the first generation migrants, there remained a powerful "myth of return", a vision of South Asia as the place to which one would eventually return" (p. 59). While talking of the Bangladeshi immigrants in the UK, Chanu remarks:

These people are basically peasants and they miss their lands. The pull of the land is stronger even than the pull of blood...they don't really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the villages here (*BL*, p. 32).

Nazneen wonders why Dr. Azad lent money to Chanu for his going back to Bangladesh. She asks herself, "...was it a cure? For that special Tower Hamlets disease that he had discovered and named and which would never get into medical books. What had he called it? Going Home Syndrome" (*BL*, p. 456)

The immigrant's life is a fractured life. While living in his ethnic enclave and sticking to his own cultural prescriptions, the immigrant suffers from the sense of cultural alienation in the host community. Monica Ali has portrayed this sense of cultural alienation through the character of Chanu. Chanu, having had bachelor degree from Dhakka University, not only feels himself different from the uneducated manual labourers of his home country, but he also feels insulted at the behaviour of the White people. Pointing to the stereotyping tendency of the Western people, Chanu comments, "And you see, to a white person, we are all the same: dirty little monkeys all in the same monkey clan" (*BL*, p. 28). Chanu, while at Dr. Azad's house, sums up the immigrant's tragedy in the words that the immigrant tragedy is "The clash between

Western values and our own...the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve one's identity...the feelings of alienation engendered by a society where racism is prevalent" (*BL*, p. 112). Chanu further talks to Dr. Azad about the immigrant's tragedy and says, "This is the tragedy. When you expect to be so-called integrated. But you will never get the same treatment. Never" (*BL*, p. 247)

Cultural difference leads to a jaundiced view towards the people of other cultures. Phillips (2007) remarks, "Cultural difference then becomes loaded with moral significance; being different equates with being wrong" (p. 64).

Chanu is sad when he feels that the norms of his Bangladeshi Muslim culture are threatened by the young Bangladeshis of the community, who are adopting the ways of the White people. He says, "But now our children are copying what they see here, going to the pub, to nightclubs. Or drinking at home in their bedrooms where their parents think they are perfectly safe" (*BL*, p. 31). He further adds, "But for my part, I don't plan to risk these things happening to my children. We will go back before they get spoiled" (*BL*, p. 32).

The more Chanu loses hopes of promotion in his job, the more he talks of the racism in the host community towards the immigrants. He warns Nazneen against making friendships with 'them'. He remarks, "All the time they are polite. They smile. They say 'please this' and 'thank you that'. Make no mistake about it, they shake your hand with the right, and with the left they stab you in the back" (*BL*, p. 72). While planning to shift permanently to Dakka, he says, "I don't want him (Rukko, Chanu's son) to grow up in this racist society. I don't want him to talk back to his mother. I want him to

respect his father" (*BL*, p. 111). He thinks that the British culture only consists of "Playing darts and football and putting up pictures of naked women" (*BL*, p. 257).

The sense of cultural alienation and cultural clash is not limited only to Chanu's character. Some other characters of *Brick Lane* also show the symptoms of the sense of cultural alienation. Mrs. Islam, a woman of worldly wisdom opines, "If you mix up with all these people, even if they are good people, you have to give up your culture to accept theirs. That's how it is" (*BL*, p. 29).

One of members in the meeting of the Bengali tigers points to the fact that the Whites have changed the nomenclature, but their hatred towards BrAsian community is the same. Since the term 'race' has become a taboo word, they don't use it any more. They now use the terms of culture and religion. He remarks, "They is [*sic*] getting more sophisticated. They don't say race. They say culture, religion" (*BL*, p. 241).

Borrowing Edward Said's idea, the ghosts of colonialism haunt the present relations of the former colonizers with the former colonized. While teaching to his daughters, Chanu comments that the colonizer Britain had introduced railways in the colonized subcontinent not out of goodwill, but for commercial benefit (*BL*, p. 249). "The Dhaka looms were sacrificed 'said Chanu, 'so that the mills of Manchester could be born" (*BL*, p. 317). He also points to the bias of the Western historians calling that particular time period as dark ages when the Muslim civilization was at its height (*BL*, p. 215).

Living in diapsora engenders the condition of rootlessness, and loss of stable identity, which compels the immigrants to embark on the search of a new stable identity. Akbar Ahmad remarks, “The experience has in many instances engendered a new superior identity found upon the universal bond of Islam, a bond that transcends national and regional identities” (Maumoon, 1999, p. 269).

Members of Muslim BrAsian community often discover their roots and identity in Islam. In this regard Ringrose (2007) remarks, “The more ‘enclosing’ a given religious order is, the more it ‘resolves’ the problem of how to live in a world of multiple options” (p. 33).

That is the reason that Karim turns to religion for the search of his identity, and that is the reason that the locality of Tower Hamlet is burning with religious fervour. Two equally aggressive groups, Bengali Tigers and Lion Hearts have come into existence for their respective purposes. ‘Bengali Tigers’ stands for the preservation of Islamic values, while the ‘Lion hearts’ supports secularism. Karim, the chairman of Bengali Tigers, declares that the ‘Bengali tigers’ has been formed for “Protecting our local Ummah and supporting the global ummah” (BL, p. 241). The search for identity in religion Islam makes the immigrants as members of the larger Muslim Ummah, transcending all borders of nationality and culture. In the words of Kral (2007), “Ali’s novel also provides an analysis of the way religion comes to replace identity by playing the part of a new *locus standi* linking the local subject to a larger imaginary community” (p. 73).

They, in such a scenario, cannot remain immune to international politics. The political situations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kashmir affect their view. The strain of international political world can be seen in the cultural conflict of the locality of Tower Hamlet in *Brick Lane*. Karim rejects the idea that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were conducted by Muslim terrorists. He calls it a fraud based on hypocrisy and misunderstanding of Islam on the part of Americans (*BL*, p. 382). Karim tells Nazneen in one of the meetings, “It’s a world-wide struggle, man. Everywhere they are trying to do us down. We have to fight back. It’s time to fight back” (*BL*, p. 243)

Owing to the influence of the international politics, the youth may tend to flourish anger and religious extremism. Phillips (2007) says that the critics of multiculturalism contend, “An excess of cultural toleration is preventing minority groups from integrating and thus creating a breeding ground for Islamist militants” (p. 13). Some of the immigrants are so much enraged by the development in the international politics that they want to wage jihad against infidels (*BL*, p. 281). The questioner at the ‘Bengali Tigers’ meeting shows the photographs of the starved and murdered children of Palestine and Iraq in order to arouse the religious sentiments of the participants (*BL*, p. 282). The questioner doesn’t approve of the approach of Karim, whose strategy is to “Think global but to act local” (*BL*, p. 287).

