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Shaking Silhouette: Gendered Spaces in Bina Shah's *Slum Child*

Abstract

This study investigated teachers' reflective perspectives regarding assessment practices of revised teachers' training programs in the Punjab province by employing qualitative approach. Faculty members of the two universities and their affiliated colleges (N=18) where these programs are introduced were interviewed and the texts were coded and analyzed qualitatively by employing Grounded Theory Approach (Creswell, 2003). The main perspectives that emerged as a result of analysis are graded activities, criteria for marks allocation for formative assessment, summative assessment, concept of rubrics, evaluation of student ability, freedom of academic sharing, satisfaction level, problems that are encountered by the teacher educators during assessment practices and suggestions for improvement. In a nutshell, the interview data revealed dissatisfaction of the teacher educators with the assessment system of revised teachers' training programs.

Key words: *Assessment Practices, Rubrics, Teacher Educators, Prospective Teachers, Grounded Theory Approach, Thematic Analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Women and City: Gendered Urban Space

While defining the discursive lines of gender and sex, Simone de Beauvoir cogently challenges the biological determinism. She finds gender as a social construct by claiming that women are not born rather made:

> One is not born but rather becomes a woman. No biological, physiological or economic fate determines the figure that the human being presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creative indeterminate between male and eunuch which is described as feminine, (Beauvoir, 1989, p. 295).

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Beauvoir's illustration strengthens the differences between the biological and social construction of woman as social subjects. Her analysis deconstructs the Prepositions of inferiority, physical and mental inabilities as preconceived notions which have been subsumed as natural conceptions for ages. To elaborate gender, Ortner and Whitehead (1981) have argued that "what gender is, what men and women are, what sorts of relations do or should obtain between them—all of these notions do not simply reflect or elaborate upon biological 'givens', but are largely products of social and cultural processes"(1981, p. 1). Rubin (1975) exemplifies these processes as intertwined through 'a sex/gender system'; such system establishes "set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (1975, p. 159). Through such monetary system, McDowell (1999) argues, sex becomes gender and due to social integration, gender is "spatially variable phenomena" (1999, p. 14).

McDowell categorizes gender regimes (sexuality and social construction) as constructed and deployed in spatial affinities that announce social ethics of organized behavior. She argues that gender relations are fulcrum in geographical studies since the divided space connotes social fabrication of gender divisions. Massey (1995) argues that space is innately gendered and claims that 'geography' and 'gender' are engaged in constructing of each other (1995, p. 176).Wilson (1992) perceives a new dimension of male dominated urban space where women challenge the dialectics of public and private, men and women. Friedan (1963) relates this dialectical association of subordination or subversion in "the problem that has no name" wherein she examines the lives of women living their domestic lives in conventionally imposed social roles whose presence only means to serve husband and children with complete absence from the public life. Similarly Woolf's (1929) *A Room of One's Own,* emphasizes over women's need for their own room. She refers to Jane Austen who used to hide her manuscript of *Pride and Prejudice* every time someone entered the room.

Feminist luminaries stress the need of women's space in the society and the difficulties women experience in the absence of this space. Gender manifestation and reification of the divided space is investigated by diverse scholarship which dismantles the socially organized behavior and challenges the construction of segregated "places" of men and women (Bondi & Davidson, 2005). Massey (1995) reinstates that the segregation of gender presented as natural is structured and reinforced through social construction of space with stereotypical binary of home as feminine, and city and work is related to masculine.(1995, p. 342). She argues that not merely space is socially structured but the social is *spatially* structured. This divide is a repercussion of this spatial construction of the social, with private space is confined to women and the urban public life is pertaining to men only. In this

prospect, women seem socially and physically incarcerated in their homes which define their social roles tied with domestic drudgery (Massey, 1995, p. 180). This socio-cultural segregation of public and private sectors thus define the spatial separation of home from workplace which is an essential mean of subordinating women (Massey, 1995, p. 177). As a respondent of Friedan (1963) exclaims: "I begin to feel I have no personality. I'm a server of food and aputter on of pants" (1963, p. 23). In this context it is argued that urban spaces are inherently gendered spaces thus discriminating between men and women through their confines of public/ private. Woman in Pakistani society has defined space to shape her identity and social relationships in her ambience. She develops her spatial consciousness due to socio-cultural constraints in patriarchal infrastructure. Cities constructed over the base structures of patriarchy appear to be divided and gendered in its manifestation. Women are confined in private space where they are detached from the matters of public space of cities.

