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# An Analysis of the Female Identity Crisis in the Short Stories of Khalida Hussain

Dr. Aqlima Naz

Assistant Professor, Department of Urdu Zuban-O-Adab, Fatima Jinnah Women University,

Rawalpindi Itrat Batool

Instructor Urdu, Virtual University of Pakistan

Ms. Neel Zahra

Lecturer, Department of Urdu, Karakoram International University, Gilgit-Baltistan

Ms. Hajira Bibi

M.Phil Scholar, Department of Urdu Zuban-O-Adab, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi

Ms. Shereen Gul

Lecturer Urdu, Fauji Foundation College for Girls, New Lalazar, Rawalpindi

Ms. Saima Naz

M.Phil Scholar, Department of Urdu Zuban-O-Adab, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi

## Abstract

Khalida Hussain is widely recognized as a powerful and distinctive voice in Urdu fiction, particularly for her profound engagement with the lived realities of women within patriarchal societies. Her short stories are not merely narrative representations but operate at intellectual and cultural levels, critically examining the mechanisms of gender discrimination, emotional alienation, and identity fragmentation experienced by women while navigating restrictive and unstable social structures. Hussain foregrounds the complexities of female existence, including the systematic denial of agency, the burden of internalized psychological conflict, and the pervasive influence of socio-cultural norms on women's subjectivities. Her fiction bears testimony to the fact that women are engaged in a continuous struggle not only at the physical level but also across psychological and social domains. The narratives suggest that women's identities cannot be understood solely through externally imposed social frameworks; rather, they must be analyzed in relation to inner consciousness, selfhood, and processes of identity formation. This paper argues that Khalida Hussain's fiction not only reflects the socio-cultural positioning of women but also gives voice

to their silenced experiences, exposing the imbalance of power between men and women and making a significant contribution to feminist discourse in contemporary Urdu literature.

**Keywords:** Khalida Hussain, Urdu Fiction, Gender discrimination, identity fragmentation, Socio-cultural Norms,

Khalida Hussain is a renowned name of Urdu Fiction who felt the conflict of feminine identity and the discrimination a female has to bear in a patriarchal society. Khalida made her short stories thought provoking while infusing her definite intuition regarding a female. Her creative expression is a reflection of the internal pain, emotional skirmish and social barriers a female has to bear. Her fiction becomes a voice of such a female who is bound to live in a society where there she possesses undecided status. Khalida has written a countable number of short stories in which she evokes the freedom of taking decision by a female, internal vexation and the effect of social norms on a female. The article

under pen is portrayal of a female's social status, internal conflict and the issue of identity reference to the short stories of Khalida Hussain. Dr. Mirza Hamid Baig states:

“Khālidā Hussain kē hāṇ ṣinf ē nāzuk kā ihsās-ē-adam tahafuz bunyādī mōzū hē. Jab kē khauf, nafrat, azīyat aūr tashkīk aurat kā azal sē muqadar. Ālmī sachāyīāṇ aik kē bād ēk rad hōtī chalī jātī hain, zinagī raftā guzishtā aqdār sē khāli huā chāhtī hē aur adam tahafuz kā ihsās baṛhta chalā jātā hē aur yehī khālidā Hussain kē afsānōṇ ka bunyādi tarz ē ihsās hē.”

“A female's feeling of insecurity is a basic subject of Khalida Hussain. Fear, abhorrence, torment and skepticism is fate of a female since birth. International facts are being rejected one by one, life is about to vacate from previous values and the feeling of insecurity is being increased, all this is the basic sensitivity of Khalida Hussain's short stories.” (1)

Khalida makes herself a distinguished Urdu fiction writer by employing symbolism, abstraction and psychologized stylistic over the regular narrative. Due to this, a female of Khalida's stories is a complex and layered who is not only fighting with her surrounding but also has certain queries, fear and quest inside her. Being herself a woman, Khalida portrays women's issues with a specific cultural and social context and tries to emphasize the social importance of women. The opening of her short story “Mēṇ Masrūf Aurat Hūṇ” is as under:

“Mēṇ aik masrūf aurat huṇ! Ab āp sē darkhuāst karūṇ gī kē yē lafz (aūrat) qausain mēṇ kar dījīyē. Kiyā yē mumkin nahiṇ kē mujhē sirf aik masrūf wajūd

samjhā jāyē. Chalīyē asūli tōr par nahīṇ tō sirf chand lamhōṇ kē liyē. Zarūrtan, eārīyatān. Sirf aik kahānī kē liyē.”

