

Portrayal of Mother in Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days* and Ali Sethi's *The Wish Maker*

SAYKAR SATISH GOVIND
Teacher Fellow
Department of English
Shivaji University, Kolhapur
India

I Introduction

In the present time the academicians and intellectuals are engaged in retrieving the texts for reassessment that are repressed or marginalized by a society or by those who are in power and encourage the voice of minority for free expression. The present paper tries to portray the image of mother in Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days* and Ali Sethi's *The Wish Maker*. Layla's mother in *Madras on Rainy Days* and Zaki's mother in *The Wish Maker* are in the focus; along with this other women characters will be referred shortly to support the idea of how women form the minority. The present paper is divided into seven sections. The first part is in the form of introduction. The second section introduces the sociological term 'minority'. The third section deals with the status of women in the Pre-Vedic Period and in all the religions. Further the present paper tries to answer the question as to why the women form the minority. The mother, though in all the religions, is respected as goddess; she is treated differently when she performs the role of a daughter, or a sister or a wife and becomes the person of less importance. The writers while idealizing her make her 'minor' by showing her as the symbol of

love and sacrifice and making her life unbearable. Moreover, the culture in which a girl is born and brought up, the patriarchal system, teaches her to be a woman who reminds us of the French critic Simone de Beauvoir. The fourth section deals with the characteristics of minority literature. The next two sections deal with the image of mother as is depicted in Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days* and Ali Sethi's *The Wish Maker* respectively. It concludes with the note that women are trying to reject the domination and rising as a separate identity.

II The Concept of Minority

The term 'minority' because of its vague and imprecise nature cannot be defined appropriately, as a result of which no definition provides the description that could consist all the minority groups. Francesco Capotorti in his study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities defines the minority group as-

a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in *a non-dominant position*, (italics mine) whose members being nationals of the state – poses ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, maintain a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language. (Capotorti, 98)

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari defines minority 'as people when invoked by subordinate groups or those aligned with them, always refers to a minority irrespective of the numerical power'. (Deleuze and Guattari) They consider woman as minority. The women all over the world are dominated by men and are deprived of all the legal rights.

III Women in Pre-Vedic India

To know the status of women in Pre-Vedic Indian Subcontinent, one needs to know the culture of that time. As Dhere R.C. (Dhere) in Lajjagouri (*The Nude*) states that India has a great tradition of worshipping the Goddesses in nude or naked form. The research has proved that Alampur (Andhra Pradesh), Nagarjun Koda (Andhra Pradesh), Siddhankotte (Uttar Pradesh), Sangameshwar, Wyaghreshwari, Wadgaon (Dist-Satara, Maharashtra), Ter (Usmanabad, Maharashtra), Nevase (Dist- Ahmednagar, Maharashtra), Mahurzari (Dist – Nagpur, Maharashtra), Bhokardan (Dist - Aurangabad), Bhita (Uttar Pradesh), Kamakhya (Assam) are the Goddesses which were worshiped and still some are being worshiped in nude form. These Goddesses are considered as the symbol of creation. Their sex organ is worshipped and is considered as having the procreative power. Even their breasts are highlighted to emphasise that they are not only the creators of the world, but also the feeders of the world. All these Goddesses are looked as the forms of the earth mother goddess.

The part of the above mentioned history can help us to know the status of women in the Indian Subcontinent. A woman can be compared to these Goddesses as she also gives birth or create new. Even the period of Goddess' menstruation is celebrated in Assam and Kashmir, as it is thought that after this period she becomes ready for creation. The earth goddess is considered as the virgin though she carries the womb of all the creation. She uses the male power for the purpose of creation, but her virginity does not corrupt. Perhaps that is why when Parshuram is teased by his friends as the boy without father, he asks his mother, Ellamma or Renuka, to show his father to whom she says that she does not have a husband, as a result of which she is unable to show him his father. Further Yamai is the mother goddess who uses the male (in the form of seed) as per her wish to create something, but is not being controlled by that, she is free for every time and everywhere. Though male comes in her sphere as father, husband or brother, it does not

affect her freedom. Moreover, when a virgin becomes the Matangi (one who worships Goddess Matangi), she marries with a tree, it is a symbolic marriage, after which she is free to enjoy sexual relationship with any man and still her dignity is retained. Even the example of Yogeshwari who avoids the pre decided time of marriage with the God Vajinnatha of Parali by pretending to comb her hair and remains forever in Ambe as a single one. The similar examples can be given of Padmavati who remains separate from the Vyankatesha of Giri and her separate temple is there at the foot of the mountain and of Rukmini who lives in a separate cell in Pandharpur.