One of the reasons, that the youth of Muslim BrAsian diaspora feel bewildered when confronted with the issues of international world, is that they don’t have any means of proper religious guidance. Brown (2006) says:

British Muslims have particular problems when it comes to transmitting Islam to their children, and to interpreting Islam

in the often problematic situations in which they find themselves....Muslims mainly from rural Pakistan and Bangladesh, have little education and lack of sophisticated intellectual tools for debates about religion. Children learn their religion in the home, where their mothers are rarely educated (p. 109).

The inevitable consequence of such a situation, then, is that religious obscurantism prevails, and the real intellectual spirit of Islam is ignored. Razia's husband overlooks the needs of his family and himself, and sends all his money to the imam of his village in Bangladesh for building a mosque in his village (*BL*, p. 124). Hanufa is socially boycotted by the community, and is not talked to by anybody as she has attended a women-only massage course for the sake of her ill husband. The imam of jamme masjid has declared the course as un-Islamic, and Hanufa is made as a social outcast (*BL*, P. 391). Brown (2006), while criticizing the imams of mosques in BrAsian community, says:

In most of the mosques attended by South Asian Muslims the imams who pray and preach come directly from the subcontinent, do not speak English, and lack the conceptual tools and training to engage with young enquiring mind or to help their congregations cope with the wider world. Nor, indeed, are they expected to do so by the older generation of Muslims (p. 109).

However, Upstone (2007) is of the view that postcolonial reading on Karim is inappropriate, and this will render Karim mere a cultural stereotype. She terms the resistance of Karim and other youth as a new hybrid identity in the following words:

The youths who attend Karim's meetings are committed to Islam, but, more significantly, are evidence of a specific, essentially hybrid, London identity. Local allegiances may be violent, but they mark the British-Asian's right to belong. Similar to the defiance of black Britons in the 1980s, this

In the character of Karim, the British born confidence is also interrogated as he turns from a man who has a “place in the world” (*BL*, p. 218) to “born a foreigner” (*BL*, p. 375).

Nazneen feels that she is shunned away by the community women, after the news of her relationship with Karim spreads in the locality (*BL*, p. 391). The imam of the local jamme masjid, who is also the spiritual leader of the ‘Bengali tigers’, doesn’t allow music in the meeting of the Bengali Tigers, and declares it un-Islamic (*BL*, p. 414). Even some of the participants agree to the version of the Taliban that since they had banned music in Afghanistan, so it was un-Islamic (*BL*, p. 413). When on the day of the march, the members of ‘Bengal tigers’ get emotional, and start making skirmishes with the police, one of the members shouts, “Is that what happens when Islam goes on the march” (*BL*, p. 473).

The presence of ethnic enclaves exerts a particular influence on the members. The ethnic enclaves ensure that the values and traditions of the place of origin be observed and protected. Brown (2006) says that the clustering together of kith and kin and formation of ethnic enclaves can be not only supportive, but also “Claustrophobic, over watchful and for some deeply controlling” (p. 81).

Since the Bangladeshi immigrants of Tower Hamlet have mostly come from the rural Bangladesh, the values and customs of the rural Bangladesh prevail in their diasporic cultural enclave of Tower Hamlet. One of traditions of the rural Bangladesh is that of patriarchy. In patriarchal system women are

considered as inferior and subordinate to men. The subjectivities of women are circumscribed.

Nazneen, the protagonist of *Brick Lane*, comes from rural Bangladesh as a result of arranged marriage with Chanu. Since her childhood, Nazneen has been trained in the patriarchal values. Nazneen, right from her birth- since she was left to her fate (*BL*, pp. 14-15) - has accepted the fate as it has come her way. She has inherited the spirit of stoicism from her mother Rupban. She remembers many maxims of her mother about women, “to be still in her heart and mind, to accept the Grace of God, to treat life with the same indifference with which it would treat her” (p.15). “just wait and see” (p.46). “If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men” (p. 80) “to endure” (*BL*, p. 323). Nazneen makes it a cardinal principle of her life that “What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne” (*BL*, p. 16).

That is the reason that she doesn't object to her marriage with a forty years old man, a marriage which is arranged by her father. All she can see is just the picture of Chanu, her future husband. Her father uses his own discretion in what would be a good husband for her. The immigrants in the UK are always on the hunt for girls like Nazneen, who are “unspoilt” (*BL*, p. 23). And the coming of Nazneen to the UK is not her choice. The narrator remarks, “That was what had happened to her” (*BL*, p. 72).

Chanu objectifies and circumscribes Nazneen. He describes her as if she is an object, a thing. Soon after marriage, Chanu, while talking on phone to a friend, describes her in such terms, “Not beautiful, but not so ugly either. The face is

broad, big forehead. Eyes are a bit too close together” (*BL*, pp. 22-23). Having a knack for proverbs, Chanu describes his marriage with her in the words, “A blind uncle is better than no uncle” (*BL*, p. 23).

Nazneen and Chanu live under the same roof, but have no emotional union of a satisfied husband and wife. The narrator says, “In all her eighteen years, she could scarcely remember a moment that she had spent alone. Until she married” (*BL*, p. 24). The narrator further remarks about the marital relationship of Chanu and Nazneen:

Where Nazneen turned in, he turned out. Where she strove to accept, he was determined to struggle; where she attempted to dull her mind and numb her thoughts, he argued aloud; while she wanted neither to look to the past nor to the future, he lived exclusively in both. They took different paths but they had journeyed, so she realized, together (*BL*, p. 121).

Nazneen has moments of rebellion within herself, but whenever she has such throbbing of heart, she takes refuge in The Quran, and thus solaces her soul. Rather than living outside herself in the company of her husband, she more and more lives within herself, where she enjoys complete independence. In her moments of loneliness, she imagines herself to be the ice skating lady which she had once watched on the television screen. She thinks, “What it would be like to fall in love” (*BL*, p. 40). Besides, Chanu wants Nazneen to be thankful to him and to her fate that she has found a husband like him. He reminds Nazneen, “It is lucky for you that you married an educated man. That was a stroke of luck” (*BL*, p. 45)

She is so bored with her mundane life that she once gets out of her home, and cuts turns at random, attempting to be lost (*BL*, p. 55). She feels suffocated

when she thinks about her own life. The narrator says, “She looked and she saw that she was trapped inside this body, inside this room, inside this flat, inside this concrete slab of entombed humanity. They had nothing to do with her” (*BL*, p. 76). Her life seems to her to be “A series of gnawing, ill-defined and impossible to satisfy” (*BL*, p. 83).

Nazneen feels herself caught among various demands of her husband and daughters (*BL*, p. 205). After having done a lot of sewing, and having faced a lot of pressure from Mrs. Islam, Nazneen has a nervous exhaustion. During that period, Chanu keeps her at a linguistic remove, and addresses her as ‘she’. But Nazneen thinks that she cannot relax as “If she relaxed, things would fall apart. Only the constant vigilance and planning, the low-level, unremarked and unrewarded activity of a woman, kept the household from crumbling” (*BL*, p. 329).

