From Shoots To Roots: A Post Colonial Feminist Analysis of "My Daughter, Mona" and "First Love" by Rukhsana Ahmad
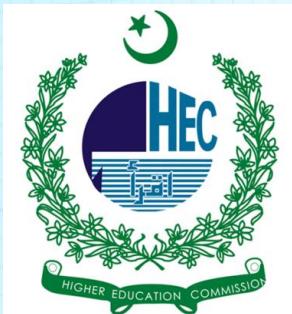
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Abstract

The present research aims to identify how do gender roles shape the experiences of second-generation diasporic women and how second generation women cope up with this situation in two short stories of Rukhsana Ahmad " My Daughter, Mona" and "First Love". Diasporic prose and poetry depicts the harsh realities of gender base issue as ethnical, alienation, identity issues, tracing back roots and writer resistance against the dilemma of tranquil western life. Post colonial diaspora literature exposes the tormented experience of second generation women of South Asian diaspora in west. All the problems or discrimination face by second generation diasporic women has been analyze in the light of postcolonial and transnational feminism and Borderland theory. The reseach follows the discriptive qualitative method of analysis and close text reading approach. The original text of the stories, articles, research paper and different books have been utilize while presenting the role of gender in shaping the lives and gender base discrimination to shape the experiences of second generation diasporic women. The research find-out the second generation diasporic women in the west faces multiple challenges due to gender that effects their lives negatively and they follow cope up mechanisms in this difficult situation.

Keywords: Borderland, South Asian Diaspora, Second generation women, Inter-generational conflict, Alienation, Fractured identity, Third world space, Gender segregation.

Introduction

The colonial enterprise in the global North had a crucial impact on the nations of the Global South. Post-colonial era has seen mass migration from the newly independent states towards to Western countries in search of better living conditions. This immigration to European countries led to the formation of diasporic communities across the western nations. The term "Diaspora" is defined as "ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with other countries of origin, their homeland" (Sheffers 1986, p. 3). The resettlement of such communities in a cultural environment distinct from their homeland is quite challenging. Therefore, diaspora communities face difficulties to adapt to the new cultural norms and values in the Western countries.

This is because their individual sense of self shattered on disrupted while crossing the physical borders of their states. Members of such communities feel yearning for their lost individual identities while some trying to reconnect with their original ancestral and cultural heritage because of marginalization on the basis of race and gender in the multiculture environment of Europe. This makes the construction of their personal identities a central approach within the field of Diaspora studies. In Oxford Dictionary, the term 'identity' is defined as the fact of being who or what a person or thing is, it became a pivotal term or concern not only for those immigrant individuals but also came under the light of literary theory. In postcolonial theory, "othering" refers to the way colonized individuals are marginalized imperial discourse, they are identified by their differences from the central and are often seen as subjects to be dominated by the imperial "ego"(Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1999, p. 168). Such conditions are not just faced by the members of diaspora communities who first migrated to the West but with the passage of time, the formation of second-generation diaspora has given rise to further complexities. They find themselves othered on account of reasons that slightly differ from their parents. This is because being born and raised entirely in the West, they have no memories of their home country. Therefore, their issues of exploration of identity, alienation, hybridity, transectionalism, second generation are more specific to them.

Various diasporic writers attempt to portray only the reality and issues that are faced by diasporic communities. Against this backdrop, writers including Rukhsana Ahmad, Kamila Shamsie and Sara Suleri emerged to share the realities of diasporic communities and explore the complex relationship of cultural displacement and identity formation, specifically focusing on the South Asian diasporic females and their struggle for making identity.

In Rukhsana Ahmad's book *The Gatekeeper`s wife and Other Stories* (2014), the stories titled as *"First Love"* and *"My Daughter Mona"* highlight identity issues, borderland, isolation, homelessness, hybridization, cultural heritage and different belonging with in Pakistan diasporic communities. Rukhsana Ahmad chooses her central characters from second-generation females like Shah and Mona exposes the hardships of maintaining cultural identity in new environments, reflecting the

complex identity crisis that arises from crossing physical borders or boundaries Second generation diaspora includes the children of immigrants that are born but the immigrants are still living in their host countries (Christou & King, 2010, p. 12). Thus, by shedding light on diasporic issues, both of Rukhsana Ahmad's stories demonstrate the complexities of identity formation in diasporic contexts, emphasizing the importance of this concept in understating post-colonial feminist scholarship.

Statement of the Problem

Various issues related to diasporic communities have been discussed extensively. Some common themes include displacement, identity crises, social alienation, cultural hybridity etc. However, there has been minimal research on the issues portrayed in the selected texts from postcolonial and transnational feminist perspectives. Additionally, Rukhsana Ahmad's works have received limited critical attention compared to other South Asian diaspora writers. Existing research on Ahmad's work primarily employs a psychoanalytic lens, focusing on the psychological complexities of her female characters. However, this approach overlooks the broader socio-political, transectional, borderland, domestic issues and cultural factors that shape the experiences of second-generation diasporic women. Moreover, the coping strategies of dealing with such situations adapted by second generation women in diasporic contexts have not been thoroughly documented.

The present study aims to address the gap by examining two of Ahmad's short stories, *"My Daughter, Mona"* and *"First Love,"* through postcolonial and transnational feminist lens. More specifically, the research will take insights from postcolonial and transnational feminisms. Through this approach, this research seeks to explore how second-generation diasporic women traverse the hybrid and liminal spaces they inhabit.

Research Objectives

1. To explore how do gender roles shape the experiences of diasporic women.

2. To identify how second-generation diaspora women cope up with their liminal position.

Research Questions

1. How do gender roles shape the experiences of diasporic women?

2. How do the second-generation diaspora women cope up with their liminal position?

Significance of the Study

This research highlights the challenges faced by second-generation women in diaspora communities from post-colonial and transnational feminist perspectivse, particularly focusing on the short stories namely *"My Daughter Mona"* and *"First Love"* written by Rukhsana Ahmad. By drawing on insights from postcolonial and transnational feminisms, the study aims to explore issues such as challenges faced by Western-born diasporic women associated with their occupation of liminal spaces, isolation and gender roles. Additionally, it will provide a broader understanding of the experiences of second-generation diasporic women as portrayed in Ahmad's literary works. This research will serve as a valuable resource for future studies, offering readers a broader perspective on the conditions, conflicts, and struggles of second generation diasporic women of South Asian background.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study delimits itself to the study of second-generation diaspora women and their issues of dislocated lives as portrayed in the short stories of Rukhsana Ahmed particularly *"My Daughter, Mona"* and *"First Love"*. For perspectives from transnational feminism, the research draws upon Gloria Anzaldua's concepts or 'borderland feminism'. To gain insights from postcolonial feminism, the research incorporates the author Amita Hamda's ideas. Due to the requirements of this research, the main lenses employed are Anzaldua's idea of borderland feminism and Hamda's concept of fulfillment of gender roles in diasporic environment to discuss the experiences of second-generation diasporic women.