The civilization of culture of any society comes into existence as per the beliefs of that society. As we know that no any Goddess we have cited above is controlled by the Gods or their husbands which means that there was a matriarchal culture in that time where the women were in power or in a dominant position. This might be the reason as to why all the upcoming religions (which were established by men) tried their level best to control the life of woman and the chastity or virginity was given the utmost importance and the adultery was forbidden. Actually they feared that women may divert to free sex which will be dangerous to their own position.

Women in Religion

Vedic Period

In the Vedic period the women worked a lot in the fields of education, religion, individual development; and had enjoyed all the religious rights along with the men. As they had the education of Vedas, they could chant the Vedic *mantras* clearly. As there were no temples or sculptures, the devine forces were worshipped and it was not banned for women. In the Vedic Religion the women were forced to marry, as the son was the goal of life for a man and that could only be achieved through wife. The presence and cooperation of woman was essential in

all religious rights. Even the intercaste marriage system was in existence, and that a wife who have come from the lower status had the right to participate in all religious activities. There was a provision for *Upanayan* of girls as well to enjoy the religious rights equally with boys.

But in Sutra – Smriti Period (B.C. 800- A.D.300) the status of women started degrading and were kept away from performing religious rites and considered them inappropriate to utter the mantras as the rumour was spread that even a small mistake committed while uttering *mantras* can lead one to hell. With the arrival of *Manusmriti* the woman was considered as dependent on her father, husband or a son for the security reasons.

In Puran Period (A.D. 300 –A.D. 1800) the women were given some religious rights again in Bhakti and Puranic Religion. It has mentioned various *Vratas* especially for women, but while performing these religious rites the women became naïve and forgot their logical ability. The attitude of men towards women was of sympathy and reverence. Even the abducted women in the war-period had an opportunity to re-enter in the religion and to enjoy the religious rights upto 12th Century , but after the 13th Century, the abducted and hence depurified women were not allowed to come back, and their degradation began. The women were the true patrons of the soul of Brahmin religion and its traditions.

Jain Religion and women

Jainism considers the importance of woman and it has awarded her an equal status with man. Woman is considered even more important than man in the family. About 80% of the stories in Jain literature are woman centred. All the *Tirthankaras* have given more importance to mother. There are two sects in this religion – Shwetamber and Deegambar. Shwetamber considers that the 19th *Tirthankara* was a woman named Malli. In the period of Verdhmaan Mahaveer, the status of women improved.

He, himself, accepts Chandana as his disciple who was sold in the market and who then became a *Sadhwi* to support the orphan women and make their life happy.

Jainism looks at sons and daughters equally. The birth of female is also celebrated as that of the male. Appropriate education, nurturing, marriage of girls in adulthood, equal share of property are considered the basic duties of the head of a family. Even the girls have the freedom to choose their own husband and also she reserves the right to stay unmarried throughout her life. Jainism disregards the childmarriage and *Sati* custom, at the same time, it encourages the remarriage of widows. There is no *purdah* system at all. Moreover, all the women have the freedom to participate in all religious festivals, religious meets and other important functions.

Any woman can function as *Sadhwi* irrespective of her present status of Queen or maid servant. But as Jainism prefers *Brahmcharya* to *Grihasti*, the stories were spread regarding the women that they are responsible for the degradation of men. However, fortunate enough, the women have the permission to take the *Sanyasa*.