But Nazneen does not resign to her fate till the end. She does not leave herself to her fate the way she was left to her fate right from her birth. Phillips (2007) says, “If people have been subjected to an oppressive socialization or have imbibed norms that consider women of lesser significance than men, this does not mean they lose all capacity for agency and choice” (p. 40).

Till the age of thirty four, and till the time she has already borne three children to a lazy futile husband, she remains a plaything in the hands of her destiny. She accepts her fate with stoicism and passivity. At last she takes the initiative in her own hands, asserts her autonomy and agency, and starts living on her own terms. The narrator points to her initial symptoms of agency in such words, “For the first time she could not wait for the future to be revealed but

had to make it for herself" (*BL*, p. 16). Phillips (2007) further says, "People retain agency even when their lives are severely circumscribed" (p. 143).

Her first attempt of coming to terms with the outside community, and of realizing her own agency, is the exchange of a "sorry" with a stranger. The narrator on this occasion remarks, "She had spoken, in English, to a stranger, and she had been understood and acknowledged. It was very little. But it was something" (p.61). A little further the narrator mentions, "Nazneen tastes some (the mixture of salt, lentils, chili, cumin, turmeric, and chopped ginger) from a spoon and burns her tongue. But it was her heart that was ablaze, with mutiny" (*BL*, p. 63).

Flickers of agency and the control of her own subjectivity surge in Nazneen when she thinks that if she dresses like a fashionable lady, she will become the master of her fate, and all her fears will subside. The narrator on such occasion remarks, "For a glorious moment it was clear that clothes, not fate, made her life" (*BL*, p. 278).

On the first physical encounter with Karim, she tastes the pleasure of life, and has a glimpse of her own agency (*BL*, p. 299). The contact with Karim forces her to think outside herself. Kral (2007), while talking about the relationship of Karim and Nazneen, says, "As a middle man, Karim acts as an intermediary between her and the garment factory, but also, symbolically, as a go-between, linking her claustrophobic domestic setting with the outside world" (p. 68).

She now starts thinking of her Muslim identity. Karim tells her about Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, where the Whites have badly treated the

Muslim brothers and sisters. Nazneen's thinking now becomes global. She for the first time defies her husband while he is scolding Shahana, who does not want to go back to Bangladesh. There is little bickering between Chanu and Shahana. Nazneen shouts and silences the parties, telling Chanu to treat the child with care, and forbidding Shahana to talk to her father in such a disrespectful manner (*BL*, p. 349). She contradicts Chanu about the survey of the professors of London school of economics, terming the Bangladeshi nation as the happiest nation of the world. She decides that she will no more suffer in silence. She will not be left to her fate anymore. Now she herself will write the script of her fate with her own hands. She says to herself, "I will decide what to do. I will say what happens to me. I will be the one" (*BL*, p. 405)

The agency of Nazneen reaches its climax when she decides not to go back to Bangladesh with Chanu, and to remain in Britain along with her children. The narrator says, "The plane left tomorrow and she would not be on it" (*BL*, p. 437). She keeps her secret to herself, and on the very morning of departure tells Chanu, "I can't go with you" (*BL*, p. 478). The staying back of Nazneen with Shahana in England is symbolic of the reconciliation between the migrant and British born identity. In the words of Upstone (2007), "In her decision to stay in London, Nazneen finally claims belonging. Moreover, she claims this in unity with Shahana: the migrant and the British-born are reconciled" (p. 343).

Unlike Chanu, who is theoretical and academic, the character of Nazneen is practical, and does not lose its identity in the multicultural Britain. Her

character also represents the adaptation of both the immigrant and the host British community (Perfect, 2008, p. 119).

Once she recovers her agency, she moves on with it. Having paid more than what she owes to Mrs. Islam, now she decides to take a stand and not to be exploited any more. She refuses to pay any more to Mrs. Islam. Although, Mrs. Islam's sons turn the furniture of her home to debris, but it is a victory for Nazneen. It is a gain that she has now learnt to say 'no'. The narrator remarks that Nazneen smiled and thought, "God provided a way, and I found it" (*BL*, p. 446).

With the discovery of her agency and subjectivity, she now sees things in their right perspective. She refuses the marriage proposal of Karim with a new found strength (*BL*, p. 451). Now, not only can she take care of herself, but she can also take the responsibility of her children. After the departure of Chanu, Nazneen discovers her complete agency, and takes the reins of the events in her hands. When her children discuss the possible arrival of Chanu and their possible departure from the UK, Nazneen remarks, "We will talk about it tomorrow, or later, and we'll decide what to do. Staying or going. It's up to us three" (*BL*, p. 480). This turn to 'we' and 'us' carries a lot of significance, and points to the shift from Nazneen's objectified subjectivity to her autonomous self. Phillips (2007) while defining autonomy remarks, "I take autonomy as the capacity to reflect on and, within the limits of our circumstances, either endorse or change the way we act or live-thus, in some significant sense, to make our actions and choices our *own*" (*italics in the original*, p. 101).

After Chanu has left for Bangladesh, Nazneen asks a boy about Karim, and is told that he has left for Bangladesh. When that boy asks Nazneen whether she will come to the meetings of a new prospective political group, Nazneen says that she will like to come. She also tells that she has also attended a few meetings of Bengal Tigers and adds, "But that was before I knew what I could do" (*BL*, p. 486).

It shows that Nazneen has achieved her full agency, and has found 'a place in the world' for herself. Perfect (2008) while talking about the gradual progression of Nazneen towards autonomy points out, "The grasp of English which Nazneen develops over the course of the novel occurs simultaneously with- and seems almost synonymous with-her move towards independence and liberation" (p.113).

Motherhood, although being a beautiful creative process in itself, and being the distinctive mark of women, is exploited and used as tool for the subjection and bondage of women. The lack of motherhood can also prove a curse for a married woman in patriarchy. A woman in the locality of Tower Hamlets commits suicide and Mrs. Islam reports it to Nazneen and Razia. Mrs. Islam also adds that the woman who jumped from the sixteenth floor had been married for twelve years, but had no children. It means the lack of motherhood becomes a curse for a woman (*BL*, p. 27).

But for Nazneen motherhood serves as a refuge from her loneliness, and in the end her daughters prove as a spark to arouse her agency, and make her take stand for their sake. When Nazneen's daughters tell their mother that they are not going back to Bangladesh, the narrator peeps into the feelings of Nazneen

and remarks, "For one dizzying moment she (Nazneen) was flushed with power: she could make it right for the girls" (*BL*, p. 216).