Literature Review

South Asian communities form major chunk of diaspora communities in the Western nations including Europe and Northern America. Individuals belonging to such communities are potentially prone to unfair treatment, inequality, and prejudice, while struggling to preserve their cultural identity in a new country. Therefore,

adjusting with the social, economic, political, psychological and environmental charges is also a challenge (Shilpa & Niroj, 2014). On the basis of age, such communities comprise of two major groups, the first- and second-generation diaspora. According to Carliner 1980 and Borjas 1992, first generation refers to an individual's living in the host country but born in a foreign country while second generation refers to individual born in the host country with at least one parent born in a foreign country (Brunello & Paola, 2016). Similar to their parents, second generation South Asian diaspora individuals undergo various problems including cultural dislocation which causes confusion, isolation, disconnection, identity crisis, a confused sense of belonging due to the complexity of existence between cultures.(Ahsan Ullah, 2024). In addition, they also find themselves vulnerable to social discrimination such as Islamophobia[1] and xenophobia.[2]

Feminist theory highlights the issues that women belonging to diaspora communities undergo. More particularly, postcolonial and transnational feminisms highlight the ways in which women adjust to the diaspora contexts. However, Transnational feminism is an activist movement that highlights issues faced by women in the current era dominated by globalization and capitalism and how they are affected across nations, races, classes and ethnicities (Enns et al. 2020, p. 20). On the other hand, postcolonial feminism is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonized countries and western location (Tyagi, 2014, p. 45). As mentioned before, members of the diaspora community are exposed to discrimination but women in particular face further issues. More specifically, South Asian diasporic second-generation women encounter various consequences of immigration toward West which include intergenerational conflict, identity crises, social alienation, cultural shocks etc. Women occupying such borderlands end up in a somewhat Third Space. The transnational feminist Gloria Anzaldua names this space as "La Mestiza." "La mestiza" is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. (Gloria Anzaldua, 1987, p. 78). Anzaldua's work gives deep insights into how people especially Chicana women resist oppression by using their

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[1] Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam. (David Torrance, et al., 2021)
[2] Xenophobia refers to general fear of difference, as an intense discomfort with people from other cultures, or hostility and intolerance towards those who look, speak, dress, and act differently. (Marina A. Adler, 2008)

culture, stories, and identity to fight back against systems of power like racism, sexism, and classism. (Martinez, 2005, p. 540)

The following section discusses various researches that highlight issues associated with diaspora women. Diaspora refers to the dispersion of people from their original homeland facing challenges for identity formation. (Kataoka ,2019) while the second generation south Asian diaspora, defined as individuals born and raised abroad to south Asian immigrant parents. (Sarwal, 2014). Begum (2019) in her study "*Americanah* as a Transnational Feminist Novel: A Study" highlights the issues faced by woman through the lens of transnational feminism and explores that how the novel portrays the experiences of women, such as marginalization, conflict and contradiction, discrimination and racism specially in globalized world and underlining the themes of power, identity, culture. (Begum, 2019, p. 1- 2).

However, Anthias (2012) "transnational mobilities, migration research and intersectionality" emphasize the view that migration not only includes people moving across borders but also within the country where they face issues like dislocation, cultural conflicts etc. Second-generation, the children of first-generation diaspora face challenges in adopting to their new country. They face discrimination and racism which effects their identity and sense of belonging. They encounter conflicts between the norms from their parents' nation and host countries including identity crisis and feeling caught between two cultures. (Anthias, 2012, p. 102-104) Thus, this study highlights the complexities of migration across borders.

Werbner (2013) "Everyday multiculturalism: Theorising the difference between 'intersectionality' and 'multiple identities" explores how people from different countries and backgrounds interact and communicate with each other in Britain. The writer states that on the surface, people show positive and respectful image but there are certain underlying issues based on inequalities. The author further analyzes the generational shift portraying how people from immigrant backgrounds identify themselves as British. First generation suffers more discrimination while later generation identify themselves British. (Werbner, 2013, p. 402-405) Thus, the study offers perspectives regarding how people from different backgrounds interact and communicate with each other within the diaspora contexts.

Similarly, Shilpa & Niroj 2014 "The theme of "alienation" and "assimilation" in the novels of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri: A socio – literary perspective" analyze the themes of diaspora and belongingness and also show how the diaspora people have hybrid identities by staying in different tradition, cultures and customs . The writers of the novel share their own experiences such as alienation, cultural fusion and assimilation and adjusting to a new life in the host country (Shilpa & Niroj, 2014, p. 19-23) This highlights that their identity is merged into a hybrid ione because of living in two spaces.

Moreover, Saadon (2022) "Collective Memories, and Diasporic Experiences in Hala Alyan's Poetry" investigates the poetry of Hala Alyan (PalestinianAmerican writer, poet, and clinical psychologist) to know that how trans-generational trauma and memories shape the identities of second generation specially diaspora individuals and discuss how past events and memories can shape their identity formation. The author further highlights trans-generational trauma and memories of individuals particularly Hala Alyan and analyzes the difficulties of hybrid identity. (Sadoon, 2022, p. 13) Thus, the research primarily discusses the complexities of diaspora identity.

Furthermore, Dimitrijovska- jankulovska (2023) "The sense of alienation in the new land; a pale view of the hills" portrays diaspora issues such as identity crisis, memory, otherness, cultural conflicts, hybridity through the main character of the novel, a Japanese woman who is caught between two cultures, her Japanese heritage and her British identity. The author illuminates the complexities of identity faced by the character.(Dimitrijovska-Jankulovska, 2023, p. 69)Thus, the research shows the peculiar issues of Japanese diaspora living in the West through the character of a Japanese woman.

Riaz & Babaee, 2015 "Inner Alienation: Diasporic Consciousness in Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron" Kamila Shamsie`s depict the experiences of people who live abroad through characters in the novel. The authors show how these characters construct their identity while living in multicultural spaces. The characters experience the issues of multicultural space. While living abroad, they are aware of their connection to their original homeland. The novel depicts the struggles of immigrants such as alienation, isolation and cultural conflicts. Moreover, the researchers explore

the themes of identity, belonging specifically of second-generation and highlight the importance of memory, culture and family history. (Riaz & Babaee, 2015, p. 163-166) Hence, the research also shows the complexities in making identity in multi-cultural space as represented in the selected text.

