



RESEARCH PAPER

Racism and Marginalization of Minorities in Khan's *We Take Our Cities with Us: A Memoir*

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ABSTRACT

This research paper underscores Sorayya Khan's personal experiences of historical events in her memoir *We Take Our Cities with Us: A Memoir* (2022) showcasing the marginalization of Muslim minorities in the post-9/11 West, the subjugation of Hindus and Christians in Pakistan following the 1947 Partition, and brutalities against Bengalis during the 1971 Liberation War also known as 1971 Debacle. Muslims faced discrimination in Western countries because of their religion (Islamophobia) and appearance (brown color). Similarly, Hindu and Christian minority communities also suffered in Pakistan. Taking cue from Sidonie Smith's theoretic perspectives that experiences are integral part of autobiographies and racism as the key element of personal narratives exploring historical crises, Khan's memoir is critically analyzed featuring not only social but also political and religious structures of life. The memoir is also critically read with the help of Critical Race Theory that explores systematic racism and serves as a vantage point to raise voice against racial indoctrinations. Khan's memoir depicts the exploitation of Muslim, Hindu, Bengali and Christian minority communities at the hands of their respective powerful majority communities. Her memoir's narration of her lived experiences, during watershed historical events, adds to the body of resistance discourses against racism and marginalization of minorities.

KEYWORDS 1947 Partition, 1971 Debacle, 9/11 Catastrophe, Critical Race Theory, Memoir, Political Turmoil, Sidonie Smith, Sorayya Khan, *We Take Our Cities with Us: A Memoir*

Introduction

In the quotation: "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences" (Lorde, 1984, p. 115); Audre Lorde talks about the differences that lead to divisions among societal groups. These differences could be social, economic or religious. This notion prohibits the ability to embrace diversity and causes inequalities. There are different groups of people living in a society with different cultures and ethnicity. Subgroups are exploited on the basis of their religion and race which cause differences that are never accepted by majorities. On the economic level subgroups face inequalities in employment. They are given low wages, unfavorable and low status jobs. Mainly minorities are the laborer or working class of the society which suffers a lot. They can't even enjoy their basic rights as citizens of a country. Basic rights are snubbed by the dominant majority groups of the society. The major reason behind this difference is the prejudice against their religion, ethnicity and

culture. Accordingly, the minorities are subjugated, considered dangerous element and face criticism because of their language, dressing and cultural practices. The dominant majority groups always wish to erase and control the minority subgroups for personal gains and that's why differences erupt when different people living in the same place cannot accept differences and become rigid. The minorities encounter loss of their places, resources, right to vote and religious practices in every society. Critical Race Theory bestows a framework to analyze how dominant majority groups frame the social, economic and religious doctrines to be followed by the minority subgroups. Race is a socially constructed phenomenon, not biological one. Critical Race Theory highlights that the concept of race is not only associated with skin color but also with physical features, psychological aspects and behavioral attitudes. These differences make someone superior (dominant states, Westerners and white people) and others inferior (Blacks and Browns). On these terms, the continents like Africa and the Subcontinent were colonized and the basic rights like living, education and employment of the natives were denied. It is not only about the Blacks, but also the matter of superiority and inferiority. These aspects have been highlighted in Sorraya Khan's *We Take Our Cities with Us: A Memoir* (2022).

Minorities have to face discrimination and it is not about individual prejudices but it involves the whole social, political and religious system. As Islamophobia is not just a modern concept, it is rooted in the history of the Crusades which spread prejudice among the Europeans against the Muslims. European power structures were involved in this systematic discrimination against the Muslims. Critical Race Theory challenges the prejudices of majorities which cause inequalities and demands for basic rights of minorities. It focuses on dismantling such prejudices and promotes equitable structure as Nelson Mandela asserted for the equal rights and claimed: "As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest" (Mandela, 2005). Sorayya Khan seems to raise a similar kind of concern in her memoir.

