



RESEARCH PAPER

Subverting Traditional Feminine Conventions in Samra Zafar's *A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose*

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the life of Samra Zafar's as portrayed in her memoir *A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose* (2019). Though the society tries its best to confine Zafar's life according to culturally prescribed boundaries, she breaks every convention, makes herself identifiable in everyone's eyes and sticks to her own view-point. Initially she was, at some level, confused and didn't know whether to fulfill her personal demands or cultural conventions, which were continuously forcing her to live according to them, but then, with the course of time, she realizes everything and subverts every norm which, for her, was unacceptable. Generally, this work, along with female's right, also talks about intimate-partner abuse, but this paper discusses only those points where the protagonist becomes aware about her mistreatment and takes action. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) talks about females' rights especially their involvement in outside affairs and is an important work in the history of feminist cause. Zafar's memoir is analyzed through this lens. It is obvious that Friedan's book elements are very similar with Zafar's personal story; both of them discuss that how a woman can gain her autonomy and agency in a world where everyone is trying to put her back in the world of prison. Moreover, Zafar doesn't gain an independent life for herself but also for others and becomes an inspiring soul, who tries her best to save others from the same situation. The outcomes, which are derived from this investigation, reveal the rebelliousness and enmity of protagonist towards society, where her education, employment and freedom of action or expression are of utmost significance for her, and she changes her fate with the aid of her intellectual passions, especially education.

KEYWORDS

A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose, Autonomy, Betty Friedan, Intellectual Passions, *The Feminine Mystique*, Samra Zafar

Introduction

In this world, women are portrayed as the oppressed figures whose lives' desires are determined by the male figures. Jaggar and Shrubl (1978) say that women are the weak figures and patriarchy gives them a very hard time by segregating the sex roles into two groups: women work inside the house and take charge of their responsibilities of housekeeping, while men are advised to go outside and work for their families (as cited in Pandey, 1989, pp. 3-4). Men make the women economically dependent and force them to obey their orders, and sometime they take the support of abuse to maintain their power on females; in case of spouses, marriage, whose aim is to create a healthy "partnership," becomes an authoritative relationship where females are under the control of their husbands (Jeevan, 2024, pp. 4971-4973). One can say that, historically, women are always suppressed and coerced to follow patriarchal principles; however,

this paper presents women in a different way. The Pakistani-Canadian Samra Zafar wrote her memoir *A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose* with the help of an editor Meg Masters, to whom she revealed her story: she was forced to marriage in a teen age with a promise of getting good education by her in laws but after wedding she suffered the worst form of alienation and domestic abuse and was prohibited to get university education. Zafar, however, fought against all the inequalities and gained everything that she deserved. The memoir describes Zafar's story of abuse, dependency, isolation and confinement and her resultant fight for her rights. The paper reveals a different side of women that shatters the constituted ideologies of male dominancy to attain their sense of agency to help them demolish all the hindrances.