Similarly, C & Lourdusamy "Review of Displacement, Space, and Identity in the Postcolonial Novels of Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry and Manju Kapur," explores the themes of displacement, space and identity crisis in the writing of Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistery and Manju Kafur. Migration made a multicultural space, people from diverse backgrounds come together, interact, and form relationships, while also staying connected to their own cultural groups. Through living in hybrid cultures, the identity of immigrants becomes ambiguous and complex. s people move to a new country, their surroundings effect their identity. (C & Lourdusamym, 2020, p. 335-336) The research shows how individuals belonging to diasporic backgrounds grapple with their lives in Western multicultural settings.

Additionally, Azeem (2020) "Critical Analysis of Identity Crisis in Hanif Kurieshi's Novel "*The Buddha of Suburbia,*" illuminates the issues of immigrants and the themes of identity crisis as explored through the protagonist of the novel who struggle with identity crisis in England, because of his Indian roots and Western culture. The research also highlights the challenges arising from identity crisis such as racism, discrimination and generational identity crisis. The research further throws light on the struggle of first- and second-generation immigrants. Identity crisis is the major dilemma for immigrants as they struggle to balance between original culture and western culture. This results in hybridity which plays a crucial role in identity crisis. (Azeem et al., 2020, p. 159-160) The research further represents how women face discrimination, racism and identity crisis in England.

However , Dwivedi & Khare "Alienation or Assimilation: The Problem of Indian Diaspora in the Select Novel of Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri" highlight the problems and the sensibility of immigrants such as nostalgia, homesickness, identity crisis, alienation and assimilation. The writers note that such individuals suffer due to these problems when they are dislocated from their roots into the different parts of the world. As a diaspora writer, Jhmupa lahiri grew up in a

multicultural society where she wanted to maintain her native identity as well as adopt the Western identity. The research contends that the suffocation caused due to alienation leads diasporic individuals to assimilate within the new social and cultural background. In this manner, their identity becomes mixed due to merging of two cultures. (Dwivedi & Khare, 2020, p.106 -112).

Similarly, Kumar and Shushi "A Discourse on Diaspora: Exploring Identity and Alienation in Jhumpa Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth" explore the themes of cultural displacement, the search for identity and the feelings of alienation. The writers analyse these themes through diaspora experience of the characters and the struggles they face as dual identities as immigrants. Lahiri's characters have quest for identity as they often find themselves caught in a web of cultures and torn between the expectation of parents and the realities of adopted country. Lahiri depicts the characters who face the issues such as assimilation, cultural adaptation and the clash between two cultures. The researchers also explore the generational gap between immigrant parents and their American-born children such as communication gap, understanding and connection with parents. The generational gap often results in misunderstanding, conflicts and sense of displacement. Another important theme that is depicted is the longing for home. Many of the characters feel deep longing for home and also grapple with their sense of belonging in America. They feel disconnected from their Indian heritage while at same time never fully fit within the American society. The characters become alienated as they try to fit in a new culture which is different from their own, resulting in feelings of isolation and loss of identity. (Kumar & Sushil, 2023, p. 275-276). This shows that the identity of second generation is complicated due to growing up between two cultures.

Furthermore Ahsan Ullah (2024) "Struggles for identity formation: secondgeneration South Asian diaspora" overseas explores the problems of secondgeneration South Asians in foreign country such as identity formation. Secondgeneration face more challenges in making identities compared to first generation individuals. This is because they struggle between their ancestral roots and dominant culture of the adopted country which causes confusion. Second-generation feel themselves caught between two worlds which results in social,

cultural and psychological issues. For such individuals, identity formation is a multilayered process which is influenced by various factors such as social, cultural, economic and political context. The study further shows that while living abroad, their identity is particularly complicated due to straddling between two cultures, their cultures heritage of ancestral and culture of host country.Thus, the identity of secondgeneration diaspora individuals is effected by racism, discrimination, cultural hybridity and generational conflicts.(Ahsan Ullah, 2024, p. 1-6) Hence, the study highlights the challenges of second generation such as identity crisis, racism, discrimination.

Christou & King (2010) "Imagining 'home': Diasporic landscapes of the Greek-German second generation" analyze the experiences of second-generation Greek Germans, who live in Germany, and explores their connection and longing for Greece while living in Germany. According to the writers, diaspora people think and experience landscapes which affects their identity and connection to their heritage. Landscape makes both positive or negative impacts on identity-making of diaspora people. They have strong connection to their original homeland while living abroad. Return is difficult for second-generation who grow up abroad but some want return to find their identity and connection with their heritage. (Christou & King, 2010, p. 639640) This highlights the longing and connection of Greek diaspora individuals while living in Germany.

Brocket (2018) "From "in-betweenness" to"positioned belongings": secondgeneration Palestinian-Americans negotiate the tensions of assimilation and transnationalism" analyses the experiences of second-generation immigrants of Palestinian origin living in America. The author reveals that they face several challenges and feel isolated due to connection with homeland and complex identities. The study was conducted on Thirty-five second-generation Palestinian American individuals aged 18 to 40. The study aimed to find how they maintain relationship with Palestine. The problems that they face include othering, Islamophobia and negative stereotypes. As a result, they shape their own lives and identities which the author calls "positioned belonging." By doing so, they maintain connection to their homeland while also adopt the host country's norms which leads them to have

multiple identities of belonging. (Brocket, 2018, p.734-738) This highlights the challenges of Palestinian-American individuals as they attempt to build their identity and long for homeland.

Bhandari (2021) "Diaspora and Cultural Identity: A Conceptual Review" explores the concept of diaspora and how the it refers to the communities of people living outside of the original home. The researcher groups the diaspora into four categories namely classical phase, cultural phase, fluid identity phase, origin phase. According to theorists like Robin Cohen and Stuart Hall, diaspora is not a uniform or similar phenomenon, the past and present experiences play a crucial role in shaping the identity of an immigrants. The diaspora concept is evolved over time and different theorists have diverse views such as early view which is focused on forced migration, social constructivists view, which is focused on identity formation by social interactions while radical view deals with the importance of power struggles. (Bhandari, 2021, p. 100 104) This shows the issues and experience of diaspora people.

Bhimji, (2008) "Cosmopolitan Belonging and Diaspora: Second Generation" British Muslim women travelling to South Asia analyse how British-born women of South Asian descent feel connected to both Britain and their parents' homeland. This quantitative research is conducted on twenty-five women aged 19 to 28. The women have sense of belonging to both Britain and their parents' homelands. The research concludes that they appreciate the cultures and family ties but also want independence from norms as they feel liberated in Britain. At the same time, they feel both outsiders and insiders to their parents' homeland. They have loyalty to parents' homeland but experience cultural differences. They often face the stereotypes associated with Muslims women such as being labelled as conservative and backwards. They have multiples identities and affiliations including links with Britain and their parents' homelands. (Bhimji, 2008,p. 414-418) Thus, through a quantitative approach, the study discusses the connection of British women to their parents' homelands.