The spaces of differences in Pakistani context are multifaceted. These gendered spaces further refine its intricacies when its gauges the economic deviations. The poor class woman is virtually uneducated populace who is indulged in physical drudgery in private and public space. Her illiteracy directs her to be victimized for long hours in tedious chores which however, remain invisible and unrecognized because her existence is stapled with domestic drudgery (Shaheed, 1987). However, men, present in public space, are responsible for financial sustenance of the family. If women are seen in public spaces, they cover themselves with veil or shawls to avoid the male gaze. This act of covering refers to the "creation of separate worlds of man and women" (Papanek, 1971, p. 528). The segregation and divide of both worlds are justified on the grounds of honour and respect. Thus, the restriction of women's mobility categorizes dependence and limited access to the resources and opportunities available in public space. Their presence in public space is merely epitomized with need which further authorizes her devoted and obedient role in the society.

Slum Child (2010) by Bina Shah is a novel that highlights the predicaments of a Christian slum girl Laila who traverses from innocence of her childhood towards her ripened adulthood. Shah (2010) in sub plot of the novel contextualizes the spatial experiences of different women who belong to diverse socio-economic backgrounds to reinstate the acrimonious antagonism women experience in order to concoct their space in urban milieu. This research is significant to highlight how women are excluded from the sexualized and masculine urban space due to their body idiom. It also aims to describe the role of women in developing their consciousness to assert their right over urban space and how they strategize their resistance to devise their survival in societal peripheries. While examining city air emancipatory this study

highlights women's agency to eliminate the dividing line of public and private sectors to correspond their needs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative and analytical study in which a close textual analysis of Bina Shah's *Slum Child* is carried out in order to highlight the intricate relationship of women with space. For Gardner (2005) the public spaces are "*those sites and contexts that our society understands to be open to all" (2005, p. 62)*. However, this research aims to demonstrate how this accessible place is challenging the presence of women by making cityspace fearful for them? Women's conscious use of urban space always registers themselves through sexuality. Drawing over McDowell's theorization of women and space nexus this study aims to examine urban space as inherently divided in public/ private, men /women. The dialectic of public/ private is perceived by her as a social construct that makes men as rational beings to maintain the order in public space by specifying women as *sphinx* in the city to relate with disorder. This research study argues that women's access to public space epitomize their liberation from domestic drudgery to pave path for creating opportunities for their independence in the grave perils of harassment and exploitation. It also examines that how women exploited and abused in private space access public space for creating their space in the urban milieu?

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

The Regimes of Haves and Have-nots:

Slum Child begins by unleashing the metropolitan Karachi as uneven urban space wherein diverse populace is accommodated according to its socio-economic status. Shah in her narrative presents a sharp contrast of living standards of urban inhabitants according to their available wealth resources. This socio-spatial disequilibrium is highlighted through the innocent eyes of Laila; a nine year old Christian girl. Shah's deliberate selection of child narrative strengthens the demonstration of uneven Socio-spatial structures in Karachi whereby individuals are not merely struggling against economic discrepancies but also collide with ethnic and religious differences which further complicate existence in the city. Shah elucidates the innocence of her narrative in the beginning of the novel:

> The first time I saw a man injecting himself with heroin, I was nine years old. Of course, at that age I didn't know what heroin was; I hardly knew what syringes were, or what injections were for. But my mind's eye took a photograph of it all anyway, and stored the negative somewhere deep inside, to be taken out later at a time when my youthful brain had accumulated enough information and experience—

> had caught up enough with my surroundings—to be able to understand the sights, sounds, smells and sensations around me. (Shah, 2010, p. 1)

