

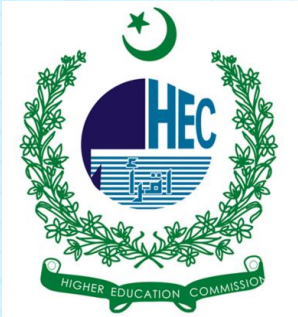
Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>

Analyzing Ayah's Fulfillment of Psychological Needs: A Glasserian Approach to Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy-Man



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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the character of Ayah in the pre-partition setting of *Ice Candy-Man* (1988) by Bapsi Sidhwa through the lens of Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory, which pinpoints five core psychological needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. The current study tends to use qualitative research and utilizes close reading technique of textual analysis. This paper tends to examine how, within the culturally diverse and relatively peaceful atmosphere of pre-partition Lahore, Ayah—a beautiful and socially aware Hindu woman—actively fulfills each of these needs by using various tactics despite being a member of a patriarchal society. The paper highlights how Ayah's life, while constrained by class and gender, is marked by emotional richness, subtle agency, and psychological resilience in a multicultural environment. Analyzing Ayah's choices and interactions before the chaos of Partition allows a deeper understanding of how self-directed and autonomous she is and how ordinary individuals strive to meet their intrinsic psychological needs within the limits of their social worlds.

Key Words: Agency, Ayah, Choice Theory, Freedom, Fun, Gender, Love, Power, Pre- Partition, Sidhwa, William Glasser

Introduction

Ice-Candy Man (1988) is a novel written by Bapsi Sidhwa, subsequently published in the United States as *Cracking India* (1991). The novel is set during the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. The main setting of the novel is Lahore. It is historical fiction narrated in a first- person perspective through a child narrator, Lenny. This novel is a clear document of the multicultural harmony among Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis in the Indian sub-continent in the pre- partition scenario. This novel aims to explore the impacts and horror of partition in 1947. Moreover, the novel serves as a commentary on ethnic hatred and religious intolerance that fueled the violence. The novel also focuses on trauma, violence, especially sexual violence performed on the bodies of women and displacement during partition.

Ayah, one of the main characters of the novel *Ice-Candy Man*, can be analyzed through Glasser theory of Choice. Ayah is a charming lady of eighteen years, belonging to a Hindu family. Her complexion is chocolate brown, having round and full blown cheeks and a short- height. She serves as a nanny in a well- off Parsi household for a polio-ridden girl, Lenny. As a child narrator, Lenny is free of biases. She is a keen observer and gives a deep insight into

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

the character of Ayah by narrating her actions and motivations with complete honesty. The experiences and actions of the character, Ayah, highlight how human behavior is driven by efforts to satisfy five basic needs as suggested by the Choice theory. Ayah's character fits into the psychological framework of Choice theory, since her actions are not random, rather rooted in basic human needs. Ayah chooses a role as a nanny in the Parsi household, an influential family, which provides her with protection and basic needs of survival. Ayah fulfills her need for love through her genuine relationships with a man of her choice. Using her beauty, Ayah asserts significant social power. Within the group of her admirers, Ayah enjoys a degree of freedom which is uncommon for a woman in during 1940's. Her moments with Lenny (the child narrator), with the family members, and with her group of admirers are filled with joy and laughter, which Glasser considers important for mental well-being.

Literary analysis of the novel *Ice-Candy Man* often portrays Ayah primarily as a victim of partition violence (Younas et al., 2023). There is a notable lack of scholarly attention to her pre-partition autonomy, self-directed behavior and psychological complexity of her character. Existing studies tend to portray her as an object of desire, thereby neglecting the opportunity to interpret her character through a psychological model. This study aims to fill the gap by examining how Ayah's actions reflect conscious efforts to satisfy her basic needs in the pre-partition scenario of the novel, thereby reasserting her role as a fully realized individual rather than merely a victim.

The current research aims to figure out the ways in which Ayah satisfies her psychological needs as mentioned in Glasser's Choice theory. Secondly, the study examines the character of Ayah as autonomous and self-directed in the pre-partition setting of *Ice-Candy Man*.

Research Questions

How does Ayah in Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* present psychological agency by satisfying basic human needs as mentioned in Glasser's Choice theory?

In what ways does the behavior of Ayah in the pre-partition setting of *Ice Candy Man* reveal her as a psychological autonomous character?

