

## **AN ANALYSIS OF VOICELESSNESS OF THE INDIAN WOMEN IN WATER AND THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study attempts to investigate Bapsi Sidhwa's Water and Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things through the lens of the Muted Group Theory. During the post- and pro-independence era, the subdominant groups were repressed and muted at the hands of the dominant groups. This discriminatory approach of Indian institutionalized society forced the muted groups to endure exploitation and suppression. This study highlights the factual truth, about the hypocritical and hierarchal Indian-subcontinent society and seeks to investigate the presence of the muted voices in Roy and Sidhwa's texts. This research examines muteness as a broader phenomenon, which is only not restricted to women in these selected texts. This research employs the Muted Group Theory to deal with the muted groups' muteness. Shirley Ardener and Edwin Ardener coined the term Muted Group Theory in 1975. The Muted Group Theory portrays that society is under the control of dominant groups. This research adopts the Thematic analysis, and themes play a significant role in organizing data. The study of the texts reveal that the Muted Group Theory allows Roy and Sidhwa's mute and marginalized characters to accept their significance and consider themselves valuable entities of Indian-subcontinent society.*

**Keywords:** *Marginalization, Muteness, Resistance, Dominant Groups, Sub-Dominant Groups*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

South Asian literature revolves around the Indian Sub-continent and diasporic writers. South Asian literature illustrates colonialism, identity crisis, the battle of oppressed groups, regional diaspora, and displacement. South Asian and diasporic writers investigate the lost part of their identity, culture, nation, gender, and race. The South Asian writers delineate their indigenous land's geographical, hybrid culture, social, and political situation. In their writings, they question various traditional norms, values, race, caste, and institutionalized culture (Lau, 2002, p.16).

South Asian writers elaborated the concept of nationalism and patriotism in their writings. These themes remained attached to the minds of

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the South Asian writers during the mid-19s and late-19s. Later on, South Asian women played a significant role in developing this genre through their writings (Lau, 2002, p.16). South Asian women writers are deeply engrossed in the issue of women's plight; women of the subcontinent were considered "Other" and second-class objects. The South Asian women writers adopted various strategies to break their silence (Lau, 2002, p.16). Roy and Sidhwa both delineate the predicament of marginalized groups through their characters in their works. They were well aware of the colonized India and the political disruption resulting from the partition (Lau, 2002, p.16). Bapsi Sidhwa and Arundhati Roy's writings reflect an accurate picture of Indian society. Their work illustrates the marginalization of inferior groups because of the dominating multi-culturalism in India. Therefore, socio-cultural conflicts are prominent in their writings. Their work portrays the authenticity and truth about the suppression of women and subaltern groups. Roy and Sidhwa delineate the devastated situation of women in the subcontinent and their austere condition in a misogynist society. Therefore, their texts stress the equal rights for women in a patriarchal society (Lodhi et al., 2019, p. 60).

Sidhwa and Roy illustrate the tragic and catastrophic circumstances of the Indian subcontinent, they set forth a bleak image of the Indian society. Therefore, their writings demonstrate the background of the Indian subcontinent that entrapped the minority groups in its chains of rigid and strict traditions (Lodhi et al., 2019, p.60).

Arundhati Roy and Sidhwa's work revolves around the pre-and post-independent Indian society. Their writings reflect the realistic image of the Indian subcontinent and the true aspects of women's psyche that has a close relationship with pragmatic reality (Lodhi et al., 2019, p. 62). This study will demonstrate different silent and voiceless groups and it will examine both novels side by side through the lens of the Muted Group Theory. These writers have played a vital role in illustrating the pathetic situation of women in India. Sidhwa and Roy's work is an excellent satire on the political, social, and religious situations of India. This study will contribute to South Asian literature by granting voice to the unvoiced characters in Roy's text *The God of Small Things* and Sidhwa 's *Water* while incorporating the Muted Group theoretical framework.