Laila narrates her observations and poses questions on uneven socio-spatial dynamics of her ambiance. These questions disclose the spatial divide which is deeply embedded in the core infrastructures and troubled the lives of the poor class. The urban poor is isolated from city centers and shifted to the margins where they settle their temporary homes and remain dispossessed from urban amenities. This class usually consists of immigrants who have come to urban spaces dreaming of prosperity but could not ameliorate their social positioning and linger as disprivileged class. These settlements of homeless, dispossessed and disprivileged are usually known as slum areas where people struggle for the spatial retention through all legal and illegal means. The novel begins with amplified spatial details of Issa Colony that is a slum area in Karachi which demonstrates the despondent lives of its down trodden inhabitants. Karachi is a metropolitan in Pakistan whereby people from the small towns and countries come to settle themselves in urban space. The rich get the space according to their economic resources and poor makes settlements according to their economic depravity. Poor people gradually begin their settlements in the outskirts of city that with the passage of time has "doubled, tripled, quadrupled in size and volume", temporary settlements with "tatting and reed mats" gradually transformed into cemented roofs and walls "this was the process of permanence, the way that the disenfranchised made their mark on the world that they owned" (Shah, 2010, p. 7).

Shah portrays the meaninglessness of existence in the slums where people are striving for their bread and butter. They do not have any dreams to be fulfilled except filling their empty stomachs. The children do not go to school because they are fully aware of the fact that "there's no place to go once you've left the four walls of the school…there are no jobs magically waiting for us; no nice offices for us to go to, no smart clothes for us to wear" (Shah, 2010, p. 24). These children instead of craving for their basic right for education began their struggles for livelihoods at the age of twelve and thirteen. The young boys begin their journey as "mechanics' apprentices or teaboys, and the girls at home, learning to perform the menial chores of the house before getting married" (Shah, 2010, p. 7). Shah's robust description of Issa Colony and lifestyle of its inhabitants, strengthens her narrative of spatial differences: "we were all like insects that teemed and buzzed and flew from one pile of rotting garbage to another" (Shah, 2010, p. 51). This metaphoric contemplation renders physical structure of Issa Colony where people settled in concrete and mud houses their plight is visible from their doorless homes. Filthy water overflows in the streets from "the drains, stinking of urine and excrement and chemicals" (Shah, 2010, p. 1) which marks it as an eternally cursed settlement. This nefarious place becomes more

degenerated when it rains. The rainwater mixed with sewage drainpipes turns the slum into a filthy moat and "many of the children would fall ill with vomiting and fever from drinking and playing in the contaminated water" however these problems will remain unnoticed by the city administration.

Laila demonstrates acuteness of her observation when she experiences the world outside Issa Colony on her trip to seaside. While sitting in a small van where she crouches on "hard corrugated iron floor", she start looking at the "fancy buildings and even fancier cars passing by" wherein rich are sitting on comforted seats. She notes the children returning from their schools in neat and clean uniforms and desires "I could wear a beautiful white kameez and shalwar and a grey cardigan and a white dupatta too, and make my way to a proper school with desks and chairs" (Shah, 2010, p. 32). Laila sees an *enormous glittering* building made of iron and steel where "gun-totting guards stood furiously near the doors, with menacing scowls on their faces" and a "steady stream of cars" drop passengers off at entrance (Shah, 2010, p. 33). She curiously asks her mother about this unusual building and comes to know that is a "place where rich people buy what they don't need" (Shah, 2010, p. 33). The inquisitive question and the savvy reply indicate concocted differences that are hyphened with *haves* and *haves not.* For Laila spatial differences become more perceptible when she visits Ansari home in Defense area where her mother serves as a maid. Laila expresses her fear of difference before going to Ansari's home by looking at her "shabby clothes and old hand-me-down shoes" which she never noticed before (Shah, 2010, p. 62). The opulence of rich inhabitation mesmerizes Laila where the green lawns, fresh air and the mansions direct her to compare the polluted and thwarted air and absence of greenery in her slum ambiance: "we walked along the ….could fall (Shah, 2010, p. 70). This divide shapes the relationships and construes ideologies that determine the oppressed and oppressor. Ideologically suppressed poor women become subservient to the rich women due to the manifestation of their *haves.*

Laila has never experienced the world outside but when she enters the house of Ansaris' she assumes it as a palace where Mrs. Ansari appears to be the queen of beauty, as a paradise where she is "a bountiful goddess" (Shah, 2010, p. 76). Laila perceives this holistic delicacy in her symbolic order as divine and impeccable which seems impossible to access the real stage. Her visit to Ansaris' home becomes a symbol of prestige for her in the company of her friends. Charisma of material comfort and luxury is even "more beautiful than anything" in her ambiance (Shah, 2010, p. 81). This difference is heightened when Laila has fight with Farzana for her mere visit to that place. Shah discloses the ideological underpinning of social dynamics where poor are striving for their livelihood and rich impose their dominance by granting little favours to the poor.

