

Deconstructing Gender Stereotypes in Children Literature “Chotti Si Munni”: An Application of Feminist Theory

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Abstract:

Objectives: The aim of the research is to explore the significance of Nursery Rhymes within the lives of children and the way they make contribution to the formation of personal identity of children especially in female. The research claims that children's literatures can nurture and unconsciously but in systematic manner, develop the idea of feminism in kids through kid's literature. It is noteworthy that all nursery rhymes have a great impact on the lives of children by portraying characters in the nursery rhyme. The study is an attempt to make connection among children psychology and gender roles in literature. The socio-psychological issues like gender role, gender discrimination, class system is important in it.

Methods: The critique adopted the exploratory research framework. The data collected and analyzed for this study was qualitative in its nature and scope. “Chotti si Munni” (A small girl), a Pakistani Nursery Rhyme was taken as sample of study by applying typical and critical case sampling strategy on Pakistani Kid's literature.

Results: Findings of the study revealed that the portrayal of the little girl in "Chotti si munni" reflects the gendered expectations and limitations, which are foisted upon young girls in many traditional societies same as Nursery rhyme can be realized as a mirror image of the changing attitudes about gender roles and education in Pakistan.

Conclusion: The summative discussions in the light of the findings obtained in this study indicate that challenging gender role and cultural norms in Pakistani society, promoting feminism and equality through kid's literature.

Keywords: Children literature; Child psychology; Patriarchal emancipation; Gender discrimination

Introduction:

Literature is a reflection of society and a method of social expression with the help of phrases. Sahir Ludhianvi a famous Pakistani poet postulated that through language, what this world has given to him, he is returning all with the assist of phrases. He unearths this definition properly enough to define what literature is thinking about the deconstructionist definition of in any way is in published shape is literature gives us a much broader scope to refer feminism which is not always simplest a literary however also social and intellectual motion. Literature deals with nearly all of the sports within the universe so feminism is not always an exception. In other words, feminism targets can be exceptionally executed only through literature (Sarkar, 2014).

Feminism as a social phenomenon is associated with subversion of longstanding patriarchal domination and accessible in the boundaries of family existence. Feminism as an intellectual movement adjustments patriarchal mode of expression in the form of speech and writing and asserts the emergence of a new magnificence of writers as intellectual women struggling for their rights. Furthermore, feminism as a political movement fight for the rights of girls in all human efforts to run this globally including propriety to vote, right to schooling, right to choose profession and right to decision making. At the very simple ground of feminism, the equality of women to men in all walks of theoretical and realistic existence.

Feminism in Pakistan as a part of India subcontinent, though encouraged by the Western feminism within the 19th century beneath the colonial rule, has special hue and color. Pakistan is rich kaleidoscope of various religions, ideals, races, cultures languages, ethnicities and tribes. Each aspect of society stated above has direct and indirect connections with the women's role and status in the society. In another words the country does not have one "feminism" but many "feminisms". In India, it started inside the nineteenth century whilst the colonialists spoke against the social evils of Sati and it evolved via the emancipation of women possibly from all evil practices against women to unite India for countrywide movement (Sarkar, 2014). Such diverse issues are deliberately portrayed in media to create specific public viewpoint.

Cartoons directly or indirectly affect children's attitude and behavior as well. According to Hajeri

(2020), attitudinal issues influence students' learning and achievements inside and outside school. Nursery rhymes and cartoons can be justifiably regarded as the most prominent factor of children's infotainment. They not only obtain entertainment from the rhymes and cartoons, rather their physical, mental and emotional growth and development are indebted to such media channels. The ideas and aspects, which are discussed in children literature, hold strong influence upon the later development and growth of children.

Rationale of the Study:

Chotti si Munni (a small girl) is a renowned nursery rhyme of Urdu syllabus of Pakistani primary education system. Many literary theories have applied to nursery rhymes to investigate the subject matter and textual content but there has been inadequate application of feminism principle to this rhyme. This gap inside the literary paintings offers an opportunity to find out the simple themes and meanings of the story, which are gift within the form of rhyme through this theoretical perspective. With the sense of feminism concept, researchers can pick out the factors of feminism in historical context preserving in mind the tradition of Pakistan (Zaidi & Jabeen, 2021). The current study is an attempt to investigate the language of the nursery rhyme with specific perspective to feminism. It further highlights the social norms and gender related paradigms with perspectives to children literature, which is enormously repellent with nursery rhymes, poems, cartoons and movies.