Literature review

Bukuru (2020), reviewing the book, describes the protagonist's life which became destroyed because of specific or restrictive cultural, religious and societal criterions. These particular domains repressed her and forbidden her to express herself, as a result she felt depression day by day because of her status of second sex in her married life. Further, she draws a comparison between two persons: Mr. Zafar (Samra Zafar's father) and Ahmed Khan (Samra Zafar's husband) illustrating that how much liberated and intellectual her father was in comparison to her narrow-minded, abusive and dominant husband (pp. 115-119). Jafri (2021) writes that Zafar's life-story is an evidence of her struggling life and especially the marriage part is the turning point of her life where she works hard and eventually attains everything that she deserved; although beginning was actually much more difficult than she initially thought, but her patience, never-ending efforts, courage, hard work and fighting spirit made her a much more mature figure, and are responsible for her success against this male-leading hypocrite and patriarchal society (pp. 21-22). Kane (2021) observes how a woman is persuaded by socio-religious norms to live in a violent relationship. By using religion, she is coerced to cut her contact with Canadian surroundings; even her in-laws perverted the lines of religious scriptures to support their belief system in an effort to take charge of her life. Moreover, the cultural principles targeted her to the life of housekeeping and child rearing (pp. 130-134). Onyeso (2023) explicates in her review that how adverse impacts of culture and religion in Islam made Zafar's life difficult, almost equivalent to a prisoner, which leads her towards submissiveness. The strict principles put all the responsibilities on her shoulders and make her a damaged personality mentally and physically. Towards the end of her review she advises women to stand against those acts or injustices of others that make one a weak and shattered personality (pp. 80-84). Mary and Priya (2023) elucidate that how, with the use of socialization, Zafar comes out from her abusive situation and leaves behind all her fears; the Toronto university, university's fellows and her psychologist provide a great aid to her, which had given her courage and empowerment to free herself from restrictions. Their study of the memoir utilizes the psychologist Lenore Walker's theoretic concept 'The Cycle of Abuse', where different phases come in the life of a victim; abuser abuses the other person and does everything to get the victim in his/her control. By looking at that abusive chart, it is obvious that Zafar is in the same situation and the abuser is continuously mistreating her. Her situation makes her aware about everything and at last she changes her destiny and leaves all scariness behind (pp. 138-145). Malinao (2023) presents Zafar's whole journey of giving her life a new direction to attain her sense of agency, while fighting against patriarchy (pp. 210-214). Furthering the interpretations of Zafar's memoir *A Good Wife*, the present paper attempts to read it closely with the help of Betty Friedan's ideas as given in her book *The Feminine Mystique*.

Theoretical Framework

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* is in favor of equal human rights for both male and female genders especially in educational and economic areas. Observing the disturbed, frustrated and trapped lives of females, Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, and after its publication, it was the first work which was translated many times in 1960s; almost three million copies of her work were sold (Godayol, 2014). Throughout her childhood, she observed that how much her mother was frustrated because she wasn't able to achieve her academic career; from that time she decided to act in a different way unlike her mother or other town women (Henderson, 2007). In her book's third chapter on females' identity crises, she herself elaborated that she wanted to take a different direction especially in the field of psychology, but her lover told her to choose between him and her career and this thing put her in difficult situation because she was ambivalent, although she wanted to be a psychologist but at the same time she didn't want to die like an old maiden, that's why she chose her love over career, but after a long time she realized that her choice was wrong (Friedan, 1977, pp. 62-63), so she interviewed various women and analyzed that she wasn't the only woman, but many girls were suffering from the same crises, so she wrote this book. Her primary motivation in authoring this work was to make women aware that they had social and personal goals that went beyond domestic responsibilities (Kayani et al., 2020).

Friedan's book, further, elaborates that the traditional criterions were forced upon women. Basketball and bicycle riding were completely prohibited for girls and they were instructed to live in a feminine way (Friedan, 1977, p. 68). Women's confinement inside the home, in the name of protection, was also there (p. 118), after the ways of male society to control women. However, various women stood against these male conspiracies and rejected their prescribed roles of finding fulfillment in "sexual passivity, acceptance of male domination, and nurturing motherhood" (p. 73). These fervent feminists blazed new paths for ladies because they needed a new identity; they wanted to prove that they were real human beings, not "Dresden figures" - a decorative piece that embodied the ideal woman of the previous century - or mindless, useless and empty mirror (pp. 73-74). Friedan also quotes some lines from Ibsen's play *A Doll House*, when the female figure (Nora), towards the close of the play, stands for her rights while her hypocrite husband is continuously reminding her about her socio-religious duties of a wife and mother, but she shows courage and leaves her house. Through her character, Friedan exerts that by watching that play, millions of women came to realize that they did not have any courage like Nora to leave their homes; they were living a life exactly like traditional Nora, who didn't have her own identity (p. 76).