Geographies of Fear and Dispossession:

Shah describes everyday life of the urban poor who travel each morning for their work place by a bus. While waiting for the bus Laila notes different people from slums whose livelihoods are connected to the central city. As the bus arrives Laila has to struggle for catching and making her space in a congested bus that is already filled with urban poor who work as peons, waiters, maids and the privileged one are the clerks who could read. Shah portrays that how men and women together work together to manage their everyday expanses in minimal units of their wages. She highlights the working women who are either serving as maids or give massages to rich women like Rekha and the women like Salma who sells their body to earn their means of existence. Shah highlights that in such deplorable circumstances when every individual is striving for their daily wages, women's spatial experiences are different and even more harrowing. The divided and gendered space, McDowell (1999) argues, is institutionalized through family, workplace and knowledge system (1999, p. 12). Flanagan and Valiulis (2011) probes the making of gendered space in the frame of patriarchy which embodies "social relations of power in any given society in which the values and behaviors of men are presumed normative and thus embedded in urban institutions and structures to privilege male control and insure female subordination" (Valiulis, 2011, p. xiii). This patriarchal decorum excludes women from public realms and confines private as secure and safe. McDowell (1999) investigates gender confines under the legacy of patriarchy whereby women's domestication is authorized:

> Thus women and their associated characteristics of femininity are denned as irrational, emotional, dependent and private, closer to nature than to culture, in comparison with men and masculine attributes that are portrayed as rational, scientific, independent, public and cultured. Women, it is commonly argued, are at the mercy of their bodies and their emotions, whereas men represent the transcendence of these baser features, mind to women's body. (1999, p. 11)

This binary opposition of the two sectors describes private as space for emotions and irrationality therefore epitomizes disorder whereas public space is meant to control and maintain order. While drawing over Walby's theoretical frame of public and private regimes, McDowell (1999) reiterates the restrictions over mobility within specified spatial confines through allocation of domestic sphere as private to women and the world outside domestic lines is dedicated to men as public sphere owing to its naturalized autonomy: "women and their associated characteristics of femininity are defined as irrational, emotional, dependent and private, closer to nature than to culture" whereas men and masculinity "are portrayed as rational, scientific, independent, public and cultured" therefore women are linked to "bodies and their

emotions" and men represents "transcendence of these baser features, mind to women's body" (1999, p. 11).

The ideological divide manifests "men as producers" and "women as reproducers", which characterizes the roles of both men and women to officiate the fabricated symbiosis in the socio-spatial specificities as women with devotion and subservience and men as "breadwinners" thus dominant (Walby, 1990; Grosz, 1994; McDowell, 1982; Perreguax, 2005; Massey, 1994). This juxtaposition translates the relationship of women with space as exploited and controlled through patriarchal and capitalist apparatuses (Brown 1987, Rose 1984). Consequently men's labour in the public space is paid and therefore visible, however, women's energy is consumed in the drudgery of private sphere therefore remain unpaid and invisible. McDowell (1984) elaborates this wavering divide of visible and invisible as, "danger and drudgery: male solidarity and female oppression", the men are the "breadwinners, women the domestic laborers, though hardly the "angels of the house" (1984, p. 199). Zainab and other slum women sell their domesticated skills to the elite class and the wage they receive does not improve their everyday lives. Their unqualified labour according to McDowell is their "feminized occupation" that they acquire due to close association with domestic chores, their inclusion in the public space is also based on this which determines their pay scale (1999, p. 125).

