

# Divulging the Blankets of Feminism with Intersecting Identities in the novel Brick Lane by Monica Ali

Anabel Cathrene. W<sup>1\*</sup>

## Abstract

This paper effectuates the specific issue of intersectional feminism where the characters intersect with violence and how fate paves the way for all the female characters to suffer in misery when they try hard to ignore or escape from the current statures that they are facing within their lives where all the sufferings and hurdles are slightly different from one another but they are similar in their suppression that can be either Cognitive or Corporeal. Those sufferings are based on the caste , culture ,race , gender , ethnicity that paves way to Super Patriarchy . All these sufferings are due to the society which made women the mere caresses of the society .However towards the end of the novel, Brick Lane, all the misery that happened has paved way to a new life to all the women who where suppressed.

## Keywords

Intersectional feminism, Super Patriarchy, Corporeal suffering, and Cognitive suffering.

<sup>1</sup> Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Tiruchirapalli -2.

Monica Ali is a Bangladeshi born British decent .She is known for her debut Novel, Brick Lane. She was also narrowed down for Man Booker Prize for the same novel .There are different ways in which suppression takes place in different places they vary from one person to another but however the females experience the oppression in their lives ,this is Intersectional feminism, this is where it exists in Brick Lane by Monica Ali. In the advent of the novel, the protagonist finds herself being pushed away by fate's hands into the female threshold. This in turn foreshadows the blanket of feminism upheaved in the society, where she is led to survive by herself, but if she were a boy, she would have been pampered. Here, the ones who make her suffer are the women's community, this shows that women are neither supported by men nor women. Men don't know about women's pain but women are aware of it.

Hasina is a rebellious girl in nature, confident to take up her own decisions and she is found to be more beautiful than Nazneen. Though both of their characters are contradictory, they face the same oppression in society and by their families. Hasina, in the novel, elopes with her partner at an early age but Nazneen submits to her parents' wish and suffers like Hasina. Hasina who enjoys her life with her lovable partner, later on, faces the reality of life where she is being misused and tortured by many people and experiences oppression, she seems to be the person who runs all through her life for happiness amidst her struggles, and Nazneen feels sorry for Hasina through her letters but she is also in the miserable condition, where she experiences the dilemma between two things in the novel- she finds the dilemma between her husband and her secret lover and also the financial situations and also the need to stay back and enjoy her life and also to go back due to her penniless situation. Hasina comparatively does not think in any of her

situations she just tries to move on and run off from her fate.

Hasina earns the ultimate anger of her father because of her elopement- her father is self centred and super patriarchal. He is the one who stands by the side of the village entrance for days together in vengeance for the daughter who has destroyed his prestige and privilege in society, that too he stands there waiting with a weapon to kill her. This shows that his pride is more important than his daughter, but for sure Hasina was wrong in her decision to elope away from her home without any support or anything, and the age was also a fowl age where it exaggerates all the emotions in life.

Now Hasina is in a condition where she would not be able to go back or lead her life further. This situation is too much to handle for Hasina at her age. She experiences oppression from both her family and the society. There, Nazneen is not in a condition to get help from the family, but here Hasina is in a condition where even if the family can help her, they will not help her. So, both are in the same miserable state as similar that their oppression intersects with each other.

When it is looked upon Nazneen's life, she is the one who is been married to an old man who is comparatively aged than Nazneen's father, but her parents state the reason that she is physically not good in terms of beauty compared to Hasina. In terms of her internal beauty, she is as good as Hasina, but Hasina made her own decision in her life while Nazneen allowed her parents to decide her future, but they made a comparison with her beauty externally and made a bad choice that too in a random way, but she should be admired for her internal beauty, but she is not. This is a general oppression every girl faces inheritance life she is been mocked and pushed away in terms of her external beauty; internal beauty is not included in the tape of measurement that they use for measuring a woman's prettiness.

The Life of Nazneen was not a bed of roses in England, they were an immigrant to the place, and they also experienced racial discrimination, but she befriended the Bengali people. Nazneen's life changes from the time of her mother's death. Her mother also faced suppression when her husband was in extra marital relationship with other women in the village, this affected her mother so much that she decided to end her life. However, her mother suffered in the past by not gaining her husband's love and affection, and oppression has been passed down to the next generation like a curse. Even though Nazneen is in England, she is seen to be the continuity of the oppression but indirectly here, there Hasina has been doubled up to her fate due to her elopement. Nazneen feels the cognitive sufferings in her life, where she feels depressed being alone in some other country, that is where she feels for her mother thinking about the lie that she believes, that her mother fell to the machine accidentally and died, which was a lie by her father. Nazneen felt all her emotions being suppressed and she was not able to express her stress, anger, and burden unknowingly she was the one who supported her family mentally, but this was not at all recognized by her husband and children. She even feels alienated among her Bengali immigrants.

