Ideological Manipulation and Exploitation of Minorities in Pakistan: An Analytical Study of Our Lady of Alice Bhatti

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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

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This research intends to highlight the subjugation of minorities in third world countries in general and Pakistan in particular, with reference to Althusserian Ideological and Repressive state apparatuses. It also sheds light on the sufferings of poor minorities who are suppressed not only by the individuals but also by the state controlled institutions. Althusser is of the view that the under privileged people are always marginalized by the elite that maintains its social hierarchy by projecting themselves as the representative of the state. This research is significant as it contributes to address the problems of third-world minorities who are facing suppression, marginalization and exploitation in various ways.

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1. Introduction

The minorities are there in every society but this is also an acceptable fact that everywhere they fall prey to the people who are in majority. Minorities in Pakistan are always dominated by those who are more in number. They are tortured, killed and murdered in the society. They are sometimes burnt alive. Most of the societies do not show any care for the people who constitute the small portion of society. Rules and regulations of the society are the fixed codes for the minority groups which are prepared by the bourgeoisie class. This research aims to expose the value, worth and interpellation of the minorities. Most of their rights are denied and they face different forms of discrimination in the society. The researcher shows the misery of the minority people. In the novel Our Lady of Alice Bhatti, the conditions of the minorities are exposed by Hanif. In this research, conditions of the minorities are openly projected and how they are treated with biased mindset in the society. The purpose of this research is to uncover the wrong strategies of the society against the minority groups.

Theoretical framework of this paper is encapsulated in Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and ideological state apparatuses. Althusser is a French Marxist philosopher who explains the suffering of the helpless and oppressed people by the hands of the ruling class and ideological state apparatuses. He explains that state is dominant over the residents of a country. Repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses are the two terminologies of the theory of Althusser. He says that poor and common people are the victims in the state. Sometimes they are cohesively forced and sometimes they are convinced mentally. People are helpless before these apparatuses and they consider them something very natural. According to this theorist, repressive state apparatuses work by punishing the poor people. These repressive apparatuses work to support the ruling class in the society. Even ruling class uses the repressive state apparatuses in the state to control the rebellious voices. The poor public is made subjects to the bourgeoisie class. ISA is another weapon which is used by the ruling class. Althusser explains that these apparatuses are different from the RSAs, but the aftermaths of these two are same in the state. In ideological state apparatuses, new generations are prepared mentally. Then these people follow those rules which snatch their own choices and freedom in the society.

Hanif was born in Okara in 1964. He has been brought up in the middle class. He got his early education in the government school in his village and the degree of graduation from Air Force Academy of Pakistan. He also got the degree of graduation in creative writing from the University of East Anglia. Because of his fondness of reading books, he started exploring not only Urdu Literature but also American as well as British Literature. Muhammad Hanif observed the deplorable state of his country very minutely, so he began his career as a journalist, satirical novelist, and a playwright to raise voice against all the injustices that were taking place in Pakistan. The condition of the Pakistani politics has also a decisive effect on his writings. He tries to pen down the imbroglios of the Pakistani politics in his works. In Pakistan, mostly politicians are double faced who do not work for the one party but they change the parties for their benefits and this is why democracy has not succeeded in Pakistan. Sometimes Generals of the Army made interruption on the way of democracy and many dictators have also ruled the nation considering it their duty. Killings, bloodsheds and atrocities of the poor class are common themes in his writings. Before leaving for London, he wrote a play named *What Now, Now That We Are Dead?* In this play, Hanif openly shows the suffocating atmosphere of the city which is fatal for its people.

Muhammad Hanif has great observation in picking the things which happen around him. He has lived in and strongly felt the era of General Zia ul Haq and he has captured this decade in his novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, his very first novel. His works expose hypocrisy and corruption of the military. These people take their own revenge by using the machinery of the government. There is one thing that is very special, Mohammed Hanif seems fearless as he has shown courage in telling the stories to the world. Hanif is the true realist in giving the hints of the atrocities of the cruel people on the weak people in Pakistani society. His courage is seen when *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* was published and people were shocked at his writing and his intellectual honesty. He did not keep in his mind any kind of pressure from military and government. He is a realist fiction writer who does not remain in the world of imagination. Hanif

does not describe his dreams in his novels. He actually endeavors to get real sources for getting knowledge about the incidents which happen in Pakistan.