Sidonie Smith, talking about women autobiographies and life narratives, highlights many features of personal narratives: personal experiences, issues, identity crisis, society and religious turmoil. She points out fifty-two genres of life narratives. Some of the most known among these are autobiography, autography, biography, memoir, chronicles, diary, letters and the like. These deal with the memory, identity and historical traumas experienced by the narrator. She mentions that autobiographies must contain memory, experiences, embodiment, identity and agency, to create autobiographical subjects. These elements not only create meanings but also help narratives proceed according to experiences. Personal narratives are shaped by different aspects of identity like gender and religious beliefs. So, this is not the simple exploration of individual's life but demonstrates the self-construction according to social, political, historical and cultural context. Her work *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (co-authored with Julia Watson, 2010) provides a way to analyze life's actual experiences. By considering Smith's ideology that our historical context leads Personal Narratives by exploring social, political and historical traumas, the research paper analyzes Sorayya Khan's *We Take Our Cities with Us: A Memoir*. This narration navigates the trauma and subjugation of different minority groups (Muslims as terrorists, Christians as inferiors, Hindus as the others) in different places. Khan's identity is not emotional but physical because her identity is connected with her physical journey in different places (Pakistan, Paris, USA, and Vienna). She draws from her experiences that in the West we are subjugated while in Pakistan we subjugate others. Therefore, the conclusion that the only marginalized are the minorities.

Sorayya Khan is a novelist of Pakistani origin known for her thought-provoking story telling. Her novels often explore the themes of identity, displacement and the

impacts of social and political turmoil on individuals and families. Some of her notable works are: *Noor* (2003), *Five Queen's Road* (2009), *City of Spies* (2015), and more lately her memoir: *We Take Our Cities with Us: A Memoir* (2022). Her writings manifest that individuals are deeply affected by the socio-political forces. She has an ability to engage the past and present in her works that gives a detailed description of history. Similarly, in her memoir she projects the multi-dimensional portrait of her experiences and memories. Khan confronts her personal grief by revisiting her relationship, parent's lives, and her own Pakistani-Dutch heritage in a multicultural memoir that unfolds over seven cities and three continents. Her mother Thera, was a Dutch lady (white) who married a Pakistani man (brown). And Sorayya Khan was in between. They both moved to Pakistan and stayed in Five Queen's House that was the house of Munir's father but actually it was Dina Nath's house, a Hindu who converted to Islam at the time of the 1947 Partition to save his home as well as his life. So, he shared this house with Sorayya Khan's grandfather as security. Her grandfather had been supplied with furnished living quarters and a large area of the house but he never paid rent. She spent her childhood in this home. Her best friend (a sweeper's daughter) was a Christian and she used to play with her. Once as she visited her friend's colony, which was deemed irresponsible by her grandfather, she was punished by him for her visit there. The depiction of the Christians shows their actual living styles and their roles (as the other) in a Pakistani society. Meanwhile, she mentions segregation of Muslims in Western countries as she is herself an American citizen residing in New York. Her son Shahid had been labeled a terrorist because of his religion (Muslim). This hate against the others is common. Majority leads the nation not only in Western countries but also in the East. She portrays East Pakistan's secession from West Pakistan in the context of 1971 War because the Bengalis were considered the outsiders. The research paper aims to highlight that racism is not only the matter of color but it also encompasses the discrimination of minorities.

Literature Review

Racism is a burning issue nowadays. It is socially constructed ideology which is not only faced by the Blacks but also by other suppressed groups. Critical Race Theory has significantly discussed such stereotypical doctrines that perpetuate such discrimination. This theory was founded by Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw and Richard Delgado. They worked in the mid-1970s to address the racial inequities. Critical Race Theory provides a framework to investigate dominant power and oppressive structures. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic maintain that "Critical Race Theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 1). This theory challenged traditional forms of racism. This framework is used to navigate Khan's personal brushes with racism. Thus, it sheds light on the racist injustices faced by the subgroups. It is the matter of marginalization of the inferiors by the superior (constructed ideology). Williams, Lawrence, and Davis (2019) have mentioned the concept of racism in which they have explored the inequities caused by the system on the basis of race and it has a negative impact on the health and educational system of racial and ethnic subgroups. This discrimination has bad impacts on people from mental to physical: "the primary domains of racism - structural racism, cultural racism, and individual-level discrimination - to mental and physical health outcomes" (Williams et al, 2019, p. 105). Structural racism (faced by Christians) includes policies of the system (political reforms), cultural racism is related with group's inferiority while individual level is linked with the criticism faced by a person on daily biases. In Khan's memoir, Shahid and Dina Nath become the victims to such stereotypical attitudes.

