

Research Article

Identity Crisis and Subsequent Consequences in Kate Chopin's The Awakening

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Abstract

This essay attempts to delve into Edna's exploration of her identity crisis and difficulties she has to face being a woman. Chopin's novel is laden with suppression, subordination, patriarchy, social and cultural restrictions, gender and many more. Chopin presents Edna as a rebellious woman in the context of the Victorian era and label her as the "new woman." Edna has the potential to exert power and influence on her men's behavior in the bedroom, yet she cannot continue to overpower men. Her sense of becoming an independent woman and societal expectations controls her thoughts and she feels trapped between these two warring thoughts in her mind. As a result, she seeks salvation through suicide. Therefore, this article examines Edna's move and action and justifies how she explores some ways to attain the joy of independence for a short period of time.

1. Conservative Patriarchal Ideology

The story is set in the Victorian era when patriarchy was very powerful. It is necessary to know what a patriarchal society is and what it means to absorb this system in order to comprehend the primary character Edna's role in society and that of the women to whom she is compared. Patriarchal society can be defined "as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles" [1]. The word patriarchy literally means "rule of the father" [2], and in patriarchal society men control women. Lois Tyson explains that "patriarchy continually exerts forces that undermine women's self-confidence and assertiveness, then points to the absence of these qualities as proof that women are naturally, and therefore correctly, self-effacing and submissive" [1]. With either abiding by patriarchal society's laws or disobeying them, women in Chopin's books have embraced and internalized a feminine role in society.

According to ("Patriarchy — Social System"), patriarchy, a hypothetical social structure in which the father or another male elder has total control over the family unit and, onsequently, one or more males (as in a council) have total control over the society. Patriarchy makes it difficult for women to advance in society as women's subordinate or secondary status is a result of patriarchal structures and social relations. Men are given total precedence in patriarchal society, and women's human rights are severely constrained. Male dominance in both the public and private arenas is referred to as patriarchy. To define the power dynamics between men and women and to identify the underlying causes of women's oppression, feminists use the term patriarchy [3].

The civilization shown in *The Awakening* is the late nineteenth-century society of New Orleans and Grand Isle. "The period represents the first wave of feminism and New Woman era" [4]. The primary character of this book, Edna, is a wife who belongs to the medium to high classes in this society. In her own life, Kate Chopin occupied this role. Chopin expressed many of her own thoughts through Edna in the novel because she was a progressive woman who believed that women were not treated with the full respect and independence they deserved in America during her times.

Women are supposed to be very social individuals first and foremost in Edna's society, just as they were in Chopin's culture. In the past, they had servants to handle the household duties, therefore they weren't actually housewives. Moreover, Edna is also expected to host parties and dinners at night, entertain people during the day, and generally uphold the Pontelliers' reputation in their community. According to Léonce, "we've got to observe les convenances if we ever expect to get on and keep up with the procession" [5].

The kind of wife Edna is not perfectly exemplified by Madame Ratignolle who is blended in the patriarchy. She is loyal to her husband, nurtures her children and conducts herself in public with dignity. It appears to be her life's purpose. The two women that represent the average middle-class and upper-class lady in that society the best in the novel are Madame Ratignolle and Madame Lebrun. Unlike them, the progressives who defy expectations are Edna and Mademoiselle Reisz. That's why Edna is not considered an ideal woman based on patriarchal ideology and she knows it.

In the novel or in Edna's community, as it is in other societies, adultery is a significant problem especially in the context of women. Although Kate Chopin's affair is with a married man and Edna's is with a widower, both women engage in extramarital affairs. While still married, Edna starts to fall in love with Robert Lebrun. When he leaves, she starts an affair with Alcee Arobin. Despite the impression that she doesn't care for Arobin, she seems to be coming to terms with the fact that she is a free-spirited woman and person with needs and wants. She must fill the vacuum left by Robert's apparent abandonment of her and her lack of love for her husband by engaging in a strictly sexual relationship, defying tradition in the process.

Despite having largely the same population as Grand Isle society, New Orleans society in the book is distinct from it. In order to escape city life and enjoy the sea, Edna's group heads to Grand Isle for the summer. There, people lead more carefree, easygoing lives. Though, patriarchy still prevails there. Overall, the society in the novel is against Edna's choices, yet whether she intends to or not, she makes daring new moves towards her freedom.

