



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

To Explore Violence, Inequality and Patriarchy: A Postcolonial Perspective of Subalternism in the *Beyond the Fields* of Ayesha Baqir

Nayab Iqbal

Assistant Professor, Govt. Agha Nizamuddin Girls Degree College Sukkur

Email: nayabshaikh484@gmail.com

Abdul Naeem

Lecturer, Sindh Agriculture University campus Umerkot

Email: abdulnaeem@sau.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The study explores Ayesha Baqir's *Beyond the Fields* through the lens of postcolonial approach of Subalternism in the feminist perspective in which violence against women and patriarchy is portrayed. This study examines the pain, grief and suffering of female character in the work; the way female character Tara dehumanized and victimized. The research framework methodologically based on the Spivak's postcolonial feminist lens of Subaltern Speak. This study mainly analyzes the male dominance and patriarchal perspectives that exploit and create hurdles for women. This study finds violence, pain and suffering of women which gives Spivak's concept of "Othering" in which male dominance and Patriarchy is highlighted. This play depicts the harsh realities of the society where women are being raped and her rights marginalized.

Keywords: Postcolonial, Subaltern, Violence, Patriarchy, Male Dominance,

Introduction

This research focuses on marginalization of rights, violence against women, patriarchal society and gender inequality. The postcolonial studies of feminist perspective help to understand the image of women in which they suffer in colonized poststructural world. Postcolonial is the ideology based on impact cultural exchange of particular region that has remained a colony of rulers from other particular country. Iqbal (2021) the postcolonial supremacy is the way to keep refugees under in order maintain the supremacy and the such overrule portrays a mindset that gives subjection. This research gives a kind of vulnerable situation of the gender based violation against women in the male dominant society. It focuses on the gender based differences that give glance on women sufferings and pain in which female authoress's approach of anti-imperialist and postcolonial depicted (Nasir, 2021, et al. p. 1). The postcolonial feminist research study is understanding the image of women where the country has been colonized, it gives poststructural world image of marginalized women. In this context different authors from different countries portrayed the image of women in the colonized countries such as India, Pakistan and Africa which give a kind of literature that depicts feminist perspective with different concept on the basis of theory.

This research focuses on the literature that is produced by colonized and the authors who depicted their social issues on the basis of different concepts and, such concept or approaches gave birth theories such as Subalternism from "Can the subaltern Speak" of Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak that helps us to investigate patriarchal mindset in different



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

works such *Beyond the Field* by Ayesha Baqir published in 2021. This research mainly concerned to the women rights that have been marginalized in the society on the basis of patriarchy elements as Zara has been victimized through different ways. Zara is the main female character, she suffers due to negligence of her family and other who raped her. When she was suffering being her family treating her in dehumanized way, she lost hope of living.

Literature Review

Since the partition of the country in 1947, feminism has long been a key theme in Pakistani English literature. Many British writers in Pakistan have adopted this idea. But Pakistani English literature is unique because of its historical connection to British colonialism and imperialism (Mahmood and Farooq, 2021).

The emergence of strong feminist voices in the 1970s coincided with a period of political and religious turmoil. The Islamization of the state has led to laws that restrict women's freedom and movement in the name of religion. On the contrary This led to a feminist consciousness that encouraged women to mobilize for their rights against oppressive laws imposed by the military regime. This feminine consciousness is also expressed in literature (Salam, 2011). Sarah Sulari (1992) specifically discusses the "restrictive law," a multicultural body of law in Pakistan. The first type was restricted, and the second type is punishment. These laws disproportionately affect women and children. Especially those who do not have access to legal representation. Postcolonial feminism in Pakistani literature examines the impact of marriage on women's identity and sexuality. This shows that Pakistani women are subjected to slavery just like in colonial times. In marriages, women often play a secondary role, whose fate is determined by the institution While they don't have agency or play a very important role. Domestic violence in marriage has long hindered women's growth and success. And marriage itself is seen as a mechanism of control and manipulation that fulfills men's sexual expectations (Suraj, 2018). Yasmin (2022) explores Mohsin Hamid's *Western Exit*, how female characters' challenge patriarchal norms and resist oppression. Yasmin and Ahmed (2022) conduct a postcolonial feminist study of Westernization within the concept of Spivak's analysis of 'subalternism' suggests that patriarchy burdens women with many responsibilities. It deprives them of free will and basic rights. Women's minds are colonized to prevent them from asserting their independent identities and rights.