“I am a busy woman. Now I request you to please put brackets around this word (woman). Is it not possible to consider me a busy creature only, suppose it is not possible by principle, then for some moments only, for a need, arbitrarily, for this story only.”(2)

By the request of putting the word “woman” in parenthesis, the writer is in search of a free creature. She wants to be free from this gender identity for a while. It declares that society looks at women as encircled women and denies all other identities including business, personalities, abilities, creativity, humbleness, sacrifice etc.

This excerpt by Khalida Hussain conjures the need of acceptance of a female's business on human and creature gages. The excerpt is a criticism on the gender biasness prevailing in the society. The business of a female is considered unnoticeable and domestic while male's business is considered noticeable and preferred. The wish to put the word “woman” in bracket itself is a symbolic action. Putting in brackets means to plug out something for the time being, to mark something not essential or to be discussed yet. It shows that a female wants to get freedom from these gender labels for a while, so she may be known as a human or a busy person only. Dr. Ismat Jameel writes as:

“Khālidā Hussain apnē zamānē kī aurat kō muravij label sē alag kar kē us kī az sar ē nau shanākhāt karnā chāhtī hēṇ. Wōh ma'rūf haqīqtōṇ kī pēhchān rakhtī hēṇ. Jāntī hēṇ kē aurat gungī shēhzādi hē (gung shēhzādī). Wōh tō bas tukar tukar kar

daikhtī hē aur sab kuch khud bakhud hōtā rēhtā hē. Usē sirf bhugatnā hōtā hē. tarah tarah kē khauf usē andar sē ghāyal kartē rehtē hēn. Wōh apnī pehchān chāhtī hē."

"Khalida Hussain wants to redefine the woman of her time by separating her from the prevailing labels. She recognizes well-known realities. She knows that a woman is a mute princess. (Mute Princess). She just watches and everything happens automatically. She just has to suffer. Various fears keep hurting her from within. She wants her own identity."(3)

Khalida Hussain wants a new identification of her contemporary female after getting her free from the custom label. She (Khalida) has a sense of preceded realities. Khalida knows that a female is a silent princess who looks wistfully without daring to speak and rest of all happens itself that she has to bear. She is defeated by numerous fears inside her (but still) she wants to be identified.

This excerpt is an effective feminine narrative that expresses the complex interconnectivity of social identity, gender biasness and the wish of freedom. It is a reflection of the struggle a woman is doing for her identification as a human creature along with a feminine peculiarity. Khalida Hussain's such thoughts seems similar to some extent to Beauvoir Simone de who is an eminent philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century, a representative of women rights and an existentialist. Her book "The Second Sex" is internationally renowned for feminist approach. In this book, she criticizes the social identification and social reality of woman in the prevailing society. She is of the view:

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."(4)

It means being a woman is a society assigned character and not a biological gender. Khalida Hussain too narrates the same idea stating that a woman wants to cater a space for her personal identity outside the circle (in which she is boxed) defined by the society. Khalida Hussain's thoughts are aligned with the international approach where the feminine identification, liberty and self-centered issues are discussed delicately. She narrates:

"Tō mēn aik masrūf aurat hūn. Yē mujhē bār bār is līyē nahīn kehnā paṛ rahā kē khud mujhē is haqīqat par kisī qism kā shak hē... dar aşal shur'ū hī sē mujhē yē tarbīyat dī gaī thī... yehī wajā hē kē aj tak mērā wujūd hōnē nā hōnē kī darmiyānī saṭāḥ main latkā hūa hē. Mērē pīr ū murshid nē kahā thā kē jō shē tumhārē līyē chat hē kīsī aur kē līyē farsh hō saktī hē.