Because of the illness of his mother, he had to spend a lot of time in the wards of hospitals. Over there, he observed the conditions of the nurses who were attending the patients while staying late at night in the hospitals. But in return, the amount of reward they were receiving was very low. That whole situation left very strong footmarks on Hanif and pushed him to write a novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. The novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Hanif was published in 2011. In this novel, the writer has imagined a story of a female nurse who has to become the victim of patriarchal system of Pakistan. He presents in his work that those women who belong to the lower strata of society are more vulnerable to torture and rape because their resistance against the fixed codes of the state and religion does not succeed. He also projects how state and religion provide grounds for the downfall of the poor and minority in the society. It is not wrong to say that Hanif has tried his best to expose the hypocrisy and shortcomings of the powerful section of the country through his writings.

1.1. Research Questions

The present study is pursued with the help of the following research questions.

How are the Ideological state apparatuses and Repressive state apparatuses work to oppress the poor masses in the Pakistani society?

How are religious minorities interpellated in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Hanif? What are the tactics used by the rich to keep the minorities suppressed?

1.2 Limitations

Marxism is a vast area of research but the present research has touched Althusser's post-Marxist theory of ISAs and RSAs regarding minorities in a state. The study explores the different kinds of state pressures and atrocities faced by the minorities. It is confined to the novel, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*.

2. Literature Review

Sara Baig has explored the realist as well as magical realist aspects of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* in her article "Realism vs Magical Realism in Mohammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*." Baig has discussed the concept of feminism in this novel of Hanif. This article explores the realist and magical realist techniques that are used by Hanif to "turn a downtrodden Christian lady Alice Bhatti to attain the status of 'Our lady'" (2017). According to Baig, the writer has depicted a society that never misses a chance to uplift the status of a lady from a poor class and minority religion. The main focus of the researcher is on the acts of resistance by Alice against the social and religious injustices done to her. Instead of showing Alice as an oppressed lady, the research focuses on the elements that show the protagonist as an empowered woman. Baig concludes while claiming that Alice Bhatti has magical power that makes her uplift her status.

Maryam Mirza's "An all-weather, all-terrain fighter: Subaltern resistance, survival, and death in Mohammed Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*" focuses on the subalternity of Alice Bhatti in Hanif's novel. Mirza not only discusses the lower status of the protagonist, she portrays Alice as "an exemplary, heroic symbol of resistance" (2015). The researcher of this paper shows that the protagonist was raped and attacked by the doctors and the relative of the patients. But she adopts some models for her defense and protection. Mirza exposes that Alice manages many ways to survive in the society where there was no respect for common and poor people. She was female, so she used to have a razor blade in her pocket. Many strategies have been exposed by the writer

of the article which were used by Alice to face the society. Society is like a net for subalterns as they have to face a lot of problems in order to stay alive.

Shaheen (et al.) (2014) have poised in "Magical Realism as a Tool for Women Empowerment in Our Lady of Alice Bhatti by Mohammed Hanif" that magical realism gives empowerment to the women in Our Lady of Alice Bhatti. They exposed the Pakistani society where women are killed, raped, hacked, strangled, poisoned, hanged and burn alive without any major grounds. Misogynous patriarchy is also permanent part of Pakistani society. In patriarchy the women become puppet in the hands of the men and they use them according to their need and wishes. All the major matters are decided by the men and they do not share their views with women. Researchers of the article show that Alice Bhatti faces religious majority and misogynous patriarchy during her stay in the sprawling city. She was Christian by birth and was living in the French Colony of Karachi. The inhabitants of the Colony were poor and they were working in the houses of the Muslims. People consider her father Joseph Bhatti, an untouchable Choorha in the Colony. 'Choorha' term is not used honorably and it shows hatred for the people to whom it is used. The followers of major religion assume themselves better than minority religion people. They do not give respect and honor to the minority religion people. Alice Bhatti has to face a lot of problems which were created for her of being a Christian lady. Patriarchal elements are discussed by Shaheen in the novel of Our Lady of Alice Bhatti as patriarchy and religion are of great importance in this novel.