Khan's mother Thera, who had moved to Pakistan, has to go through tough times after her husband Munir's death. Her grandmother Eleonora was separated from her husband and suffered a lot. Anam, Khan, and Khalid (2023) have mentioned the experience of bereavement in the memoir. In which she has highlighted the bad experiences of Khan's mother and grandmother in their lives. The ugliness of society has been mentioned as she describes: "The protagonist undergoes a series of life stages and subsequently experiences a sense of deviance in nearly all facets of existence. She experiences a range of mental and physical hardships and conflicts" (Anam et al, 2023, p. 264). The only cause was the standards of society that have a great influence on layman's life. Anam et al have demonstrated the element of sadness, mourning, love and life that are the personal experiences of Sorayya Khan and she has mentioned these in her memoir. She highlights her mother (Thera), grandmother (Eleonora) and great grandmother (Una)'s story of bereavement. However, this research paper goes beyond family and love and studies historical, political, and religious doctrines. Khan encountered side-lining because of her religion (after 9/11) and physical appearance (brown color and dressing), and had faced consequences of partition (1947, 1971). This research paper extends Anam et al's research from personal to political and social expressions. Geographical setting plays a significant role in a literary work and it also provides information about the narrator's identity through her social status at that place. Mostly memoirs explore a connection between place and experiences of the authors, and same is the case with Sorayya Khan's memoir. Barnett (2024) remarks about Khan's memoir: "Loved reading how places live inside [...] especially liked the first chapter about raising brown boys" (Barnett, 2024). Khan has highlighted identity and belonging in her memoir. People are strongly connected with some places that even their displacement and migration cannot demolish their sense of belonging. Wherever they go, they bring their cities with them. Barnett highlights her struggles of raising a brown boy (her son Shahid) among the white people. Khan tells the story of one of her friends who was dark in color and faced criticism because of his identity and race. The reason behind this repression is black's marginalized status. This paper also highlights the similar kind of repression. Memoirs explore the personal narratives by providing insights into the complexities of self. Khan, being a mixed race individual experienced different cultures and identities. Her mother was a Dutch (Christian) and married to a Pakistani Muslim, so she faced a huge identity crisis in her life. She was commented on by Anderson (2022), who said: "The author searches for her own identity as a mixed-race citizen of the world, no boxes on forms that say Dutch/Pakistani" (Anderson, 2022). She has visited two different continents and seven cities like Lahore, Islamabad, Vienna, Ithaca, Karachi and Amsterdam. She has geographical knowledge and conveyed themes of diaspora, hybridity, racism and identity crisis to her readers. It can be observed that diverse groups face identity crisis where they are less in number and this can be seen in this memoir.

Racism, hatred against other religions, marginalization of Muslim, Hindu and Christian communities in different states has been highlighted in different assessments. There is a considerable amount of scholarship regarding the issue of minority subjugation in the world. While this article demonstrates that it is the matter of minorities not of the specific religion or ethnic group. In every state these groups will be exploited, whether they are Muslims, Christians and Hindus or belong to any other religion. Sorayya Khan's memoir highlights that every state has policies which somehow exploit minorities, whether these are Muslims or any other.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory was introduced by Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw; they remarked that racism is a systematic issue embedded in the society. It highlights

how dominant groups shape the lives and experiences of minority groups. As, Patricia Hill Collins says:

Oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas and works to elevate the ideas of dominant groups. (Collins, 2002, p. 7)

Thus, Critical Race Theory raised a voice against the prejudice faced by minorities in different regions of the world. The oppression based on gender, race, religion and class, is not separated but interconnected and causes multilayered disempowerment. Khan's memoir draws upon the issues of identity, belonging and political doctrines. Critical Race Theory helps interpret systematic discrimination that has negative impact on minorities. Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, exploitation of Muslims, Hindus and Christians has been explored in this research paper. Khan's narrative explores the racial, religious and cultural intolerance fueled by political turmoil. As Hindu-Muslim controversy further deepened after the 1947 Partition, likewise Islamophobia raised to newer heights after the event of 9/11; whereas, hatred against minority groups in Pakistan had sprung up after the 1971 Liberation War (East Pakistan against West Pakistan). These happenings gave a way to the perpetuation of the oppression against subgroups.