Zia (2013) explores Margaret Atwood's novels to reveal postcolonial elements. The study explores how colonial control distorted and silenced women. It highlights how women sometimes contribute to their own oppression and humiliation. In conclusion, both men and women suffer in today's world. Concerted efforts are needed to address the various factors responsible for the oppression of women including imperialism, marginalization, racial discrimination and internal gender bias against women (Ullah, Gul, & Naz, 2020). Religion is often used as a tool to subjugate women, leading to resistance in various forms both language and behavior Ahmed (2017) explores the short stories of writers Hamidullah and Abbasi through the lens of postcolonial feminism.

Alvi (2022) explores the triple colonization of women in novels set in Britain's colonial past. Including Africa and the Indian subcontinent. Studies have shown that women in these areas experience various forms of physical and psychological oppression. Zia Ahmed in her study of Pakistani feminist fiction. It highlights that feminism is a key issue discussed by Pakistani women writers in the context of postcolonialism. Postcolonial men also attempt to recolonize women's bodies and minds. It uses tradition, culture and religion to justify patriarchal control (Ahmed, 2009).



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

Theoretical Framework

Spivak (1988) postcolonial theorist will be used on the basis of her theory of Subaltern in which feminist perspective is covered. Spivak is widely known as a theorist who is investigating the feminist approach and her famously used term “othering” is base of her work. This theory has different perspectives in different groups, when it comes other countries perspectives its postcolonial approach to study subaltern but when colonized go through its expose male dominance and oppose patriarchal mind set. This study based on the debate of Luddens’s observation that in the studies of subaltern “Internal coherence of the study is less intellectual than personal coherence of the subaltern studies” (p. 2).

Spivak in her work “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1988), discusses about marginalization of women rights as she has mentioned word “Sati” as ceremonial widow who commits suicide. This history of feminism is basically traced from the 18th century Marry Wollstonecraft that lead to 20th century. In the waves of feminism, the issues of Third World Women are not as much covered but later on its covered by the feminist authors of colonized countries. Among those feminist authors Spivak she covered postcolonial marginalization in her work “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1988), she has undoubtedly uncovered male dominance and patriarchal mind set in the Third World colonized states.

This theoretical framework based on Gayatri Spivak’s study in which her approach towards suffering of women and suppressed position is highlighted. The status of the “subaltern” and dominance of male who controls every resource and marginalize women rights and women suffer “othering” is are the key manifestations.

This feminist theory of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s has significant role in her concept of “Can Subaltern Speak” in the postcolonial studies discourse. Spivak’s theory engages specific research concept through emphasizing theoretical underpinnings of feminist aspects such as patriarchy, male dominance and suppression etc. this feminist theory is widely accepted in the postcolonial discourse on the basis of traditional power dynamics that are inherited in the societies of colonial and postcolonial. Spivak has argued to shape subaltern identities because they are multifaceted and ambiguous in understanding. In this study the conceptual framework is based on subaltern of Spivak that focuses on rights of marginalized and exploring suppressed voices of the communities. This research is to explore multifaceted nature of complex experiences that subaltern identities face in different societies in the colonial and post-colonial world.

This research follows textual analysis for the research in order to interpret the selected text of *Beyond the Fields* (2021) by Ayesha Baqir. Since the research paper is based on the subaltern study of women in the Spivak’s theory of Subalternism that is the voice of Subaltern Women. In this work the characters, dialogues and ideas will be analyzed on the basis of textual analysis in order to extract the idea. Catherine Belsey (2013) highlights the importance and authenticity of the textual analysis in the research studies “In the cultural criticism of research textual analysis is indispensable where it includes English, history of culture and other fields of the studies that are used to focus on text that is given and, to understand the written stuff that is concerned”. Keeping in the view given statement of Belsey’s how text can be analyzed and how meaning cab be extracted from given text or comments of different sources either primary or secondary. In the light of Spivak’s theoretical frame work the text would be analyzed with the evidence from the text that violence against women, male dominance and marginalization of women rights is existing, in order to fulfill research objective. For the sake of research other author’s critical analysis will be incorporated as secondary source.

The concept of Spivak’s “Subaltern” give a critical lens for theoretical framework in the research in order to understand and critically analyze the realities of different groups that



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

are marginalized. On the basis of potential limitations of the theory we accept that it leads to the foundation of conceptual framework of the research.