One can observe that, through her book, although Friedan describes the courageous journey of some passionate feminists but the various sections of her work elaborate that women were restricted and prevented to reach their full potential, and all the ways which could enable them to stimulate their growth were also prohibited by society (p. 109), and mostly women surrendered themselves against societal barriers, for instance, her book's chapter on sex-directed education elaborates the experience of a girl, who wanted to choose her career in architecture, but her professional instructor forbidden her to do this, but she wouldn't listen and applied to two institutes, in the end she was accepted in both universities but her counselor advised her to go to some junior school and work for all the skills that were essential for a purely feminine married woman (p. 153). Another girl wanted to go to bacteriology but in the end found herself in home economics because she was feeling uneasy in a class of sixty boys and a single girl. Sex directed educators told girls that their lives revolve around the criterions of

society and they don't have to indulge their minds in those things which are made for men (pp. 147-149).

In the last chapter of her book she reinforces about women education, especially for married ones, and professional careers. She explicates that getting education is a female's right and it is the only route for her success and escape from housewife's trap (p. 344); however, a married lady has a lot of difficulties therefore a new life plan is needed for her in which she can fulfill her domestic responsibilities along with professional education, although on a part-time basis, it is the only way that save a lady to become "dilettante" (p. 358). Once education ceases to compromise and temporize with the outdated notion of female's role, it can contribute to that new image and the spark that inspires girls to build their own fate. Education is a necessity of human beings and its availability should be for both men and women; it is purely due to this fact that so many females have experienced the taste of higher education - although incomplete - that they are now able to push themselves to pursue new identities and ultimately escape the house wife trap (p. 355). This chapter also elucidates that women have the option to handle either of both things: career or family. It is the misconception of the feminine mystique which told women to choose either between commitment to career or family (pp. 361-362). The epilogue section explicates that women's financial independence is necessary; it is the only way through which a lady becomes able to live a complete life with essential life's necessities. It made a woman stronger when some "dollar value" is put in her work for social security (p. 370). It is in the light of these ideas from Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* that the next section of the paper attempts to read closely Samra Zafar's memoir *A Good Wife: Escaping the Life I Never Chose*.

Results and Discussion

Zafar's memoir begins with the depiction of her early life when she was a very courageous, brave and strong girl who knew how to tackle her problems, but at a very early age she was forced to marry an eleven year older man because of her cultural criterions. In her young adult life, she was abused by various men, but she handled every situation very calmly and bravely, but the abuse that she suffered at the hands of her husband and in-laws was intolerable as they forced her to leave behind her childhood ambitions, dreams and passions. There are certain rules in a particular culture and every individual is instructed to follow them. The same thing happens to the protagonist's parents. They have four daughters and according to Muslim culture they should marry them off as soon as possible. That's why when the proposal of a Canadian citizenship holder IT officer comes to their house for Samra's hand; they give their consent without any reluctance. After marriage Ahmed (her husband) and his parents start a worst form of abuse and impose certain restrictions on her. As this paper's title elucidates about women's agency, Zafar also subverts all the traditional conventions, fights for her rights and eventually succeeds.

Traditionally it is implemented that a woman's life must has to revolve around household responsibilities and she should avoid any plans related to intellectuality and career (Friedan, 1977, p. 158). Zafar's memoir also explicates this as hers is not a portrayal of a traditional lady, although at the start of her married life, one can observe the slight glimpse of her cultural attitude, but with the passage of time she changes herself to a different lady, who wants to do something different. In her story, Abba (her father-in-law), one day, calls her and advises her to be a good wife. In his view, a good wife prioritizes her husband's or family's needs, indulges herself in domestic responsibilities and doesn't show any interest in outside affairs like education as her potential resides only in her familial responsibilities. He, every time, gives her the example of her mother-