## **1.1 Purpose and scope**

This research is significant because it will contribute to South Asian feminist Literature. This research will contribute to postcolonial feminism and cultural anthropology study, postcolonial feminism is highly concerned with women of once colonized countries, especially third world countries. This

research plays a significant role in cultural anthropology study. Furthermore, this research analyses the human interactions and behaviors in a social structure. It will introduce the reader to the different social and cultural aspects of the India subcontinent. The research is crucial for the resistance literature which deals with the mute and voiceless groups in *The God of Small Things* and *Water*. Furthermore, it will elucidate the reasons for their muteness in these relevant texts.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

- To investigate the muteness as a broader phenomenon not just restricted to women in the selected texts
- To investigate the strategies of resistance that minority groups adopted in *Sidhwa* and *Roy's* texts.
- To investigate the different forms of muteness and marginalization in *The God of Small Things* and *Water*.

## 1.3 Research Questions

Qno1. How have the authors inculcated various forms of muteness and marginalization in the selected texts?

Qno2. How is muteness countered and resisted in *The God of Small Things* and *Water* by the minority groups specifically women?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ganaie and Chauhan (2024) in their article "Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: A Feminist Perspective" figured out the feminist elements in *The God of Small Things*. Ganaie and Chauhan focused upon the female's struggles, torture, and problems through the feminist approach, they argued that childhood trauma drastically impacts a person's life (11). They analyzed the themes of women's exploitation, marginalization, women's oppression, and economic exploitation in the Indian subcontinent society.

The primary concern of Roy and *Sidhwa* is women's plight and their derogation in their writings. Their writings do not leave the inferior and suppressed groups of subcontinent India, especially women, in darkness. Zaidi (2007) in his article "Feminist Reading of *The God of Small Things*." analyzed the text according to the feminist concept of Helen Cixous. Cixous argued that women should develop their way of writing and she added that women should write according to their perspectives (876).

Rani (2020) in her article "A Feminist Perspective: Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" discussed the theme of misogyny in *The God of Small*

Things. Women were marginalized and suppressed at the hands of the patriarchal system in Indian society. Rani argued that the dominant male groups were responsible for the inarticulateness of women in Indian society. Society taught men that they should have power over women. Pappachi's wife played violin but he did not appreciate her because it developed the sensation of jealousy in him. He feared that he would lose his popularity and he would lose his significance in the male dominant society. Rani unfolded the grim reality with references from the book of Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir argued that society sets specific rules for women and only matrimony is the best option for them to survive in society.

Kumar (2016) presented "A feminist reading of Bapsi Sidhwa's Water" which investigates the miseries of widow characters in the text. Kumar claims that pre-independent Indian society was a patriarchal society and patriarchal society possessed all the dominance (8).

Siva (2018) in her article, "The Intense humiliation and the silent suffering of Chuyia as pictured in Bapsi Sidhwa's Water" sheds light on widow's struggle in Indian society. Siva argued that widows were in a stigmatized position and under suppression due to religious norms and traditions. The misogynist society implemented firm limitations on her. She was not authorized to live freely and according to her will. The more severe problem befallen the protagonist when society considered her responsible for the death of her husband.

Crespo Gómez (2019) in his article "Gender roles and power relations between an Indian male and female characters in The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy: A Postcolonial Feminist approach" expounded on the theme of gender roles and relationships between male and female characters. The rigid traditions did not grant them the chance to live with emancipation. In India, women faced marginalization and at various times they became the victim of male chauvinism. In a male chauvinist society Indian women faced marginalization in independent India and women had to bear the consequences of resistance.

This literature review aims to probe the different trends the researchers have already analyzed in these novels. These researchers have analyzed this novel according to various aspects. They have implemented post-colonial theories and ecofeminism and focused on women's sexuality, child abuse, and feminist theories. They ultimately covered all study aspects but did not approach these novels through a Muted Group Theory lens. This research will fill this gap because researchers did not analyze the texts through the Muted Group Theory and thematic analysis. This research is distinguished from previous researches because the researcher will use the Muted Group Theory

with thematic analysis. The methodology and theoretical framework are unique and different. This research will address the gaps and give admission to the marginalized voices in the world of superior and dominant groups.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Edwin and Shirley Ardener originated "Muted Group Theory" in the anthropological discipline in 1975 (Barkman, 2018). They observed that the voice of women was absent from the front page, so they articulated this idea. "Women's voices are "often more 'inarticulate' than men" (Barkman, 2018, p.3). In the same place, the pioneers of the Muted Group Theory claimed that the Muted Group Theory is not all about women but this theory grants a significant place to women (Barkman, 2018).