Struggle Against Societal Norms

During the Victorian era, the law that society created and expected as a whole actively prevented women from working. "Whatever their social rank, in the eyes of the law women were second-class citizens" [6]. Women's appropriate and exclusive position, according to Victorian culture, was in the home. The women were expected to get married, have kids, and maintain a good home. During that time, those were the only roles that women could play. As a result, the female characters in the novels during the nineteenth century fought every day to get by without being harassed by men. Edna is first introduced in the novel as a typical woman of the time, keeping up appearances for society with her husband and kids. She does, however, overcome her time later on by going against the societal norms and choosing the road towards independence as a result of her awakenings.

Edna is struggling with the social and biological norms of parenthood that limit her ability to define herself independently and force her to be known by her roles as Léonce Pontellier's wife and mother to Raoul and Etienne. Edna's potential life choices are demonstrated by Chopin's attention to Adele Ratignolle and Mademoiselle Reisz, two other female characters. The men Edna is surrounded by use these women as models and as the source of their expectations of her. For example, Mr. Pontellier does not believe Edna is effectively carrying out her responsibilities as a wife and mother: "He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it?" (p.15). This portrays his strong patriarchal beliefs that define women "as uniquely, sometimes solely, suited for bearing and raising children" [2]. Women in a space where males exercise authority are still subjugated historically rooted or biological, deviating from conventional behavior is often deemed incorrect, thereby reinforcing the existing societal norms" [7]. But Edna discovers that both of her role models fall short, and she starts to realize that the independent existence she seeks is incompatible with both society and the natural world. She reaches a point of hopelessness due to the certainty of her destiny as a creature defined by men, and the only way she knows how to find freedom is by committing suicide.

Even the deeply personal act of making music, which Madame Ratignolle is said to be quite excellent at, is done for the happiness of her children. "She was keeping up her music on account of the children, she said; because she and her husband both considered it a means of brightening the home and making it attractive" [5]. She also continuously draws attention to her pregnancy in ways Edna feels unsuitable. Ratignolle takes great pride in being a mother, and one could argue that this is what she is destined to do. Edna discovers that the mother-woman's life falls short of fulfilling her desire for a lifestyle devoid of limitations. "From ancient times through into the modern democratic era, women have thus been assimilated, reduced, and assigned to their body. As this body is naturally made to bear and nurture children, the entire female existence has been condensed into the role of mother, combined with the sexual function necessary for procreation" [8]. She feels sorry for Adele and realizes that she is not suited to that way of life. "It was not a condition of life which fitted her, and she could see in it but an appalling and hopeless ennui. She was moved by a kind of commiseration for Madame Ratignolle" (p.63).

Furthermore, Edna's inability to play the role of a "modern woman" can be observed. The role of the "modern woman" is that she wants a good relationship with her husband. Per Seyersted coined the term "modern woman" in the 1890s [9]. They are the women who rebel against society by leading independent lives [10]. Seyersted explains "modern woman" as the woman "who insists on being a subject and a man's equal, but who cooperates with the male rather than fighting him" [5]. He continues to explain that the modern woman does not mind getting married, but that she often keeps her own last name instead of taking the husband's, since taking on his name is a "sign of [his] ownership" (p.105).

By adopting a third lifestyle option and starting to behave like a man, Edna makes an effort to define herself. She observes that males can have fulfilling sexual lives without being required to procreate or care for their offspring. Léonce leaving for New York and Raoul and Etienne going to Iberville to reside with their grandmother are the first times Edna has a sense of masculine freedom. Edna is able to make a living on her own by gambling and selling her paintings, and she uses the proceeds to pay for her house. Nevertheless, after moving into the pigeon house, she cannot get away from the love of her children. The role of a "mother- woman" is deeply rooted in her naturally as well as socially. Edna commits suicide as a result of her realization that she is a mother and woman first and foremost, in addition to the role that society expects her to do. Edna longs for eternal freedom at last as she does not want to follow any of the natural and societal roles that hinder her independence.

Identity Crisis

Women today play a variety of roles in their lives, including that of daughters, sisters, co-workers, and friends. They can also be wives and moms. They are free to decide whether they wish to attend a university that provides a wide variety of disciplines. They have the potential to become presidents, scientists, lawyers, teachers, doctors, and writers. Women have the power to choose their future and are free to modify their paths. “Every woman is the architect of her own fortune” (“Quote by Jessie Burton”). But there are only two roles Edna Pontellier is supposed to play in her life mother and wife. She cannot find happiness in her painting, which is part of her greater failure at self-definition, claims Strebel.