Research Questions:

- How can the use of feminist idea deconstruct the gender stereotypes found in "Chotti Si Munni" and promote gender equality in Pakistani kid's literature?
- How do implications of deconstructing gender stereotypes in "Chotti Si Munni" consider feminist literary criticism in Pakistan?
- How do the themes and meanings of nursery rhyme "*Chotti si Munni*" (a small girl) change when viewed through the lens of feminist theory?

Significance of the Study:

The motive of this research is to look at the nursery rhyme "*Chotti si Munni*" by applying feminist theory to analyze the character of *Munni* in

order to show the important factors of feminism that shape the textual content. Munni is an Urdu word, which symbolizes a little girl in literal sense.

The study focused upon the language used in the nursery rhyme and their literal and pragmatic meaning. The findings of the study highlight the traditional and cultural perspectives of the society where females are treated as subordinates to women; however, they are given respect, affection and due care. Lastly, this study provides an extraordinary outlook on "Chotti si Munni" and contributes to a greater knowledge of the methods wherein literature can shape our understanding of self and surroundings.

Literature Review:

Description of the theory:

The literature evaluation explores the historic oppression and subjugation of women by their male counterparts, and the feminist actions that emerged in Europe and Africa to combat for women's rights and trade negative societal perceptions of women. Feminist movement underwent four main stages named as first wave feminism, second wave feminism, third wave feminism, and fourth wave feminism. African women confronted particularly dire situations, as they were problem to both repression and discrimination in actual lifestyles and in literature. Early African writers in their literary work represent girls as passive and naive character, but feminist writers consisting of Mariama Ba and Sefi Atta rejected this portrayal and used their writing to improve girl's conditions and inspire them to combat in opposition to persecution. This review makes a specialty of Ba's "so long a Letter" and Atta's "the entirety appropriate will Come" to research how these writers deal with the problem of feminism and patriarchy in their literary works. The study conducted to examine how the two African writers successfully created strong and independent female characters that could challenge the biased practices of African cultures. The focus is on the portrayal of girls in their novels (Lansari & Keltoum, 2018).

As explained by Letherby (2003), stance of activist taken by feminist psychology and dealt the issues present in the work for researchers. The study was not only a stance for a researcher who create it but also a challenge for the production of knowledge. In current situation masculinity has been secure the position of sagacity while femininity has been transferred towards emotional

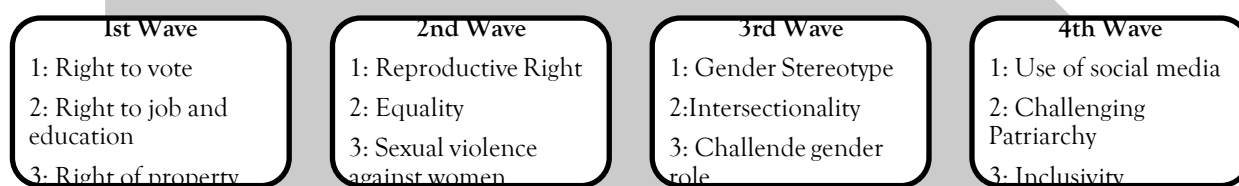
sphere. Not like a quantitative technique this is verified over and done with continuous reiteration, a feminist technique is aware about transferring electricity bases constantly redefining its own boundaries. As described by Weir (2008), feminism assaults affecting goals; it is not a static pressure but continuously inspiring patriarchy, realizing that the modifications requested for (by feminists) do now not essentially denote that patriarchal oppression will vanish humbly.

Feminists have since long been elevating concerns about the discrimination and oppression faced by women in various corners of life. The patriarchal shape of society has led to the suppression of women's voices and the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and expectancies. This has led to unequal rights to get entry to opportunities and assets for women, as well as confined autonomy and enterprise over their lives. Feminist theory offers a framework for knowledge the approaches in which gender is built and how it shapes our stories and interactions in society via difficult conventional gender norms and subsequently advocating for gender equality, feminists' purpose to create an extra just and equitable society that values the contributions and perspectives of all individuals, irrespective of gender. The look at of nursery rhymes via a feminist lens is just one example of ways feminist theory may be implemented to numerous components of lifestyles to sell gender equality and venture conventional gender roles. (Whitson, 2004).