Sidonie Smith's works mainly focus on women and autobiographical writings. Her works explore the inter-link of personal narratives with cultural, social and political doctrines. Smith has written many works in the field of autobiographies under the themes of gender, race, identity, women and human rights. Some of her works include: *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography* (1987) and *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2001; revised 2010). The latter is co-authored with Julia Watson and provides a detailed guide to autobiographical writings enumerating as many as fifty-two genres of life narratives including biography, autobiography, memoir and many more. Smith (1987) asks to "read autobiography as a representative and supposedly truthful account of an individual life" (Smith, 1987, p. 1). In present times these narratives become creative endeavors and significantly chart history. Smith states: "To theorize memory, experience, identity, embodiment, and agency is to begin to understand the complexities of autobiographical subjectivity and its performative nature" (Smith, 2010, p. 48). Smith in *Where I'm Bound: Patterns of Slavery and Freedom in Black American Autobiography* (1974) remarks that an American writer's narratives are based on enslavement and discrimination. According to her these writings not only highlight historical turmoil but also become a tool of resistance to such injustices. As she says: "The slave narrative functioned as an early form of protest literature, whose purpose was to expose the nature of the slave system and to provide moral instruction through the vehicle of autobiography" (p. 8). The writers not only highlight their experiences but also resist against the stereotyping attitudes of the dominant majority groups. Consequently, historical representation becomes the key element to resist. This research paper aims to bring subjugated communities, highlighted by Khan's personal experiences in *We Take Our Cities with Us: A Memoir*, to central focus.

Results and Discussion

"The world is full of people who never take the time to understand, only to judge. They judge you by the color of your skin, by your accent, by your religion, by your history" (Shamsie, 2009, p. 45). Power and hatred against minorities have been deeply rooted in the societies and have a role in societal change. People are being judged and

treated on the basis of their color, race and religion. In her memoir, Sorayya Khan, through her personal history and memories, highlights the navigation of systemic discrimination and exclusion across generations. Her narrative sketches the detailed suppression of minority groups including Muslims, Christians and Hindus from the 1947 Partition to the event of 9/11. Her personal narrative shows identities and belongings of different communities affected by socio-political landscapes leading to displacement and subjugation of laymen. Changez, a fictive character in Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* rightly observes: "Perhaps you have drawn certain conclusions from my appearance, my lustrous beard" (Hamid, 2007, p. 68). Changez's experience here, illustrates that how Muslims faced prejudices because of their appearances and religion post-9/11 at the hands of white Americans. His appearance and language became a subject for exploitation. This also aligns with Khan's personal experiences of acceptance and rejection in society determined by one's identity, culture and religion. Khan expresses the same through her character of Aliya in *City of Spies*, who refuses to admit her Pakistani identity in American school because of the constructed (racist) ideologies around her. Aliya says: "she was not allowed to admit to being Pakistani. No one told me this, but I somehow knew" (Khan, 2015, p. 20). Khan's memoir depicts the struggle of minorities in systemic segregation that moved throughout the histories. Critical Race Theory provides a lens to examine intersection of race, religion, politics and societal framework by disclosing the systematic oppression. Race is socially constructed phenomenon that is controlled by the power structures including social and political aspects. Michael Omi and Howard Winant remark: "Race is a master category [...] that has profoundly shaped and continues to shape the history, polity, economic structure and culture of the United States" (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 106). It covers intersectionality, historical suppression, systematic power structure and wars to create a base for creating oppression. This oppression has been personally experienced by Khan not only in USA but also in Pakistan for minority groups. Critical Race Theory underlines the systematic injustices in societal framework and calls for transformative change. Sidonie Smith's theorization of autobiographical representation helps navigate Khan's memoir elaborating the subjugation of minorities in the society. The identities and voices of the minorities are marginalized, subdued, and excluded by dominating majority throughout the history and Khan questions this exclusion in her memoir. This prejudice is deeply rooted in the history and has been occurring for many years. Alternatively, individuals within the same state were oppressed due to their social and racial identity which has been highlighted in Khan's memoir in the form of societal and political discrimination on the basis of their religion, color and societal status. As Hindus were hated because of their religion in Pakistan, the Muslims were negatively perceived because of their brown skin color in Europe and same with Christians who were considered the other in Africa and Subcontinent because of their white color and religion. Khan has mentioned these fabricated beliefs through her personal life experiences in the memoir and Critical Race Theory provides a framework to analyze it. Consequently, it is the matter of marginalization occurring universally and impacting every minority group at every place and it has been experienced by Khan on personal and historical grounds.