Similarly, Brotman (2020) "Intergenerational Care in the Context of Migration:

A Feminist Intersectional Life-Course Exploration of Racialized Young Adult Women's Narratives of Care" analyzes the stories of three immigrant women in Canada. They all have different racial backgrounds. The research addresses the challenges that these young women face such as balancing personal and familial responsibilities, dealing with alienation and isolation because of having certain barriers such as language barrier and cultural expectations due to migration. (Brotman et al., 2020, p. 14) The study is unique as it shows the challenges of diaspora women in Canada belonging to multiple races.

Bhandari (2024) "Beyond Borders: A Review of Diaspora and Female Immigrant Experience" analyzes diaspora and female immigrants. The author posits that diaspora refers to people who live outside their homeland. The author further mentions that early researches focused on diaspora men and thought that women belonging to such communities face the same issues. Bhandari focuses on South Asian female immigrants' changing gender roles and family dynamics. They suffer from marginalization and alienation in new space and have desire to return back to their original space. (Bhandari, 2024, p. 159-161) Hence, the study shows the experiences of female immigrants.

Additionally, Mirza (2012) "A second skin': Embodied intersectionality, transnationalism and narratives of identity and belonging among Muslim women in Britain" explores how Muslims from India, Pakistan and Turkey face experiences such as racism, Islamophobia, gender expectation and sexism while living in Britain. There are also common stereotypes about Muslim women such as they are dangerous and oppressed. The author also discusses the ways in which society perceives their dress, behaviour and identity and the significance of hijab in Muslims women's lives. The writer argues that Muslim women's choice about hijab is not just about religion but also about identity and culture. (Mirza, 2012, p. 57) The research shows the experiences of Muslim woman living in Britain.

To conclude, the above section throws light upon the major issues that individuals belong to diasporic backgrounds face while living abroad including cultural conflicts, longing for homeland, alienation, isolation, racism, desire for

return. alienation, marginalization, tracing back roots, third space identity and nostalgia. In addition to that, some researches focus specifically on the problems faced by the first and second-generation diaspora individuals. However, the problems associated with the second-generation diaspora women is a relatively under-explored area. Moreover, little attention is paid to the stories of Rukhsana Ahmad's stories that depict diaspora women. The present research fills this gap by utilizing the feminism frameworks presented by postcolonial and transnational feminism to highlight the issues of women in Ahmad's works. In addition to that, the study discusses how secondgeneration women employ coping mechanisms to deal with their hybrid positions.

Research Methodology

This research throws light on Rukhsana Ahmad's short stories *"My Daughter, Mona"* and *"First Love"*. The research will use qualitative method to conduct textual analysis of data.

Data Collection

For the present research, two sources will be used for the collection of data, primary source and secondary sources. The original text of *"First Love"* and *"My Daughter, Mona"* by Rukhsana Ahmad will serve as primary data collection source for this research. On the other hand, secondary data will be taken from different books, web pages, reviews, reports, articles and journals published by other researchers.

Data Analysis

After the collection of data from various sources, the close reading method of analysis will be carried out. The research will closely examine the texts of the short stories focusing more particularly on the female central characters who belong to the first and second-generation diaspora women. The research will point out the specific challenges that they face as a result of their cultural and generational positionality. Moreover, the attempts to critically analyze how societal norms and gender roles influence the lives of South Asian women living abroad. The study aims to view the texts as samples of diasporic literature through the lenses of Postcolonial and Transnational feminism.

Theoretical Framework

This research will examine the challenges faced by second-generation women of the South Asian diaspora, as represented in Rukhsana Ahmad's short stories *"First Love"* and *"My Daughter, Mona,"* using a theoretical framework grounded in feminism, specifically postcolonial and trans cultural feminism. As South Asian women in the diaspora often find themselves caught between their cultural heritage and the dominant culture of their host country, their hybrid experience complicates the notion of their identities. Thus, to discuss issues of identity, the research will draw upon the concept of Borderland feminism given by the Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldua. Using an inter sectional approach, Anzaldua argues that individuals living in borderlands often possess multiple, overlapping identities due to Transnationalism and also discusses the gender, race and sexuality. They may be influenced by various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, resulting in a complex and multifaceted sense of self. Moreover, South Asian women in the diaspora also face conflicting expectations from their families, communities, and the broader society. They may be pressured to conform to traditional gender roles and cultural norms, while also being expected to assimilate into Western culture. Amita Handa's concepts regarding the experiences of South Asian women will be employed to view societal expectations and gender roles. According to Handa, the most significant and recurring challenge faced by young South Asian women is conflict with their parents. These women feel constrained by expectations tied to their gender. This tension highlights the clash between a static, fixed view of culture and a more flexible, evolving understanding. Thus, these concepts will provide overarching perspectives into the dynamic experiences of second-generation women diaspora having roots in South Asian nations.

Discussion And Analysis

The current research aim to explore the tormented and marginalized conditions of second generation diasporic women through the analysis of short stories *"My Daughter, Mona"* and *"First Love"* written by Pakistani Britisher writer Rukhsana Ahmad through the perspective of Postcolonial and Transnational feminism specifically the concept of "Borderland". These stories focus on how second generation women are marginalized by their culture and parent and how they use

various strategies to cope with their sidelined position in the diasporic community. The analysis has done in two sections.

First section " *The Suffocation of Gender Expectations*" comprises of the challenges faced by second generation women explored through the concept of Amita Handa and Gloria Anzaldua. These theorists bring forward the obstacles experienced by second generation women from South Asian diaspora. The study throws light on how the women in diasporic environment are treated on the basis of their gender. While second section *"Growth with-in Shoots of Diaspora"* highlights all the coping mechanisms adopted by second generation diasporic women, to overcome those challenges which they tolerate due to their feminine gender.

The Suffocation of Gender Expectations

The present section seeks to explore how gender roles play a pivotal role in shaping the experiences of second-generation women in diasporic communities. According to Amy M. Blackstone, "*Gender roles are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society's values and beliefs about gender" (2003, p. 335).* In other words, gender roles are the cultural norms that individuals belonging to a particular society are expected to uphold. In trans-cultural environments, second-generation women face multiple challenges as their experience becomes an amalgam of their gender, cultural heritage and domestic role. The section employs the insights given Amita Handa, Post Colonial Feminist feminist regarding the gender experiences of diaspora women to analyse the gender roles of the women characters presented in Ahmed's short stories.

It discusses how women are bound to act according to the societal and cultural expectation. In this way, the section highlights how such roles lead women to experience conflicts with family members, issues regarding cultural taboos, social barriers when interacting with other genders, and emotional detachment from their families.