The muted groups remain silent throughout their life. The hegemonic powers compelled the muted groups towards subordination and marginalization. The hegemonic powers segregate the society based on status, gender, class, race, religion, and caste system (Meares, 2017). Edwin and Ardener claimed that the societal and cultural values based on the discourse of the dominant groups and the social values do not provide the non-dominant groups any access to the public discourse (Meares, 2017). The gender distinguished attitude is responsible for women's muteness. The inferior groups remain mute because they cannot contribute to the dominant mode of communication. They have to follow the dominant mode of communication to express themselves in the dominant male society. The hierarchy established society on the cornerstone of unjust behavior and inequality and the dominant groups took advantage of this hierarchy structure (Funderburke, 2012). The dominant groups push the minority groups towards devastation and prohibit them from voicing their ideas. The dominant groups have sovereignty to control the subdominant groups (Funderburk, 2012). The pioneers claimed that the Muted Group Theory was not all about women, but women contain a significant place in this theory (Barkman, 2018). For instance, this theory got the heed of feminists, Australian Dale Spender, the American Cheri Kramarae, and the British Deborah Cameron expanded this theory. The power of discourse is in the hands of a misogynist society and women have to remain mute.

The Muted Group Theory does not leave minority groups in silence, but it grants them authority and identity. The approach examines all the minority groups and delineates the circumstances of the socially and culturally muted groups who are silent at the hands of the stigmatized society. However, it also brings to light all the muted groups; for instance, the people who belong to the nonwhite community, disabled people, LGBTQIA, and non-native English

speakers (Meares, 2017). Kramarae claimed that the Muted Group Theory concentrates on the gender division in society. Shirley Ardener argues that the Muted Group Theory is concerned with gender differences, later on, my husband felt this theory is applicable to other groups, such as bullies, children, and abuse victims (Meares, 2017).

The Muted Group Theory is significant and it unveils certain bleak truths of dominant groups. The Muted Group Theory works as a medicine to deal with the muteness of the muted groups by identifying the different causes of systematic oppression in society.

The research methodology of this study depends on the thematic analysis of the selected texts. It will pin down all the factors involved in the subordination of minority and subordinate groups. This research will analyze the existence of the muted groups in the Indian orthodox society through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an applicable instrument in scrutinizing the muted and subdominant groups in the selected texts. The researcher will investigate the specific repeated patterns, topics, words, and symbols and will illustrate particular themes. The thematic analysis consists of data familiarization, coding, categorization, reviewing, and defining themes (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Thematic analysis plays a significant role in analyzing and organizing the content (Ibrahim, 2012). In this study, the researcher will follow the following research methods and develop themes by adopting the data collection method. The researcher will identify the different patterns of codes and will combine different codes into a single theme. To finalize the themes, a researcher has to pass through the different phases and stages. Each phase is based on various stages; for instance, the first phase is data familiarization, the second phase is theme generating, and the third phase is reviewing and defining the collected data. Each phase consists of further stages (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

The given table will scrutinize the preliminary codes and final codes. The following table elaborates the connection of the data with the codes and themes. The first section of the table elaborates on the data while the second section delineates the primary codes. The codes play a crucial role in developing themes and subthemes.

Table no. 1: Connection of Data with Different Codes and Themes

Data	Primary Codes	Sub-Codes	Themes
Baby Kochamma chooses to remain quaveringly silent on the subject	Muteness due to social repression	Social Stigma/ Female marginalization	Gender Marginalization
She mutely appealed to Lakshmi	Fear of speaking in public	Linguistic marginalization/ Forced muteness	Muteness due to male aggrandization
In a quiet way, he offered suggestions without being asked.	Muteness due to social rejection	Identity Crisis/ Racial Marginalization	Ethnic Muteness
Ammu hit him with the heaviest book	Resistance against male dominance and rejection of misogynist society	Resistance against social stigma, Rejection, conflict	Resistance

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Marginalization

Sidhwa and Roy's texts portray that the dominant groups control the minority groups by mapping their traditions and norms. The primary research question focuses on the themes and forms of marginalization and muteness. Roy and Sidhwa's texts illustrate the suppression of Indian marginalized groups who were marginalized at the hands of ancient Indian society and deprived of their true identity. This will focus on the specific factors that coerced the marginalized groups into the phase of silence. It will address the different forms of muteness and marginalization reflected in the selected texts through thematic analysis.