Data Analysis

Postcolonial feminism challenges Western feminism with its tendency to generalize and ignore the unique problems women face in Third World countries. It was started by scholars and activists from former colonized countries to improve the lives of women in post-colonial societies. This movement resists the colonial and hegemonic control of indigenous peoples after the end of colonial rule.

Gayatri Spivak plays an important role in solving the problems of marginalized subjects, especially subjugated women and their struggle for emancipation. In his influential essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), Spivak presents the philosophy of subordination and considers the limitations of subordinates. She argues that subordinates, especially subordinate women, are further marginalized and silenced. Although they know how to talk, others often lack the patience to listen to them. In this context, the noise interferes with sending their messages and makes it difficult for them to speak. The singer emphasizes that understanding the subordinate requires a determined effort from the listeners.

Postcolonial literature explores various themes such as freedom, national identity, unity, migration and youth. Authors engage in discussion and debate to select themes that are new and relevant to readers of postcolonial literature. These works deal with social issues such as cultural conformity, national unity and lack of self-confidence (Nasir et al., 2021, p. 1).

In the field of gender relations, when men are positioned as powerful controllers of resources, women are often relegated to being 'other' and relegated to 'subordinates'. The singer sheds light on the dynamics of this relationship by comparing it to a universal slave dialect. It emphasizes the importance of what goes unsaid and unsaid in understanding the subconscious. In gender relations, this silence is particularly noticeable among women, as Western nations often speak for them and render them speechless. This silence allows men to perpetuate colonialist violence and see women as important only if they obey patriarchal orders. Singer argues that this form of epistemic violence is an incomplete allegory of the broader violence inherent in the episteme.

When the power is mainly in the hands of men, they become the decision-makers of women's lives, copying the practices of the colonizers. The construction of gender maintains male dominance, and in the context of colonial production, subalterns, especially subaltern women, remain voiceless and without history. Spivak's ideas are deeply rooted in her understanding of Indian culture, and she draws parallels between colonial exploitation and the marginalization of women. In later years, subaltern studies developed towards globalization and its economic consequences, opposing the economic supremacy of powerful states (Ludden, 2002).

This novel is based on the patriarchy violence and inequality that has marginalized rights in different aspects. There are two main characters Tara and Zara twins. These twins are suffering more in the work than anyone else because there many other characters too. There is inequality in the property, education and many other things as male are inheriting property but women are not given rights as its mention in different stages. Women are not supposed to marry according to their own will but they being raped and silenced for family honor and name. Tara raped and within a week sent to maid agency where Kamran betrayed her and sent her to brothel as before Zohra sent after death of father. When Zara tried to get education like her brother Omar but she forced to marry



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

and, women are not supposed get education. On the other hand, marriage of Zara faced issues of dowry and Zara went Lahore to work as maid in order to collect money for dowry but on other hand his brother Omar started getting education in Lahore.

You went out?" Amma's voice tightened with anger. "Haven't I told you and Tara a thousand times not to? What if someone sees you? Do you want to rain our family name? And where is Tara?" (p.12)

In the Spivak's subalterns are marginalized in different perspectives where suppression and subjugation is in various contexts. In the male dominant society where are not allowed to go outside because there is restriction on women that they are supposed to live inside of home, behind the walls of house and males are supposed to roam and move. In this work it shows that twins are being forced by mother that you must be imprisoned inside forever. In such patriarchal society inequality is everywhere and every aspect. It shows that women are not supposed to speak out for their rights with father. It's the multifaceted and complex atrocities against subaltern where their voices are being unheard on the basis of gender.

One afternoon, Omer caught me with his books and warned me of what Amma would do if she ever found out, "Why What is the need would be married soon. (p.19).

It shows violence that only sons are being given property but women are not supposed to give share from the property because they are women, it is inequality and fearful face of male dominance. When it comes the right to get marry the only male are supposed to show their wish and will to get marry and get education but women are not given chance to get education and get married according to their own will. As being only son who is Omar he is willing to get marry and get education and the own wishes of family and support but and other hand intelligent Zara is intelligent but she has not been given right to get education and get marry.

: Women are being forced that you have to get Mary with the wish and well of family but you are not support to get education you have future is to get marry and support your husband it's that difference of the male dominance society in equality and violation of the rights of women

Zohra choked back a cry and disappeared inside the room. city with me and Ill get you married to a nice boy in no time. Your mother have to worry anymore, I'm here now. I'll take of everything. Zubaida Masi. "It's her father's funeral." (p.61)

In the village a girl becomes orphan, those who came for condolence they were talking about marriage and proposals instead of condolence to orphan girl. When Masi Zubaida said Zohra don't worry I am going give your hand city to a boy who earn a lot. In the end of the story Zohra also recovered from brothel of Lahore. This is dark face of male dominance society where orphan is being sent to brothel by agents. This is share injustice and violence of women rights when they are suppressed being helpless.