"So I am a busy woman. I have not to state same thing again and again because of some doubt... In fact, I have been trained in this manner since beginning. That's why I am still hanging between the state of existence and nonexistent. My saint said that a thing that is a shelter for me can be a ground for some other."(5)

This excerpt is a voice of a character that is raising a question again and again and asking for a gender identification along with existing status, trying to solve the puzzle that how being a woman would get social discrimination and denial.

This character is stating again and again "I am a busy woman" that reflects the rational barrier of the society where a woman has to prove her identification again and again. This is an existential crisis and a result of gender discrimination. It shows that a woman identification is made up by social structure and is not natural. Society,

religion and patriarchy clutch a woman in the cage of her character, place and identification. Khalida Hussain narrates further:

“Tō mēn aik masrūf wujūd hūn. Mujhē bēhad zarūrī kām krnē hēn. In kī fehrist itnī ṭavīl hē kē khatam hōnē maiṇ nā āyē gī. Aik bār mēn nē in kī fehrist banānē kī kōshish bhī kī thī magar mujh par is kōshish kē abaṭh hōnē kī ḥaqīqat khul gaī. ḥaqīqat yē hē kē ham har lamhē main aik niyā wujūd hō chukē hōtē hēn. Aik sē dūsrē tak ūmar aik lamhē barh chukī hōtī hē aur bōht sē khulīyōn kī tor phor hamārē jism kē andar aūr bōht sē tajarbāt kī tarsīm hamārē bātin mēn hō chuknē par ham vōhī nahīn rehtē jō pehlē thē. Isī līyē har lamhā hamārē līyē aik niyā wujūd hē. Har waqt hamāri naw’īyat badaltī rehtī hē.”

“I am a busy extant. I have to perform very obligatory tasks. Their list is so lang that it cannot be ended. Once I tried to enlist them but soon, I realize the effort is inoperable. The fact is that in each moment, we are transformed in a new extant. The gap between one and the other moment add a moment in our life, after the deconstruction of body cells and the penetration of several experiments we cannot stay as we were earlier. That’s why each moment is a new extant for us. Our extant is changed each and every time.”(6)

Here a woman is pondering upon the issue that her routine duties have finished her individuality. She is just a busy individual cut off from herself while proving her existence to others. She is tired physically, mentally and spiritually. And now she questions for her identity:

“Merē ghar maiṇ aik khāmōsh tārīk kamrā hē. Ūs kī dīwārōn maiṇ nīchē sē ūper tak tāq banē hū’ē hēn aur in sab mēn vōh chehrē

dharē hēn jinhaiṇ mēn aik aik kar kē pēhntī hūn. Din kē mukhtalif hīsōn maiṇ apnē kām nimtātī chalī jātī hūn. Is kē sivā kōi chārā bhī nahīn. Har kām kē līyē munāsib “persona” ist’imāl karnā paṛtā hē. Bas mēn aik kē bād aik “persona” pehn kar tamām kām krti chalī jātī hūn. Kisī film kē fast motion kī tarah. Āp pūchain gē ākhir in kāmōn kē nimtānē maiṇ aisī ujlat kīyūn?”

“I have a silent, shady room in my house. It has niches in its walls from top to toe. There are the faces placed in the niches which I wear one by one. I do perform the assigned tasks in different parts of the day. I have no other option than this. I have to use a suitable persona for every task. So, I wear these personas one after the other and complete all the tasks like a fast motion of a film. Now you ask why am I in a hurry to finish these tasks?” (7)

A silent dark room is a symbol of unconscious of a person in general and of a woman in special, that is usually filled with personal abrupt shades. This is the point where a self is captured, where those personas are placed a woman use in her daily life.

The word “Persona” used by Khalida Hussain has a direct link with the concept of persona by Carl Jung. Persona is the veil a person has to wear to fulfil the social needs. Mother, daughter, teacher, wife, boss or just a civilized citizen, all are persona. According to Carl Marx, persona is a mask that a person has to wear while social interaction.