Deutsh (2000) argues that "it was always 'women,' not 'woman,' would gain access, always particular groups, contingent on particular figurations of power and alliances" (2000, p. 285). The women of the slum are unorganized and scattered women who are facing the obstacles in public space and to survive in the world. These women cannot attain power with their minimum wage that is assumed to be substantial for their unskillful and feminized labour which cannot prescribe their happiness but eternal calculations to manage the expanses of their inflated everyday expanses. The working women in the slums are pathetically overwhelmed by their survival maneuvers that they cannot attend their children. Shah notes that these women work in the city and also remain engaged in their domestic affairs as looking after children and serving food to them. Nonetheless, the men seem free from these engagements once they enter home.

The division of labour and divided space for both men and women are examined by Paul (2011) in terms of women's sexuality. She scrutinizes women's presence in the public space "legitimately only when she can manufacture a sense of purpose for being there and she is supposed to use these places as a transit between one private space and another" (2011, p. 251). The access to public space codifies women with proper code of conduct since their presence is administered by an admiration of "body idiom"; an unquestionable symbol of their feminine sexuality that "has been

portrayed as promiscuous which needs to be tamed by keeping them indoors" (Paul, 2011, p. 252). This restriction is allied with certain socio-religious presriptions (McDowell, 1999; Bondi, 1998;Walby, 1990; Grosz, 1994). To locate the relation of gender within urban space, McDowell (1999) insists on the importance of body which shapes the spatial experiences of the individuals. Physical vulnerability of female body always shifts her to secondary and subordinated position (McDowell, 1999, pp. 68-69). Moreover, it is "sexuality, physical vulnerability and reproductive role of women have been typically held responsible for legitimising their confinement within private space" (Paul, 2011, p. 252). Shah significantly contrasts between Salma; the "prostitute", "a whore" and all other slum women who beyond their religious and ethnic differences go to city centers and serve rich for full day. By selling their domesticated and feminized labour and giving up all their socio-religious differences these women exclaim that "more that any faith, our poverty was our religion; we worshipped at the feet of the same god—money" (Shah, 2010, p. 65). However, their contemptuous hatred for Salma shows their biological consciousness.

Women in their struggle for claiming space become oblivious of their socio-religious rituals but they remain conscious of their body-idiom. Salma is a beautiful young lady whose veil is "failed to hide the make-up on her face and the cheap jewelry on her wrists and ankles" (Shah, 2010, p. 65). Her ornamented self at bus stop is haunting for the man who could save her livelihood of the day. Her promiscuity is shown as her strategy for claiming the city that may differ from other slum women but she is also adopting survival strategies. Shah draws a blurring line between Salma and other women who are molested and harassed in the bus and remain quiet and silent. Shah accentuates that for men in public space women is assumed to be available whether she is a woman like Salma or not. Laila's traveling develops her consciousness of gendered space where she is objectified through her body. The crawling fingers on her backside incarnate permanent fear of public space and she internalizes the ideological manifestation of gendered urban space where men believe that they deserve privileged position because they sustain their families however "women travelling out of the house were only up to mischief, and they didn't deserve anyone making their journey any easier for them" (Shah, 2010, p. 68).

Koskela (1999) perceives "the gaze" as a critical form of abuse that shape the experience of space for women. In public sectors women are repeatedly objectified by the gaze, which cause unease and feelings of repression and insecurity. Confrontation of gaze according to Koskela gives room for harassment and molestation. The description of bus stop and the commute discerns female figures as easy prey to this gaze that Laila experiences through molestation. The geography of fear especially for women reproduces and reinforces the hierarchical foundations of cityspace which inhibits women's freedom in urban milieu. Nonetheless, Wilson

(1992) contends that this depicted fear plays significant role in obstructing women's mobility, despite cities are if frightening and risky, they also inscribe empowerment (1992, p. 10). Till the bus drops her to the desired stop, Laila learns molestation and harassment as inevitable to access public space. This adumbrates public space in masculine domains that is perceived as a site for "exchanging ideas, values, expressing grievances and claims, and a platform for leisure activities" (Paul, 2011, p. 251) and private space that is restricted in the four walls of the house is categorized as feminine and public space for women are usually defined as "transit ways to other regions, not loci of interest in themselves; laws against loitering, lolling and vagrancy exist in part to ensure that public places remain way stations, not goals" (Gardner, 2005, p. 60).