### 4.2 Linguistic Marginalization

The pressure groups linguistically marginalized and pressurized the inferior groups, and forced them to remain silent. It is one of the leading factors of marginalization among the subcontinent's suppressed and subaltern groups. Sidhwa and Roy's texts depicted the linguistic marginalization of inferior and suppressed groups in ancient Indian society. For instance, Bhagaya's key to communication was in the hands of her husband, but the key to her daughter's emancipation was not in her hands. "She prayed to goddess

Lakshmi silently, her voice was quiet and silent" (Sidhwa, 2006, para 12). Roy and Sidhwa's female characters are linguistically marginalized, and this marginalization leads them toward muteness and silence. Male does not follow the language of their mother, while on the other hand women follow the footsteps of their mother. Women prefer to remain mute and silent throughout their life as they remain mute in their mother's body. "The linguistic system of the dominant groups fails to represent the experience of subordinate groups" (Hataway, 2010, p.31). The authors argue that women carry the heavy burden of speaking up in public. When they try to speak, they lose their words and language ability. It is a transgression for them to speak publicly, and if they speak, their words did not have any impact on men's deaf ears (Cixous et al., 1976, p.88). Once Mammachi was playing violin, Chacko stopped her from playing the violin. "He said it is enough" (Roy, 1997, para 63). Mammachi stopped and she did not resist. Indirectly, Chacko stopped her from communicating and he controlled her thoughts. She held them back before transforming them into final words.

#### **4.3 Gender Marginalization**

Mammachi and Bhagya were deprived of self-confidence in their life. Therefore, they could not transfer the confidence to their daughters. However, their daughters inherited muteness and voicelessness from their mothers; Chuyia and Ammu adopted muteness as a standard method to deal with the patriarchal system. When Hira Laal died, then a man shaved Chuyia's head according to Hindu traditions. "Somnath noticed her toes curl, almost reflexive, in mute protest" (Sidhwa, 2006, para. 43). The extracted codes are here as, "gender inequality", "women silence" and "pangs of widowhood", set the foundation of the sub-theme "gender marginalization".

Ammu and Chuyia were marginalized and suppressed due to their inferior gender in Indian society. Gender is determined by society, "One is not born a woman, but rather one becomes one" (Moi, 2008, p.123). Beauvoir says that our society and culture determine a person's role and keep them intact in gendered binaries. "Butler basically meant to say that we create our gender by doing gendered things" (Moi, 2008, p.263).

#### **4.4 Cultural Marginalization**

The Hindu culture was under the ascendancy of the dominant groups. The dominant groups fabricated the Hindu tradition for their purposes and benefits. The widow was muted at the hands of the patriarchal society and Water portrayed their muteness in this way" Chuyia speaking in a small, fearful voice" (Sidhwa, 2006, para. 24). Sidhwa delineated the struggle and lamentable

situation of widows, that will perplex its readers. According to the Muted Group Theory, the issue of muting is significant in the standardized system where certain groups' identities are removed or voiceless by the institutions and cannot convey their voice (Hataway, 2010). According to the lens of the Muted Group Theory the dominant societal groups organized the social culture and its values for its means, and ascendancy. The culture of any society is institutionalized at the hands of its pressure groups. Ancient Hindu tradition kept women at an inferior rank and did not accord any authority to women over men. Women of the subcontinent were unintentionally under the command of the patriarchal culture and they were puppets at the hands of the patriarchal system.

#### **4.5 Socio-Economic Marginalization**

Economic independence is imperative for the emancipation of women. Financial stability leads women towards liberation from male authorization. Women play a significant role in business and other fields of life. Women have been victims of economic exploitation for years, and the power groups keep them under their suppression, and dominance. Society determines the different patterns for individuals, organizations set roles for women, compel them to do household chores, and consider them only child-bearing instruments. The misogynist groups hold power, wealth, and business, they do not accord women authority and power. Roy and Sidhwa delineate the economic marginality of women in ancient Indian society, where the male patriarch retained them, deprived them of their inheritance, and abandoned them. For instance, all the female characters in the texts are substandard and impoverished.

Roy elucidates the desolated situation of women in her novel. The ancient India's economic foundation was on the capitalist system. Indian women became the victim of marginalization due to the capitalist system. In the post-independent Indian society, women struggled for their true identity and emancipation. "The women's wages be increased from one rupee twenty-five paise a day to three rupees and men's from two rupees fifty paise to four rupees fifty paise a day" (Roy, 1997, para. 106). The extracted codes "Indian capitalist system", "women dependency", "financial instability", "exploitation", and "economic suppression", generate the final category of socio-economic marginalization.