Between patriarchal societal systems and her desire to forge her own social identity, she becomes confused. In women’s case, the most important aspect is to realize the process of identity formation. Their identity formation is important when women themselves need to have the ability to premise their sense of self on that [11]. In the novel, Edna has to face the struggle for her self-identity formation from the beginning. Edna’s awakening is partially brought on by the social, sexual, and aesthetic problems she encounters while trying to paint Adele [12]. Although it initially appears that Edna’s conflict with her expected obligations as a wife and mother has prevented her from achieving liberation, it is actually Edna’s own lack of responsibility and capability that leads to her demise. As [13] reveals that her successful motif and steps bring not only joyous moments of independence but also lead ultimately to her death.

Léonce, her husband, views her as “a valuable piece of personal property” (Chopin 2). He anticipates that he will fulfill his expectations of a housewife. But Edna is unwilling to conform to the patriarchal systems and social standards that are expected of her. She yearns for independence and seeks something other than being a wife and mother. There are few options available to women of her times. She gains a new perspective on the world due to her friendship with ademoiselle Reisz. In contrast to Edna, Reisz is an artist who expressly occupies a social persona and speaks her mind, even in front of others. Her identity serves as an example of the choices open to women at the time. But Edna finds it difficult to relate with Reisz’s character.

The perfect example of an ideal woman of that era is Madame Ratignolle. Unlike Edna, she is a perfect wife and mother. In contrast to Edna, Adèle’s character doesn’t seem to have developed or changed significantly. She also doesn’t get that a woman’s life can involve things other than becoming a mother. Edna is not comfortable with Adele as well. However, the following signs point to her almost complete independence: her release from stifling dress codes and awareness of her own body, the beginnings of her financial independence, the abandonment of her marriage and motherly responsibilities in favor of an open and self-determined love and sex life. Though Edna moves from restrictive roles to her freedom, in the end, she cannot remove the motherly feelings for her children. She becomes highly confused with her desires and finally commits suicide. Her unclear identity is the reason for her demise.

Sexual Desires and Cheating

During the Victorian era, women were supposed to follow strict gender roles and to be pure and devoted to their husbands. In the course of the book, Edna, a lady ahead of her time, explores and learns more about her sexuality. The beginning of the book makes it clear to the reader that Edna and Léonce’s marriage is not pleasant. She does not love Léonce and thinks their relationship is improper. She initially feels puzzled and unsure of her emotions. She gradually comes to terms with her sexuality. When Edna is with Madame Ratignolle, she starts to explore her sexuality. Both women visit the beach, and Edna sees Ratignolle for the first time in a different light.

Edna also begins to feel affection for males besides her husband. Edna gains a lot of knowledge on the right to freedom of expression from her Creole acquaintances. “This discovery of self-realization did not just happen on its own-there were events and people surrounding Edna at the time, which helped influence and awaken her desires and urges for music, sexual satisfaction, art, and freedom that she can no longer tolerate to keep hidden” [14]. Edna is inspired to experiment her sexuality with other men by her infatuation with the Creole way of life. “Expected to perform their domestic duties and responsibilities for the health and happiness of their families, Victorian women were prevented from seeking the satisfaction of their own needs and desires. During her gradual awakening, Edna discovers her own identity and acknowledges her emotional and sexual desires” [15]. Her desires and self-identification are in opposition with Victorian society.

When Edna is learning to swim in the ocean, it is when her exploration becomes most important. She is initially frightened, but she eventually understands the concept and relishes her newfound freedom: “She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before” [5]. For Edna, this marks a pivotal moment. She experiences a life-altering epiphany as a result of her newfound freedom, which demonstrates that for her to realize that everything in her life, including her body and sexuality, belongs to her and that awakening is the first step toward realizing this, her body needs to be free at sea and alone with the waves. Furthermore, she realizes her identity is her own and no one else can have the right over her body and desires.