Its fearful face of the patriarchal society when women are treated unequally when its talk of education or another situation. As Zara is not being given chance to get education. Even though she is talented and hardworking but being women she is not given to get education but she used to work in fields where her sister Tara raped. When boys are supposed go to school but women are not being given proper education it shows inequality and marginalization of the rights of women and the context of education because they right have been snatched by the male dominance in the society.

Moulvi Saab to the women's side of the tent, for Saima Appi's consent. Head lowered under the heavy dupatta, Saima Appi nodded three times to the Moulvi Saab's question and burst into tears. (p.94)

Its violence against women when women are being covered with burkas but male are



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

roaming without shirts in the fields and the streets and women are forced first to wear burka male even not only wearing their shirts in the fields where Tara raped and Zara forcibly send to the fields work. It is showing male hegemony that they are not supposed to follow rules and coeds but women are being forced to do so. It is mindset of male dominance and violence against women because they are not being treated equally, on the basis of all the aspects of life where religion is playing role to make the male dominant because Moulvi is asking for consent in nikkah where Moulvi is also male supporting religious person and without her consent of Saima has been knotted in wedlock. On the other hand, violence is against Samina where everybody is saying she is happy but she being beaten every day.

They'll find ways to blame your family. Why did you let your girls out? Why didn't their mother control them? What were they doing in the fields? Did Tara know those men from before?" Moulvi Saab. (p.116).

How disgusting and pitiful violence against women when it comes to prove that Tara has been raped now there are different ideas according to new law that has been passed in the regime of Gen. Zia-ul. Haq that is Hudood Bill Ordinance it shows that women has to prove that she has been raped or zina has been done and her testimony is not acceptable there is need of three persons to verify it being women, its inequality with the victim.

In Chiragh's funeral prayers, a mob had gathered and threatened to set the mosque on fire. Moulvi Saab had been forced to send Chiragh's body to the shrine. (p.162)

Such cruel of face of male dominance and subjugation where the religious laws and rules are proclaimed for the protection of male. Tara is the victim of the society when Tara was raped even though she was well covered as per the Islamic society but even though she has been raped when there is another character she is Chiragh also humiliated by the society when she run off with Anwar but Anwar betrayed it shows that male is not only humiliating and using women to protect himself but women are not being protected by women as mother of Tara and Zara has also become part of male dominance and Zubaida Masi who are against women education and marriage as per their own will. It is victimization of female character under the shadow of honor, religion and social values that male don't pay the price but women pay with their laying down their lives.

When Tara, Zara, Zohra, Saima, Samina are victimized by the society but they haven't been protected by anybody because they were women. they are being raped they are discount by the property they are not allowed to get education they are not supposed to get marry and their own well it's the clear marginalization of the rights. When the incident of Chirag is there are betrayed by the Anwar, she has been thrown out of society even though she is victim and thrown away from all the privileges of family and support bad nothing happened to the Anwar that is clear inequality and dominance of the man who have different rules and laws for their own and the have different rules for women. After being raped Tara punished and given to the brothel agent male Kamran even though who raped they were male. Zara was genius that woman is being punished because her sister twin Tara raped that's why education has been banned. Zara wants to get education but she has been detained because she is women her rights has been snake to get education she has been sent Lahore to become mad because education is not for the women even though her brother Omar is being given education and the same city where her sister Zara is working as a maid.

There is incident of another woman was husband used to beat her but the people are saying she is happy even though she is being beats daily when father of Tara came to know that Kamran is agent and has sent Tara to brothel then her father used say that it's



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

her fate and Kamran is her husband same is the case with Samina she is being beaten but everybody used to say that she is happy even once upon Tara used to say Zara that she is happy even being beaten daily. Its male dominance where oppression and suppression is always coming in the side of women because they are being given inhuman torture in the postcolonial societies. Anwar betrayed Chiragh but in the end mob camp to in the funeral of Chiragh said that we are not supposed to give her to get offer because she has run off even though Anwar has not been targeted being male.