There is a difference in opinion in Jain religion regarding the rights of *Moksha* to women. According to Deegambar sect, the women have no right to attain the *moksha*, and to attain it she take rebirth as a man and not as woman. On the contrary, Shwetamber sect believes that there is a right to woman as well to attain the *moksha*. Shwetamber regard Malli as the 19th *Tirthankara*. But the believers of Deegambar doesn't consider Malli's femininity. But the fact that a male *Shravak* who has performed the *sahana* for three years can be the *Guru* of a female *Shravika* who has performed *sadhana* for thirty years is approved by both the sects which highlight the secondary status of women.

Buddhism and women

Buddha rejected *Brahminism* where all the women were secondary and where the unfertile and widow women had no place. He made no difference in man and woman regarding the attainment of religious knowledge. The rules of morality were applicable to both men and women. So the secondary nature of women came to an end to some extent. Any unmarried, married, unfertile or widow woman were allowed to be the *Sanyasini*. The *trainee-Sanyasini* was given the same education as that of the *trainee-Sanyasi*.

Though it is often claimed that the status of women was improved in the period of Buddha, there were some limitations imposed on women. The *Bhikshuni*, though for a hundred years in the religion, should salute the new *Sadhu*. In the monsoon, The *Bhikshuni* was not allowed to live where there were no *Bhikshu*. She had to confess, if any mistake had committed by her in the monsoon, after the end of every monsoon. Moreover, she was not allowed to criticize any *Sanyasi*, A *Sanyasi* can warn any *Sanyasini* but not vice versa.

Buddha's attitude towards women was rather a mixed one. Despite the limitations imposed on women, his views were rather great in connection with the contemporary society. He even disapproved the admission to the *Bhikshu Sangh* to all the women including his own stepmother Goutami. But after the continuous insistence from his favourite disciple Anand, he agreed to admit women. He has given the right to women to attain the *moksha (Nirvana)*. Though he admitted women in *Bhikshu Sangh*, he professed that his religion will retain for five hundred years only instead of a thousand years which again throws a light on Buddha's attitude to women.

Islam and Women

Some of the rights are given to women in Islam and is expected that every religious person should follow the same. The rights given to women are: right to education, right to collect wealth,

right to earn money by business/service (if she needs / wishes), right to get awards for the good deeds, right to speech, right to get required facilities from husband when she is in need, right to make the favourable marriage contract, right to divorce, right to retain the self-wealth, right to sexual satisfaction, right to retain children after divorce, right to reject the marriage, etc. Though Quran gives rights to women, they are not enough as the men are the controllers. In this connection Quran says: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given them one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means." (Quran, 4:34) One thing, quite contrary to the moral values, is that the evidence of two women is equal to the witness of one man because of the so called deficiency of the former in intelligence. Moreover, a woman can neither pray nor fast in her menses.

Islam discourages social interaction between unmarried or unrelated men and women when they are alone, but not all interactions between men and women. This is shown in the example of Khadijah, a rich, twice widowed businesswoman who employed Muhammad and met him to conduct trade before they were married, and in the example set by his other wives, who taught and counseled the men and women of Medina.

Hijab is the Quranic requirement that Muslim women should act and dress in a way that does not draw sexual attention to her when she is in the presence of someone of the opposite sex. Islam gives women the right to own, which entitles them to have personal possessions. While women have no financial obligations like men, some of their financial rights are less. Women's share of inheritance, as outlined in the Quran, is typically less than that of men because women do not have financial obligations, they do not have to pay dowry or pay for child or elderly parents' maintenance. Women's right to divorce is often extremely limited compared with that of men. Men can divorce their wives easily, women face many legal and financial obstacles. Prophet Mohammad should be thanked that

for the first time, he gave women at least some legal rights. He hated the female infanticide. He encouraged the remarriages of the widows.

Sikh Religion and Women

Gurunanak (1469 - 1539) established the Sikh religion and rejected the Indian customs, blind beliefs in religion and the superstitions of the 15th Century India. He took the support of religion to give equal status to women. As per the philosophy of Sikh religion the women had full freedom to worship, education and business. They can work anywhere in fields, factories or as a soldier in the battle field. They are not deprived of *mukti*, nor needed them to take a birth as a man in the next birth.