Atif (2016) has explored the feministic aspects in his paper titled "Feminist Concerns in Mohammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti.*" He discusses the aching aspects of the lives of the women in his article. The researcher mentions that Hanif has presented the problems of women which are faced by them in their lives while living in male-chauvinistic society. Women are maltreated in Pakistani society. In a patriarchal society, women are considered only lifeless statues. They are not encouraged to have their opinions and desires. Atif presents that Alice like many other female characters belongs to lower class and this is why the society has usurped all the rights from her. Women face atrocities, cruelties and repulsiveness in male-dominated societies.

Fahmida Manzoor (2016) writes in his article "A Comparative Analysis of "The *Geometry* of God and A Case of Exploding Mangoes" in the framework of postmodernism that Muhammad Hanif and Uzma Aslam Khan have broken the traditional principles of writing novels and they have created mini narratives in the literature. Meta narrative was the conventional style of the writers. The writers were using the techniques of old age but in *The Geometry of God and a Case* of Exploding Mangoes, Hanif and Khan have adopted the new way of writing the novels. They introduce the mini narrative technique in their novels. The use of mini narrative becomes the voice of subaltern in the novels. Hanif and Khan deconstruct the totalitarian Meta narratives and generate the mini narratives by using the two modern literary devices in their novels. The researcher discusses that parody and pastiche have been used by Hanif and Khan in their novels and they have parodied the grand narratives and ideologies in satirical way.

Muhammad Yar Tanvir (2014) in his paper "Praetorianism in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*: A Critical Analysis" investigates the social as well as political circumstances that are presented by Hanif in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. He says that Muhammad Hanif has exposed the ruling condition of Zia ul Haq in his novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. After the independence of Pakistan from the British Raj in August 1947, there have been many military officers who have controlled over the ruling party or snatched the power from the people. In under developing countries, army is seen fighting against the government and political parties. Pakistan is an

underdeveloped country and it is also experiencing the same as is being faced by the third world countries. Tanvir says that praetorianism is found in the novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. In the condition of praetorianism, powerful minority occupies the country by force. People are not given the freedom of expression before the world and they are kept in the darkness. They become the puppet and helpless before the praetor. Tanvir concludes his paper while mentioning that Hanif's novel explicitly tells the story of the ruling days of General Zia in his novel and what he did to maintain his position in army and government.

Hence, it can be pointed out on the basis of existing research that a lot of research work has been done on the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Hanif from post-colonial and post-modern perspectives but this study will be a fresh study under the lens of Althusser's ISAs and RSAs. However, little research work has been done on the topic of the plight of minorities on the novel of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Hanif. In this context the present study will point out religious interpellation of minorities in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* and it will also help to minimize the problems of minorities.

3. Research Methodology

This research entails a content-based, textual analysis of Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* as the primary text. The theoretical framework that has been utilized in this paper is Louis Althusser's ideology and ideological state apparatuses. The evaluations relating the aforementioned author, novel and concept shape the secondary sources of this paper. Both, print and digital media have been used as a secondary source. Karl Marx's theory has also been consulted as a part of secondary source for this research.

This research is qualitative and exploratory in nature. The methodology used for this paper is completely subjective as well as holistic. Research has been conducted in the background of Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses. This theory asserts that these apparatuses have trickledown effect in the line of the oppressed people or minorities that feel alienation with the dominant ideology. The theory of Althusser works as a theoretical framework for the present investigation. Other writers and critics have been referenced for textual analysis of related novel, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*.

The research has utilized Althusser's concepts of ISAs and RSAs to explain the situation of minorities. ISAs stand for ideological state apparatuses. In ideological state apparatuses there are many institutes which are working in any state to control the people especially the lower and middle classes. Ideological state apparatuses influence the minds of the people. There are religious institutes as Churches, Mosques, Schools and colleges which are working but their working style is not punishing the people directly.