Since the daughters of Chanu and Nazneen are born in the UK, and have never been to Bangladesh, their knowledge of Bangladesh is only second hand, gathered from media, parents, school and the general public views. During a little bickering between Shahana and Bibi, Shahana warns Bibi that as soon as she lands on Bangladeshi soil, she would be hastily married off and her husband would treat her very cruelly (*BL*, p. 395).

In patriarchy, women are considered as the repository of honour. Keddie (1990) in this regard says:

As in a number of societies, particularly those near the Mediterranean, the code of honor and shame was, and often still is, very important. A family's honor was considered to rest primarily in the purity of its girls and women, and shame lay in any possible aspersions being cast on that purity. Purity meant not only virginity for girls and fidelity for wives, but also the impossibility that anyone should think or say that the virginity or fidelity stood in doubt. Ideally neither girl nor wife should talk with a man who was other than a close relative forbidden as a marriage partner (father, brother, and so forth) (p. 89).

Chanu considers Nazneen as repository of the family honour. On the question of going out of the home, Chanu replies to Nazneen, "Why should you go out? If you go out ten people will say, "I saw her walking on the street." And I will look like a fool" (*BL*, p. 45). When Jorina starts working in a factory, her husband takes it as an insult to his honour, becomes reckless as a reaction, and starts going out with other women (*BL*, p. 97). While alive, Razia's slaughter man husband does not approve of Razia's working in factory. When he dies,

Razia comments to Nazneen, "I can get that job now. No slaughter man to slaughter me now" (*BL*, p. 139).

Razia confides to Nazneen that Amna, one of the community women, is demanding a divorce from her husband due to his harsh treatment, and his having had a hidden second wife for eleven years. Razia says, "I saw her with a split lip. And one time she had her arm in a sling. He must have gone too far this time" (*BL*, p. 71). As if breaking of arm is something of a routine matter.

Razia, though circumscribed by her husband till the moment of his death, has agency and vigour. Radhakrishnan (1993), while talking about subjectivity and agency, remarks, " 'Subjectivity' all too often consents to remain an effect of an alien form of representation, whereas "agency" is an attempt to realize subjectivity as an effect of an authentic act of self representation that one can call one's own" (p. 756).

Razia has the courage and agency to look to the community members in the face. She does not mind the objections of the community on her going out of home for work. She tells Nazneen, "Will the community feed me? Will it buy football for my son? Let the community say what it will" (*BL*, p. 97).

Razia, not only takes her own fate in her hands, but also drives Nazneen towards gaining of her agency and autonomy. At the end of the narrative, both have got their complete agency and autonomy, and are planning to start a self run business venture.

Culture is taken in a particular way when applied to the minority communities of the UK by the majority community. Phillips (2007) says:

What I see as one of the biggest problems with cultures (is): the tendency to represent individuals from minority or non-Western groups as driven by their culture and compelled by cultural dictates to behave in particular ways. Culture is now widely employed in a discourse that denies human agency, defining individuals through their culture, and treating culture as the explanation for virtually everything they say or do (p. 9).

But we see that different characters in *Brick Lane* have different approaches on the question of cultural assimilation. Chanu, like most of other characters, feels culturally alienated, and believes in the superiority of his own cultural values. Dr. Azad's wife favours Westernization and contends that while being in Britain, there is no harm to be like the British. The balanced approach is adopted by Nazneen and Razia, who feel that in Britain one can live alongside the host society without the loss of one's individuality. Razia, too, is sometimes uncomfortable at the attitude of host community. She remarks on one occasion about the members of the white host community, "They are even happy to spit on their flag as long as I am inside it" (*BL*, p. 394).

But on the whole, she has that potential to make her own place in the host society. When Nazneen quotes her husband's words, "Racism is built into the 'system'" (*BL*, p. 72), Razia does not agree to it. Razia believes, "There are good ones, and bad ones. Just like us. And some of them you can be friendly with. Some aren't so friendly. But they leave us alone, and we leave them alone. That's enough for me" (*BL*, p. 73). Since her acquiring of British nationality, Razia keeps wearing a sweatshirt which has a large union Jack, a British flag, printed on its front.

The young generation feels more prone to cultural assimilation than the old generation. Just before returning to Bangladesh, Chanu takes his family on a

trip, where Chanu finds it hard to explain to his Western photographer that they belong to Bangladesh, which is not part of India. On the other hand, Shahana, Chanu's daughter, who is born and brought up in London, proclaims with confidence, "I'm from London" (*BL*, p. 296).

Upstone (2007), while pointing to this generation gap between Shahana and her parents, remarks, "Despite Nazneen's isolation and Chanu's emphasis on "respectable" Bangladeshi values, Shahana is connected to a global street culture rather than a diasporic consciousness" (p. 338).

This difference of approaches between the young and the old generations towards the host community makes the generation gap of Muslim BrAsian community more acute. Jorina, one of the neighbours of Nazneen points to this problem, "Making lives for our children. They want to make them for themselves" (*BL*, p. 482).

This chronic generation gap often leads to forced and arranged marriages. . This problem persists in all the immigrant communities, and the Muslim immigrant community of the UK is no exception to it. Britain has the official policy of 'multiculturalism, where the minority ethnic groups have more cultural liberty as compared to the other Western countries. Some people count the policy of multiculturalism as responsible for the miseries of women of the minority ethnic groups. In the words of Phillips (2007), the critics of multiculturalism, especially feminists, contend that it encourages in-group suppressions as "Multicultural policies shore up the power base of the older men within the community and encourage the public authorities to tolerate practices that undermine women's equality" (p. 12).

The whole story of *Brick Lane* stems from the arranged marriage of a Bangladeshi rural girl with Chanu, who, being a member of Muslim BrAsian community, succeeds in his hunt for a wife like Nazneen, unspoilt by the Western culture. This tendency persists in the immigrants to choose their life partners back from their home community. This shows an acute sense of cultural rift and alienation, that not only the members of the host community are not considered fit for marriage due to cultural difference, but the members of one's own cultural diasporic community are also considered to have been spoiled by the corrupt influence of the host community. After her son gets addicted to alcohol, Jorina's daughter is sent hastily to her home village in Bangladesh to be married there. The daughter is only sixteen and is at school, but despite her pleas, she is not allowed to stay till her exams, and is hastily dispatched and secured from spoiling in the UK. Maumoon (1999) points to this phenomenon, "In a reversal of Orientalism (or, as it is sometimes referred to as, Occidentalism) Islamists project the Western 'Other' as sexually perverse, immoral and corrupt" (p. 271). Razia, while revealing this news to Nazneen says, "The brother has gone bad, and they wanted to save the daughter. So there it is. Now she can't run off for a love marriage" (*BL*, p. 49)

It is very difficult, for a girl specially, to resist a forced or arranged marriage.

Phillips (2007) in this regard says:

The threat of exclusion is one of the pressures brought to bear on people resisting an arranged marriage, who are often made to feel that they will be cutting themselves off from their community and culture if they persist in refusing a particular marriage partner (p. 137).