Literature Review

The emergence of post-colonial writers in the twentieth century has been a vital contribution to the landscape of the world. These writers have sought to reject the colonialist ideology and cultural supremacy by asserting their own cultural values and identity. Post-colonial writers challenged existing power structures through their works and created new and independent narratives of their culture and identity. Which ultimately helps to reshape our understanding of the history and culture of post-colonial societies. Many

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post-colonial writers have given voice to the marginalized segments of society. Sidhwa's work has highlighted the issues of gender, class, and race. In *Ice-Candy Man*, Sidhwa narrates the story of a young girl Lenny, during 1947 and how she comes to know about the social, political, and religious division that was created as a result of partition. Sidhwa's work is an example of post-colonial work which challenges the oppressive system (Kumar, 2015).

The partition of the Indian subcontinent is a significant historical event that resulted in the formation of two nations, India and Pakistan. This period witnessed an immense amount of violence and displacement. Especially women's experiences were fraught with fear, horror, and violence. In *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa explores the silencing of female bodies, and the victories celebrated on their bodies to shape power dynamics in post-colonial Pakistan (Ghilzai, 2024). The novel demonstrates how women were used as a tool by men to express hatred. Violence was committed against women by men of the opposite religion to degrade and humiliate their enemies, since women are considered as a symbol of honor and virtue.

Bapsi Sidhwa uses the perspective of a child narrator, Lenny. Daiya (2011) argues that focus on child's perception of the violence allows for an ethical representation of the exploitation and sexualization that partition brought with it. In his 2008 work, Mitra shows that this novel is the record of the brutality of the formation of two post-colonial countries. It also demonstrates how traditional patriarchal systems affect the formation of nations. Begum (2012) explores the traumatic experiences of women during partition and the psychological effects of those events on them. Singh (2016) argues that through this novel Sidhwa has given voice to Parsi community which stays neutral throughout the course of partition. Sultan and Awan (2017) analyze the novel from feminist perspective of Simon de Beauvoir. They focus on how women are objectified and how the novel encourages women to stand against injustice. Similarly, Khan et al. (2019) argue how Sidhwa uses feminist perspective in her writings. They explore that Sidhwa refuses to follow the patriarchal codes of conduct and gives the same freedom to her female characters as enjoyed by male in a patriarchal society. Choudary (2020) explores the impacts of the partition of 1947 on the psychopathology of children by studying the character of Lenny. Abbas (2021) explores how Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy Man* celebrates the indigenous culture and identity by rejecting the Eurocentric historical constructs.

Glasser's theory (1998) has broader applicability across various disciplines. Disciplines like psychology, education, philosophy, literature, and politics use this theory. Zeeman (2006) examines the practicality of this theory for

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

academic purposes. Where a student's success can be measured in terms of their changed behavior. Wubbolding (2017) opines that Glasser's theory is all about needs and personal urges that motivates a person to mold his/ her behavior. In such context, Ahmad et al. (2025) have conducted a study which aims to investigate the behavioral changes in the character of Changez, the protagonist of the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) through the lens of Choice Theory. The protagonist is an admirer of the West in the beginning of the novel, but after the incident of 9/11, he was exposed to a number of choices resulting in changes in his perception and behavior.

Bacha et al. (2025) conducted a study using Choice theory as a theoretical framework to analyze the character of Nawabdin Electrician in the novel *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (2009). The researchers investigate the different choices made by the protagonist and the effects of those choices in his personal and social life.

Choice Theory has been applied to numerous works but there is a lack of scholarly attention given to the application of this theory to Sidhwa's work, *Ice-Candy Man*, which has prompted the researcher to conduct a study by applying Choice Theory to the character of Ayah in *Ice-Candy Man*.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a qualitative research design to analyze the character of Ayah in Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy Man* through the lens of Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory. This study aims to use textual analysis grounded in psychological literary criticism. This study tends to adopt a close reading strategy to analyze the pre-partition setting of the novel with a major focus on Ayah's interaction with other characters, decisions, motivations and choices made by her to satisfy the needs as mentioned in the Choice Theory. The aim is to offer a contextualized understanding of Ayah's choices and internal motivations within a patriarchal society. The novel is read with a major focus on identifying moments in the text where Ayah's decisions or actions align with the fulfillment of five basic needs as outlined in Glasser's Choice Theory.