The women were asked to add 'Kour' (the princess) after their name and were identified as a person for the first time. Even a woman did not need to add the name of her husband to express her identity. Sikh religion opposed the old customs and traditions such as, *Sati*, girl infanticide, purdah, etc. On the contrary, he was the exponent of woman education and widow remarriage.

Christianity and women

In ancient and middle period, woman was considered less important in family, society and religion than man. Even the thought of equality in man and woman is considered as the rebellion against the wish of the God. To treat woman equally with man leads to the devastation of morality of the society. Christians opposed polygamy which helped to improve the status of women. As marriage was considered a permanent bond, the life and status of Catholic and other communities' women was badly affected. Though Christian women enjoyed the company of children and security at home, they were deprived of the legal rights and didn't get the right to live life independently. So most of the women were dominated by their husbands.

The ability to work, familial worries, kindness, the love for the people outside the family and intellect are considered the important qualities for a woman. She can participate in religious ceremonies. Except the Methodist sect, the woman is not given the full responsibility by religion in Church. But she is considered as a full person and has some duties in relation to society. So in professional sectors, such as nursing, medical and teaching, the Christian women entered first. In religion also, she is considered secondary. The myth of Adam and Eve can throw a light on the status of woman in Christianity.

Actually, if we consider the story of Adam and Eve true, it is not the case that the woman is all responsible for the doom of man. She stands for the thirst of knowledge, she stands for the wisdom. The God forbade the fruit of knowledge to both man and woman, fearing He will lose his importance and the man or woman may not worship him. The serpent was very clever to identify the thirst for knowledge in woman and chooses her to persuade her mind to eat the forbidden fruit. He says:

“No, you would not die at all!. But God knows that whenever you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will, like gods, be knowing good and evil.” (Holy Bible, 3: 4-5)

Eve, as the embodiment of wisdom (though she had little knowledge at that time), eats the fruit despite the God's will. She not only eats the fruit but also persuaded Adam to eat it meaning she was the first to open the door of knowledge for man. When the God comes to know the matter, he curses her:

“I will greatly increase your pregnancy – troubles; you will suffer birth – pangs; yet, you will be drawn to your husband and he will dominate you. (Holy Bible, 3: 16)

If a woman does anything independently, it is considered a sin and if she wants to save herself from sin, she must accept her secondary position as she is equal to, what Bible says, a small limb of a man. Protestant sect believes that man and woman

were equal in the heaven, but as a form of punishment she has got a secondary position.

IV Minority Literature

A minor or minority literature doesn't come from a minor language, but it is the product of minority within a major language.

The first characteristic of the minor literature is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization'. Deleuze and Guattari use deterritorialization to designate the freeing of labour – power from specific means of production. *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) distinguishes between relative and an absolute deterritorialization. Relative deterritorialization is always accompanied by reterritorialization, while positive absolute deterritorialization is more alike to the construction of a 'plane of immanence', akin to Spinoza's constitution of the world. There is also a negative sort of absolute deterritorialization, for example in the subjectivation process.

As stated earlier, the minority writes in the language of majority – the colonized writes in the language of the coloniser, the oppressed writes in the language of the oppressor, the Blacks write in the language of the white, the ruled writes in the language of the ruler, and so on and the deterritorialization takes place. So English is the most suitable and appropriate language for the blacks, subalterns, workers, the writers in the third world and the women for deterritorialization.

Secondly, everything in minority literature is political. In major literatures, the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other individual concerns and the social milieu serves as the mere background to it. So the Oedipal intrigues are specifically not indispensable nor absolutely necessary but all become as one in a large space. On the contrary, the minor literature's cramped spaces forces each

individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating in it.

Thirdly, in minor literature everything takes on a collective value. There is no possibility for an individual expression that would belong to this or that “master” and that could be separated from a collective expression as opposed to what T.S. Eliot expects the individual writer to be a part of a great tradition and enrich the existing tradition with his own talent. But in minor literature, it is said that there is a scarcity of talent that is beneficial and that allows the conception of something other than a literature of masters. What the author says individually already constitutes a common action. What he says or does is necessarily political, even if others are not in agreement. Collective or national consciousness is “often inactive in external life and always in the process of break – down,” (Deleuze and Guattari) so literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary expression. Literature produces an active harmony in spite of skepticism, and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means of another consciousness and sensibility.