These apparatuses work forcefully and they also work under the ruling class in the state. Ruling class uses them to dominate the lower and middle class in the state. If anyone tries to break the rules designed by the ruling class, he is punished violently. Actually all the powerful institutions work to facilitate the ruling class. But they block the ways of the poor people in the state. The sever behavior is seen with the poor and minority people in the state through RSAs. RSAs and ISAs work with different methods but their subject is same that is to control the poor people of the state. RSAs work violently by punishing the people, whereas ISAs work by ideology.

4. Discussion and Analysis

In this section the aspects of the Althussier's theory have been applied to the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti. Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, a postcolonial novel has exposed the condition of minorities in the Pakistani society. Alice Bhatti is the protagonist of the novel who belongs to the Catholic Christian family in the French Colony of Karachi, the biggest city of Pakistan. As Alice belongs to the minority group, she has to encounter a lot of traumatic incidents in her life. After a lot of wait, Alice wins the position of junior nurse in the hospital. She starts performing her duty in the hospital but suffers a lot there as well. When she was the student of medical college, the girls who were from the religion of majority showed strong hatred for her. Even once they attacked the Christian girls with their hockies. It is significant to note that people do not like her because she is a Christian girl. In another scene of the novel, it is shown that she was doing her duty in the hospital with her senior doctor in the operation theater. The patient has died because of the ignorance of the doctor and she is called in the police station as a witness. In the police station she is proved as a killer of the patient in the hospital. Therefore, she is put into the cell for fourteen years.

Alice has been raped by the senior doctor and elite class members who come in the hospital with their patients for the treatment. People consider her powerless girl and they attack her to fulfill their sexual desires. All the miracles become dead before the destruction of Alice Bhatti. She has been treated badly in the society like other poor people are treated. Poor people are considered puppets by the elite or ruling class. In this postcolonial era, the poor are mistreated and kept in bad condition for whole of their lives. If the poor try to change their situation, they are not given the permission by the codes of the society which are fixed by the elite class. They have to follow those codes and feel humiliation in the hands of the powerful persons. Authority is given to the strong ones who are financially better than lower and middle classes. Society always salutes the rich class and rich class is always there to engulf the rights of the poor class.

People who belong to the major group in the country are prejudiced against the others like minority religion. Major group considers that their people are deserved for whole the opportunities in the society. They are greeted in the offices and meetings but minority people are ignored. Minority religion people are not given opportunity for jobs and loans in the country. State becomes dangerous for their existence. Mostly minority religion people are migrating to other countries every year. The religious discrimination is considered a big issue in the state. Minorities are kept in the limited circle. The signs of prejudice against minorities are observed in every field of life. There is a gap between Muslims and Christians in Pakistan. Christians have to face a lot of problems on their way of progress in any field of life.

Alice has been given orders by her senior nurse that she will have to bear everything in the specific ward. That ward was exclusively allotted to the rich class. They are here for treatment and get enjoyment in the hospital. They wait for the nurses to come in their room and they will tease them for sex. There is no restriction for the elite class and poor people are dehumanized by them in the hospital. They are using hospital as they are in park for visit. Alice has been warned that they also make sex with their own sisters. If they behave very badly they will have to show to the public that in this ward everything is normal. From this situation, reality appears in the novel that the minorities are always kept in low condition.

Elite class consider that they have got a license from their God to mistreat the poor and minority class. They neither give them respect in society nor spare any moment from degrading

them in the society. Alice Bhatti is Christian junior nurse in the Sacred Heart hospital and she is interpellated in the Muslim society. When the minority or suppressed groups try to change their position according to the modern parameters, they are not given freedom by the authoritative ones to break their chains.

The Christians are living in Pakistan on behalf of the Muslims. The Muslims consider they are superior and try to guide the minorities. They play vital role in the society by considering minorities that they are not able to perform the sacred duties which are assigned to them. Joseph Bhatti makes protest against the behavior of the Muslims. He says that we are not less than the Muslims in any respect. He says that we are senior and living in this area before them. Hanif tends to expose the behavior of the Muslims against the Christians in Pakistan. Hanif says that the Muslims have come from the shore of the Arabian Sea. But after entering this area they are becoming the rulers of this area. They consider themselves superior to the minorities in every matter. Society is providing lot of chances to the majority people but minority people are constantly kept in subaltern condition. They are not given proper facilities in the society.