This theory puts forward the concept that the behaviors chosen by individuals are driven by five psychological needs. These needs are needed for survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. The most important human needs are survival (physical component) and love (mental component). Without physical (nurturing) and emotional (love), an infant will not survive to attain power, freedom, and fun. It means these needs are inter- dependent. Moreover, this theory posits that if a child is without human touch, it can stunt his mental, emotional, and even physical growth no matter how well-nourished and intellectually stimulated a child is. William Glasser talks about

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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five essential psychological needs in his Choice Theory. The psychological needs as suggested by Glasser's Choice theory are under.

Analysis and Discussion

This section presents a psychological analysis of Ayah, a main character in Ice-Candy Man through the theoretical lens of Glasser's Choice Theory. Glasser's theory consists of five basic psychological needs - survival, love, power, freedom, and fun. Ayah, despite being a marginalized Hindu woman, belongs to the lower class and a member of the patriarchal society on the brink of partition actively navigates her environment in ways that denote a persistent effort to fulfill these needs.

The psychological needs and the ways in which Ayah fulfills these needs are discussed below.

The need for Survival

The need for survival is the most primal among all five needs of the Choice theory. In Ice-Candy Man, Ayah fulfills her survival needs through adaptive choices that ensures her social security, physical safety and economic independence within the pre-partition setting of the novel. The ways in which Ayah satisfies her need for survival are mentioned below:

To satisfy her need for survival- as suggested in Choice Theory- Ayah works as a nanny in a Parsi household owned by Mr. and Mrs. Sethi. Ayah takes care of a polio ridden girl, Lenny Sethi. Thus, she maintains her economic stability and fulfills her needs for survival. This job provides her with food, shelter and basic requirements of survival. She maintains respectful boundaries with Lenny's family and performs her job with honesty. She balances her personal desires with her role as a care giver, showing that she is aware of her dependence on her job for survival.

Ayah is a Hindu by religion and chooses a job as a nanny in a Parsi household shows how self-directed she is in making her decisions and choices. Her decisions are carefully crafted by her. On the one hand, Ayah knows that the Lenny family is a well-to-do and influential family, so people will respect her. On the other hand, she knows the Paris community is neutral towards communal tensions, which will provide her with a relatively stable and safe environment. As narrated in the novel, "we must hunt with the hounds and run with the hare!" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.24). This strategic positioning is important for lower class women in a highly stratified and gendered society.

Moreover, in the novel, Ayah is described as a charming lady of eighteen years. Ayah uses her beauty as a resource. She tactically manages to maintain a certain level of survival. Using her "chocolaty chemistry" she engages men belonging to different professions and uses them for her own benefits. As the

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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narrator explains, " I gain Ayah's good will and complicity by accommodating her needs to meet friends and relatives" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.26). Ayah knows how to ensure her survival in a male dominated society by adjusting her choices according to situations. As the narrator in the novel explains, "Ayah has acquired two new admirers, a Chinaman and the Pathan." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.69). Ayah befriends the Chaina-man, because he is a merchant and supplier of goods and a good source of material benefits. She makes a choice of making relationships with him by using her charm and beauty to trap him.

"Ayah knows well how to handle his bold- tilted eyes and his alien rudeness" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.69).

Ayah knows well the tactics to trap men by her flirtatious and playful looks and talks. She uses the trick to trap Chinaman, when he shows her different colorful silk clothes. Ayah says,

'Oh-ho', she says, all singy – songy. 'I have no monneey – how I buy?' (Sidhwa, 1988, p.69). The Chinaman is trapped in Ayah's playful gaze and wants to be slayed more by her flirtatious talks. "Chinaman, pulling Ayah to squat beside him and, retaining his hold, engages her in a staccato and desultory conversation" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.69). Ayah becomes successful in her scheme. As a result, he provides her with charming silk clothes and tea- warmer free of cost. As the narrator explains in the lines, "Mother wonders why we are suddenly swamped with such a persistent display of embroidered bosky-silk and linen tea-cozies, tray-cloths, trolley sets, tablecloths, counterpanes, pillowcases and bedsheets" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.70).

Ayah's Pathan admirer name is Sharbat Khan. He is also a friend with benefits. This relationship is also based on give and take. He is a knife- sharper. As the narrator in the novel explains, "The attentions of Ayah's Pathan admirer also benefit our household. All our kitchen knives, table knives, Mother's scissors and paperknife and Hari's garden shears and Adi's blunt penknife suddenly develop glittering razor edges" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.70). He too, is slayed by Ayah through her coquettish glances to manipulate him and satisfy her needs as mentioned in the Glasser's Choice Theory.