In the light of above scholarship it is argued that the female characters like Laila, Zainab, Jumana and other slum women remain dormant and obedient in their specific orbit while men are active and decision makers in both domains. Construction of these relations itself defines the conduct of both genders to attribute their masculinity and femininity with their presence in the space (Domosh, 2001). Strong and established connectivity of men with the public realm can threaten the presence of women in this space which causes fears of instability for women and her mobility is eventually restricted to her comforted private zone. Laila's harassment epitomizes an attempt to obstruct women's intrusion in public space but the troubles of their lives permit them to denounce these calculated obstacles. Accessing public space for women, however, cannot be regarded as safe and secure (Valentine, 1989). Women experience new boundaries wherein they remain uncomfortable owing to their peripheral and subordinate social positioning. They have to vie for opportunities and freedom in order to create their space in highly congested urban space both in private and public realms, nonetheless, it is overlooked that the abuse and violence they experience in domestic sphere often go unreported and the focus is concentrated on public domains (Andersson, 2009).

Alison Hayford examines invisibility of women from "geography as they have in history… few efforts have been made to investigate the particular contributions they have made" (1974, p. 136). She highlights that "the control of women was directly necessary for the stability of the productive system," (1974, p. 138) that is the public space and women are locked to domestic realms wherein their energies are utilized in domestic drudgery. The unsettling and fragmented public/private urban space according to Massey (1994) is more closely connected to time and space which stretch far beyond that urban space is not limited to confined domains despite it is in constant flux to shape and reshape the social relations with time and space. Hayford perceives this difference of time and space through capitalism which actively contributed as the main force to bring women out of private zone to disrupt their

conventional roles for economic pursuits, nonetheless, their dependant positions in labour force makes them less productive (Hayford, 1974, p. 143). The antagonistic animosity of *haves* and *haves-not* is presented by Shah through her characterization of Laila's mother Zainab when she experiences her egregious helplessness to cure her daughter from throes of her death and loses her senses when she fails. Zainab could not give birth to male child during her first marriage which leads to dissolution of their relationship and her husband eventually leaves her at stake of her misery. Being alone in a male dominated social setup, she was fully aware of the need to get married again. Her second marriage reveals an attempt to settle in patriarchal system along with her young girls. Feminist scholarship explores urban public space as liberating and impregnate with opportunities to dismantle the invisibility of private sphere by exploring the public space (McDowell, 1997; Hayden, 1981; Rose, 1989). This contact proffers deconstruction of established social hierarchies and translates gendered construct as an exigent through which women can make and remake their identities by subsuming with the urban miliue.Zainab's second marriage is shown as her survival strategy that establishes her contact with public space that is a means for her livelihood. Being mother of two daughters, Zainab perceives her marriage as secure for the protection of her private space. Fortunately, she succeeds in giving birth to male children that strengthens her marriage bond. Zainab works at Ansari's home to sustain her family that shows that she only requires a name of man to survive in the society.

"My mother was someone I hardly knew" Laila exclaims when she runs in the streets ignorant of the troubles of her mother (Shah, 2010, p. 6). This strangeness epitomizes her detachment from both spheres. Laila does not display any intimacy with her mother in her home. Zainab spends her days working for her children but she fails to demonstrate her deep concerns for them. Jumana's acute illness reveals her motherly concerns to Laila and she observes that her mother has lost herself in struggle for settlement:

> When I saw her hands, I felt a cold stone of panic strike my heart, and I looked down at my own hands, plump and soft. What had happened to Amma's hands to make them look like that, as though they'd been dipped in vinegar and washed with acid? (Shah, 2010, p. 46)