Individuals are treated unfairly because of their identities, race and appearance in dominant societies. Yusuf Nebhan Aydin states that Islam is the second largest religion in the world and because of unemployment Muslims migrate to Western countries and lose their identity. He says: "Muslims, especially living in Western countries, have increasingly become the victim of a contemporary form of racism and xenophobia" (Aydin, 2017, p. 245). Similarly, Khan reflects her personal encounter (in New York) of being treated as the other because of her social background, religion and skin color. She sheds light on the constructed trait of race in the society that is not inherent. In European

countries color matters a lot and the concept of superiority and inferiority is based on it. So Khan rightly states: "But my truth of color and country is complicated" (Khan, 2022, p. 1). She has been considered the other, socially and culturally from both sides. She is captured in White/Black and Eastern/Western binaries. As she was born in Pakistan, her mother was a Dutch and she had brown color because of her Pakistani father. After marriage, she moved to United States of America (New York) and this migration complicated her identity. Due to this, she didn't fit in the rigid categories of the society. As, once she was a young girl, wearing shorts in Islamabad and her father forbade her to wear such clothes in Pakistani environment. On the contrary, she faced the sense of otherness because of her brown color in West. She was trapped between two complicated worlds, not fully accepted by either. Critical Race Theory helps highlight this kind of personal racial discrimination and uncover the power structures of society. After 9/11, Muslims of South Asia and Middle East were targeted because of their Muslim identity. Muslims who were living in USA faced intensive response from the society especially in New York because it was deeply affected by the event. Khan was living there with her family and few friends, who were Jewish and when she came to know about the towers that they had fallen and Muslims were suspected for this occurrence, she realized that what was going to happen to Muslim Brown citizens of America. She says: "She, white. Me, brown. Me, Muslim. She, Jewish. Worst of all, I imagined, me, Pakistani." (p. 3). Consequently, minority groups, especially Muslims, faced systematic violence in the West. It is beyond any incident or political event and tracing its origin to the era of the Crusades.

Sorayya Khan faced significant troubles after 9/11. Her children Kamal and Shahid were called terrorists in the school bus time and again; she also complained to the principal who didn't even respond much. A student in the playground threw a stone towards a flying airplane in the sky and called it "you Afghanistanis" (p. 10). Khan records that countries that ended with 'STAN' were misunderstood and mispronounced. Pakistan was not involved in those attacks but being a Muslim country, her citizens struggled with numerous hardships. Because of this rage, a Palestinian girl of fourth grade was harshly bullied after 9/11. Khan's son visited a podcast related to that event and on his return Khan asked him what he felt about it and he replied that the girl must have done something and in the response the boy might have treated her unfairly. Khan highlights the efforts of different institutions in constructing fixed ideologies against Muslims. She says: "I saw how deeply certain lessons settled" (p. 12), it has not only altered the thinking patterns of the people but also affected their mental well-being as Khan is too much worried about the brown color that darkens during summer. This concern reveals the societal pressure on individual about colorism, where fair color is valued over light color. In this way, these constructed ideologies are questioned by Critical Race Theory that rejects racism and works on personal identity and self-worth. Khan was highly conscious about her complexion in USA and it emphasizes the need of having a fair complexion to stay there. Margaret Hunter addresses color discrimination, emphasizing light skinned people dominate darker one in every aspect of life: "Dark skin represents savagery, irrationality, ugliness and inferiority" (Hunter, 2007, p. 238). For her the people from former colonies valued skin tone because of European colonial history, mostly Indians or Filipinos bent towards light color and associate it with high status. She also demonstrates the role of colorism in American school systems. Teachers and Principals respond to light skinned students and parents. As in the memoir, Khan complains about the incident happened to her son Shahid (students continuously called him a terrorist) but principal didn't take any action against the native students. Khan insists on color throughout the memoir and remains uneasy with hers and her children's brown color because brown category was not listed in any institute (only Black and

White). According to her, color made obvious differences, when she was going abroad for her studies her father advised her “not to come home with a Black or Jewish husband” (Khan, 2022, p. 50). She fell into deep thought by hearing this, and remembered that a brown man who himself married a white woman, was saying such stuff. These are constructed in our minds and we cannot get rid from these ideologies. As, Saeed (2007) highlights the misrepresentation of subgroups on social media to depict them worse and ‘alien others’. He says, “British Muslims are portrayed as an ‘alien other’ within the media” (Saeed, 2007, p. 443). Here subgroups’ portrayal depends upon the majority’s perception while the representation of media is based on racism.