She receives gifts and favors from Sharbat Khan as we can see in the text, "Ayah shuffles her bare feet and fidgets with her sari. Her eyes are shy, full of messages. 'Bring me pistachios,' she says again. 'And almonds: they are good for the brain" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.72). Finally, after deeply analyzing the behavior and choices of Ayah, the researcher arrives at the conclusion that in Ice Candy Man, Ayah's character is shaped by her choices which reflect her underlying motivations and needs as described by William Glasser's Choice theory. Ayah shows emotional intelligence which is crucial for survival. She adjusts her

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

behavior depending on the audience_ more nurturing with Lenny, more teasing with her admirers and more respectful with Lenny's parents. Thus, the researcher proves that Ayah, according to Glasser's theory, is not surviving by luck, rather she is making strategic choices and using psychological tactics to satisfy her need for survival in the pre- partition setting of the novel.

Need for Love and Belonging

The need for and belonging is one the core elements of Choice theory. Choice theory suggests that once survival needs are met, individuals have a strong need for meaningful relationships and connections with others. In Ice Candy Man, despite her status as a servant and being a member of a patriarchal society, Ayah actively navigates her environment to form meaningful, affectionate and socially engaging bonds.

Ayah possesses a gorgeous body and several admirers. The narrator of the novel describes her as "chocolate brown, short women, round and plum" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.13). Though she has a group of admirers including Masseur - the Hotel Cook, the Gardner, Sharbat Khan and many others. Even the beggars, holy men, old men and many young people are admirers of her feminine grace and elegance. She is the common link that binds them together despite belonging to diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. This magnetism gives her a sense of importance. Through the attention of her admirers, Ayah fulfills the need to be valued and noticed which directly satisfies her need for love according to Glasser's Choice theory.

Among her many admirers, Ayah, being aware of the psychological need for love, develops a genuine romantic relationship with Masseur (the massager). Masseur seems to care for her genuinely whereas other admirers merely objectify her. It is clearly evident from the novel that both Ayah and Masseur feel differently for each other. "Masseur turns, making room for Ayah, and his eyes, full of honey, shower her with his maddening dreams. They lie, side by side." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.106).

Ayah loves Masseur genuinely as she often sings a song which is usually sung by Masseur, 'Siski hawa ne lee: Har pati Kanp oothi. The breeze sucked in his breath ... The leaves trembled, breathless.' It's Masseur's song. He sings it in a rumbling, soulful baritone: and he sings often. (Sidhwa, 1988, p.106)

It means that Ayah thinks of Masseur even mindlessly. The narrator further describes their relationship as Ayah is tempted and moved even by the voice of Masseur. "Masseur's voice lures Ayah." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.107).

The narrator describes how passionately Masseur waits for Ayah daily in the park which has been symbolized with the beautiful feathers of the peacock. "The heavy pleats of his Multani-silk lungi fall in slender folds to his ankles as

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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leaning against the paling he waits for Ayah. And when she comes, the peacocks spread their tail feathers. And Masseur's movements unfold the rich pleats in his checked lungi." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.107).

At the peak of partition crises, when Hindus and Sikhs are compelled to leave Lahore being a Muslim majority city, Ayah cries in Masseur's lap and sharing a secret with him that she intends to go to Amritsar. Masseur consoles her and tells her, " no one will touch a hair on your head, I don't know why you don't marry me, you know I worship you." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.139).

To which Ayah replies," I will always be yours" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.139). These lines show their mutual love and connection. This emotional relationship of Ayah with Masseur gives her a sense of emotional belonging and romantic validation, fulfilling her inner desire to be loved truly, not just desired as mentioned in the Choice theory.

In conclusion, after carefully analyzing the novel, the researcher arrives at the conclusion that Ayah is not merely a passive object of desire, rather an emotionally intelligent woman making intentional choices as stated in Glasser's Choice theory. Ayah built a deep relationship with Masseur based on true love that satisfies her psychological needs for love in the pre-partition setting of the novel.

Need for Power

The need for Power is also considered as one of the essential needs in the Glasser's Choice theory. In *Ice Candyman*, Ayah satisfies her need for power—as outlined in Glasser's Choice theory, primarily through social influence, personal agency and control over her relationships in the pre partition setting of the novel. Although Ayah belongs to a lower class Hindu family, she navigates her environment with charm and intelligence asserting power in many ways.