The fact that the community of *Brick Lane* is a Muslim community does not mean that Islam is responsible for the problems faced by the community members, especially the women. As cited in the previous chapter, Islam gives equal rights and duties to women. In the selection of her marriage partner a woman has complete freedom. The arranged marriage of Nazneen with Chanu, and her later ordeals have nothing to do with Islam, but are the result of repressive patriarchal social values. Chanu is a Muslim by faith, but unlike the true injunctions of Islam, he confuses marital relationship with the master slave relationship. He does not value Nazneen as an independent human being to be loved and taken care of. Rather, he considers Nazneen as his property. Nazneen would have never entered into illicit relationship with Karim, had she received the love and affection of her husband. Karim and other members of 'Bengali Tigers' resort to the violent interpretation of Islam. The fact is that Islam is a religion of peace. Religious obscurantism leads the residents of Brick Lane to employ all kinds of repressive practices in the name of Islam.

Marriage from Islamic point of view is a form of civil contract. Mullah (2002) says:

Marriage according to the Islamic law is not a sacrament but a civil contract. All the rights and obligations it creates arise immediately and, are not dependent on any condition precedent such as the payment of dower by a husband to a wife. The Nikah is not a contract only but a method to legalize the cohabitation of a man and woman and issues out of this union are legitimate. The parties after consenting it are bound to respect it and to live within the limits of Allah (p. 329).

The Quran recommends that every contract should be conducted in the presence of witnesses and inscribed in written form.

O you who believe! When you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down. Let a scribe write it down in justice between you. Let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him, so let him write. Let him (the debtor) who incurs the liability dictate, and he must fear Allah, his Lord, and diminish not anything of what he owes. But if the debtor is of poor understanding, or weak, or is unable himself to dictate, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And get two witnesses out of your own men. And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women (The Noble Quran, 2:282).

The Muslim family laws in Pakistan, derived from the Quran and Sunnah, oppose forced marriage, and make the consent of the contracting parties obligatory for the validation of the marriage contract. Mullah (2002) points out the principles of having of sound mind, the attainment of puberty, and the consent of both the parties as a prerequisite for the validation of a Muslim marriage. While referring to the Islamic law he remarks, "A marriage of a Muslim, who is of sound mind and has attained puberty, is void, if it is brought about without his consent" (p. 330).

The dissolution of Muslim marriage act, VIII of 1939, which came into force on the 17th march, 1939, as cited in (Mullah, 2002) lays down the following grounds for a divorce (p. 403-411):

- (1). The whereabouts of a husband are unknown for a period of four years.
- (2). Failure of the husband to provide for the maintenance of the wife for a period of two years.
- (3). Sentence of imprisonment on husband for a period of seven years.
- (4). Failure without reasonable cause to perform marital obligations
- (5). Impotence of husband
- (6). Insanity of husband
- (7). Repudiation of marriage by wife
- (8). Cruelty of husband.

(9). Any other ground recognized by Islamic law.

Islam gives great importance to the transparent performance of the marriage contract. Under Muslim family laws, every effort is to be made to make sure that there is no irregularity in the conduction of marriage contract. While commenting on The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (VIII of 1961), Halim says:

In our society, the girl is normally given in marriage by her parents in their absence by the nearest blood relation and that too mostly at her ordinary place of residence. If this solemn is performed by the persons not answering the above description and at a place other than the ordinary place of residence of the girl in closed doors under mysterious circumstances a heavy duty is cast on the Nikah Registrar to thoroughly confirm and probe into the circumstances under which the marriage was being solemnized, before authenticating the same. If Registrar fails to do so he can, to a great extent, be held responsible for the complications that follow in addition to running the risk of being involved in litigation, both civil and criminal (p. 16).

CONCLUSION

The questions asked at the beginning are taken up one by one in this section.

1. What factors do lead to forced marriages in diasporic communities?

Based on the works selected for my thesis, and supported by the relevant studies, the reasons for forced marriages in BrAsian community of the UK are multifarious.

One of the reasons that lead to the phenomenon of forced marriages is the value system which the parents of the individual concerned profess. In both the works selected for the thesis *Maps for Lost Lovers* and *Brick Lane*, the parents of the individuals, who are subjected to the vagaries of forced marriage, are from the traditional rural societies of Pakistan and Bangladesh respectively. As is evident, in the rural parts of Pakistan and Bangladesh the custom of arranged marriage is in vogue, where the selection of marriage partner is the prerogative of the guardian rather than the boy and the girl concerned. The marriage in such societies is not an individual act, but a social act, where not only the marriage partners come together, but the two families are united. As Phillips (2007) remarks, "Forced marriage mainly occurs within communities where it has been common place for parents to select marriage partners for their children- that is among communities that have a long established practice of arranged marriage" (p. 65).

The elders who are born and reared in such an atmosphere may think it as an infringement on their right if the boy/girl takes the selection of the marriage partner in his or her own hands. The marriage partner arranged by the

guardian may not be acceptable to the other partner, that may lead the guardian to use coercion and the resultant phenomenon is forced marriage.

Another reason of forced marriages in BrAsian community is the economic disparity between the Britain and the Asian countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh. Many individuals are anxious to enter Britain for better work and economic opportunities, and marriage provides them with an easy opportunity. Since the people of Pakistan and Bangladesh have extended families whose welfare is taken as responsibility, the parents of a child may force their child into marriage with one of the members of the extended family, so that his/her easy entry to Britain is accomplished.

Exile is a traumatic condition and Immigrants often suffer from nostalgia, harbouring the 'Going Home Syndrome'. The immigrants are anxious not to lose contact with their countries of origin. Some of the parents may renew their links with their home countries by forcing their children into marriage within the families of home countries. As Keddie (1990) remarks, "Cousin marriage encourages family integration and cooperation" (p. 81).

Cousin marriages have another practical advantage for Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants of the UK. In Islam a girl inherits the property of her ancestors. To avert the transfer of property to another family, girls are coerced into unwanted marriages with cousins. In the words of Keddie (1990), "Women inherit, as they are supposed to, according to Muslim law. There are clear advantages in keeping land and animals in the hands of close relatives via cousin marriage, since in this way contiguous family property will be

maintained” (p. 82). And in case cousins are not available in the UK, they are imported to the UK, or the girls are exported to home countries.

Factors which encourage forced marriages in diasporas of the UK are British immigration laws, lack of legal action against the perpetrators of forced marriages, lack of women organizations working against forced marriages, low education level of Muslim BrAsian community, and the prevalence of patriarchal values in the ethnic enclaves of the Muslim diaspora of the UK.

Cultural clash is another important factor contributing to the occurrence of forced marriages in the Muslim diasporic community of the UK. This is the 2nd question raised in the present study which I take up next.