She seems unacquainted of underlying wisdom of her marriage and contemplates over the hardships of Zainab who remain busy in menial chores outside her private space that eventually disconnect her from the comforts. Zainab experiences similar detachment from Ansari's house where she invests her labour and eventually alienated from her physical and psychological drudgery in form of her income that is three thousand rupees. For this amount she leaves her children for ten hours in a day

and commutes on stuffy overcrowded bus which Laila specifies as a torture in itself. Even after spending a month like this Zainab takes Laila as an evidence of her veracity. She needs money to pursue treatment of Jumana who is suffering with tuberculosis for which she requests for an advance salary. Shah presents that the ideologically oppressed community of *haves not* appears to be highly obliged when they receive their deserving favors. Women especially mothers who come out of their private space collide with innumerable difficulties and they could not retain their position in any sphere. Being mother of two daughters Zainab gives up her dreams of improving her socio-economic status, despite this she focuses on safe and secure present and future of her daughters. Shah reveals her desires for spatial settlement as, "I had plans for myself…I was going to get out of this place, work in a beauty salon. I would have made something of myself, my life. But instead I had to give birth to you two…and now look where I am" (Shah, 2010, p. 85).

Laila admits that Zainab abandons her future stability "because she cared. If she hadn't cared, she would have just left us alone" (Shah, 2010, p. 86).Zainab's sacrificial motherhood becomes more visible when Jumana her beloved daughter, dies of tuberculosis. The traumatic stress of her death leads Zainab to mental disorder which outcasts her from social dynamics. Her disorder epitomizes the realization of her economic instability which does not allow her to cure her daughter. She endlessly fights with her *haves-not* but her collision with her failure in shape of Jumana's death destabilizes her psychologically. Jumana becomes a miserable memory of dispossession. Fully aware of the troubles of her mother, Jumana tries to conceal her disease which eventually displaces her existence from the world. Her dreams to live a life without worries are symbolized through her box of money in which she gathers small amounts of money for her stable future: "a rupee here and there, over years, gleaned from old Christmas gifts, a saving from market day, coins she'd earned from odd jobs" (Shah, 2010, p. 94). However, this money could also not help her to get well and even a peaceful death. They could not provide her morphine to relieve her pain and she ends tragically by pronouncing "it hurts…it hurts" (Shah, 2010, p. 107). Her funeral demonstrates deprivations in her dispossessed life. Her family could not give her comforted coffin and the donated coffin is "as undignified and pathetic as those cardboard rectangles used to display shoes in high-street shoe stores" (Shah, 2010, p. 110).

Resisting the Divides:

Nothing else could better demarcate the contrast between everyday lives of *haves* and *haves-not* for Laila as excruciating death of her sister and agonizing psychological disorder of her mother. She is acquainted with her vulnerable socio-spatial position when she hears Salim negotiating with her step father to commodify Laila as object of their prosperity by fixing her price in the market. Spain (2014) perceives the fear

of insecurity in urban space in the frame of feminine sexuality "the greatest inhibition to women's mobility is their fear of sexual assault, and rape by a stranger ranks at the top of that fear hierarchy" (2014, p. 588). The fear of rape is the "ultimate expression of patriarchy", which is the way "all men control all women" (2014, p. 589). This fear allows Laila to flee from her own house. Laila as conscious of her body leaves her mentally retarded mother when she realizes her virginity at perilous stake. She ruefully exclaims that it is "the last time" she would see the place she had been born and the place she thought she would die (Shah, 2010, p. 129). Her departure looms her over with shades of uncertainty when she meets HaroonMakrani; the notorious drug addict, who makes arrangement for her to reach Ansari's home. Laila initially assumes this place as a permanent solution to her escape from private sphere. Nonetheless, she has been facilitated by Mrs. Ansari by hiring her as a maid for her three years old daughter Sasha. For her elder daughter Maryam and son Jehan, Laila is exotic other whose difference from them is source of their amusement. For Maryam; Laila could be an opportunity to earn bountiful virtues by converting her religion from Christianity to Islam whereas, for Jehan she is an accessible object whom he could see as body idiom.