In this work patriarchal aspects are dominant throughout the text where women rights are marginalized. Spivak's subaltern voices are in the form of Zara, Tara, Samina, Chiragh etc. are cruel face of violence that society has done with them. The lens of Spivak's concept has evaluated the multifaceted violence and victimization against women. The marginalization of women rights in postcolonial deeply discussed by various authors in their research. The main concern regarding privileges are portrayed in this work *Beyond the Fields* (2021) by Ayesha Baqir in which various aspects of post-colonial feminist literature covered.

Conclusion

Therefore, it clearly shows that there is violation against women and different aspects either it is in the form of getting education when Zara is not being allowed to get education when Tara is being imprisoned to work for the fields but she is not allowed to get education it is share violence and inequality against women in the patriarchal society. When there is the violence against women in the form of being raped, being forcibly married all the cases are the victims of being forcibly married and their being target in women head shows the mind set of male hegemony that is subjugating and suppressing women in different ways just for the sake of their own interest. Hence it shows that all the characters are neglected, suppressed and targeted and devalued just because of their gender that's why they are suppressed and their rights marginalized.

Hence, Spivak's "subaltern" are multifaceted in marginalization of the women rights is depicted in the novel. In the novel of Ayesha Baqir *Beyond the Fields* 2021 various burning issues have been covered such as patriarchy, male dominance, and violence. When we look different characters of the that give us the picture of women rights marginalization and violence against women in the postcolonial literature. In the research two main characters Zara and Tara are victimized and their voice silenced through violence and male dominance. When its analyzed through the feminist lens of Spivak's theory of subaltern the novel gives testament of patriarchal structure and system oppression.

Therefore, in this research integral conceptual framework based on Spivak's subaltern focuses on marginalization of rights of Tara, Zara Samina and others. Those who are suppressed and their voices discouraged through tactics in the patriarchy. Male dominance in the postcolonial literature gives reflections through such characters who are being targeted in multifaceted ways. Hence, its critique that has covered subaltern through nuanced realities of those communities that are marginalized.

Reference

- Ahmad, Z. (2017). Woman as Doubly-Colonized Postcolonial Subject in the Short Stories of Hameedullah and Abbasi. *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research*, 18(1).
- Alvi, S. D. (2022). *Triple Colonization: Female Characters and Postcolonial Feminist Fiction* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Ayesha B. (2021) *Beyond the Fields*



Vol. 4 No. 1 (January) (2026)

- Belsey, C. (2013). Constructing the subject: deconstructing the text. In *Feminist Criticism and Social Change (RLE Feminist Theory)* (pp. 45-64). Routledge.
- Hamid, M. (2017). *Exit West* Hamish Hamilton.
- Iqbal, H. Z. (2021). Orientalizing the orient: A critique of colonial encounters. *Al-Hikmat: A Journal of Philosophy*, 41, 09-22.
- Ludden, D. (2002). Introduction: "A Brief History of Subalternity". In *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalization of South Asia* (pp. 1-42). Permanent Black.
- Mehmood, F., & Farooq, M. H. M. A. (2021). Feminism in Pakistani English Literature: A Study in Post-Colonial Paradigm. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 5(2).
- Nasir, S., Ajmal, M., & Sarwar, M. (2021). An exploration of postcolonial-feminist elements in William Dalrymple's white mughals. *Pakistan social sciences review*, 5, 105-119.
- Salam, S. (2011). *Unveiling the sacred: reading the gendered female body in contemporary Pakistani fiction: a thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English Literature at Massey University, Manawatu, New Zealand* (Doctoral dissertation, Massey University).
- Spivak, G. C. (2023). Can the subaltern speak?. In *Imperialism* (pp. 171-219). Routledge.
- Suleri, Sara (1992). *The Rhetoric O English India*, Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Suraj. (2018). *Marriage as a Form of Domestic Violence in the Pakistani Bride* by Bapsi Sidhwa.
- Ullah, S., Gul, A., & Naz, A. (2020). THE IMPLICATION OF PATRIARCHY AND GENDER ROLES SOCIALIZATION ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN, IN DISTRICT DIR UPPER. *Pakistan Journal of Society, Education and Language (PJSEL)*, 7(1), 395-405.
- Yasmeen, T. (2022). Deconstructing the Image of Third World Woman in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*: A Postcolonial Feminist Perspective. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 6(4), 493-499.
- Yasmeen, T., & Ahmad, I. (2022). Subalternism, Women and Patriarchy: A Postcolonial Approach to Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 6(4), 555-561.
- Zidan, A. I. (2013). Postcolonial feminism in Margaret Atwood's fiction. *International Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 2(3), 11-20.