Nazneen was the one who felt the suffering of her sister through her letters and tried methods to save her sister however she was far away from her. Generally, a statement says that a woman can feel another woman's suffering but, in this story, it is not the same, even in reality where people try to put down others for their betterment. As per the above statement, here, in this novel, the blood relation can only feel the connectivity of suffering among themselves, apart from the other women present. Nazneen seems to be the only person who takes up her sister Hasina's cognitive suffering cognitively. However, she is found weak when compared to her family members who do not have any support especially when it is concentrated on women. Nazneen who wants to make her sister's life set right, asks her husband, but Chanu does not consider her to be even a human being, though she is pregnant with a child, she is not heard by Chanu to fulfill her wishes nevertheless her pregnancy. In this case, it can be looked upon from a different perspective where men do not care about women's sufferings, they are fixed up with their problems seeming to be the big one according to them comparatively.

Nazneen is not only the person who experiences the restraint from the males but also her mother and her aunt. They are revealed when Nazneen thinks about her memories where her mother and aunt are worried about the state of Super Patriarchy at they experience in their day to-day lives. She thinks of this when she experiences it again in her life when some of her inner dreams are not fulfilled, as an example, she feels happiness when she watches the ice skating program, she also thinks that she wants to try it at least once in her lifetime but her husband Chanu is not interested to know about his wife likewise this character goes up similar to Nazneen's father where he does not care about his wife and has many other

extramarital affairs. This was known to Nazneen 's mother and that stands to be the reason for her mother's suicide. Here, super patriarchy plays a major role and this stands to be the sole reason for her father not to care about his wife. Even after that, he does not care about his daughter's life and he makes her marry a random person whom he finds for Nazneen, who is by no means a match for Nazneen. Later, this is again found to be the repetition by Chanu and Hasina's husband. Here, Hasina's husband is found with an extreme tendency to abuse her for he is only obsessed with his parent's wish. "The most revolutionary thing a woman can do is not express herself" (Doyle 62)

This is what every woman in this novel found to be doing in their lives, where they are silent with their lives without raising any voice against men. Even if it is seen in terms of Hasina, she did not raise any voice against men, instead, she just ran off silently to avoid her situation. But Nazneen stays quiet and stays there, and she cannot even walk off like Hasina who now has a baby for herself, she now has to think from the perspective of a mom too apart from the role of being a wife. When it happens to a woman who should play the role of a mother she has to lose herself, forget her dreams, and lose everything for her child and husband, she is not even allowed to think for herself now, that too she has to enhance the situation of racism in an unknown place and manage with the environment along with all these problems in her life, here she has to face up the problems of an immigrant along with male chauvinism. Hasina's state is like Nazneen's where she has to endure with all the other beastly men outside where she experiences corporeal and cognitive suffering, there Nazneen seems to experience cognitive suffering alone.

Hasina is the one who undergoes many beastly people present in the society she is been gossiped about by women in conjoint with Mr. Chaudhary for his less rent and that stands to be the root cause for the rape done by Chaudhry towards Hasina. However, the damage to a woman comes from a woman either directly or indirectly. Due to this situation of being pushed out of state from her work, she must get into the job of prostitution in her life. Even though her sister is ready to offer her savings of some amount, she is grateful for her sister's love, and she feels the connectivity as a blood where she does not accept it as she thinks from the perspective of her sister too, she also feels about the state of her economic disparity in her sister's life. This makes her pushed into street walking for the means of her survival. This is a disaster when a female is pushed to the situation where she does it for her survival. All these fall under a curse to even the women who made her go into this state. After a long time, she is found to be the lovable one by one of her clients he asks for her hand, and she just wants her life to be pure as a retrieval from her life. She tries to be a good wife and a domestic one to Ahmed where he is the one who proposes to her, but the disease called Super Patriarchy also affects him and he is also found to be the one who abuses his wife. However the place differs, the state differs the marriage differs, and men

are found to abuse women on all sides either corporeally or cognitively, in Hasina's case all the men are similar in abusing her on both sides. Finally, she uses the solution of skipping the problem rather than facing it, she finds a home where she is supported and she works as a maid for a wealthy couple, according to the general ethics of human beings, what she did was right because working as a maid is far better than working as a street walker.

Towards the end, nonetheless the suppression, Nazneen can change herself into a rebellious woman who makes herself into a person who is much more shrewd than others imagine. She has accumulated all her stressful situations into a positive mode of life where she finds herself standing up for her dreams and wishes. This is where her children are also able to accommodate themselves as she does. They even stand for themselves with their mother's influence. They just make their wishes to stay back when their father wants to go back. There is no need for a woman to go wherever a man goes and serve him wherever he is. This is where they broke the wall of their suppression and they can speak up for themselves is all because of their suppression. However, it had made them like polished gold that undergoes a heavy burn. In another case, Hasina has chosen the path where she is always rebellious and goes in for domestic work. She finds her life in peace at last. Nazneen stands up do her wish in the end, here she does not kind about the surroundings and the gossip of other women or what other people think of her to skate out being an immigrant Muslim woman rather she goes up for it and the people who help her are her neighbours sometimes all the women or not the same some people suppress and depress other women but there are even person's who supports us when there is a person stands against us, it can be either indirectly or directly. Regardless of how humans can adapt to situations like the theory of Charles Darwin states about the survival of the fittest. "The only Nazneen was sublimated and the new Nazneen was filled with white light, glory" (Ali 10).

## **References**

- [1] Ali Monica . Brick Lane ,Scribner ,London , 2003
- [2] Doyle Glennon . Untamed , The Dial Press, New York City , 2020.