2. To what extent does cultural clash/alienation of BrAsian community contribute to the increasing phenomenon of forced marriages?

Based on the present study, it becomes evident that cultural clash and cultural alienation greatly enhance the phenomenon of forced/ arranged marriages in BrAsian community. Miscegenation is highly disliked and discouraged by the older generations of BrAsian community. The parents belonging to one ethnic group do not approve of the marriage of their child with the members of other ethnic groups. Religion plays a deciding role, and it is held with great abhorrence if the child of one religious group chooses life partner from another religious group. In order to thwart the plan of the child, he/she is forced into marriage with a member from the same religious group. If necessary, the child is transported to the home country and coerced into marriage there. Miscegenation in the case of both girl and boy is detested, but since the girl is considered as the repository of the honour of family and the

whole religious community, her transgression is taken more seriously than that of the boy. In the works selected, most of the families of Muslim BrAsian community are culturally alienated not only from the host community but also from other immigrant religious communities. Religion dictates the boundaries of 'us' and 'them'.

Cultural clash not only leads to the phenomenon of real forced marriages, but it also induces the tendency in the mind of people to exaggerate the issues found in the other cultural groups. That is the reason that forced marriages, though, happen in many cultural groups, but the Muslims are special targets because of the media hype which equates forced marriages only with Islamic culture. The hegemonic discourse of 'war on terror' exaggerates the negative points of the Muslims rather than the cruelties of neo-colonialists.

Cultural alienation of the diasporic communities develops a tendency of cultural cringe, and the minority community becomes more protective about the preservations of its own culture as compared to the culture of the host community. Certain selective values are given currency and are upheld. It works both ways. The selective values may be given currency by the minority community itself and strongly upheld by it, or some selective values of the minority community may be wrongly propagated, or exaggerated by the majority community. The phenomenon of forced marriage is one of such selective value. To some extent this phenomenon of forced marriage does exist in Muslim BrAsian community as in other traditional communities of the world, but it has been exaggerated and wrongly made the hallmark of only the Muslim community by the Western media and intelligentsia.

3. What are the responses of Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali towards the issues of forced marriages in BrAsian community?

Both Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali have touched on the issue of forced marriages in Muslim BrAsian community. The factors which Nadeem Aslam shows in his work to be responsible for forced marriages are cultural conflict, religious obscurantism, financial motives, weak immigration laws, and desire for family reconnections. Mah Jabin is sent to Pakistan in haste to be married to her first cousin after her failed love with a white boy in the school. In order to thwart the love affair of her eldest son Charagh with a white girl, kaukab tries many times to arrange the marriage of Charagh with some Pakistani girl (*MLL*, p. 119). The members of BrAsian community may want to reconnect with the extended family back in the home country and may force their children to marry with their cousins. Sometimes the cousins are imported to the UK, and thus the members of the extended family are helped to enter, stay and improve their financial position. The abhorrence of miscegenation in BrAsian community makes it prone to the illegal immigrants whose sole purpose in marriages is getting nationality of the UK (*MLL*, p. 345). Nadeem Aslam characters often seem to be motivated by their own interpretation of religion in their harsh treatment towards women.

Monica Ali considers cultural gap as the major cause of forced marriages. The members of BrAsian community force their children into marriages in order to save them from being spoiled by the influence of the host culture. Chanu belongs to BrAsian community, and in his hunt for a girl, who is unspoiled by the corrupt British society, marries Nazneen from a rural area of Bangladesh.

Jorina's daughter, who is a school girl, is sent back to Bangladesh in haste to save her from the corruption of the host community.

Another issue which Nadeem Aslam points out is that there is a very fine line between an arranged and a forced marriage, and often times the difference between the two is indistinguishable. The parents may not necessarily resort to physical violence, but often time use more subtle weapons like emotional blackmailing and the threat of use of force. The interchangeable use of both the terms of arranged marriage and forced marriage can be seen in the statement of the bounty hunters who talk about a girl, "who had run away a week before her arranged marriage to a decent-enough cousin from Pakistan" (*MLL*, p.251). Mah Jabin was married to her cousin back in Pakistan at the time when she was just sixteen and heartbroken, and her parents "didn't tell her openly what she was getting herself into" (*MLL*, p. 300). Patriarchal cultural norms may also make it impossible for a girl to have any other option except to obey the dictates of their parents. Chanda was pushed three times into arranged marriages without her positive consent (*MLL*, p. 345). The protagonist of Monica Ali, Nazneen, had no option but to accept the partner who her father had selected for her (*BL*, p. 16).

Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali have pointed to the fault lines that lie across gender and generational lines in BrAsian community. The older characters are shown to be more conservative, and to be clinging more tightly to their home cultures. They are more belligerent in their attitude to the host culture. The young characters are shown to be more assimilative in their attitude towards the host culture. Thus the cultural conflict of BrAsian community with the

host community merges with the inter-generational conflict within BrAsian community. More than male, it is female characters that bear the brunt of patriarchal values. This collusion of cultural conflict with inter-generational conflict is deemed as one of the major causes that lead to the phenomenon of forced marriages in BrAsian community.

Nadeem Aslam seems to be of the opinion that more the members of BrAsian community are assimilated into the host community, lesser the chances are that they will be indulged in the practice of forced marriages. Shamas, Jugnu and Charagh are assimilated into the host community and are more liberal in their approach towards the rights of women. While Monica Ali seems to be of the opinion that one can be progressive and at the same time can maintain allegiance to his or her own culture. Monica Ali presents Nazneen and Razia who have succeeded in carving spaces for themselves in the host community, not at the cost of loss of their allegiance to their home culture.

Nadeem Aslam portrays more of a traditional postcolonial immigrant tale where most the major characters are suffering from nostalgia for their home cultures, and are trying to re-create a sense of belongingness by sticking to the patriarchal norms that are observed in their home culture. For those who have to integrate into the host society, they have to rebel against their home culture and lose their old identify. There seems to be just two options available to them, either to be part of "we" or "them". No oppositional voices have been presented from within BrAsian community. Monica Ali seems to have gone a step further than the old immigrant tale in the character of Nazneen, who in

the end becomes capable of moving in the British society, dilute the patriarchal hold of the home culture, and at the same time maintains her own identity. Through the character of Shahana, Monica Ali lays hope in new British born youth who can manage their diasporic identity with confidence.

Both Nadeem Aslam and Monica Ali seem to have presented the stereotypical picture of BrAsian community. Read as pieces of exile and diasporic literature, the texts of both the writers seem to be corroborating the stereotypes of BrAsian community, constructed and circulated by the western media and intelligentsia. They maintain that the members of BrAsian community bring their home culture with them “like shit on (their)... shoes” (*MLL*, p. 114). The home culture has been presented to be steeped in religious obscurantism and patriarchal values. All the marriages that occur within BrAsian community are presented to be forced ones. Both the writers find no distinction between arranged marriage and forced marriage, and the marriages which are arranged by parents are presented to end in harsh ordeal for the female characters. They seem to have ignored oppositional trends in the phenomena of marriages within BrAsian community. The diversity of the lived experiences of BrAsian community has been ignored.