Edna Pontellier, searches vainly for a means to express her sexuality that is acceptable to society throughout the entire novel. The struggle is particularly challenging since it occurs in the late nineteenth century, when women were particularly oppressed. Edna is unable to create a new life alone; she needs a partner to fulfill her desires. Despite the fact that Chopin’s protagonist has failed, her novel received favorable reviews and is seen as an example of how society distorts the genuine essence of women.

In order to have a space of her own, she leaves her husband. This causes Edna to develop her own desires, which prompts her to get involved in an affair where she can express both her artistic and sexual side. She then fulfills her sexual desires with both Robert and Alcee. She becomes sexually attracted to Robert as they are in love. On the other hand, her romance with Alcee is undoubtedly due to her physical need. This way, to fulfill her desires she cheats her husband as well as her love.

Uncaring Actions

Edna has a number of traits that are considered as dishonorable, odd, and outright wrong. When Edna and Robert first arrive in Grand Isle for the summer, they spend an excessive amount of time together. For the most part, Edna’s husband has no objections to this at first because there is only a friendship there. Edna discovers that she does not love her husband as she starts to fall in love with Robert. In the novel, Edna is utterly self-centered. She only takes on the role of a nurturing, attentive mother when forced to, but she ignores it otherwise. For instance, Léonce tells Edna that she has become carefree when one of her children is sick with a fever. However, Edna goes to care for her child due to her husband’s persistent urging [5]. She also believes that raising her children is a burden on her. Edna’s hidden problems are what drive her to be unreasonable, self-centered, and careless.

The first cause of Edna's failure is that she frequently places herself in tempting circumstances. Throughout the course of the novel, she uses Robert and Alcee multiple times for her selfish desires. Edna fails to take the required measures to stop what starts out as harmless events from spinning out of hand because she wants to satisfy herself. The second root of Edna is that she is only motivated by selfish desires, which is related to the previous root. Since the start of the novel, Edna has exhibited these self-centered qualities. The novel tells the tale of how she learns to openly defy morality or society in order to satisfy those egotistical urges she has suppressed for a long time. Edna's self-centered actions only take her down a path of sorrow and despair. "...I don't want anything but my own way. That is wanting a good deal, of course, when you have to trample upon the lives, the hearts, the prejudices of others –but no matter –still, I shouldn't want to trample upon the little lives. Oh! I don't know what I am saying, Doctor" [5]. In this chapter, Edna's remarks concisely express her desire to live a dual life of selfishness and service to others.

However, Edna is not entirely to blame for everything. Léonce, her spouse, has some issues that act as a trigger for Edna's self-awakening. Léonce does offer Edna nice things and all the facilities, but he does not show her love, care, or devotion. She believes they aren't even truly married. She thinks it leads to disaster to give Edna no love to cling onto while he is away on business. His ignorance becomes the catalyst towards Edna's immoral steps. Edna begins to lose hope toward the book's conclusion. She regrets that she doesn't have a close relationship with her kids, but she also knows more clearly than ever why she hasn't given them her (whole) self. She commits suicide as a result of her shock about Robert leaving her because he loves her. She has never experienced true love, therefore she has no idea what it is like, and she believes that by dying, her worries will be erased. Because Edna chooses the simple route and adds stress on those she leaves behind, her suicide is the definition of her selfishness. Due to her temptation and selfishness, Edna finally meets her end.

Mental Illness

A particular element of Edna's rich and heroic character has been ignored by feminist research as a whole. Chopin's analysis on male attitudes toward perceived mental illness in women during the nineteenth century has not been thoroughly or adequately investigated. She also challenges patriarchal misconceptions about female mental illness in relation to the gender norms in the narrative. During the course of the book, relationships with males, including those with her father, husband, doctor, lovers, and even her sons, serve to define and limit who Edna is permitted to be as a woman. Chopin's depiction of Léonce Pontellier and Mandelot suggest that she was making a deliberate remark on the problem of some men's propensity to misinterpret women's yearning for identification. Additionally, their misinterpretation of Edna's awakening exposes the false societal doctrine of the Victorian era that connects women's aspirations for self-actualization to mental illness.