in-law (Amma) and tells her how good a life partner she was (Zafar, 2019, pp. 157-158). Amma is completely a traditional woman who lived her entire life according to socio-religious demands. She also dislikes Zafar's education and tells her to feel happy and lucky for choosing the option of early marriage. She believes that as Zafar was still in high school, therefore it was completely acceptable if they stopped her education as she hadn't achieved anything yet (p. 111). Another time she tells Zafar that she was a married woman now, so she must feel relieved and show happiness towards those things which Ahmed, her husband, provided her (p. 222). Ahmed also demands obedience from her in every matter. He is portrayed as a complex character as he didn't know what exactly he wanted; sometimes he supports Zafar's educational spirit, and other times he is against her education (p. 159). In spite of all these advices or orders, Zafar does not surrender and shows revolt against all those conventions which were binding her. After her father's death she knew that she was alone and she had to build her own life with extreme efforts: "No more treading water - I had to swim" (p. 207). She gets admission in the University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus and continues her education, although Amma and Abba keep creating a lot of hindrances for her, but she is firm to reach her full potential through education (p. 222). Even after her separation she does not leave her education; she applies for some part time jobs and simultaneously maintains her education with full equity, and at the end wins the Moss Scholarship award (p. 312) and "top student" award "in economics" (p. 313).

Friedan observes that those women, who receive education, reject their traditionally prescribed conventions and create their own personal individuality (Friedan, 1977, p. 355). Zafar, after getting admission in U of T, realizes that she is a victim, with the aid of her counselor, and Ahmed continuously abusing her (Zafar, 2019, p. 232), she decides to take a stand against Ahmed's actions and stops acting like an obedient wife. After she completes her university's education, she leaves her previous identity of a submissive better-half and 'bahu' (daughter-in-law). Her book's epilogue describes that it was her university which provided her a new route through which she reclaimed her personal self (p. 328). Zafar talking about her scholarship interview sessions implies that before marriage she was a very confident lady but turned into submissive and anxious one after her marriage. Now as she is with interviewers, she feels the same pre-marriage confidence and answers every query accurately and at last wins the scholarship, which is a clear indication that by leaving all odd norms behind she embraces her new personality (p. 311). Divorce is a social taboo and women's lives are centered around their husbands or children, that's why after separation, Maya's mother (one of her friends) prescribes her to marry again, as unmarried or especially divorced woman has no worth in society; for this she even presents to her the proposal of a sixty-year old man, but Zafar, unlike her first time when everyone had forced her to marry Ahmed because of the necessity of social or cultural norms (p. 298), rejects and "in place of fretting" about her marital status "[begins] to focus more seriously" on her education (p. 304). Friedan's book, similar to the vein of Maya's mother telling Zafar to remarry, describes that girls are often told by society to focus completely on finding a man, but Zafar's character, here, subverts the previous ideologies and, unlike other females of her society, transforms herself into a strong and autonomous female. One can also compare her to Dona Hilaria, who was in the same situation like Zafar; lived in Mexico in 1800s, when marital unions were considered divine, filed for divorce on March 24, 1839 and declared that her hellish marriage had become unbearable, and the only choice for her was to divorce her husband (Yechuri, 2017, pp. 70-76). Zafar and Ms. Hilaria's lives are similar in some ways as both were struck in abusive and loveless marriage and, at the end, had gone against the social conventions through legal separation.

Zafar, in the starting phase of her marriage life, was forbidden to act according to her own desires; she wasn't allowed to spend a single minute alone in her bed room; even during her pregnancy period she wanted to rest but Ahmed didn't allow her and told her to sit in the living room with his parents (Zafar, 2019, p. 89). During various sections of this memoir, one clearly observes that Ahmed, as a man, himself felt bored with his parents, but forced Zafar to sit with his parents and listen to their conversations or gossips about surrounding communities. It is all because of traditional rules, which force a married girl to act obediently and follow the demands of her husband's family. But Zafar, as a modern female, with the passage of time, shows resistance and designs her life plan where she indulges herself in intellectual pursuits (like education) and stops acting like a feminine wife and 'bahu'. This is evident from these lines: "One night he had come down to my bedroom [...] he demanded. I have a test tomorrow, I said. I tapped the textbook that was lying open before me" (p. 227). Such societal behavior, here, proves Friedan's view that men want women to live in domestic arena and admire her femininity (Friedan, 1977, p. 37). Nevertheless, Zafar demolishes all the outdated norms and exerts her own views in every decision or opinion of her spouse.