“The persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is.”(8)

This mask hides the reality of a person so he/she may fulfil the requirements of the society. These masks symbolize the several

social identities of a woman. A woman is bound to wear these masks stressed under social demands.

The opening text of Khalida Hussain's short story "Dōlī" symbolically portrays an unusual and unconventional picture of a woman. This short story is not only the emotional narrative of a woman but also a reflection of a society where a woman still departs in a carriage "Dōlī" but there is no clarity that why she travels along with whom, where and what is the destination. The central theme and the narrative style of the short story have a strong feminist impact. "Dōlī" is not only a carrier or a symbol of traditional marriage but it is a conscious metaphor that presents an unchoice travel of a woman along with social barriers and a quest of identity.

"Aik a'jīb naqāhat nē mujhē bē his ō ḥarkat kar dīyā. Shayad wō kōī khōf thā jis nē mairī zubān mairī ānkhōṇ tak kō khushk kar dālā thā. maiṇ nē bē basī sē ūs kī taraf hāth barhāyā. Us kē hāthōṇ maiṇ surkh chūrīyāṇ thīn. mēṇ nē us kī ānkhōṇ sē iltijā kī.. pehlī chūrī chaṛhātē hu'ē us nē sargōshī kī "mēṇ jāntī hūṇ. Magar ab kuch nahīṇ hō sakta."

"I was numbed by a strange feebleness. Probably it was a fear that make my tongue and eyes quite meaningless. I stretched my hands towards her. She had red bangles in her hand. I look her in a pleading way. While taking a bangle around her wrist, she whispered "I know. But nothing can be happened now."(9)

The strangeness, fear and silence in the statement show that the characters are internally bearing some psychological conflict. This conflict shows the contrast among feminine identity, social pressure, custom and tradition. The excerpt is a fine

sample of Khalida Hussain's symbolic and abstract style, which meticulously narrates the internal conflict of a woman, emotional helplessness and extant fear. It is a silent plea of a woman having no voice, no choice and no resistance in society. She can watch only, can be depressed but cannot take a decision. Wearing red bangles is a symbol of a new oppressed relationship that cannot be sidestepped anymore. It is a soundless appeal of a woman as well as an acceptance of such oppressed relationship.

The feminine characters in Khalida Hussain's short stories are nameless. They have no identity, no status. Khalida narrates the stories of the helpless women of the society symbolizing through these nameless characters. "Dōlī" is a symbolic short story that reflects the utmost pain of a woman associated with existential crises, strangeness and social oppression.

"Lō diakhō. Tum nē ā'īnā tō daikhā hī nahīṇ." Us nē apnē pehlū sē aik ā'īnā nikāl kar merē sāmnē rakhh dīyā. Magar mēṇ nē us chehrē kō nahīṇ pehchānā... mēṇ nē yād karnā chāhā. mēṇ tō us sē bē had mukhtalif thī. Aik hansī merē halq sē aṭak aṭak kē niklī. Aisī āwāz jō kīsī zabhī hōtē bakrē kē gale sē nikaltī hō. Vōh murjhāyā, bē rang dhabōṇ bharā chehrā jis par bad rang bāl nichē tak jhuk ātē thē.. bē basī kē ēhsās nē mairā sīnā jakar dīyā."nahīṇ aisā nā karō." mēṇ nē phir iltijā karnā chāhī. Magar wōh tō sab k sab merē gird jama' thē."

"Look in the mirror you didn't have yet" She took a mirror from sideway and placed in front of me. But I couldn't recognize the face in the mirror. I tried to recall. I was quite different from this face. I laughed hardly. I sound like a slaughtering goat. That withered, colorless, spotted face encircled with dull hair downside. My

heart was fastened due to helplessness. “Please don’t do so.” I tried to plea but they all were gathered around me.”(10)

The mentioned feminine character was being married without any consent and she was not even informed about her marriage. She was surprised to observe the unusual home decor and her situation is added up with an order to wear a bridal dress. She was beautified by some ladies and then a mirror was placed in front of her face. She refused to recognize herself. It shows that a woman is an existential that is apart from the reality, she is different from that one made up by the society. Hence it is a metaphor of an internal defeat, emotional fatigue and social negligence. The bride laughs like a slaughtering goat. Laughing that must be a metaphor of contentment is a now a metaphor of the pain, discomfort, agony and defeat.