To overcome the societal limits and focus on her identity, Edna has to face lots of struggles mentally. In nineteenth century fiction, the female hysteric and nerve doctors were not entirely unusual themes; yet, Chopin's novel has not been properly analyzed in terms of the discourse on mental illness. Edna has the same restrictions and difficulties as other women at the time, but her ability to cope with them appears to be hindered. It is well known that early experiences have an impact on adult lives. Because Edna loses her mother at a young age and is solely raised by a harsh and distant father, her childhood is devoid of love and attachment. Edna's childhood trauma continues into adulthood, leaving her depressed, selfish and hopeless. She pays very little attention to the feelings of her family or friends and spends much of her time thinking about and taking care of herself. Chopin composed this book before Freud's psychological research, although Freud would have been aware of the influence of the unconscious mind and its ability to prompt human behavior [16].

Since Edna had never experienced motherhood, it is likely that she has no idea how to be a decent mother. So it is not unexpected that she doesn't think much about or care about her children. She enjoys her solitude. When she is released from her obligations as a wife and mother, she experiences her rare joyful or content moments. Even in her close relationships, Edna is only able or ready to provide a little fraction of her. Even after having sexual relation with Arobin and admits that "there was a dull pang of regret because it was not the kiss of love" [5]. She knows that she doesn't love Arobin and later admits that she is in love with Robert but on her own terms. She also becomes overly attached to those who develop ties with her as a result of her depression, such as Reisz and Ratignolle, who she holds up as role models. She also behaves strangely as a result of her despair, when she refuses Léonce and Robert's offers of assistance and sleeps outside in a hammock. She even abandons her children.

However, Léonce makes no effort to help Edna overcome her depression. When Edna begins to ignore the children, he chooses to disregard her signs, enabling Edna's depression to worsen. Edna finally understands that she has been living a lie her entire life when she starts her awakening. Her social function as a mother-woman has been unfulfilled. She is a failure in her father's eyes and a disappointment to her spouse. Edna believes that she needs to start again because everything in her life up until this point has been negative. Her awakening is the fulfillment of her depressive anxieties. Edna's determination to change her perception of life resembles how Sanchez gradually develops incredible resilience to fight her depression, astonishing her readers' prediction that she will never get rid of it until her demise [17]. Edna has at last come to the conclusion that she must alter her life sooner or later. Throughout her life, Edna Pontellier battles depression and other mental issues that ultimately lead to her awakening and suicide.

Failed Marriage

Marriage is a blessing for those who adore each other, where love pervades their lives, where the children can grow up knowing that their parents value and cherish one another, and where the best is yet to come. Marriage is considered as the most beautiful bond of a relationship.

Despite the fact that marriage and families face more difficult and complicated challenges than ever before, we are aware that strong families and happy marriages serve as the foundation of our society and offer their members a stable environment in which to grow up and experience love, support, understanding, nurturing, tolerance, commitment, respect, interdependence, enjoyment, and a great deal of happiness. These are the outcomes of spouses and their families working together to create a safe and loving environment, which enables them to flourish and grow, rather than things that happen by chance.

Men still retain power when it comes to marriage. For instance, conservative male authority leaders support policies that would make men's life simpler and more enjoyable at the expense of women's emotional challenges. One of the British marquises, Douglas, specifically targets women. His fundamental claim is that prostitution is essentially necessary because of the current status of marriage, which includes the laws put in place to protect monogamy and penalize adultery. He is trying to convince women that they should be more accepting of the notion of allowing their husbands to have a variety of sexual partners. Additionally, he contends that a wife's acceptance of her husband's various sexual partners would enable the man to be more open about his desires and experiences, which would make him a more honorable

person. Where do women enter this equation, though? Douglas' main argument is that adoption of such a system would improve "the greater happiness of the human race" by combining the above mentioned effects (p.3). This is incorrect. Women can have vivid sexual desires, and some might act strongly on their sexual impulses.

Many women have been forced into arranged marriages over the years in order for their family members to benefit. The marriages are frequently lacking in passion and love, which leaves the women to be held to unfair standards. In Chopin's *The Awakening*, Edna is married to a tyrannical man who frequently treats her like a piece of property. When Edna relives her dreams, she realizes that her marriage to Mr. Pontellier is not exactly a happy one; however, if she had the option, she wouldn't have chosen this life for herself.

The acme of bliss, which would have been a marriage with the tragedian, was not for her in this world. As the devoted wife of a man who worshiped her, she felt she would take her place with a certain dignity in the world of reality, closing the portals forever behind her upon the realm of romance and dreams [5].