Hanif exposes that the Christians are considered shit cleaners. They have taken birth to take the responsibility to clean the garbage of the Muslims. They are also human beings but the difference has been created on the basis of religion in the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Minorities are considered low kind of people in the Pakistani society. Law also does not give protection to the minorities. They have a lot of hurdles on their way of leading their lives. The do not mix with them because of being the Christian in the Pakistani society. In the novel Christian people are degraded in the society and there is not given any kind of importance to their basic rights.

Joseph Bhatti who is the father of the protagonist of the novel is working in the streets of the city. He is Christian by faith and sweeper of the city. While talking about their social status, he points out that the Muslims think that Christians are shit-cleaners. While talking about the poor behavior of rich Muslims, this clearly depicts the status of minorities in a Muslim society.

Strong people always control the common or poor ones according to their own wills. The poor souls lead their lives in the society at the signals of the rich or elite class. Ruling class is considered models for the poor people. The poor people follow the ways of the ruling class in the society. Some rules are made on the behalf of the ruling class. The interests of the elite class are protected in making the rules. Ruling party makes the poor people target. In this novel, Alice Bhatti, a poor girl has been attacked in the hospital many times by the strong people. There is no law to control the situation. Poor people are deprived of facilities in their lives. They remain busy just to earn their livelihood and during this period they are maltreated by the ruling or elite class. Alice has to face harassment in the hospital every single day because of her lower status. The attackers know that she is not having worth in the society and these week ones cannot do anything for themselves. They use the poor according to their needs in the society. Alice is convinced to make oral sex in the VIP room by the rich people as a man Hanif projects this idea that the poor minority women are also raped in Pakistani society and the rapists have least fear of law enforcing agencies. Directly or indirectly, these people are becoming the victim of the ruling party. Ruling class is imposing its own rules and regulations on the poor and minority class.

Rich people think that poor Alice has taken birth in the gutter and she is still having the smell of the dirty water and mud. Because her father is Christian and he works in the streets of the French Colony. He cleans the drains of the society which are full of the dirtiness of the city. The houses of the Christians are considered the dirty pounds where the offspring of the Christians grow

up. They are Christians and because of their religion they are not appreciated in the society even they are criticized openly before the people.

People make fun of their low status by showing their bad condition to the public in the society. Muslims think that Christians are the birth of dirtiness in the Pakistani society. According to the Muslims, they are smelly people and they are leading their lives in bad condition. Muslims think that Christians are born as servants in the Pakistani society because their religion is not acceptable in this area where Muslims are living and performing the duties of their own religion without any fear of the non- Muslims. Hanif says:

"Noor has spent enough time in the hospital to know what they really think: they think that Sister Alice grew up in a gutter and still carries that stench. They think that Noor was born in jail and grew up in these corridors and carries that odour associated with people who are born into slavery. (Hanif, 2011)

In Pakistani society respect is given to the strong families and majority people. Minority people are not welcomed by the people. Poor people are given those tasks which have no importance in the society. Alice is junior nurse in the sacred hospital and she is performing her duties in the VIP room where rich people are treated by the doctors. Junior nurse has been advised by her senior nurse to remain silent. She has been asked to perform her duty by accepting every signal from the rich patients and the relatives of the patients who come in the hospital. They are the offspring of the rich families and they have the right to do whatever they want in the special ward of the sacred hospital. State empowers the ruling and majority class and poor and minority class have to face problems. In this novel author has exposed the problems of the minority people. Hanif shows the difference between the Christians and the Muslims in this novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Muslims are enjoying every segment of life but Christians are kept away from the side of Muslims who are in the shape of Alice Bhatti and Joseph Bhatti.