While she enjoys the attention of her group of admirers, at the same time she maintains physical and emotional boundaries to protect herself. She teases and flirts but maintains boundaries, choosing when to respond and when to walk away. This selective engagement gives her a sense of power and control over her admirers in the pre-partition setting of the novel. In the novel *Ice-Candy Man*, Ayah is projected as one with abundant sensuality, which makes her extremely attractive.

The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her. Stub ended twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, marked in piety, shove aside their pretenses to ogle her with lust. Hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with the

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unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships. (Sidhwa, 1988, p.13)

The lines indicate that though Ayah is sexually desired by men, she is not reduced to a commodity. When men compete for Ayah's attention, she is the "judge, not prize" (Stroke, 2008). Kleist (2011) argues that Ayah remains out of control and exhibits skills to control her admirers (men) around her.

According to Hai (2000), in the novel, Ayah is portrayed as, "the magical goddess of racial harmony, the locus of convergent desire, the border terrain that neutralizes ethnic or religious differences. Surrounded by her circle of admirers in the park.... Ayah reigns.... over an ethnic spectrum of working class males: cooks, gardeners, Masseur's, traders, butchers, wrestlers, and Ice Candyman (p. 398).

The aforementioned quotation indicates that Ayah's "chocolate chemistry" endows her with the ability to partake actively in the performance of her sexual desires with men from different cultural and religious backgrounds (Sidhwa, 1988, p.18). By doing so, she challenges patriarchal codes of behavior by rejecting notions of chastity. As the narrator in the novel narrates, "She has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under her cheap colorful saris and the half spheres beneath her short sari blouses" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.13). These lines imply that Ayah was fully aware of her sensuality and does not bother about the normative concept of feminine modesty. Ayah's beauty and magnetism makes her a focal point of male attention and infatuation. Thus, the supposedly unbridled sexuality of Ayah bestows her with influence and power on her surroundings, especially on her group of admirers as suggested by Glasser in his Choice theory. Moreover, Ayah demonstrates power through her emotional autonomy by choosing to pursue a relationship with Masseur, a man whom she believes truly cares for her, rather than giving in to an aggressive admirer like Ice Candyman. This choice shows her capacity to assert her own desires rather than to be led by other expectations.

Finally, the researcher arrives at the conclusion that in the pre-partition scenario of Ice Candy Man, Ayah fulfills her need for power, as suggested by Glasser, through confident self-expression and selective emotional engagement. With the limits imposed by patriarchy, she exercises power through her sensuality by maintaining control over her relationships and choices, asserting meaningful forms of personal agency.

Need for Freedom

In Ice Candy Man, the character of Ayah satisfies her psychological need for freedom, as framed by Glasser's theory of Choice- through freedom of movement, freedom of self-expression and autonomy in making relationships.

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Despite being a member of patriarchal society and having a position of domestic servant, Ayah actively carves out spaces where she can seek freedom and assert autonomy.

Ayah moves through public parks, gardens, and cheap restaurants and interacts freely with a multicultural group of admirers – Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi and Sikh. Such kind of freedom is seldom offered to women of her social class. Unlike women of a patriarchal society, Ayah is not confined merely to indoor activities, rather her freedom to walk, talk, socialize and choose her company is a clear indication of social, physical and psychological autonomy.

Ayah expresses herself freely and without any fear. As we see in the novel, when Ice Candyman, one of Ayah's admirers, tries to touch Ayah under her sari, she becomes angry and stands up. The narrator explains, "catching us unawares, his ingenuous toe darts beneath Ayah's sari. Ayah gives a start. Angrily smacking his leg and smoothing her sari, she stands up. 'Duffa ho! Go!' (Sidhwa, 1988, p.34). This clear shut up call by Ayah indicates her freedom of self-expression. Ice Candyman invites Ayah to go to the cinema with him, but she refuses, "I told you I've work to do,'says Ayah, close to losing patience.' (Sidhwa, 1988, p.32). It is another instance of Ayah's freedom of self-expression, which is an essential element in Glasser's Choice theory. Another woman in Ayah's place would have said 'yes' to the offer in such a male dominated society. But Ayah has the guts to say 'no' to anybody in front of her. Ayah is neither submissive nor silent. Her ability to speak her mind reflects her inner sense of freedom. Ayah laughs, flirts, talks and teases openly. This kind of psychological freedom is essential to Choice theory.