4. What kind of gap does exist between the actual injunctions of Islam regarding marriages and Islam as practiced by diasporic communities?

There exists a great gap in the actual injunctions of Islam, and the Islam practiced by diasporic Muslims and imagined and perceived by the Western people. The actual injunctions of Islam, as have been pointed out in chapters 3 & 4 of the present study, are very clear and give great importance to the

consent of both the parties to marriage. Islam does not approve of forced marriage, and as is clear from the verses of the Holy Quran, the *ahadiths* of the Holy Prophet (quoted in chapter 3), and Islamic marriage laws (quoted in chapter 4), forced marriage has no place in Islam.

Then, a question arises, if Islam forbids forced marriages, why forced marriages occur in the Muslim societies, whether they be in the home countries or in the diasporic condition. The answer to this question is that the occurrence of forced marriages in the Muslim societies does not mean that they are approved by Islam itself. Many evil practices, besides forced marriages, are rampant in the Muslim societies which go against the spirit of Islam. As Keddie (1990) remarks:

In regions that do follow a strict traditional code, however, sanctions for transgressions, based more on tradition than on Islamic law, can be severe. A girl who is seduced may be killed by her brother, as may a wife, caught in adultery by her husband. Otherwise, however, Islamic legal standards of proof for adultery are so severe as to be impossible to meet (p. 91).

Islam is a code of life, and if any of its articles is violated by anybody, he himself will be deemed accountable for his deeds. Many Muslims are not aware of the true spirit of Islam, and they have been very selective in which injunctions of Islam to follow and which not to follow, depending on their ulterior motives. In the words of Keddie (1990), "Qur'anic provisions are often ignored or evaded when they do not fit needs or desires" (pp. 94-95)

Furthermore, forced marriages are not the distinctive features of the Muslim societies alone. They occur in every society. No society of the world is free from this curse, although, it is not permitted by any religion of the world.

Phillips (2007) asserts, "Forced marriage is not condoned in any of the value system" (p. 67).

It is more prevalent in those societies which have their ideal of life collectivity rather than individuality. The guardian principle of the Western culture is individuality, so there are fewer chances of parents interfering in the lives of their children.

The reason why only Muslim communities are then equated with forced marriages when many other communities also do have this practice lies in the politics of representation. Maumoon (1999) remarks, "The Muslim woman thus continues to be seen as trapped, oppressed and subjugated. However, recent research reveals that the actual situation differs largely from this stereotype" (p. 272)

Internationally, the Muslim culture is perceived as a potential threat by the West, and media hype has been created, pushing the Muslims into old the old colonial stereotypes, where all males are patriarchal and barbaric, and all females are subjugated and enslaved. The lived experiences of Muslim women are as varied as that of women of any other community, and this stereotyping of Muslim women is blatantly hegemonic. International politics, especially after the events of 9/11 and 7/9, has gone much against the Muslims. Qutb (1998), while admitting that the status of women in the present day East is low, however, stresses, "The miserable plight of the Eastern women is the result of the emotional, social, political and psychological conditions prevailing in the East today" (p. 125). Muhammad Qutb further explains that

Islam tries to eradicate those evil systems which render women marginalized and subjugated.

Although, there are instances in the New International Version of the Bible which relegate women to a lower status from the modernist point of view, but nobody in the West today claims that Christianity is responsible for the forced marriages or the lower status of women. If the phenomenon of a forced marriage happens in the West where the individuals of a religion other than Islam are involved, that is ascribed to the individuals concerned rather than the whole religious community, or the religion itself. One such instance is the chapter Judah and Tamar where Juda not only makes his daughter in law Tamar sleep with her brother in law, but also makes her pregnant himself, thinking to be a prostitute (NIV Bible, 38:1-30).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmad, F. (2006). The scandal of 'arranged marriages' and pathologisation of BrAsian families. In N. Ali, V. S. Kalra, & S. Sayyid (Eds.), *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain* (pp. 272-288). Uk: C. Hurst & Co.
- Ali, M. (2004). *Brick Lane*. London: Black Swan. (Originally published by Doubleday 2003).
- Ali, N., & Minoui, D. (2010). *I am Nujood, age 10 and divorced*. (L. Coverdale. Trans). New York, NY: Three Rivers Press. (Original work published 2009).
- An-Na'im, A. (2000). Forced marriage. Retrieved from <http://www.soas.ac.uk/honourcrimes/resources/file55689.pdf> on 04.05.2011.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2001). *Key concepts in post-colonial studies*. Taylor & Francis e-Library. (Originally published by Routledge 1998).
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2004). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial studies* (2nd ed.). Taylor & Francis e-Library. (originally published by Routledge 1989).
- Aslam, N. (2004). *Maps for lost lover*. London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1990). The third space: Interview with Homi Bhabha (pp. 207-221). In J. Rutherford (Ed.). *Identity: Community, culture, difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Bhattacharya, S. (2004, July 18). Good bye young lovers. (Review of the Novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*, by N. Aslam). *The Observer*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2004/jul/18/fiction.features>, on 26. 06. 2012.
- Beechey, V. (1979). On patriarchy. *Feminist Review*, 3(1), 66-82. Published by: Palgrave Macmillan Journals. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1394710> Accessed: 10/02/2011.
- Brah, A. (2006). The 'Asian' in Britain. In N. Ali, V. S. Kalra, & S. Sayyid (Eds.), *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain* (pp. 35-61). Uk: C. Hurst & Co.
- Brown, J. M. (2006). *Global South Asians: Introducing the modern diaspora*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Cooke, M. (2007). Women claim Islam: Creating Islamic feminism through literature. In *Feminism and Islam*. (pp. 22-28). Rawalpindi: Alpha Sky Printers.