Laila leaves her private space and as a maid begin to settle in public realms. Her fears of uncertainty and displacement always hover around her that are shaped from the insecurities in private sphere. For Valentine (1989) women's fear of urban space is the "spatial expression of patriarchy" (1989, p. 389). Violence in private space "may affect the broader spatial experiences and choices of women affected by of threatened by it" (Pain, 1991, p. 417). Therefore, "feelings of fear and threat cannot be expected to be spatially divided" (Koskela, 1999, p. 118). Anxiety in public space may connote fear of men: "Confronting women's fear means confronting the danger women face at the hands of their partners, acquaintances, clients, and coworkers, as well as other potential violence from men inside and outside the home" (Stanko, 1995, p. 46). The overlooked abuse and assault Laila experiences in safe and secure private space serve as a tool to obstruct her mobility in public space and remain dependent upon the decisions of her step father and Salim. Her departure asserts her agency that she claims her space in public space where Mrs. Ansari limits her mobility by forbidding her access to Jehan's room. This restriction implies extent of available space. Nonetheless, in absence of Mrs. Ansari when she is forced to cross this boundary, she experiences the same fear of being dependent body. Categorization of victimization in urban space though in public or private, according to Domosh, lays stress on women's exclusion in socio-spatial patriarchal groundings, which ironically further perpetuates gendered inequalities (2001, p. 78).

Fearful city spaces not merely emblem physical violence instead women face diverse forms of abuse which are often neglected (Andersson, 2009). Laila's pestering in

Jehan's room by his friends communicates Laila about her insignificant and "anonymous" being and she contritely notices, "what it felt like to be a slave, where your pride was as insignificant to your owners as a fly sitting on the back of an elephant's head" (Shah, 2010, p. 205). Wilson (1992) emphasizes that feminists should focus on describing the social construction of fear in using urban space instead of connecting women with fear. Woolf's (1929) demanded room is a space woman needs to acquire in her private space but it is ultimately not given to woman except kitchen where she remains busy in her labour. This kitchen cannot be perceived as a space of comfort and ease as bed room that is also shared by her husband. This space inside home is disregarded by Friedan (1963) as space of depression and discomfort which obstructs women's mobility which highlights that the problem seems not connected to the divided space instead it is the matter of exclusion from claiming space in the city though in private or public. Laila who finds rescue in Ansari's home is threatened by the midnight phone call of her step father. She has learned to survive with all possible degradations as a slave but this sudden phone call fills her with ferments of insecurity and displacement. Meanwhile, Sasha; younger daughter of Mr. Ansari is accidently bitten by wasps for which she has been accused for capriciousness. Plotting of these events direct Laila to leave Ansari's home and confront her fears to create her space that will eventually liberate her from depression for having *roomfor* her *own.*.

Laila acquires that she cannot hide herself in the house of Ansari's who are planning her dismissal therefore she needs to strive against her dispossession and outcast. She cuts her long hair, steals Maryam's veil and crosses the gate: "Laila Masih was gone: in her place was a nameless, faceless Muslim woman of Indeterminate age" (Shah, 2010, p. 253). Koskela argues that women who claim space are fully aware of their excluded socio-spatial positioning and their vulnerability even in protective fence of the private sphere. Therefore they display boldness as an ultimate tool to deconstruct gendered spatial orders: "if women have the courage to go out, they make space more easily available for other women by their presence" (Koskela, 1999, p. 112). Laila's boldness not merely protects her from her step-father and Salim but also brings her mother to health. Her confession of truth before Maryam and Jehan creates space for her mother too whom she leaves in order to save herself from the atrocity of Salim. She successfully brings her mother back to her normal life. She is not afraid of her stepfather and happily serving Ansari family as their maid. She is satiated for not being part of the slum from where she could only collect bitter memories of her sister and mother "even getting out of here [slum] would be enough of a reward in itself" (Shah, 2010, p. 67).

CONCLUSION:

Slum Child by Bina Shah narrates the everyday lives of women living at the margins of the metropolitan city. Shah sheds light over the struggles of the down-trodden women who are endlessly engaged in ameliorating their socio-economic plight, but fail to do so. This study has argued that Bina Shah's *Slum Child* highlights the intricate relationship of women with space and investigated that how the female characters oscillating between private and public space find the urbanspace fearful for them. In the theoretical frame of gendered urban space, this study highlights how women are excluded from the sexualized and masculine urban space due to their body idiom. This study concludes that Laila who is exploited and abused in private space access public space for creating space not only for herself but also for her mother who fails to stabilize her daughters in the socio-economic oppressions of *haves-not*. Her decision to come back to her mother and confront her fears of domestic and public space demonstrates her agencial consciousness that stabilizes the future of her mother and for her own self.

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