Zuhrī is the character of the short story “Cheenī kā piyālā”. She is orphan and a domestic servant with no will and wish. She is deprived of social background and individual identity. Her master got her married with a strange man and then became indifferent to her, it actually shows a solid denial of Zuhrī’s existence, her wishes and freedom. One day he accompanied her husband to his house and that day she seemed quiet, upset and overaged. It reflects her internal conflict and vulnerability.

“Voh chup chup thi. Siyānī hō gaī thi aur amān kē sāth ziyādā bātaiṇ kartī thi... kuch kuch dair bā'd ānsū us kī ānkhōṇ sē ubal ubal kar rukhsārōṇ par bēh nikaltē thē.”

“bībī ab tumhārā hī ghar hē. Shābāsh dil chōṭā nahīṇ kartē.” amān nē kharar kharar machine chalātē hū'ē kahā aur Zuhrī nē hasrat sē is ghar kē dar o dīwār par nazar kī.

Phir apnē dupatē kō sehlānē lagī. Magar us kī ānkhōṇ kē ānsū nā chupē.

Dūsrē kamrē sē us kā ādmī āyā aur bolā: “chal bha'ī chal”. Phir zarā rukā aur bōlā: “aur kiyā kiyā batā'ūṇ bhābī jī. Āik tō mēṇ is kē pās bēlhta hūṇ tō jēsē is kō gōlī lagtī hē.” Us nē galē kī ragaiṇ phulā'īṇ.

“nā nā aē Zuhrī. Patā hē farishtē lānat kartē hēṇ tmām rāt.”

Yē bhī farishtōṇ kī kitnī ziyādī thī kē Zuhrī hī kō lānat kartē.”

“She was silent. She might be mature and used to talk more and more with amān. On and off her face was filled with tears. “Dear! Now this is your home. Don’t be let it down.” amān advised her while operating a noisy machine. Zuhrī looked at the house and then tried to settle her shawl but she couldn’t hide her tears. In the meanwhile, her husband came out from the other room and ordered her to go with him. Then stopped, he complained angrily “how much can I share Bhābī, whenever I sit with her, she seems to be killed.”

“No way Zuhrī. You know you will be cursed by the angles throughout the night.”

Its not fair that angles too would curse Zuhrī.”(11)

Zuhrī became indifferent from her home after marriage. It shows that a married woman is not protected and in fact she is transferred from one slavery to another. The husband saying “chal bhaī chal” seems to be a Lord and ordered as if Zuhrī is his property like an animal. He is not limited to this but is cursing her too. The other lady in the story is not caring about Zuhrī and forcing her for a blind obedience of the husband. Zuhrī in this situation, can say nothing but a resisting weep. She bears silence, injustice and powerlessness. She is

handed over a man but she is not considered a human under that man's world.

After sometime, Zuhri informed her previous lords that she is ill but nobody came to see her. One day she died, the daughter of her previous lords can only feel Zuhri's pain as she was a woman herself but still she has no courage to speak for her. She was sitting with a bowl of sugar, her brother hit the bowl, saying:

“is ٹاراہ جا’ائیں گی یہ۔” Imtiáz nē jhuk kar kahā aur phir pā’ūn sē dhīrē sē ٹھوکار mārī piyālē kō.. ٹھوکار par vōh rizq sē chipkī makhlūq “haqīr” m’ātūb makhlūq aik bhagdaṛ maiṇ par gaī. Vōh kā’ēnāt kē kinārōn tak bhāg uṭhī. Is nafsā nafsī kē ālam maiṇ aik dūsrē kō rōndti kēh chahtī thī kēh is kā’ēnāt kē dūsrē kinārē tak pōhnch jā’ē kēh in tmām imkānāt sē nikal kar kisī aur hiṣar main jā base.. kēh āj kō’ī bōjh uṭhānē walā kisī dusrē ka bōjh nā uṭhā rahā tha.”