The major motives of girls are of special importance, in their lives. Zafar always desired to become a doctor. In her parents' home, sitting at the dining table along with her sisters, her father supported her ambitions, even whenever she played with her siblings, usually "took the role of physician, dispensing jellied candies to treat the various ailments" that her little sisters cooked up (Zafar, 2019, p. 11); her younger sisters also like to play that hospital game and she gathered them around the board, that her father built, to teach them everything that she had studied in class the previous week. Zafar further illustrates that education, study and usage of one's intellectuality were the integral parts of Zafar's family as every day their routine began, on the breakfast table, where her mother brought juice and eggs to eat and her papa gave her a piece of morning newspaper and told her to read something interesting and then explained it to everyone. Her siblings watched her while she struggled with the enormous newspaper pages and skimmed through several articles to find something which is interesting and easily understandable (pp. 11-12). This was the way through which her father flourished her passion of getting education and she dreamt of becoming a doctor, but as soon as she got engaged, her fiancé told her to choose an easy field because it was extremely difficult for a married girl to manage family life and medical education so Zafar decided to go to Business program and forsaken her childhood dream (p. 62). Friedan describes the same issue: a girl wanted to choose architecture, but was forbidden by her instructor who told her that such profession was not for her and instructed her to go to junior school, where she could learn everything that was necessary for a married girl (Friedan, 1977, p. 153). Although Zafar made the difficult decision of neglecting her dream but years later realized her mistake as she has pursued medical school since the fall of 2021. She successfully broke the stereotype and struggled for that occupation which, years ago, she was disallowed by her husband.

Women are hindered to reach their full potential in all areas, and patriarchal society forces them to live within confined domains; sports participation is forbidden and permissible for only males. Friedan elucidates the same by pointing out some intellectuals who believed that females fond of such activities must go back to their culturally prescribed areas and spend their lives like Ibsen's modern female character of Nora in his famous play: *A Doll's House*, and live within their femininity (Friedan, 1977, p. 116). Zafar suffered this same unbearable attitude from her society members because of her fondness towards extra-curricular activities like cricket but she didn't bend her head to such forces and continued her struggle, unlike other girls during that time, to do something different. Once, in Ruwais, she was playing cricket in the street that suddenly

a man appeared and criticized her father of allowing unfeminine things to his girls, but her father encouraged her and Zafar, by ignoring that man's comment maintains: "I had no intention of going indoors just because a few neighbors thought that young girls should not play sports" (Zafar, 2019, p. 10). Her athletic pursuits remained the essential part of her life since her middle school days, and it is evident that during those years, she persuaded her few friends to form a girls' cricket team as well, and the administration gladly provided support. Subsequently, in her eighth grade year, she came up with another concept of school newspaper, and for this she created posters, and at the end there was plenty of content but as she read everything that was gathered, she observed that every poem and story piece was by girls, and the boys focused only on athletics, it was that moment when she decided to become a cricket columnist (p. 13), which proves that Zafar chose to do something different and aimed to shape her life according to her urges. Furthermore, once, during one of her matches, one of the boys, while serving as the officiant, made a poor decision. Knowing that Zafar had pointed out his mistake he dismissed her view-point and said girls weren't allowed to play cricket, which made her angry and she hit him in the nose; she did this because such kind of rejection on the pitch incensed her, this act, although, affected her gold-star status, but the principle also criticized her a lot and called her father. However, her father, in spite of punishing her for such blunt act, smiled and said, meekness also needed to be opposed, just as fearfulness (p. 15). Although Zafar, after marriage, wasn't allowed such hobbies by her in-laws, after her divorce, she again came back to her previous life, where she was able to make her own decisions. As she loves to travel by herself or along with her daughters she goes on solo bike and hiking trips in Austrian Alps, zip lining excursions in Mexican jungles. In Cuba, she goes for scuba diving, despite the fact that she still needs to work on her swimming (p. 344). All this proves her a woman who subverted all the traditional norms and showed resilience and empowerment.