In addition to racial subjugation in Khan’s memoir, non-dominant groups are oppressed not only for color but also on the basis of religion and ethnicity. Mubashar Hassan Jafri, Sabir Ijaz, and Muhammad Ziauddin (2022) observe that “minorities have faced discrimination in the social and political sphere in Pakistan since the country’s inception” (Jafri et al, 2022, p. 1665). Across every society, people belonging to different religious groups live together. In her memoir, Khan has mentioned the suppression of minor groups because of their religion and their ethnicity that is considered inferior (culture, language, tradition and history). This is not the modern idea but evolved from the medieval time period when the Crusades were waged against the Muslims. During 11th to 13th centuries, Christians targeted the holy lands of Jews and Muslims and tried to demolish them. Basically, the Crusades were carried to marginalize the non-Christian, who had different ethnic, religious and cultural outlook. Anti-Semitism is also the product of such constructed ideology against other religious groups. Minority groups faced different issues like forced marriages, religious conversions, marginal participation in elections and government affairs. Accordingly, these events underscore a history of intolerance that led systematic discrimination. Khan’s memoir pens her experiences since her childhood and onwards to old age. She records the south Asian history (Subcontinent) around the 1947 Partition, the 1971 Debacle and 2001 catastrophe of 9/11. Each event affected different minority communities of different religions, living in different areas.

The 1947 Partition of the Subcontinent resulted in the form of two independent states, India and Pakistan, having Hindu and Muslim majority respectively. In Pakistan Hindus and Christians were in minority and faced violence and discrimination. Khan’s mother was a Dutch, who moved to Pakistan (Lahore) in 1958, with her husband Munir. She lived in 5 Queens Road that was the house of her grandfather and it was the new beginning of her life in Pakistan. The house had been built by the British and then sold to Dina Nath who was a Hindu citizen of Lahore. Due to violence Dina Nath converted to Islam and searched for a Muslim renter to share the other side of his house. As Dina Nath belonged to Hindu religion but in order to stay in Pakistan and save himself from the Muslim’s aggression he changed his religion. Khan explains his situation by saying that he was “hoping that the presence of a Muslim might protect him from raging violence against Hindus who had dared remain in Pakistan” (Khan, 2022, p. 22). Then he rented his house to Khan’s grandfather and their family moved in the house and Khan spent her childhood there with her siblings. But the feud remained among the two neighbors and it was because of the ethnic differences. Thera (Khan’s mother) compared this controversy with Catholic/Protestants and Black/White, the differences common in her own country. Years later in a literary festival Khan encountered the grandson of Dina Nath and she was happy to meet him after decades. He disclosed the secret: “your grandfather was not my grandfather’s tenant” (p. 99). After that Khan investigated about her grandfather and came to know about the reality that he had never paid a single rupee as rent of the house. He stayed there without paying rent by marginalizing the legitimate owner based on his religion and values: “my [Khan’s] grandfather never paid rent, as a judge he’d influenced

unrelated litigation that involved Dina Nath family" (p. 100). This illustrates the deep religious division after partition, in which a Hindu who was converted into Muslim, even then he faced legal dispossession. Sorayya Khan in her novel *Five Queen's Road* mentions that Dina Nath changed his name to D. L. Ahmed and was the actual owner of the house. This house represents the whole India as "This house, thus partitioned is like portioned into India and Pakistan" (Chakrabarty, 2017, p. 89). For Chakrabarty this house is a character which was exploited because of Muslim-Hindu feud. In Khan's life, *5 Queen's Road* is a significant place because she spent her childhood and her mother lived there with her in-laws. Khan has, through the story of Dina Nath, showcased Muslims' (majority) suppressive attitude towards Hindus (minority).