Sidhwa argued that the Indian subcontinent did not grant any economic relief to widows. The capitalist system forced them to hold begging bowls in their hands and they sat outside the temple with begging bowls in their hands. When Kalyani resisted the social structure, she confronted

Madhumati regarding Hindu society's double standard. "Why did you send me across the river? She asked quietly. Madhumati replied, for survival!" (Sidhwa, 2006, para. 19). The Muted Group Theory claimed that "Organizations privilege the voices of certain groups (generally those in the position of power) above others" (Hataway, 2010, p.29).

#### **4.6 Double Marginalization**

The Muted Group Theory claims that men consider women their property, they colonize and exploit them as they exploit a land. Sidhwa claims that in ancient Hindu society, men treated women as their possession, and the decision of their life was in the hands of their father and their brothers. Sidhwa's work is a significant contribution to the field of feminism, and her work plays a significant role in the aggrandization of feminism. She mocks the misogynist society through her writings. "Widow no longer exists in Brahmin society" (Sidhwa, 2006, 6). The extracted codes are here as "Social pressure," and "Burden of being a widow". Sidhwa's text portrayed that in ancient Indian society, widows carried the burden of their gender and widowhood. The Muted Group Theory claims that muted groups lack the skill or confidence to navigate the advances by the dominant groups. Society did not accept the vocalizing of women but instead tried to suppress their personal voices (Meares, 2017).

#### **4.7 Muteness**

This part of the study will engross the muted groups that were marginalized and silent due to their inferior status in ancient Indian society. Due to their lower social status, they could not participate in dominant discourse. This section will investigate the voicelessness of certain marginalized groups in the selected texts and interpret the factors that lead these marginalized groups towards muteness. In the subcontinent Indian society, the pressure groups coerced women and the minority groups towards silence, and this research is concerned with their muteness.

#### **4.8 Muteness due to Social Rejection**

The social rejection of institutionalized society is the leading factor of minority groups' silence and muteness. They decided to remain silent, but the nature of their silence is contumacious. Rahel and Estha were the offspring of divorced parents, so society was not ready to accept them because they were supposed to bear the burden of the transgression of their parents. Rahel and Estha both were the product of inbreeding, their mother was Sirayan Christian, and their father was Bengali Indian. These characteristics made them marginalized and mute. "Baby Kochamma disliked the twins, for she

considered them doomed, fatherless wail" (Roy, 1997, para 6). The social rejection and social pressure led them towards silence. Shirley Ardener argues that the Muted Group Theory is concerned with gender differences, later on, my husband felt this theory is applicable to other groups, such as bullies, children, and abuse victims (Mearns, 2017). Estha and Rahel were so devastated that even Ayemenem's house servant Kochu Maria made them realize they did not belong to this society. The twins bore the burden of transgression for yearning the self-emancipation. Whenever Ammu tried to suggest any opinion. Chacko stopped her and degraded her, "You do not go to Oxford" (Roy, 1997, para 65). The Muted Group Theory argued that "Women in the workplace have been encouraged to "speak like a man" avoiding apologies and excess qualifiers" (Mearns, 2017, p. 2). The extracted code words are here as, "Social rejection," "Women's plight," "Social restrictions," "Rigid traditions," and "Patriarch suppression". The extracted code words generate the final category "Muteness due to social rejection".

#### **4.9 Muteness due to Male Aggrandization**

Somnath used the dominant way of communication, and his body language was domineering over his wife. According to the Muted Group Theory, "to be heard and heeded, an individual must use this dominant mode of expression" (J. Well and Leary, 1999, p. 22). Similarly, Bhagya was unintentionally following the misogynist society's traditions and norms. Indirectly, Bhagya was mind mapping her daughter and training her according to society's trends. Water (Chapter 1) elaborates that, Chuyia started following her mother, she used the same linguistic style as her mother and used the same words. Chuyia was following the tone of subjugation of her mother. The male aggrandization prohibited the ancient Indian women from expressing their true selves. Chacko 's mother was running a good business and Chacko's self-aggrandizement could not bear it, and he took hold of everything in his hands. He deprived his mother of her true identity by changing the name of the factory. The Muted Group Theory illustrates that women are repressed characters, and the superior groups made their opinions mute, the superior groups made them voiceless instead of their veracity (Hataway, 2010, p. 29).