Ayah also maintains an agency over her romantic interests. While she engages in coquetry, she remains in control of how much physical or emotional intimacy she offers. Ayah chooses to love Masseur genuinely out of a large group of admirers, which signals her freedom to make emotional decisions without any fear even within a patriarchal framework. Even though a male dominated society expects a working class woman to be modest and invisible, Ayah seems to challenge the notion. She wears "cheap colorful saris", enjoys being admired, and embraces her individuality.

Ayah is Hindu by religion but chooses to wear shalwar – kamize quite deliberately. When Ice Candyman asks her the reason, she replies, "'Arrey baba,'says Ayah spreading her hands in a fetching gesture, 'do you know what salary ayahs who wear Punjabi clothes get? Half the salary of the Goan ayahs who wear saris! I'm not so simple!' (Sidhwa, 1988, p.34). It shows her psychological and physical freedom in terms of dress sense and a clear

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

rebellion from Hindu tradition.

In short, the researcher arrives at the conclusion that in the pre-partition setting of the novel, Ayah satisfies her need for freedom through her mobility, relationship choices, expressive personality, and offering challenge to societal norms. Though she lives in a patriarchal society, she finds meaningful ways to exercise autonomy which is vital to Glasser's theory of choice.

Need for Fun

Fun is a key component of Glasser's Choice theory. Ayah fulfills her need for fun through playfulness, her engagement with both adults and children, and social interactions. Fun, according to Glasser, is not only limited to entertainment but also includes creativity, joy, and mental stimulation, all which Ayah actively seeks in the pre-partition setting of the novel.

Ayah's relationship with Lenny, the child narrator, and her brother Aadi is filled with affectionate humor and playful interaction. She takes Lenny to different places to feel fresh. "Ayah takes Lenny, now free of pain, in her stroller for an outing to the nearby zoo" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.17). Sometimes, Ayah takes Lenny to Queen Victoria Park to meet with her group of suitors for the sake of entertainment. "Ayah takes me up Queens Road, past the YWCA, past the Freemasons' Lodge, which she calls 'The Ghost Club', and across the Mall to the Queen's statue in the park opposite the Assembly Chambers..." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.25). Thus Ayah, whose job is to make Lenny comfortable and happy, fulfills her duty with complete honesty. Both Lenny and Ayah adore each other.

Lenny, the child narrator, says, "She (Ayah) takes me to fairs, cheap restaurants and slaughter-houses." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.26). Ayah enjoys being with Lenny and her brother Aadi. Being polio-ridden, Lenny is the center of attention, so indirectly Ayah also enjoys the attention. These moments provide her with the opportunities to express humor and laughter. On the other hand, Aadi is a fair-skinned boy and the center of attention everywhere because out of the Gora-Complex, people think of him to be the child of an English woman and adore him. Ayah calls him "little English Baba!" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.31). "Ayah is so proud of Adi's paucity of pigment. Sometimes she takes us to Lawrence Gardens and encourages him to run across the space separating native babies and English babies. The ayahs of the English babies hug him and fuss over him and permit him to romp with their privileged charges. Adi undoes the bows of little girls with blue eyes in scratchy organdie dresses and wrestles with tallow-haired boys in the grass. Ayah beams." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.31).

Aadi's presence in the group of Ayah and Lenny adds to siblings-like energy, which Ayah enjoys and supervises with amusement. These outings provide a break from the tiring household chores and allow Ayah to enjoy the curiosity

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

and spontaneity of the child world. Which is essential for psychological wellbeing according to Glasser's Choice theory.

Ayah satisfies her psychological need for fun also by meeting frequently with her group of admirers - a diverse mix of Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian through their flattery, teasing and competition to get her attention in the pre-partition setting of the novel. Among her suitors, Ice Candy man and Pathan (Sharbat Khan) entertain her the most.

The character of Sharbat Khan is unique. He entertains Ayah in distinctive ways. The Pathan, often described as large, strong, and stoic, provides a kind of silent humor through his appearance. His seriousness and bulky presence amuse Ayah. "He leans across his bicycle, talking, and she shifts from foot to foot, smiling, ducking and twisting spherically." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.70). Pathan's loyal, steady presence becomes a form of silent flattery that Ayah enjoys. "Ayah is nervous in his presence: given to sudden movement; her goddess-like calm replaced by breath-stopping shyness" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.70).

His commitment acts as a kind of romantic gesture, amusing Ayah and feeding into the playful power she exercises over her admirers.