The 1947 Partition has badly affected the Hindu community in Muslim majority Pakistan. Christians are the second minority group after Hindus who have faced suppression because of their religion in the Muslim majority area. They lose their homes, properties and are threatened. As for as their employment is concerned as subgroups they are forced to take the jobs of sweepers, garbage collectors, laborers and maids that are low-status and low paying. Khan's memoir presents the condition of Christian sweepers in Pakistan through a narrative segment about her childhood friend who was daughter of a sweeper. She does not know about her name because of the language barrier but she used to play with her daily. Once as a child she visited the colony and said, "The colony was alive with intense smells and textures" (Khan, 2022, p. 28). She was terrified by the condition of children and the whole colony. As she ran back, her grandfather was waiting for her and asked: "Why did you go? What were you doing? What did you touch? Don't you know better?" (p. 29). He was worried about her granddaughter because she had visited the ugly houses of few people who belonged to lower caste. This event in Khan's life brought her face to face with the fact that people were judged on the basis of their caste and perceived inferior, untouchable and impure. Her grandfather's attitude stands for religious and caste prejudice against minorities. Sorayya Khan was amazed on her grandfather's reaction when he found about her visit to sweeper's colony. Khan says that the "colony was a dangerous place in which anything could have happened to [her], but apparently not to her [friend]" (p. 29). Khan explores the religious, social and ethnic prejudices in which minorities are denied from their basic rights. Same could be observed in case of Helen and Lily, in Nadeem Aslam's novel *The Golden Legend*, who being Christian face subjugation because of their religion in Muslim majority Pakistan: "And Helen - who was now nineteen years old - too would have grown up to be an uneducated servant in some Muslim household (Aslam, 2017, p. 10).

In 1971, Bangladesh appeared on the map of the world, by the efforts of Bengalis. The 1971 Liberation War was the result of ethnic differences and prejudices of the West Pakistanis against Bengalis. Khan's memoir records displacement as the main theme, caused by political, cultural and economic inequalities. Both, the Eastern and Western Pakistanis shared Islamic identities but because of political differences they were alienated. Khan underscores the lost landmass of Pakistan when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the new leader of Pakistan. Her meeting with a journalist reveals to her the brutal reality of the 1971 Partition. The Journalist says:

Bloated bodies filled the waterways, bobbing in the rivers as if they still had some place to go. People were tied to trees for execution. Bridges were blown up, civilians were mown down. Genitalia were chopped off. Bengali women brought to the barracks for soldiers to have their way with them. Taken aback by the casual suggestion of rape. (Khan, 2022, p. 76)

It dawns upon Khan that the horrors of the 1971 Liberation War were actually the result of hatred and prejudice of the Western Pakistanis against the Bengalis. She shows her desperation over the dehumanization of minorities; considered others and exploited. The Bengalis stood for their rights and got away from the system that treated them as the other.

Conclusion

Sorayya Khan's memoir masterfully weaves her personal experiences with political events by enlightening the suppression of minorities. On the basis of their race, ethnicity and religion these minority groups faced systematic prejudices in the society. Critical Race Theory unveiled political and societal injustices that not only shaped the minor groups but also embedded in the society. Telling about her stay in USA, actually she is highlighting the struggle of people with dark skin. Here, Khan's consciousness about her color exposes the global and local standards about colorism that cause discrimination. Khan not only refers to West's racist ideology but also sheds light on the marginalization of Hindu and Christian minorities in Pakistan. Khan's memoir portrays the challenges faced by minorities while existing in dominating majority groups. The memoir examines the manifestations of discrimination, found in the history of Pakistan, through the events like the 1947 Partition, the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh and most importantly 2001 catastrophe of 9/11 that caused marginalization of Muslims in the West. Through the depiction of the 1947 Partition, she exposes the religious and political agendas which caused intensive distress for non-Muslims. The 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh reveals the interplay of ethnic and political policies that led to severe brutality and secession of East Pakistan from West Pakistan. The event of 9/11 catastrophe underscores the globally constructed biases against color, religion and ethnicity by pointing out misconceptions and prejudices of the Americans against Muslims. Khan's memoir about her lived experiences during watershed historical events adds to the body of resistance discourses against racism and marginalization of minorities.

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