#### **4.10 Muteness due to Religion**

Religious marginalization was the significant factor that caused turmoil for the inferior groups in the subcontinent, and they remained unable to enunciate their ideas properly. Roy and Sidhwa sketched the society in which her characters remained mute Infront of their religious traditions. On various

points, Sidhwa and Roy targeted the religion and depicted that no doubt the Hindu religion entangled women of the ancient Indian society.

According to male patriarchal culture, women should be gentle, tender, humble, patient, and kind-hearted. The Muted Group Theory claims that the power groups force women to speak like the dominant groups and do not authorize them to communicate in feminine mode (Mearns, 2017). Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water* depicts that the ancient religious tradition did not permit muted groups to raise their voices in front of a male-dominant society. Narayan's father, Dwarkanath, was the client of Kalyani. Narayan went to his father to unearth the secret. His father's response was barbaric, his father was taking support of the religion to support his evil act. Narayan answered his father according to religious faith. "Ram told his brother not to grant respect to those Brahmins who interpreted Holy texts according to their means" (Sidhwa, 2006, para 29).

The Hindu culture and religion negatively impact women's psyche because it has distinguished behavior for men and women. The Hindu religion allowed men to develop extramarital relationships while, on the other hand, it put women behind rigid boundaries and fences. The religious traditions did not allow the subaltern entity to articulate their ideas independently. The Muted Group Theory argued that the suppressed communicator must silence themselves in favor of the supremacist groups, which is why they are muted (Wall and Leary, 1999, p. 22). The strong misogynist cultural pattern plays a significant role in shaping the minds of society. The misogynist groups control the dominant religious ritual, and they form it according to their interest. The dominant groups take complete hold of religion, ethnicity, communication, education, and governance. The minority groups follow the dominant groups unintentionally, they become victimized at the hands of the institutionalized society. The religious values made them feel worthless. The extracted code words formulated the theme of "Muteness due to religion".

#### **4.11 Ethnic Muteness**

The Hindu culture and the social norms revolve around the caste system, the caste system considerably influenced the Indian culture and affected their social life. The people of the higher caste in Indian society had authority and deep pockets to enjoy their life. People of the lower caste were bound to perform menial jobs and the caste system did not allow the untouchables to enter the abodes of patricians. Gandhi tried to demolish the caste system in Indian society. However, the dominant groups were not ready to accept equality. Velutha was a marginalized character in Indian society. His class, caste, ethnicity, and economic marginalization prohibited him from

participating in conversation and this subordination led him to muteness. The Muted Group Theory is not all about women but applies to other marginalized groups. The Muted Group Theory is not only about women, but women contain a special place in this theory (Barkman, 2018, p.1).

Roy 's text illustrates the marginalized condition of the lower caste people. This research indicates that muteness is a broader phenomenon. Nevertheless, Velutha's lower caste made him marginalized. Due to the social and cultural pressure he considered silence the only standard pattern to deal with the superior groups. The dominant groups humiliated and degraded him with their dominant mode of expression. According to the Muted Group Theory, "The sub-dominant group's modes of expression are less acceptable to and less respected by the dominant group" (Barkman, 2018, p.3). Roy delineates the pathetic circumstances of Paravan here, they were expected to sweep the floor to remove their footprints at the floor so that their footprints would not defile the Brahmins and the Syrian Christians. The social marginalization and subordination lead them towards continuous silence.

#### **4.12 Muted Desires**

The superior groups established the social and religious trends and the institutionalized society programmed them like automata and expected them to behave as they had programmed them. Sidhwa depicted the unfulfilled desires of widows in a society that considered them reprehensible for the death of their husbands. They were inadmissible to eat, drink their favorite food, wear colorful clothes, and were not allowed to participate in social activities. Roy's characters also remained silent and their unfulfilled desires led them to rebelliousness. The orthodox traditions triggered certain circumstances that lead the marginalized women towards the journey of muted desires. Baby Kochamma's unfulfilled desire to marry Father Mulligan transformed her into a toxic character; Ammu's unfulfilled desires turned her into a rebellious character. Therefore, Roy and Sidhwa's mute characters took action against the misogynist society by turning against the programmed patterns of this society.