“They would go like this” Imtiaz bent and hit the bowl slightly. The tiny creature stuck with the sweet of bowl became restless with this hit. It felt to be running the universe boundaries, want to touch the other boundary and to be a creature of some other universe. nobody was there to bear anyone's mass.”(12)

Here, the ants are shown as a symbol of an organized system that was gathered on the bowl and the order and continuity of a life was ongoing. However, the breaking of the bowl due to the man's foot and the ants running away indiscriminately symbolically show the oppression of male power, which, intoxicated by its power, destroys the order and continuity of this entire system and causes pain. The fragile existence of a woman like a bowl, which her husband, through unnecessary cruelty and abuse, destroyed her feelings and

emotions, thereby destroying her delicate existence, which ended her life's order, relationships and identity, the collapse of existence, the end of identity.

“Vōh m’ātūb aur imtihān maiṇ dālī ga’ī makhlūq andhā dhund bhāg rahī thī aur is piyālē kē kinārōn sē nikal jānē kī dhun main thī kē piyālē maiṇ darāṛ par ga’ī. Aik dō nahīn bōht sī aur vō alag alag ٹukrōn main bikhar giyā. maṭī ban giyā... aur maṭī tanhā rēh ga’ī. Vōh makhlūq jā chukī thī. Kahīn us kā nām o nishān nā thā aur naqsh ē pā bhī nahīn, nā hī kōī us kī āhat sunāī daitī thi.”

“That cursed creature that had been beaten and put to the test, was running blindly and was about to escape from the edges of the bowl when a crack appeared in the bowl. Not one or two, but many, and it shattered into separate pieces. It became dust...and the dust was left alone. That creature was gone. Its name and mark were nowhere to be found, nor was its footprint, nor was any of its cries heard.” (13)

A man's tripping, breaking and turning a bowl into dust has deep symbolic meaning. A man's tripping does not just mean an outward physical blow, but it is the emotional, psychological and social exploitation of a woman. Just as a bowl of sugar broke and turned into dust, a woman's self-control, her identity and her being were completely destroyed by a man's oppression. And when a woman, who is the center of any family and the one who connects relationships, breaks down, the entire social system also falls apart. Similarly, the breaking of the bowl shattered the entire system of ants.

In Khalida Hussain's stories, women are presented not simply as individuals but as social entities that have been consciously

structured by the patriarchal system. The story "Nām kī kahāni" also presents the identity of women, the fragmentation of caste, and the existential crisis that arises in a patriarchal society in a very profound and symbolic way. At the very beginning of the story, "name" is not a simple symbol but becomes a metaphor for the identity, existence and social status of women. A woman who has been abandoned by her husband and is now entangled in the issue of the loss of her identity.

"Ab wōh kisī sē kiyā kēhtī. Awal tō yē nām bhūl jānē kā qīṣā hī ajīb thā kē harf sab kē sab mōjūd thē aur mil kar aik nām ab bhī banātē thē. Aur usē yē bhī mālūm thā kē yehī us kā nām hē. Magar mushkil yē thī kē pēhlē yē lafz vōh khud thī magar ab vōh mehd̄ khōl thā. Vōh us kē andar mojūd nahīn thī. Ab m'ālūm nahīn kē vōh aṣal nām vōh khōl thā yā vōh khud jis kā kōtī nām nahīn thā. Is līyē sab kām tham ga'ē thē yā shāyद yē hād̄thā is līyē hūā thā kē aik mudat tak vōh apnē nām kā shadīd ehsās kartī chalī ā'ī thī. Maslan jb Jamīl nē usē chōrā tō usē har dam apnē nām kā ehsās rehtā. Vōh lōgōn sē alag mōjūd thī, aik aṭal lafz. kīon kēh lōgōn nē usē apnē sē a'lēhdā kīyā thā. chunanchē sōtē jāgtē, andhērē ujālē, kōtī yē lafz us kē kān maiṇ phūnktā rehtā. Magar jab vōh Nuzhat kē pās ān rahī tō a'jīb itifāqāt hōnē shurū hū'ē. Ab yē bhī hūā kē għantōn usē lafz kī yād nā ātī."