Friedan, by explicating the situation of nineteenth century females, stresses that every woman is forced to stay within the house and expected to relinquish all her intellectual passions (Friedan, 1977, p. 230). Other options are forbidden as patriarchy tries its best to subjugate women and pressurize them to live a life of dependence and servitude (p. 77). When Zafar decides to work as a shop girl, her in-laws are extremely sorrowful because of her decision of working outside; for them a girl's place is in the house and she must spend time with them and gossip about various affairs and those who work outside are equivalent to prostitutes (Zafar, 2019, p. 150). Furthermore, Amma also creates clouds in the house when Zafar enrolls in university, and advises her to sit inside and feel happy that Ahmed was taking care of her (p. 222). However, Zafar shows resistance; she gets education and also works as a shop girl in a store. This paper illustrates that male dominated society is against her intellectual, rational and beneficial activities but she doesn't stop and achieves everything that she once dreamt of. The same issue is portrayed in other works like Roy's *All the Lives We Never Lived* and Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. In *All The Lives We Never Lived* Gayatri runs away after being instructed by her husband to follow her responsibility of household and forsake her other productive ambitions. However, in the end she makes her personal identity stand out by displaying her artwork in a museum (Pranita, 2024, pp. 356-364). This same issue is a subject of study in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, where Janie was strictly ordered by Joe to fulfill her responsibilities as a woman, without taking interest in outside affairs, while she wanted to make herself an empowered figure, in the eyes of everyone and her this passion encouraged her to stand against her husband and struggle for her rights (King, 1990, pp. 683-696). Similarly Zafar's memoir also elaborates her struggle in the teeth of male patriarchy continuously pushing her back to home. She keeps resisting and at the end goes outside and changes her destiny.

The Feminine Mystique, supporting women's rights, further elucidates that financial independence is necessary for every human being (especially women) because it increases a person's worth in society and enables every being to live with life's essentials without any worry (Friedan, 1977, pp. 370-371). Initially Zafar had no money and she was living completely a dependent life. Every time she needed money, her husband urged her to go away since he had no money for her (Zafar, 2019, p. 134). She experienced emotional and financial abuse, which later led to manipulation that made her feel unworthy and insecure about herself (Asad, 2021, p. 156). She realizes about her financial abuse, when, during her way to home from day-care center, she stopped at a shop for buying a donut, but she didn't find even a single penny in her bag and eventually some stranger bought that donut for her little girl; it was that exact moment when she became aware about the fact that money was of extreme importance in one's life (Zafar, 2019, pp. 147-149). Zafar's real struggle, towards gaining a better financial status, begins when her graduate advisor introduces her to Halina von dem Hagen, who later got her a part-time job with a promise that it would become full time once she graduated in economics (pp. 317-318). Zafar rejects all the previous conceptions about women's position; builds her personal individuality and casts off her previous submissive and dependent self: "the day I walked into my own little office at RBC, wearing my brand-new Banana Republic business suit and clutching a box of business cards with my name on them, I could barely believe what my life had become" (p. 318).

Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* also clarified a previous (traditional) misconception about female's role: a girl must decide between her career and family. Zafar's book exerts that it is completely acceptable if a woman wants both career and family side by side as females manage their family and career with equal seriousness (Zafar, 2019, pp. 361-362). Zafar spends a lot of evenings, playing with her daughters and goes to Niagara Falls, Wasaga Beach with her baby girls and watches various movies on television along with a bowl of popcorn (pp. 306-307); and maintains her professional life too with complete honesty, continues her education, opens a catering business, volunteers at various organizations and works as a teaching assistant for one of her older professors (pp. 291-292). She not only establishes her place in society but also provides support to others suffering the same abusive treatment like her. Amna was one of those women who were the victims and searching for a shelter; Zafar gives her courage and aids her to stand on her feet (pp. 315-316). There is another essential fact: previously women were prohibited to work and if some girl wanted to go outside, it was only because of one reason; they wanted to help their husbands for running household expenses, but strong commitment about any activity or employment was banned for them, too (p. 143). Zafar, in her memoir, initially hadn't found an appropriate and respectable job and was working as a shop girl to help her intimate partner for household's essentials, but after divorce, she meets John Rothschild, who told her to apply for governor's post in Governing council of U of T, which took care of all the student's, academic and business affairs. Zafar couldn't believe that this chance had come her way and she was capable for that post. When she appears in the interview session, she expresses her views, confidently, accurately and courageously, which impresses everyone and she is selected (pp. 320-321). After a few weeks she appears in the council chamber for her first meeting: "I was, one of the youngest people ever elected to the governing council, surrounded by a cohort of truly impressive academics and professionals. And yet I *did* feel I belonged" (Italics in original, p. 322).