#### **4.13 Resistance**

This research question will focus on the strategies that the muted groups, especially women, adopted to resist the imposed muteness in the selected texts. Although, they do not directly resist but they resisted indirectly through their different actions and words. Muted Group Theory argues that the muted groups can resist their rights because both muteness and resistance are not permanent (Meares, 2017). Sidhwa and Roy's characters resist for their

rights, their muteness manifests the rebellious nature of these characters. For instance, Ammu's character was marginalized and mute and she tried to resist for her rights. She attacked her husband with a heavy book to protect herself from exploitation. The code word "hit with the heavy book" put the foundation of the theme of resistance. The Muted Group Theory explains that muteness and repression are not permanent among muted groups, they try to resist to attain emancipation (Meares, 2017). Ammu rebelled against societal norms through her actions and broke the rigid fences of society. Velutha is the best example of rebelliousness, although he did not resist through his words, his actions manifested rebelliousness. Muteness does not indicate voicelessness, but it manifests in the repression of marginalized groups (Meares, 2017). They adopt new strategies and techniques to make their own space in the power structure (Hataway, 2010). During British rule, the people from the lower caste did not have the power to achieve high status in society.

Velutha and Ammu's relationship delineates the negation and protests against the inequity of post-colonial Indian society. Velutha did not subjugate himself in front of the post-colonial patriarchal ideology; instead, his rebellious actions shouted for emancipation. Ammu and Velutha's illegitimate relationship was the resistance against social stratification. However, the social stratification chased and devastated them.

Kalyani, the victim of forced prostitution, tried to raise her voice various times but society did not authorize her. Kalyani committed suicide but she showed her resistance through her actions because society did not accredit her to raise her voice. The Muted Group Theory argues that the muted groups raise their voice and adopt the technique that plays a significant role against the organizational forces (Hataway, 2010). Chuyia, a six-year-old protagonist, tried to rebel against the traditional orthodox Hindu society. Chuyia married at a very young age when she was not aware of the true meaning of the marriage. Muted groups try to raise their voice for their identity and adopt a specific strategy for this purpose. The resistance strategy allows them to prohibit the dominance of organizational groups (Hataway, 2010). Subsequently, muted groups resist and try to rebel against the dominant groups. Estha and Rahel resist through their actions, their actions are portrayed as a reverberating voice against societal otherness. The Muted Group Theory claims that change is possible and members of non-dominant groups can resist their suppression and resistance, they raise their voices against social dilemmas (Meares, 2017).

## **5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The texts analysis reveals that the traditional Indian society entangled the marginalized groups in its rigid fences. The rigid social fences devastated

the marginalized groups and did not allow them to speak. The coding method plays a significant role in organizing the data. The first section of the study addressed certain forms of muteness and marginalization, for instance, linguistics marginalization, cultural marginalization, socio-economic muteness, and racial muteness. Ammu, Velutha, Kalyani, Chuyia, and Shakuntala did not subjugate themselves in front of the institutionalized society. Instead, they resisted the social norms and values through their actions. The Muted Group Theory delineates that the muted groups do not remain under suppression or marginalization for a long time, instead, they rebel against the institutional and organizational groups. The results indicate that the Muted Group Theory is a broader phenomenon and does not remain restricted to only one gender. The muted group theory and the coding method have analyzed the pre- and post-independence texts and proved that the muteness does not remain confined to only the women characters, but men also suffer due to the muteness. The muted characters do not remain mute throughout their lives but resist muteness and marginalization through different strategies.

This research opens distinct avenues for future researchers. The researcher can discuss these novels by employing different methodologies and new perspectives. Roy and Sidhwa's texts are enriched with postcolonial themes, and future researchers can analyze these texts from postcolonial perspectives. Future researchers can reopen this research. They can scrutinize the themes regarding muteness and oppression, in the selected texts, with the help of different theoretical frameworks. It will prove the authenticity of this work. Studying Roy and Sidhwa's other texts, in the same manner, will provide strong evidence regarding the muted groups' existence in pre-and post-independent Indian society. When the researcher conducts further research by implementing a similar methodology to Sidhwa and Roy's other texts, it will prove the authenticity of this research, and it will also provide a realistic image of the pre-and post-independent Indian society.

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