She has taken to sticking a flower in her hair, plucked from our garden. They don't need to touch. His presence radiates a warmth that is different from the dark heat generated by Masseur's fingers - the lightning-strikes of Ice-candy-man's toes (Sidhwa, 1988, p.70).

Sharbat Khan narrates the stories of leopards in his village to Ayah, "There are leopards in the granite ravines and stony summits surrounding his village" (Sidhwa, 1988, p.72).

Ayah enjoys these stories, "Hai Ram!" exclaims Ayah, her lips trembling with concern. 'Don't they attack?' (Sidhwa, 1988, p.72). Seeing the surprise and fear on Ayah's face, he exaggerates the story, "We mountain folk know what to do. We touch our foreheads and courteously say "Salaam-alekum mamajee [uncle]" and they let us alone' (Sidhwa, 1988, p.72). Thus, Pathan fulfils Ayah's need for fun -as outlined in Choice theory -through his comic role in the pre-partition setting of the novel.

Ice Candyman, one of the entertaining characters in the pre- partition setting of the novel, also serves to satisfy Ayah's need for fun in many ways, i.e. making himself a dynamic part of her social life and amusement. The narrator calls him 'reconteur', "Ice-candy-man is a raconteur. He is also an absorbing gossip. When the story is extra good, and the tentative toes polite, Ayah tolerates them." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.27). According to the narrator, Ice Candyman is an amazing storyteller and gossiper. But along with entertaining Ayah with his brilliant art of storytelling, he also tries to find an opportunity to flirt with

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Ayah and touch her under her sari, Things love to crawl beneath Ayah's sari. Ladybirds, glow-worms, Ice-candy-man's toes. She dusts them off with impartial nonchalance. I keep an eye on Ice-candy-man's toes. Sometimes, in the course of an engrossing story, they travel so cautiously that both Ayah and I are taken unawares" (Sidhwa, 1998, p 27).

Sometimes when Ice Candyman teases Ayah and she becomes angry, he punishes himself through silly and childish techniques to bring a smile on Ayah's face.

"Ice candy-man coils forward to squat and, threading his supple arms through his calves from the back, latches on to his ear lobes. It is a punishing posture called 'the cock', used in Urdu-medium schools to discipline urchins. He looks so ridiculous that Ayah and I laugh." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.34). Ice Candy-man entertains Ayah by inviting her to her favorite restaurant. "And if the sale has been quick and lucrative, as on this Saturday afternoon just before Christmas, he treats us to a meal at Ayah's favorite wayside restaurant in Mozang Chungi." (Sidhwa, 1988, p.32).

Finally, the researchers arrive at the conclusion that in the pre-partition setting of Ice Candyman, Ayah satisfies her psychological need for fun through interaction with Lenny and Aadi. Ayah fulfills her need for fun by finding joy in everyday interactions with her suitors, using her beauty, personality, and charm to create a life filled with laughter and emotional engagement. Ayah's life reflects a vibrant enjoyment of human connection, beauty, and freedom, which all contribute to her psychological well-being, as suggested by Glasser's Choice theory.

Conclusion

In the pre partition setting of the novel Ice Candy Man written by Bapsi Sidhwa, Ayah emerges as an elaborately stacked character who seems to actively satisfy her basic psychological needs- i.e., survival, love, power, freedom, and fun -as suggested by William Glasser's theory of Choice. The researcher found out that even within the confines of a patriarchal society, Ayah satisfies her need for survival by working as a nanny in an influential Parsi family and using her group of admirers for her survival gains. She finds love through genuine emotional engagement with Masseur. She asserts power through her sensuality. She is desired by men and can attract men's attention like a magnet and her by using her chocolaty chemistry. She enjoys a kind of power which is far from the reach of a woman belonging to her social status. She satisfies her psychological need for freedom as per Choice Theory through emotional choices and wandering in public parks, gardens,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

restaurants, slaughterhouses etc. She satisfies her need for fun through playful interactions with Lenny, Aadi, and her diverse group of admirers—especially the Ice-Candy-Man and Sharbat Khan (Pathan). The researcher found out that Ayah, being a patriarchal and lower class member is not surviving by luck, rather she uses different tactics to fulfill her needs and carves out a dignified position for herself. By examining Ayah through Glasser's theory, we gain a deeper understanding of how even marginalized individuals strive to meet their intrinsic psychological needs as mentioned in the Glasser's Choice theory and assert their humanity within male dominated society.

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