"What would she say to someone now? First of all, the story of forgetting her name was strange, because all the letters were there, and together they still made a name. And she also knew that this was her name. But the problem was that earlier this word was herself, but now it was just a shell. She was not present inside it. Now it is not known whether the real name was that shell or the self that had no name. That is why

everything had stopped or perhaps this accident happened because for a period of time she had been intensely aware of her name. For example, when Jamil left her, she was always aware of her name. She existed separately from people, an unwavering word. Because people had separated her from themselves. So, while sleeping and waking, in the dark, someone kept whispering this word in her ear... But when she stayed near Nuzhat, strange coincidences started happening. Now it also happened that she could not remember this word for hours."(14)

In a patriarchal society, a woman's identity is often shaped by her relationship with others. When this relationship is broken, such as when her husband Jamil leaves her, she begins to search for her own identity. This situation is actually a sign that a woman can maintain her identity as long as society recognizes her in some relationship. Sometimes as a daughter, sometimes as a wife, sometimes as a mother, and sometimes as just a voice or a word. In many cultures, a woman has been considered the personal property of her husband, brother or father, subject to their desires and even as an instrument of purchase and sale. (15)

In this story too, after the woman is abandoned, her name on the one hand gives her an individual identity, but on the other hand it also makes her a symbol of loneliness and separation. But when she has no other place to stay and is forced to stay permanently with her sister, she becomes extremely busy with household chores, raising her children, managing the kitchen, cleaning the house, sewing clothes. In such a situation, she is not even aware of day and night and even becomes indifferent to hunger and thirst.

And there comes a point in Apu's life when she suffers from depression and starts eating excessively and becomes obese and becomes physically deformed and ugly. Here, throughout the story, the woman thinks, feels and lives in dreams more than she speaks. This situation is a sign that a woman does not have complete freedom of expression, so her identity takes refuge in the unconscious and dreams. Dr. Bibi Amina writes in this regard:

“Asānā “Nām kī kahānī” nām sē bē nām hōnē ka safar hē. Nām hamāri shakhşiyat ka ek ehm juzw hē. Hamārā wujūd aur nām aik dūsrē kē sāth is ṭarāḥ juṛē hū’ē haiṇ kēh mā’lūm nahīṇ hō pātā keh dōnōṇ maiṇ sē kōn sī chīz kis par asar andāz hōtī hē yā phir hamāri zindagī kā kō’ī aik rukh mut’ayan karnē main in dōnō kā kiyā kirdār hē? Yēh aur isī qabīl kē mazīd sawālāt is kahānī kē zarīyē uthā’yē ga’yē hain.”

"The story "Nām kī kahānī" is a journey from name to namelessness. Name is an important part of our personality. Our existence and name are intertwined in such a way that it is not known which of the two influences which or what role they play in determining any aspect of our lives? These and other similar questions are raised through this story".(16)

Khalida Hussain's short stories are not just narrative stories, but also interpret the status of women on an intellectual and cultural level, their emotional contradictions and existential questions. She testifies to the fact that women are going through a continuous struggle not only on a physical but also on a psychological and social level. She clearly states how a woman has to hide herself due to a contrast between psychology and

society. According to Batool, I., & Qasim, M. (2022):

“Carl Jung’s idea of shadow in one’s personality which is an archetype of darkness and repression, qualities a person do not want to be acknowledged, but attempt to hide from others.” (17)

The same is depicted in Khalida Hussain’s stories. Her short stories point to the fact that a woman’s place cannot be determined simply in social structures, but it must be understood in the context of her inner feelings, her self and her identity. Her creative consciousness describes women’s social status, internal conflicts and identity issues. Khalida Hussain not only gave an intellectual dimension to the existence of women, but also made the social, cultural and psychological oppression associated with it as the subject of her stories. Her stories not only reflect the internal anguish and social restrictions of women but also highlight the imbalance of power between men and women.

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