Women as Cultural Markers

Women belonging to South Asian diaspora are often perceived as symbols of their cultural heritage and thus face discrimination in terms of their gender roles by other

members of their community. As Amita Handa suggests,"d*iasporic women are often bound to culture and societal expectations due to their gender" .(p.53).* In her interviews with second generation diasporic women, Handa notes, "All of the women spoke about the restrictions on their lives and tied this into the expectations around being a girl" (2003, chapter. 3, p. 53). Handa's observation suggests that women in diasporic communities usually go through gender-based discrimination. They are not just women but perceived as powerful symbols of cultural representation in diasporic communities. Moreover, in diaspora communities, women's role as "cultural custodians" becomes more prominent (Kurien & Rayaprol, 2000, p. 837). On this account, their identity as cultural symbols gives rise to multiple conflict with their family. As dressing is a significant cultural symbol, therefore, women are expected to hold fast to their cultural heritage in terms of dressing. Similarly, in South Asian diasporic communities, decisions regarding dressing tend to be imposed upon women by their families. They are expected to choose the attires that would reflect the traditions of their home country. The families usually discourage them from dressing according to the Western culture. On the other hand, their host culture often expects to adopt new cultural values including dress code and to discard their native cultural heritage. This suggests that second generation diasporic women grapple with the conflicting views of following either of the dress codes that is Eastern as well as Western.

Similarly, in the story *"First Love"*, Ahmad portrays diasporic women who are caught in the same circumstances where they are expected to preserve their home cultural values in terms of dressing. At the death anniversary of Shah Bano's father, her mother dresses in accordance with the mourning custom of their culture. As the narrator mentions, "She was dressed in white. No lipstick. Those are her rules for the anniversary" (2014, p. 56). This description of the diasporic woman demonstrates the traditional roles of gender in South Asian culture and expectations put upon women. At the same time, this reveals that women in diaspora communities display their culture through their choice of dressing. The communities consider their mode of dressing to be indicative of their home cultural norms. Deviating from such cultural norms leads to the perception of cultural shift from the Eastern culture in

favor of the Western one.

Gender Segregation

As mentioned earlier, women in diasporic communities are considered as cultural markers. Therefore, they are regarded as the ones supposed to maintain their cultural heritage in transcultural environments. As Pande (2018) posits, Indian women remain within patriarchal and cultural boundaries when they migrate outside their countries and are therefore considered as "bearers of Indian tradition" (p.1). Moreover, Talbani & Hasan Ali, (2000) assert that diasporic women often narrate the intergenerational conflicts as they are not allowed by their parents to hang out with friends outside their communities (p. 620). In this manner, they are also perceived as cultural markers who represent their culture in the diasporic environment.The parents do not let their children mix-up with other children without their supervision.

Likewise, in the story titled "*First Love"*, the central character Shah Bano is depicted as a cultural marker throughout the plot who is expected to act in culturalspecific ways in diasporic community. Shah Bano is victimized in this situation as she faces restrictions when it comes to socializing with men. She mentions that her grandfather's patriarchal role dissuades her from sitting with boys, as according to her, *"I know he is never pleased to see me sitting around with the boys (Ahmad, 2014, p. 51).* This action of protagonist represents second-generation women are stereotyped as cultural markers because of their gender roles in diasporic communities. On the other hand, the older generations expect them to uphold certain roles based on their femininity. Thus, it gives rise to conflicts between the older generations and secondgeneration women within domestic circle of South Asian diasporic communities further complicating the latter's issues of gender.

Following Cultural Taboos

Moreover, South Asian diaspora women are also expected to uphold cultural taboos. Although, the diversity of multicultural settings exposes them to a variety of customs and ideologies, however, their families obligate them to adhere to such societal prohibitions. They are expected to accept the norms rather than question and violate the taboos. As Ahmed et al. contend, *"South Asian families are traditionally patriarchal with communication and authority flowing from top to bottom. Within the*

family, roles are highly defined and based on age and gender" (2000, p. 90). In other words, the parents dictate their children to communicate within their home cultural values while living as south Asian diasporic communities in the West.

Likewise, the central character of the story "My Daughter, Mona" named Mona is curious about her birth time. As per the norms of the Westen culture, she considers it normal to ask her mother about her birth. As she says, *"come on, Maa, tell me then. I need you to remember every detail — help me remember" (Ahmad, p. 127).* She also asks about the details of her mother's labour duration as is obvious from her words, *"How long were you in labour? Do you remember? "* (p. 127). These words illustrate the protagonist Mona's urge for knowing about her birth time while her mother does not answer her because the latter considers speaking about such topics a taboo. This reveals how the second-generation women face the clash between the Eastern culture to which they originally belong and the West where they reside. For her more traditional first-generation mother, the question is a bold one and does not conform to the norms of their background culture. Therefore, she does not want her to ask such information which is kept private in South Asian cultures. Conversely, she criticizes her daughter's bold questions about investigation of her birth time. Her mother thinks that Mona is strongly influenced by the more cosmopolitan Western environment which is making her forget her cultural values. This is evident from her mother's remarks, *"How can that be a valid subject for a child? A voice inside her argued with this Sebastian, this hypnotist in her head." (Ahmad, 2014, p. 130).* This monologue suggests that Mona`s mother blames the source of these thoughts in the latter's mind on a British hypnotist named Sebastian who she thinks is making her daughter rebel against their cultural norms by asking such culturally sensitive questions. Thus, Mona is discouraged from discussion such culturally-tabooed topics. Hence, this suggests that first generation diaspora women not only follow the restriction of cultural taboos but also impose their views upon the second-generation women. It further suggests that the first-generation women play a more assertive role in shaping the minds and gender roles of the second-generation women.

Furthermore, the role of first-generation mothers also proves to be an instrumental

factor in determining the roles of younger women in South Asian transnational communities. *"South Asian women are expected to assume domestic responsibilities, bear children, tend to the sick, and defer to the authority of men."* (Syed M. Ahmed, and Jeanne P. Lemkau, 2000, p. 90*)*. In the course of conforming to these sociocultural notions, the mothers end up playing a more authoritative role in the lives of their daughters. In this manner, second-generation women become marginalized, not only by the patriarchal notions imposed upon them by men but also by women belonging to their families.

In the same way, in the story *"First Love"*, when the central character Shah Bano complains to her mother about her grandfather's attitude towards her, the mother remains passive and does not defend her. Shah Bano describes his dominating role in the following words; *"I do think it's best to get out of his way at that time. Anyway, I know he is never pleased with me sitting around with the boys."(p. 51).* This suggests that on account of her gender, she is unable to cross the social boundaries defined by her grandfather and more broadly, her home culture. At the same time, her mother sides with her grandfather, as Shah Bano narrates, *"Maa is always quick to rise to his defence".(Ahmad, p. 51).*This illustrates that men's role overshadows the agency of women in diaspora communities. Hence, in diasporic environments, first generation women internalize traditional gender roles which they impose them on second-generation women. To put it differently, they project their own roles of cultural specificity upon their daughters thereby pushing them to the periphery.