V Portrayal of Mother in Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days*

Layla is the central character in Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days*. Her parents prefer to live in America but want to retire in India. They try their level best to raise their children without the influence of the culture of the West. Layla feels that she belongs to nowhere as she ‘wore the shirt of one, the trousers of the other, and both sides were shooting at me.’ (Ali, 26) Always, there is confusion due to the differences between the cultures of

India and America. In America, she is known as Indian and whenever after each six months, she comes to India, her mates call her as American and for her 'it was like turning a page and not knowing whether to begin reading the script from right to left or left to right, Urdu or English.' (Ali,8-9) Layla's confusion can be compared to the Grandma in *The Shadow Lines* who cannot decide whether she is 'coming home' or 'going home.' Her mother always imagines about her son-in-law as,

Your husband will be a doctor or an engineer. Your husband will come from a good family. Your husband will be a Muslim. Your husband will be from India. (Ali, 116)

Amme fears for her daughter and thinks that Layla is possessed by a devil. She gets angry at her and asks who was her lover and calls her a "Whore!" (Ali, 6) She threatens her daughter that she will throw her out of the house to live as a prostitute. Amme manages to take her daughter to *alim* to remove the ghost in her. She is very careful that the news should not reach Sameer, the bride groom chosen for Layla, as there was a danger of breaking of the marriage. So both of them hide themselves in the chadors so that no one can identify them. She also supports her daughter by saying not to worry as her dreams and bleeding will stop and she will be better.

Layla's mother, always, compares Layla with her father as she resembles her father. Before ten years, her husband divorced her as he married Sabana, though it was not known to others. She weeps for a month as it was a shock for her, but has not cried yet since then. She retains her father-in-law's house as *mahr* and refuses to give up the master bedroom, which her husband needs to share with Sabana, as it becomes her own property as per the contract. Amme loves Layla the most and is ready to kill herself than to see her daughter injured. Her son died after his birth, so she has Layla as the only child. She prays the God to place whatever in Layla's body in her own so that her daughter may not need to suffer. When she suspects the wrong done by Layla, Amme says;

“Your mother’s heart is breaking. You are breaking your mother’s heart. Devil’s child, you will never be happy, you’ll se.” (Ali, 4)

She worries for who can help her as Layla’s father never remains there. When she talks with *alim* about the problem, she rejects the fact that it is a mistake committed by her daughter, instead she emphasizes that devil or ghost is inside her and she has brought her daughter to him to get rid of it. Though *alim* asks her to take Layla to a lady doctor, she insists the *alim* to do everything needed to recover on his own. Layla, at once, wants to confess the secret of her bleeding which is the result of the misdeed in Minneapolis. Amme’s blind belief makes a barrier. So though she is ready to spend much money, it is of no use. At last the *alim* suggests her to postpone the marriage until her daughter is better suited to meet her husband.

Though the two families know each other for seven generations and Sameer’s family rented the house of Amme till Partition, now as the mother of the bride, she remains the one without power. So she has no courage to ask for the postponement of the marriage. She does everything to impress Layla’s in-laws. She prays God for Layla in the night in a private audience with God as the prayer of a night is considered equal to praying a thousand years. She use to pray till dawn.

Amme locks herself when her husband divorces her and mourns for a month and makes her husband to sign a contract to not to reveal their divorce to anybody. Amme asks Nafiza to accompany Layla to Sameer’s house and gives her a salary of a month in advance. She assures Layla that the latter will be free after marrying Sameer, though the people in the U.S. think that one loses one’s independence as s/he marries. When Layla asks her to ask her husband to give the house back or tell him to leave it, he overhears and calls his own daughter a ‘Randi!’ (Ali, 86) and threatens Amme that he will throw her out of the house to prostitute herself to live irrespective of whose name it’s in.