Quite similarly, Chow (2013) divulges that visibility may be enticed. This will be determined by arguments done on neoliberal for improvement of choice and participation. Nevertheless, contribution itself is not a single answer, as displayed by women while applying Bechdel test that tries to undertake the manner women who are depicted as object to display. Neoliberal feminism is a fulfillment in this respect as it gives believes to woman that they are taking part in liberation, all the while colluding with patriarchy of their personal accord (Walter, 2010). It is further based upon the idea that everyone has a preference to make and people's selections are free from social and political entanglements.

Men and women together are part for the formation of a society. However, it is the financial and cultural requirement of the particular society, which outlines the form of their liaison. In many societies, this relationship between the opposed

genders is on the previous level and is given preference (Kanwal, 2015).



Powers (2001) emphasized on the importance of discourse analysis as a feminist methodology that can be utilized to examine power dynamics and gender relations in society as well as gender discrimination. By analyzing language usage and the ways in which discourse forms our understanding of gender roles and prospects, discourse analysis can help to disclose secret biases and inequalities. Burman (2003) also focused upon the value of analysis a discourse in negotiations about feminism as a gender, mentioning that it can expose the ways in which gender is fabricated and preserved through language practice. Jonas (2012) informed about Nigerian creator Sefi Atta in her famous novel 'Everything nicely will come' gives the reader a unique demonstration of the way women defies the challenges of the patriarchal group and the range in the metropolis. She also highlights the variations among generation, faith, way of life, the belief of a woman from young people to maturity, and the effect of wars and colonialism. Those factors make Sefi's paintings as one of the prominent novels in the African literature (ibid).

In his study, Philip Rushworth (2011) stated that Mariama Ba thru her novel proposes to the reader a sensitive representation of Senegalese girl's struggle at the sunrise of independence. Further, the factors that made it a traditional and precise are no longer excellent its courageous and honest account of the venture of polygamy for girls but its subtly elucidated message calling for women's self-reliance. Ba famous through Ramatoulaye the inner electricity demanded of a girl however moreover, poignantly, the demanding situations and fears that she faces. The lousy lot broader message that any

reader will remove is the texture of preference and disappointment, clarity and confusion, of those caught within the perplexing social trade of twentieth-century Africa.

Description of the Nursery rhyme:

The nursery rhyme "Chotti si Munni" (a small girl) no longer only depicts the daily existence recurring of a faculty female; however, it also emphasizes the significance of education and mastering. The fact that the little girl is going to school in her yellow get dressed and pink footwear with a scarf indicates that she takes pride in her look and is happy to analyze. In addition, the rhyme also highlights the role of mother and father, and family in supporting their children's training. The little female within the rhyme is able to pass to high school and purchase sugar from the bazaar because her parents have furnished her with the resources and guide she desires and beneficial for her to remove patriarch and focus on equality of male and woman. Furthermore, "Chotti is Munni" additionally highlights the vibrant and colorful lifestyle of Pakistan and India. The colorful get dressed and add-ons worn by means of the little woman are an image of the rich cultural background of the vicinity, and the bazaar in which she buys sugar is probably bustling with interest and filled with vibrant colorations and sounds. Common, the nursery rhyme "Chotti si Munni" is a simple poetical narrative usually describing girl's daily routine. Moreover, it is a celebration of education, family, culture, and happiness; and it has been passed down via generations as a liked formative year's memory.

Research Methodology:

Thesis Statement:

The study attempts to analyze the character of Munni by apply the lens of feminism theory and discovering the elements of feminism and gender discrimination in a nursery rhyme known as Chotti si Munni.