Author of the novel is exposing the hurdles of on the path of the Christian people in the modern society of the Pakistan. But there is one thing that is very tragic for the minorities that they are utilized by the Muslims according to their own wishes. Those people who do not want to touch Alice Bhatti try to have sex with the same girl. In the beginning, they consider that Alice is Christian and they do not want to touch her but they want to satisfy their sexual desires, they attack the minorities.

Alice Bhatti is asked to maintain the atmosphere in the ward of the hospital. The senior of Alice Bhatti tells that she should not try to speak before the rich people who are in the VIP room with their admitted patients but Alice is not able to maintain the balance and it creates the disturbance between Alice and VIP people. When this news spreads in the hospital and Hina Alvi also comes to know about the incident and she suspends Alice Bhatti for some weeks. From this incident the reality comes on the front that poor and minority people are always kept backward and truth always walks on the side of the rich people. Poor people do not have purity in the society even they are fair and honest.

The protagonist of the novel is poor girl and she is dismissed by the seniors because she is not fulfilling the expectations of the authoritative persons of the hospital. She is not acceptable in the society. The Christian people are feeling disappointment among the Muslims because they are not having an acceptable status. Status gives importance to the people. Minority religion people are leading their lives without status. Alice Bhatti, Joseph Bhatti and his wife have no value in the society. They are considered the slaves of the Muslims in different fields of life. They are facing a lot of challenges which block their ways of progress. They are Christians and because of religion, they have finished their status and familiarity. In the Muslim countries the importance is given to the Muslims. They become the ruler of the state and all the rules and regulations are made on the recommendations of the ruling class. Minorities are serving in the houses of the rich people. In this novel Alice's mother is working in different houses. There is news that she has died after slipping on the floor. But the reality is different. She has been victimized by some persons in the Landlord's house. From such type of tragic incidents, the behavior of the Muslims is judged with the Christians in the Pakistani society. Hanif has shown the status and powerless of the minorities in his novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. People of the society have not any kind of the status in their minds related to the Christians.

Christians' women are living in subjugated condition. They work whole day for earning something for their children. In this novel Joseph's wife lead her life in very lower condition and Joseph Bhatti also works in cleaning the streets of the city. They have a daughter who is the protagonist of the novel. Alice Bhatti has lots of signs of cut because people always have hatred against her. She had been attacked many times by the Muslims in the society. Sometimes, she is victimized by the attacker. But she did not lose her heart and she faced lot of problems. Life has become a trial for her in the Muslim society. Actually, Hanif is exposing that minorities are the worthless people who can be utilized by someone in the society without fear of any one. She is belonging to the poor and Christian family and these two weak points become the hurdles on her way of life in the Pakistani society. She has faced lot of physical and mental torture from many years. She does her best to change the status in the society but society gives rough response by calling her daughter of the sweeper. The French Colony gives them no opportunity to change their status. But French Colony only produces sanitary professional people who are rejected by the advanced century in the whole world and also in the Pakistani society. She remained in subjugated condition and gets lots of hurts physically.

Alice is poor, Christian and a woman. These three low points destroy her life in the society. She faces very courageously every issue of the society but she does not succeed in her life. From above mentioned three points one is very important that she is a Christian. Her religion declines her strength and status in the Pakistani society. Religion becomes hurdle in her practical and professional life.

5. Conclusion

In the novel, the effects of Repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses are observed apparently. The minorities become the victims of the Althusser's apparatuses. They are tortured by the hands of the strong people of the society. According to Althusser, state played crucial roles for the minorities. State has the upper hands on the poor people. They are threatened and killed violently in the society. Hanif's novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is researchable for the influence of the Althusser's apparatuses. In the Pakistani society respect is given to the wealthy people. Same case is found in the novel Our Lady of Alice Bhatti. Alice Bhatti is a Christian and junior nurse these two points increase her subalternity in the society. Even the patients wait her in the hospital when they come to know about her appointment in the hospital. They want to disgrace her. Minority and ordinary people are humiliated in the Pakistani society because they have no worth or power. They are crushed under the feet of the majority people and there is no response found from the side of ruling party to save them in the society. Women of minority class are the goal of the majority people

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