- Giri, B. P. (2005). Diasporic postcolonialism and its antinomies. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 14 (2/3), 215-235. University of Toronto Press. Accessed at Malakan University on 12/08/2011.
- Halim, S. A. *Muslim Family Laws: containing Muslim family laws ordinance and rules; family courts acts and rules, Muslim personal law (shariat) application acts; dissolution of Muslim marriages act; and bridal gifts (restriction) acts and rules.* Lahore: P.L.D publishers
- Haque, R. (2004). Feminism and Islam. In *Feminism and Islam*. (pp. 1-21). Rawalpindi: Alpha Sky Printers.
- Hesse, B, & Sayyid, S. (2006). Narrating the postcolonial political and the immigrant imaginary (pp. 13-31). In Ali, N., Kalra, V. S., & Sayyid, S. (Eds.). (2006). *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain*, London: Hurst & Company.
- Hester, M., Chantler, k., Gangoli, G., Devgon, J., Sharma, S., & Singleton, A. (2008). Research Summary. Forced marriage: the risk factors and the effect of raising the minimum age for a sponsor, and of leave to enter the UK as a spouse or fiancé(e)-. University of Bristol.
- Hiddleston, J. (2005). Shapes and shadows: (Un)veiling the immigrant in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. *The journal of commonwealth literature*, 40(1), 57-72. Sage publications. DOI: 10.1177/00219894055050665. Downloaded from <http://jcl.sagepub.com> on February 27, 2007.
- Huntington, S. P., (1997). *The clash of civilization: Remaking of world order*. New York, NY: Touchstone.
- Keddie, N. R. (1990, Spring). The past and present of women in the Muslim world. *Journal of World History*, 1(1), 77-108. University of Hawai'i Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20078457> .Accessed: 10/02/2011 07:39
- Kral, F. (2007). Shaky ground and new territorialities in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali and *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 43(1), 65-76. URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449850701219892>. Retrieved on 2 October 2010.
- Lau, L. (2005, Feb). Making the difference: The differing presentations and representations of South Asia in the contemporary fiction of home and diasporic South Asian women writers. *Modern Asian Studies*, 39(1), 237-256. Cambridge University Press. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3876512> .Accessed: 10/02/2011.

- Mandair, A. (2006). (Im)Possible intersections: Religion, (post-)colonial subjectivity and the ideology of multiculturalism. In N. Ali, V. S. Kalra, & S. Sayyid (Eds.), *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain* (pp. 93-107). Uk: C. Hurst & Co.
- Maumoon, D. (1999). Islamism and gender activism: Muslim women's quest for autonomy. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 19(2), 269-283. URL [http:// dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602009908716442](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602009908716442).
- Moghissi, H. (1999). Feminism and Islamic fundamentalism: The limits of post-modern analysis. In *Feminism and Islam*, (pp. 42-63). Rawalpindi: Alpha Sky Printers.
- Mohanty, C. T. (1988, Autumn). Under Western eye: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, 30, 61-88. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici=0141-7789%28198823%290%3A30%3c61%3AUWEFSA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4>. Retrieved on 13/08/2011.
- Mojab, S. (1994). Islamic feminism: Alternative or contradiction In *Feminism and Islam*. (pp. 29-35). Rawalpindi: Alpha Sky Printers.
- Mullah, D. F. (1906). *Mullah's Muhammadan law*, 20th ed, (Pakistan), 1995. Revised by Mian KHurshid Ahmad. Lahore: Mansoor Book House.
- Pandey, M. (2003). *Feminism in contemporary British and Indian English fiction*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
- Perfect, M. (2008). The multicultural bildungsroman: Stereotypes in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 43(3) 109-120. Sage publications. Retrieved from, <http://jcl.sagepub.com> on August 27, 2008.
- Peters, T. (2005, May 8). Wages of living in sin are dire for Pakistani émigrés. (Review of the Novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*, by N. Aslam). *San Francisco Chronicle*, B-6. Retrieved from <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/05/08/RVGC7CK44G1.DTL&type=books> on 09/06/2011
- Phillips, A. (2007). *Multiculturalism without culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Qutb, M. (1988). *Islam the misunderstood religion*. (14th ed. Pakistan). Lahore: Islamic Publicaitons. (PVT) LTD.

- Radhakrishnan, R. (1993, Autumn). Postcoloniality and the boundaries of identity. *Callaloo*, 16 (4), 750-771. On "Post-Colonial Discourse": A Special Issue. The Johns Hopkins University Press. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2932208> .
Accessed: 10/02/2011 06:36
- Ringrose, P. (2007). 'Beur' narratives of self-identity: Beyond boundaries and binaries. In A. H. Ronning and L. Johannessen, (Eds). *Readings of the Particular: The Postcolonial in the Postcolonial*. (pp.21-37) Amsterdam-New York, NY.
- Robson, D. (2004, July 13). The deadly honour. (Review of *Novel Maps for Lost Lovers*, by N. Aslam). *Telegraph*.
- Sahih Bukhari*. (M. M. Khan trans.). Created: 2009, Version: 0910112346244624-21
Retrieved from http://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single/en_Sahih_Al-Bukhari.pdf. on 25/07/2011.
- Sahih Muslim*. (A. Siddiqui, trans.). Created: 2009, Version: 0911052238593859- 30.
Retrieved from <http://www.biharanjuman.org/hadith/Sahih-Muslim-english-translation.pdf> on 26.02.2012.
- Said, E. W. (2006). "The mind of winter. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (Eds). *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (pp.439-442). London/New York: Routledge.
- Sayyid, S. (2006). BrAsians: Postcolonial people, ironic citizens. In N. Ali, V. S. Kalra, & S. Sayyid (Eds.), *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain* (pp. 1-10). Uk: C. Hurst & Co.
- Shamsie, K. (2004, June 26). All you need is love. (Review of the Novel *Maps for lost lovers*, by N. Aslam). *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2004/jun/26/featuresreviews.guardianreview17> on 05.05.2011
- Sunan Abudawud*. English Translation. Retrieved from <http://www.biharanjuman.org/hadith/sunan-abu-dawud-english.pdf>. on 02.02.2012.
- The Bible*. New International Version. Retrieved from <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NIV&search=all> on 5.08.2012.
- The Noble Quran*. (M. T. Al-Hilali, & M. M. Khan. Trans.). Retrieved from <http://www.dar-us-salam.com/TheNobleQuran/index.html> on 4.03.2012
- Upstone, S. (2007, December). Same old, same old. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 43 (3), 336-349. <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>. DOI: 10.1080/17449850701669666.

- Waterman, D. (2010). Memory and cultural Identity: Negotiating modernity in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*. *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*, 2, (2). <http://www.pakistaniaat.org/article/view/5593>. Retrieved on 15.02.2012.
- Weingarten, J. (2011). Traditional claustrophobia — intersections of gender and religious identities in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*. In *Transfers. A Postgraduate eJournal for Comparative Literature & Cultural Studies*, (1). <http://www.slif.qmul.ac.uk/research/anglogerman/etransfers/docs/43367.pdf> Retrieved on 10.02.2012.
- Wilson, J. (2005, August). The family and Change: contemporary second generation british asian fiction. In I. Visser, & H. Disler (Ed.), *Family fictions: The family in contemporary postcolonial Literatures in English* (pp. 109-120). Proceeds of an international conference, hosted by the Department of English, University of Groningen, the Netherlands, 17-19 November 2004. CDS Research Report No. 23, ISSN 1385-9218.
- Zine, J. (2008, Spring). Lost in translation: Writing back from the margin. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 24 (1), 110-116. Indiana University Press. Retrieved at Malakand University on 12 August 2011.