Research Design:

Researchers used qualitative and exploratory design to benefit a deeper expertise of character of a small girl elaborately mentioned in the rhyme. The design adopted for this study was exploratory. Such frameworks are adopted for qualitative researches. The data was collected and analyzed qualitatively. The population parameter consisted upon the nursery rhymes related to kids literature, whereas one poem was taken as the sample of the study. Whole poem was taken as sample by using purposive random sampling technique. To analyze the data researchers used thematic evaluation those encompass figuring out patterns and difficulty subjects within the statistics. With the aid of using feminism principle, this observes centered to provide a complete analysis of the feminist factors and behaviors that contribute to his downfall. Using thematic evaluation and purposive sampling will assist to select out patterns and problem subjects within the records, at the identical time as supplying a complete assessment of the man or woman of Munni through a Feminist perspectives.

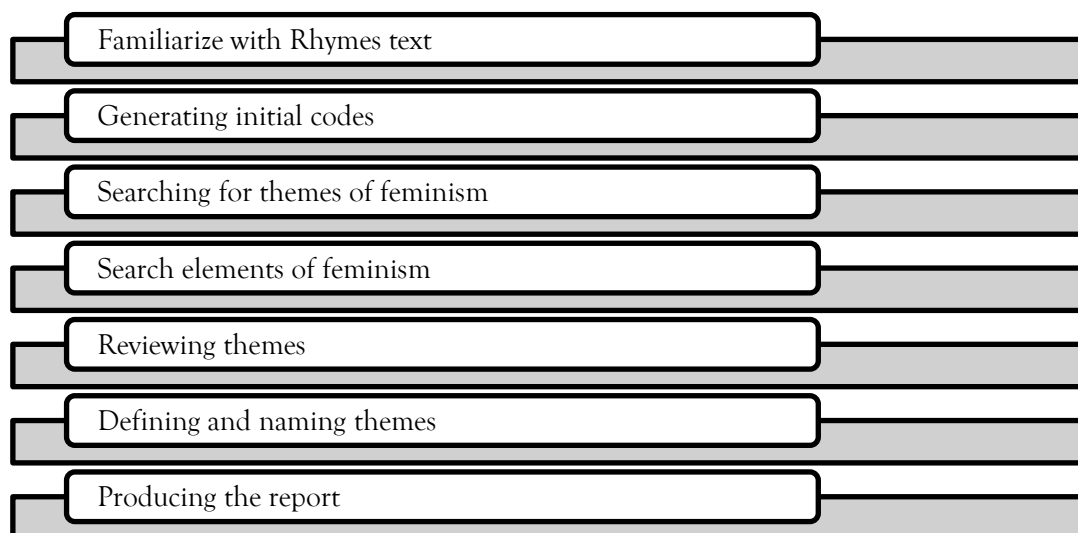
Not like a narrative analysis where a linear pattern is hooked upon thematic evaluation emphasis on connecting a parallel statistics together to construct on communal styles. Information is assembled through commonly happening patterns; evaluation is constructed totally on the base of reoccurrence of those styles. Thematic evaluation were defined as 'a poorly demarcated, hardly ever mentioned, yet broadly-used qualitative analytic technique within psychology' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 2). Despite this ambiguity, Braun and Clarke described the stages of ways this evaluation must arise:

- Familiarize with rhyme's text
- Generating initial codes
- Searching the theme of feminism
- Search elements of feminism
- Reviewing themes.
- Defining and naming themes
- Producing the report

These stages provide systematic evaluation criteria of content analysis most specifically of poetic text.

Framework of Analysis:

The framework adopted for content analysis focused upon the taxonomy given by Braun and Clarke (2006). The reason to select this taxonomy lies in its simplicity of thoughts and complexity in systematic content analytics.



Finding and Discussion:

Feminist theory also highlights the power dynamics that present between men and women in a society. In the case of "Chotti si munni," the nursery rhyme reinforces the idea that women are responsible for household chores such as buying sugar, while men are not depicted as having any responsibilities in the home. The power dynamic is further reinforced by the fact that the little girl is going to school, which suggests that education is a privilege that is not afforded to all girls. This is particularly relevant in cultures where girls are traditionally expected to prioritize household duties over education. Moreover, the emphasis on the little girl's appearance reinforces the idea that women's value is often tied to their physical appearance, rather than their intellect or abilities. This can have negative implications for young girls who may feel pressure to conform to societal beauty standards rather than pursuing their own goals and aspirations. However, it is significant to note that feminist theory also highlights the potential for change and progress towards gender equality. By challenging traditional gender roles and expectations, feminist theory encourages individuals and societies to question and rethink gender norms, and to work towards creating a more equitable and just society.