In South Asian diasporic communities, second generation women feel alienated within their homes due to their stigmatization because of their gender roles. Alienation refers to the *"feeling of being disconnected or isolated from one's surroundings or from others." (Kumar & Sushil, 2023, p. 276).* This stems from their negotiated gender-roles leading them to keep emotional distance themselves from their families. Consequently, they feel isolated, disconnected and alone are unable to reconnect with their families. This is because they always receive harsh criticism from their families because of not conforming to their gender-specific roles. As Nabanita Chakraborty (2018) puts it, individuals in diaspora environment find it

hard to cope with the feeling of alienation in spite of living there for years (p. 31). Moreover, their attempts at communicating their views with their families remain futile. This is because the families usually stick to the values of the home culture and also encourage the women to do so despite residing in multicultural Western contexts. Thus, their subversive attitude towards their home cultural norms results in their alienation.

Similarly, in the story *"My Daughter, Mona"*, the protagonist Mona isolates herself in a dark room and does not interact with her family. This shows the alienated condition of second-generation women in diasporic community and highlights their complicated social condition. As the narrator mentions, "*she refused dinner. In the dim light, her mother looked round the room which distaste at the piles of photo albums and ribboned bundles of old letters on the floor" (Ahmad, p. 130)*. This description posits that Mona prefers isolation and alienates herself from own family in diasporic community which arises due to her position within the gender structure. which leads to alienation. In addition to that, she refuses to eat her dinner, which shows her resistance against her gender-related challenges dictated by her family and community. Moreover, when she comes to know that she is the adopted daughter of her mother, she does not express her emotions arising from her realization with anyone. As the narrator portrays her response to the news, "*Quietly, she rose to leave the table" (Ahmad, p. 134)*. These words indicate that she wants to be in her comfort zone and deny reality Thus, she prefers isolation instead of sharing her feelings with someone, because she is cognizant that no one will relate to her second-generation diaspora woman's position.

On the other hand, Ahmed also portrays the protagonist Shah Bano in the story *"First Love"* as emotionally distant from her family. She has multiple experiences in her mind but is unable to communicate her feelings and emotions because her family criticizes her due to her non-conformist gender roles in the context of diaspora. She is alienated in her own home surrounded by her mother, brother and grandfather as she is unable to articulate her emotions with them. She shares all of her deep feelings and emotions with her father when she visits his tomb. As Shah Bano says, *"That was my plan. Talk to him- about my life, about the future,*

about my choice of A levels, about Feroze - about all those things I keep meaning to bring up with Maa and never manage to… Maybe he'll give me some advice, send me some inspiration, I thought" (p, 57). These words show her intense longing to express her emotions. However, even her mother remains indifferent to her need for communication. As Shah Bano captures her mother's response, "*Perhaps she's too busy to stop and listen, or perhaps I'm too scared or too shy" (p. 57).* These words expose the dilemma of secondgeneration diasporic women as they are often perceived as objects who will preserve cultural heritage. On the contrary, they are not regarded as humans having their specific emotions and agency to express themselves which leads them to detach themselves from own family and prefer loneliness.

Taking everything into account, in the stories "*My Daughter, Mona*" and *"First Love"*, the author Rukhsana Ahmed portrays the challenges and hurdles faced by first- and second-generation women in terms of their gender while living in diasporic communities. They face marginalization in every situation while interacting with other members of south Asian diasporic communities. These challenges not just arise on the societal level but also dominate the domestic circle. The second-generation women are perceived as markers of cultural representation. Their first-generation mothers and family members play a key role in shaping their gender-based experiences as second-generation women. Instead of advocating for their daughters' wishes, they stand by their norms of their South Asian origin.

Growth with-in the Shoots of Diaspora

The postcolonial and transnational feminist theories not only shed light on the issues of second-generation diaspora women's experiences but also suggest the coping techniques used by these women in response to the pressure of conforming to gender roles. As Rakhi Mehta argues, "In the contemporary globalized world, the younger generation is vulnerable to subverting their traditions, cultures and values, which is not in accordance with the views of the older generation thereby giving rise to conflicts between them (2016, p. 499)". Mehta further posits that second-generation women living in diasporic environment face the threat of being influenced by the host culture which is seen inappropriate by the first generation of diasporic

communities. Thus, in order to avoid conflicts, second generation diaspora women blend their home and host countries' cultural values together in order to find spaces where they can live neither accepting nor rejecting both completely. The present section discusses how these women confront the challenges that are associated with their gender roles and hybrid position while living in multicultural settings. The study draws upon the concepts of postcolonial and transnational feminist theory to analyse how second generation diaspora women deal with their liminal position.

Third Space Identity

Firstly, the younger generation diaspora women find a third space as a liminal position in response to their uprooted identities. The concept of *Third Space* given by Homi. K. Bhabah , who is a Post Colonial writer, as Dr. Keith Hollinshead, 1998 mentioned, "*Bhabha's treatise stands as a Lanfantian admonition that cultures and ethnicities are not as habitually distinct or as permanently polarised as mman observers in society would comfortably have them, and that so many pplace and people exist ambivalently in 'displaced' or 'under-recognised' third spaces —located within in-between forms of supposed difference".(Dr. Keith Hollinshead, 1998, p. 124).* They are not only influenced by the outside culture but their family-centered domestic environment also orients their lives. To contend with the expectations of both cultures, they come up with the idea of adjusting within a third space. As Gloria Anzaldua 1987, a transnational borderland feminist argues that Chicano[3] women encounter various consequences of immigration toward West which leads to intergenerational conflict, identity crises, hybridization of culture. In this way, they create a third space where two cultures blend together.(p.78).This third Space is named as "La Mestiza," which is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another (Gloria Anzaldua 1987, p.78). Gloria Anzaldua`s theory of borderland exposes the identity crises among seconed generation diasporic women due to their in-between transcultural environment. Those women who live in diasporic communities are unable to completely adopt each of the cultures. As Moussa Pourya Asl contends about south Asian diasporic writers, "The writers have shaped their female protagonists as in-betweeners who

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[3] CHICANOS is used for Mexican Americans born in the United States but also a generic ethnic name for Mexicans in general.(Vigil, J. D, 2002).

crossed the border and produced a hybrid identity" (2022, p.04). Moreover, by remembering "native traditions and negotiating them with the culture of the host country, immigrants are able to create a culture and identity, which transcend both territories" (Jamshidian & Pirnajmuddin, 2019, p. 13). Likewise, women belonging to such backgrounds tackle the issue of fractured identities and as a result, they blend two cultures together and make a hybrid third space where they neither follow their home culture heritage nor host country cultural heritage completely. This leads to the experiences including feeling homeless in their own home, shattering of their identities and inability to embrace their home cultural values. "Returning to the original is impossible for a woman once she leaves her home/land" (Moussa Pourya Asl, 2022, p.14). In other words, Moussa Pourya Asl claims that it is not possible for second generation women to stick to their original cultural heritage completely when they are in the third space. Therefore, they create a third space where a combination of both cultures exists.