She stops her husband from beating Layla by saying; "She doesn't belong to you, not anymore!" ----- "You have no rights left. She is married!" (Ali, 86)

Her husband, during the pregnancy of Sabana wants her to follow him to America to take care of his sons. Amme goes to the U.S. with her husband. Though she denies her want for him as her husband, he is the only thing she craves for. She goes to watch his sons, to be a surrogate wife and surrogate mother in the absence of Sabana and Layla.

To Roshan, Amme is a generous woman as a result of which she receives the blessings from others and that is why Sabana's *jadu* does not affect her. Amme has spent her husband's money on the bills of the doctors, of the *alims*. Moreover she tries to force Sabana to leave her husband by giving a blank check as a bribe. Layla feels that more money would be sent on Nafiza's death than on her life. This is how she is a selfless woman and caring mother for her daughter for which she must be respected, but in her other roles, she finds herself in secondary position.

VI Portrayal of Mother in Ali Sethi's *The Wish Maker*

The Wish Maker (2009) is a novel written by Ali Sethi, a Pakisthani novelist. The novel deals with the life of three generations. Daadi, her children and her grandchildren are portrayed effectively in the novel. Zaki, a narrator of the novel, is the central character of the novel. Through Zaki, the novelist portrays the character of Zakia Hussein who later becomes Zakia Shirazi. She has come from Karachi being her father the general manager of the Beach Fantasy Hotel; she grew up in the white-walled surroundings of it. Her mother, Mabi, was the hostess at the Chinese Restaurant with the revolving doors on the sixth floor. As her parents had to come to Karachi from Kanpur and had to live in the refugee camp which resulted in their alienation.

After school education, she takes admission in the university in Karachi. Once she accompanies Nargis in a trip to the mountains where they stay with the Nargis' aunt. An unknown man tries to talk with her in the party held at the house of a painter, but she refuses to talk to him on the ground that they are unknown to each other. While walking in the mountains, she meets Sami Shirazi from Lahore who lived in Risalpur for some years because of his enrollment there in the Air Force Academy. She is invited to a hotel for a *Tambola* night where she first tastes alcohol. She falls in love with Sami and after persuading her parents, she marries him and shifts to Lahore to live with him. When she is pregnant, all the relatives become more responsive to her. In mean time, she cannot maintain a good relations with Daadi, her mother-in-law, so she needs to work to earn her living; but she think negatively that she cannot work because of her pregnancy. As she is encouraged by Nargis saying that there are so many things that a young and educated woman can do, she becomes an interventionist journalist who takes risks and give thrills.

Nargis and Zakia both participate in the protest against the government, and Zakia's photo appears in a newspaper in which she is seen standing on the side of the street holding a stick in her hand, that is held in the other end by a policewoman standing behind her holding her collar and pulling her hair and the caption beneath her says: *Woman activist struggles with representation of the state.* (Sethi, 129) When the news is informed by her sisters-in-law to Daadi, she shouts at her. Daadi says,

What kind of family did Zakia think she was from? What kind of mother was she going to make? Had she thought about the child she was carrying in her womb? Had she thought about the husband? (Sethi,129)

The answer given to her mother-in-law is very significant which shows the revolutionary nature of Zakia. She says:

'I will do what I want! I will decide! Not you! Not your son! I will decide! (Sethi, 129)

Zakia's answer suggests that she rejects the domination of both her husband and her mother-in-law. While reading this comment someone may feel that she may not prove herself as a good mother; but throughout the novel, for her son, she is both, a father and mother – a successful single parent. By rejecting the domination she frees herself to assert her own identity which does not bar her from her role as a mother. So she becomes the ideal woman who is free from any restrictions on one side and the caring mother on the other side. In the seventh month of her pregnancy, she receives a news of the plane accident and the consecutive death of her husband. Two months later the death of her husband, she gives birth to her son. The answer given by her shows her confidence in her own abilities and so she could affirm she will do what she wants. She thinks of herself as a person, not depending on anyone for any reason. She knows very well that she can bring up her son well despite of the death of her husband which means she is ready to accept the parental responsibilities of her son as Nazneen in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* accepts to be a single parent to her daughters by sending Chanu to Bangladesh and rejecting to marry her lover. After having quarrel with her mother-in-law, she keeps her son with her all day. When she is removed from her job, she runs a magazine entitled *Women's Journal* in collaboration with Nargis. She takes the editing part to herself and asks Nargis to run the Marketing Department. In one of her visit to her parents, her mother asks her to think about remarriage as she is young and attractive enough. Her mother thinks that she is not doing it for the sake of her son. But she says:

‘It's not what you think it is. I'm not stopping myself. And he is not the obstacle in my path.’ (Sethi, 138)

As a woman she is very optimistic about Benazir Bhutto. When the latter wins the election, she writes in the *Women's Journal* that the prime minister must take ‘concrete steps now to ensure that the women of Pakistan were healthier and freer in the

future, starting with the abolition of the anti-woman laws instituted by the military under its so-called Islamization campaign. Though all her family members are critical of Benazir Bhutto, she tries to defend her.

'Yes', ----- 'we know there is corruption. There has always been corruption. There has always been corruption. But why do we look now? Why are we looking only at this government? Why don't we look at the corruption of those who rule with guns, and have ruled with guns for so many years and are even now waiting in the wings? (Sethi, 256-257)

She defends poorly but by heart but is depressed to see that though she has supported a lot to her, even the reputation of her journal was in danger, she and her friends have been let down. When she meets Louise and Richard, an American couple, she tells them about the woes and troubles of Pakistan, the challenges it faced as a developing country, the cycles of military rule and the experiments of democracy. She also tells her about the poverty and women's rights in the Third World, the life and struggles of an activist, the protests and marches she had organized in Pakistan and the failures in it.

As a mother, she takes her son to Alhambra castle. While showing him the castle, she says that the Muslim culture was best represented in art, music and architecture. It used to be progressive. She thinks that they have forgotten their history and culture. When the Headmistress of her son's school says that she is needed to take him to a child psychologist because of his active misbehaviour, she gets angry and decides to find a new school for her son. Then she has to wait for some time for her son's admission, so she hires a tutor at home to teach him lessons in maths and Urdu. She herself teaches him English lessons according to the admission criteria. When her son gets admission in the Wilson's Academy, it is she who says that it is the result of the talent of her son and not the luck. She sends her son to a tuition centre in Johar Town which provides coaching for SATs and A-Levels and runs a department of

Guidance and Councillng. Without thinking of her financial condition, she asks her son to apply to a Liberal Arts College in America by saying that it will be seen once the admission is cleared as the narrator has been advised so by the Guidance and Councillng Centre.

When Samar, the narrator's grandmother's sister's daughter, is helples after her mother's death, she takes place of her mother and brings her into her home by threatening her relatives of unmasking them in papers and doing a court case. She makes Samar join the *Women's Journal*. As a real mother, she asks her to keep her eyes open to find a suitable match for her. When Samar succeeds, she does everything to organize her marriage. She manages everyone - the tailor, the beautician and finally the caterers. She organises the wedding single handedly though the funds have come from all quarters of family. The narrator observes ;

'One does it for the children', in a way that affirmed her organizing role, her skills and her patience, as well as the vague parental function she was serving, and recast the whole thing in a positive light. (Sethi, 7)

VII Conclusion

'Woman is given to man in the role of mother, sister, wife and daughter. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) has gone as far as to say that 'Paradise lies at the feet of the mother.' (Sethi, 300)

Woman as a mother is often revered by all. She is an incarnation of love and sacrifice, but at the same time, while playing the role of sister, daughter and wife, she is marginalized and is given less importance. A mother portrayed in *Madras on Rainy Days* is an example of minority as she is marginalized in the patriarchal system, she has no identity of her own. She remains only a worrying mother and woman as well. On the contrary, the mother represented in *The Wish Maker* is revolutionary in nature. Besides playing her role as a loving mother, she rejects the domination of her husband and of

mother-in-law as well and maintains her identity as a human being.

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