Besides, women are advised to keep quiet in public places, especially in the presence of men; Zafar also was instructed to do the same, her husband was extremely unhappy about her outside interaction and always wanted her to live obediently according to his instructions, so when she gets admission in university, he strictly forbids

her to socialize with other fellows, even classroom participation was also impermissible, in Zafar's view point, he wanted her presence like a ghost - unidentifiable and imperceptible (p. 222). Zafar avoided all the instructions of her life-partner. As her economics professor had given her highest marks, she decides to indulge herself in class activities, study groups classmates' chatting, library working and put Ahmed's instructions into dustbin (pp. 226-227). Moreover, after her divorce, she spreads her voice to the whole world by addressing various institutes like educational sectors, banks and corporations. She also takes the support of social-networking sites, conducts TED talks and forms a Yahoo! Video, which spreads all over the globe (p. 330). Friedan's book also considered it a ridiculous notion to stop females from talking outside and reinforced them to speak, without any fears, in front of the whole community as gender discrimination is totally an unacceptable notion, although women neither deserved special advantage nor animosity and injustice, just because of their sexuality (Friedan, 1977, pp. 360-361).

Abdication of traditional feminine attire is also an important part of Zafar's life as she was forced by her husband to wear hijab while going outside. On the other hand she always wanted to express herself fully and the head-covering made her little bit anxious. There is also a conception that good girls always wear hijab, while Zafar always believed that cloths didn't determine a person's character. Still she did this for her husband's sake (Zafar, 2019, pp. 63-64). Nevertheless, after finding out about her husband's true colors and getting divorce, she forsakes all the hijab things and traditional (outdated) cloths. When she is dressing up for her interview, for a job of a part-timer, in student center, at the info desk, she doesn't want to wear any South Asian dresses, which her in-laws had purchased for her. She wants a complete new style (p. 290). Furthermore, at the day of her scholarship award ceremony, she had worn a western dress, applied a little bit makeup and straightened her hairs; her looks were completely different unlike that shabby Samra who once lived with Ahmed (p. 312). Even now, after the divorce, Ahmed's taunts looked like funny jokes to her that had no importance in her life (p. 318). This is a clear indication that she has done something differently unlike a traditional female and separated all the feminine stereotypes from her life's ways. Like Friedan's example, Zafar chooses the way of Lucy Stone, an early feminist, known for her man-like attitude, and wore bloomers and "pants" (Friedan, 1977. p. 80).

Conclusion

This paper illustrates Zafar's efforts in subverting all the traditional conventions hampering women. She spends her life according to her own demands. Throughout her married life, she was expected to play the role of an obedient, submissive and hardworking housewife, and sometimes forced to act like that, which instigated her to free herself from the constraining culture associated notions. Her character is a great inspiration in this book especially those sections where she transforms herself and builds her personal individuality for all those women suffering from same circumstances and do not know what to do. Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* is noteworthy for portraying the traditional values restricting females' involvement in public sphere and is used as a lens to investigate Zafar's memoir. Zafar's extreme level bravery and courage is evident, through her actions, when she revolts against the claustrophobic norms, gets education and attains an employment for living 'a good life'. Culture, society and religion are essential parts of a person's life and a human being's life totally revolves around their ideologies. Zafar, by following a different direction, rejects all the constricting traditional criterions that present themselves to her as a female and endeavors to shape her life. One can also say that she achieves success by following Western ideologies, yet in spite of all these things, the change in her character clearly elaborates that one always has to fight

against injustices, choose a right (positive) way for achieving success and, for this, it doesn't matter if one chose one's own socio-cultural conventions or others'.

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