Rukhsana Ahmad exposes this in-between space in her story *"First Love"* as the author addresses the issue of third space through the protagonist, Shah Bano's character. Shah Bano crosses the tangible border that is the physical border but is unable to cross non-tangible borders which refers to the emotional boundaries. This makes her remain within the confines of her own cultural domain. As her diary's date is dynamic and jumps from one year to another, likewise, her identity and sense of belonging is not static in third space. Shah Bano hangs in third space, where she creates a hybrid environment for herself and alienates herself from the people around her. She neither socializes with her family nor with individuals outside her familial circle as the former does not allow her to do so. Consequently, expressing herself through her diary provides her a third space where she can let out all her emotions and feelings. As she all the time writes her diary "*Dear Diary*" because she is close to her diary more than anyone else that provide her comfortable third space. Moreover, she visits her father's grave where she expresses her inner feelings. Even though she knows no one hears her feelings, yet she gives voice to her innermost self which she does not reveal to anyone else. For instant, Shah Bano in the story shares her feelings and emotions at her father's tomb as *"May be he'll give me some advice,*

send me some inspiration, I thought."(Ahmad 2014, p. 57). This is because she feels that no one relates to her feelings nor try to comprehend the complexities of her positionality as a second-generation diasporic woman.

Similarly, in Ahmad's second story *"My Daughter, Mona"* the female protagonist named Mona is caught in a hybrid space where two cultures intersect. One is her Pakistani culture to which her roots belong, and the other is her more dominant Western culture. In the story, when her father Abbas's friend asks him about Mona's profession, Mona's mother mentions that she has found a job likely to live in home. This indicates that being female of Pakistani origin, Mona's life is trapped between her more conservative domestic circle and the British setting. Her way of dressing reflects Western fashion as *Rukhsana Ahmed* describes *Mona, "Daughter* of the East".(p.129) which is in marked contrast to her Eastern domestic environment. Moreover, she also finds a job which is another way of adjusting within the Third space. As the narrator notes, *"She found a job round at the corner and, to her relief, she didn't even consider moving out. She was happy enough living at home, getting on with her life, in a quite complaint fashion". (Ahmad, p.129).* She is content at working from home because this allows her to spend time in her own company. This is because she neither wants to interact with members of her own family nor with people at her workplace. In addition to that, working makes her occupy a sphere where she could use her skills which contributes to her professional identity. Working also contributes to her financial independence which further aids her in taking up the Third space. This shows that the personal choices of dressing and employment, second-generation diaspora women discover new facets of their Third space identity. This also allows them to bridge their host and home cultures together, balancing the normative expectations of both.

Nostalgia as a Way of Coping with the Situation

Another coping mechanism employed by second generation women is that of nostalgia or longing for the past lives and their home cultures. Nostalgia is defined as "a sentimental longing for a past that has gone forever. It is often identified as an emotional response brought on by a dissatisfaction or detachment in the present, and an anxiety for the future." (Batcho 1995; Davis, 1979). In other words, the longing

for past and dissatisfaction with the present is considered as nostalgia, which is commonly faced by diasporic communities. Second-generation diasporic women from South Asian background employ nostalgia as a strategy to deal with the difficulties defined by their marginality. Ramshaw and Gammon (2021) argue that nostalgia is form of "leisure consumption" (p. 3). Moreover, "other "at home" leisure activities such as cooking, baking, and exercise also have a nostalgic form to them, whether they reflect a nostalgic view of family bonding or, in the case of fitness, attempting to recapture our former, younger selves". (Gammon, Sean James and Ramshaw, Gregory ,2021, P. 3.). In other words, diasporic women being nostalgic cook traditional food and there memories always flashback their familail bond. Similarly, second-generation women also use this mechanism in order to deal with their isolation and alienation in the diaspora setting. This is because nostalgia promises them a sense of wholeness thereby psychologically empowering them.

Second-generation women while living in the Western context, simultaneously cling to their Eastern roots. Even though, they are not born in their home countries, nor spend significant time, yet their familial affiliation makes them yearn for their background. In the same way, in the story *"My Daughter, Mona,"* the protagonist, Mona feels nostalgic and longs for her past. For her, finding peace and happiness in her present diasporic environment becomes challenging. Consequently, she usually talks about her past with her mother and expresses her dissatisfaction stemming from her life in Britain. As Mona says,*"A good life, ordinary, comfortable and so trouble free. We've led charmed lives, haven't we? I couldn't ask for better. Could I? But today, when he regressed me to the time of my birth...it was just awful".(Ahmad,p.126).*This indicates second generation diasporic women are nostalgic throughout their live, continuously thinking of their ancestry and native land. Similarly, in *"First Love"*, Ahmad exposes the sense of nostalgia of Shah Bano's character through the character's diary. She remembers her past life in which also includes the memories of her father. She describes her memories in quite detail, as she says, "Every thing jumbled together and gets dreadfully mixed up in my memories:*name, planes, years and times". (Ahmad, p.60),* this confession of the protagonist conveys her sense of belonging for past, where her family especially her

brother and friends used to laugh together. As she mentions, *"The very thought of it made me feel tired. I turned over to block out the memory and the sensations, not quite ready to face the morning"(Ahmad, p. 55).* This indicates that Shah Bano, being a second-generation diaspora woman, does not want to face the depressing and stressful scenarios of the present. On the contrary, she wants to fly back to past where only peace and tranquility exist. Furthermore, she mentions in her *July 5,1995* entry of her diary that living in past life is better than living in present. She further emphasizes the idea by mentioning that her father as, *"I think my dad is quite lucky to have died so young".(Ahmad, p. 54).*Thus, Shah Bano is of the view that those people are lucky who are not living in present. According to her, present is worse and tormented while past was full of laughter, serenity and happiness.

Moreove*r,* Shah Bano idolizes the Indian film actor named Shahrukh Khan. She associates the movie hero with her crush named Feroze, who is also her brother's friend. This is evident from her words when she says, " *To me he looks more gorgeous than ever, Shahrukh Khan, eat your heart out!". (Ahmad, p. 65)* . This reveals that she considers her past a more ideal time providing her with a sense of completeness. She longs for the familiarity that is promised by her past as opposed to the more challenging present life.