Edna's marriage to the tragedian, with whom she had once been in love, would have brought her the greatest happiness; nevertheless, since she is a woman, she was not offered the choice. Edna has found herself frustrated in her marriage to Mr. Pontellier, and she frequently sobs in frustration at his harsh remarks. Many wives experience similar circumstances and long to leave an unhappy marriage, but they are unable to do so for a variety of cultural or societal reasons. Sadly, this means they will have to endure their suffering for the rest of their lives. Mr. Pontellier exhibits a natural tendency toward dominance in this exchange between the husband and wife. Throughout the novel, this behavior is frequently displayed, highlighting how inferior Edna is in his eyes. For instance He once reprimands Edna for having sunburn. He does not give her a loving or tender gaze. Instead, he views her as a defective good.

Suicide as an Ultimate Solution

Edna's suicide can be observed in two ways. First, the conflict between self-realization and societal conventions followed by depression leads her towards suicide. Edna appears to cross the line beyond which the oppositions of her society are no longer present. The novel constantly points out that these conflicts prohibit women like Edna from developing a sense of identity. However, she is also unable to create a new set of oppositions to challenge her newly attained independence, which will remain silent and may only be a fleeting illusion that might be destroyed [18]. As a result, Edna kills herself in order to free herself from the labels of a mother, a wife and a lover because she will not let herself be bound by the natural and societal boundaries. Second, she finally comes to the realization that the only way she can rescue herself is by sacrificing her life; she gives up her life in order to save herself. So, on the one hand, it seems that suicide is her biggest failure in acknowledging her identity. On the other hand, rather than her failure, it can be observed as an act of her safety towards her innermost self. "I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself. I can't make it more clear; it's only something which I am beginning to comprehend, which is revealing itself to me" [5]. By killing oneself Edna acts just as she has already predicted. Despite the fact that she says these things in relation to her children, they reveal a key factor in Edna's decision to commit suicide. They demonstrate how unimportant she finds her physical life to be.

In this case, Edna is left with a limited number of options. After being sexually awakened, she cannot live the life as a wife of Léonce. She cannot go with Alcee as well since she doesn't love him and Robert doesn't really want her as his wife. Moreover, neither she can live being a "patriarchal woman" like Ratignolle, nor she is strong enough to live like Reisz as in one way or the other, Edna is unable to live without men's company. Moreover, she does appreciate the material wealth and comfort that Léonce has. She cannot take the thought of living without money. She even feels her children as antagonists who try to overcome her. So Edna wants to keep her soul free from her children as well. Edna decides to give up her life because none of the possibilities are pleasant for her.

The meaning of the sea is very important for Edna in the novel. Researchers claim that water is the symbol of her spiritual rebirth. In the novel, the importance of the sea has been shown in two stages. "The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation. The voice of the sea speaks to the soul. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace" [5]. These two instances appear both in the beginning and at the end of the novel. At first, the sea plays an important role in her life for her awakening when she learns to swim and also understands that life has a lot more to offer. She feels free and wants to swim far away. Later, her sexual awakening also relates to the sea as well as her escape from the social realms. She can isolate herself from the restrictive Creole society in the sea. The sea symbolizes the only place from where her freedom emanates [19]. She surrenders her life to save herself, giving up her body and her existence on earth in order to save what matters most—her soul. She gives herself to the force that has awakened her.

2. Conclusion

Women's proper and exclusive place, according to Victorian culture, was in their homes. Strict gender notions and stereotypes emerged during the Victorian era. In this period, men and women were given distinct roles that gave men more power over women and significantly disadvantaged women. The status of women has significantly improved in the modern era, but there are still some contexts where traditional gender roles and patriarchal dominance are still prevalent, and women are still frequently victimized. South Asia including Nepal depicts a constant male control over females, rooted in patriarchy. The South Asian belief of rights over the sexuality, masculinity and productive capacity of a woman is closely tied to patrilineal family solidarity. On the one hand, "girls and women are termed impure and a source of pollution because of menstruation and childbirth and are designated lower social worth under control of men. On the other hand, they are presented as pure and their condition reflects on the honor and status of their menfolk" [20]. Whatever the case may be, women are led to loss of autonomy, and their lives revolve around the authority of men. Besides, the responsibility for protecting an unmarried girl lies particularly with her fathers and brothers. All these lead to social practices, such as segregation, early marriage, denial of public spaces etc. to control women.

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