Expanding on this idea, the portrayal of the little girl in "Chotti si munni" reflects the gendered expectations and limitations that are placed on young girls in many traditional societies. The emphasis on her appearance and the expectation that she will perform household chores reinforces the idea that girls are valued primarily for their domestic abilities, rather than their intellectual or creative potential. Further analysis showed that, the fact that the girl is depicted as going to school while still being responsible for household chores highlights the challenges faced by young girls who are expected to balance their education with traditional gender roles. This can have negative implications for their academic performance and future opportunities, as they may not have the same resources or support as their male peers. It is also important to note that the nursery rhyme also celebrates the little girl's agency and autonomy in making decisions about her daily routine. By choosing to go to school and buy sugar from the bazaar, she is asserting her independence and challenging traditional gender roles.

In short and simple, the nursery rhyme can be realized as a mirror image of the changing attitudes about gender roles and education in many societies. By portraying a young girl who is proud of her appearance and enthusiastic about learning, "Chotti si munni" challenges traditional gender norms and encourages young girls to pursue their dreams and aspirations. At the end, it is related that "Chotti si munni" provides a complex portrayal of gender roles and expectations in traditional societies. While it may reinforce some traditional gender norms, it also celebrates the agency and autonomy of young girls and highlights the potential for change and progress towards gender equality. Furthermore, the nursery rhyme does not provide any insight into the girl's aspirations or desires beyond her daily routine. This lack of agency and autonomy is a common theme in traditional gender roles, where women are often expected to conform to societal expectations rather than pursuing their own goals and dreams. Expanding on this idea in context to feminism it is important to acknowledge that "Chotti si munni" is a product of its cultural context and should be understood within the context of its time and place. While it may reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations, it is possible that the nursery rhyme was created with the intention of encouraging young girls to pursue education and take pride in their appearance.

It is also necessary to recognize that feminist theory is not a monolithic perspective, and that there are different interpretations and approaches within feminist thought. Some feminists may argue that "Chotti si munni" reinforces traditional gender roles and limitations, while others may argue that it challenges these norms by depicting a young girl who is enthusiastic about learning and proud of her appearance. It is also important to consider the potential positive messages that "Chotti si munni" may convey, such as the importance of education and the celebration of cultural heritage. By engaging with the nursery rhyme in a nuanced and critical way, we can better understand the complex ways in which gender roles and expectations are shaped by cultural and societal norms.

Elaborating the idea and analyzing "Chotti si munni" through feminist theory can provide valuable insights into the gender roles and expectations present in the society and culture it represents. By highlighting the ways in which gender is a socially constructed concept, feminist

theory can help us understand the cultural and societal norms that shape our understanding of gender roles and expectations. However, it is important to recognize that cultural context plays a significant role in shaping gender roles and expectations. What may be considered traditional gender roles in one culture may not be the same in another. Therefore, it is important to consider the cultural context in which "Chotti si munni" was created and the potential positive messages it may convey. For example, the nursery rhyme may be seen as celebrating the importance of education and encouraging young girls to take pride in their appearance. The poem is also a reflection of the changing attitudes towards gender roles and expectations in many societies, particularly in regards to education and women's empowerment. Therefore, it is important to approach the analysis of "Chotti si munni" through a nuanced and critical lens that takes into account both the potential negative and positive messages conveyed by the nursery rhyme. By doing so, we can gain a better understanding of the complex ways in which gender roles and expectations are shaped by cultural and societal norms, and work towards creating a more equitable and just society for all.

Conclusion:

This nursery rhyme with the help of feminist theory gives better understanding of power dynamics between male and female in Pakistani society by dismantling the gender roles, expectation of society and culture as well as social and cultural norms. In this rhyme, poet challenges these traditionally set feministic norms, encourage feminism to promote equality in society with reference to education and job in other relevant areas. Poem "Chotti si Munni" inspires women to create more inclusive and empowering society for young girls. It delivers both positive and negative effect on society as highlighted in the findings of current study along with other previously conducted researches (Letherby, 2003; Kanwal, 2015). It clears the concept of gender role and cultural norms regarding women status in Pakistani society.

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