Choosing their own Company Instead of their Families

South Asian women are traditionally bound to the domestic circle on account of patriarchal norms. However, for second-generation diaspora women, domestic circle is a safe haven where they spend their time peacefully away from pressures of their families and Western sociocultural environment. In other words, they give preference to solitude instead of socializing with other individuals. Likewise, in both of Ahmad's stories, *"My Daughter, Mona"* and *"First Love",* the protagonists usually prefer to spend their time at home alone, despite being working women. This implies that they feel a sense of comfort in their own company which represents their antitraditional approach to accepted norms. The protagonists Mona and Shah Bano do not interact and sharing their feelings with other family members. They feel happy to be in their rooms where they find solace in the circle of their own world. As in the story "First Love", Shah Bano limits herself to her room and articulates her

thoughts in her diary. The whole story come to readers through her personal diary which is like her close friend where she vents her emotions. For instance, in her diary, she writes about her inner-most wishes, as she writes about her first love, her gender stigmatization by grandfather, the marginalization she faces through her mother's passive behaviour as her mother does not take stand for her when her grandfather marginalizes her. This is evident from her each entry's initial phrase which reads *"Dear diary..."*. This phrase is mentioned throughout the story, which symbolizes the coping mechanism of *Shah Bano* to craft her feelings on the paper instead of sharing them with her own mother or any other member of the family.

Furthermore, in the story *"My Daughter, Mona"*, the protagonist *Mona* is described as a school teacher whose emotions are depicted through the thoughts of her mother. Initially, Mona interacts with the other people of her community, however, later on, she stops teaching and isolates herself just to enjoy her own company. She prefers to be in her dark room for a long period of time which serves as a place where she does not have to confront. As mentioned, *"She refused dinner. In the dim light, her mother look around the room with distaste at the pile of photo albums". (Ahmad, p. 130).*This behavior of Mona indicates how she deals with difficult situations as a second-generation diasporic woman. As mentioned earlier, she does not leave her home even when she finds a job. This highlights Mona's coping method in which the quietude and privacy of her room shield her from criticism. This behavior portrays how second-generation South Asian women living in trans-cultural environment adopt the strategy of social withdrawal to protect themselves from being judged according to the Eastern and Western cultural norms.

Writing as a Memoir, a Form of Self Expression

Another significant approach taken by second-generation South Asian women to deal with the issues associated with their liminal position is using writing as a form of selfexpression. Sudirman, Gemilang, and Kristanto (2021) posit that journal writing is used to "capture experiences, record events, explore feelings" (p. 174). Furthermore, Golden (1989) notes that the central character of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story The Yellow Wallpaper is prohibited from writing, yet, she manages to write a diary secretly to *"express herself by writing her own text" (p.193)*. Similarly,

in order to give voice to her thoughts, Shah Bano, the protagonist of "*First Love*" writes in a diary shaping the whole story in the form of a narrative.In her *"July 5,1995"* diary she mentions *"I listen, pretending to be more interested than I am".(Ahmad,p.60*).The protagonist, Shah Bano can not express her true well before her own family so whatwere she experiences, she simply express that through her written memoir. This is because writing offers her the only means of giving agency to her subjectivity. Furthermore, she communicates her inner turmoil through her writing. Shah Bano pours her own feelings and views about her life and experiences in her diary.

Embracing Silence

Silence is also a dominant coping mechanism of second generation diasporic women. These women face the pressure of gender roles imposed upon them by their families. In such situations, they hold back from communicating with others including their own families. As Parpart (2019) notes, silence provides a venue for "strategising and organising resistance to oppression" (p. 7). Likewise, Ahmad portrays this view through the central characters namely Mona and Shah Bano of her stories "*First Love*" and "*My Daughter, Mona*" respectively. Shah Bano uses silence as defense mechanism against the continuous marginalization and discrimination to which she is subjected by her family. She mentions in her diary *"June 7,1995"* that life is not easy for everyone, "*Life isn't fair! I've got to say it again. Life isn't fair at all, is it?"(Ahmad,p. 49)*, this illustrates that protagonist do not perceive life as an easy journey instead she embraced silence to deal with the diasporic community, and the tone of her writing in the diary is also pessimistic In the second story, *Mona* is shown as a silent character from the beginning of the story. Moreover, she also remains silent later in the story when the identity of her real mother is revealed to her. As a result, she does not utter a single word to her non-biological parents, as it is mentioned *"Quietly, she rose to leave the table."(Ahmad, p. 134).*This indicates that silent is another effective strategy whereby the second-generation South Asian women address the hardships of living between cultures.

To conclude, Postcolonial and Transnational feminisms offer valuable insights to view the complexities rooted within the hybrid identities of South Asian second

generation diaspora women. The above section highlights the techniques that they employ to cope with these challenges in the trans-cultural environments. Thus, second generation diasporic women struggle to balance their identity in an environment where both Eastern native and Western host cultures intersect. The study shows that these women adjust themselves in the Third space, which serves as a gray area between the two cultures. It is here that they seek to balance both worlds and express their agency through choice of dressing and financial independence. In addition to that, these women become nostalgic which soothes the present feelings of discomfort arising from their borderline existence. Longing for the past contributes to their sense of fulfillment. The research further shows that these women engage themselves in writing diaries where they express their subjectivities. Moreover, the research elucidates how these women prefer seclusion over interaction with others, which offers them a sanctuary of peace. Lastly, silencing themselves is another strategy to cope with the gender expectations of their more traditional families.

Conclusion

The present study analyses the short stories titled as *"My daughter ,Mona"* and *"First Love"* written by the Pakistani Britisher author from the perspective of Post colonial and Transnational feminism. By drawing upon the concepts from both theories, the study explores the challenges faced by second generation diasporic women on the basis of their gender and to identify how they cope with these challenges. The research incorporates the concept of third space given by the theorist Amita Handa. The study examines how the first generation perceives the second generation as cultural markers as they are expected to act as traditional women.

Furthermore, the research aims to identify the coping mechanisms of second generation women adopt while living in diasporic communities. In order to cope with challenges of diaspora context, second generation women create a third space where they blend together two cultures. In addition to that, nostalgia is also employed by them as a response to the situation. The study also shows how second generatoin women wrrite diary to documents their responses and write their deep emotions as they are limited and limits themselves to the dark rooms . These stories

under the perspective Post Colonial and Transnational feminism highlight the hurdles of second generation women and the shows the challenging situation of South Asian diasporic community while living in west.

Recommendations

The Pakistani British writer Rukhsana Ahmed stories *"My Daughter ,Mona"* and *"First Love"* play a pivotal role in English Literature . The present study examines and highlights the issues of second generation South Asian diasporic women specifically the obstacles they confront regards their gender and their strategies with coping those challenges in transnational environment. However, this study recommends to take into account the diasporic second generation siblings bond and need to be explored the second generation men experience while living in south Asian diasporic community. It also provides a ground to anti-feminist study in order to focus on the passive behavior of first generation men.

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