



THE SATIRE OF PATRIARCHY AND THE MARRIAGE SYSTEM FOUND IN HOW IT HAPPENED: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF WALBY'S THEORY OF PATRIARCHY

1 Sadia Batool

M.Phil Englis Literature Scholar, Riphah International University Faisalabad

sadiabatool718@gmail.com

2 Sanniya Batool

Senior Lecturer Riphah International University Faisalabad

sanniya.batool@riphahfsd.edu.pk

3 Awais Ahmed

English Lecturer, The University of Faisalabad

awaisahmed.eng@tuf.edu.pk

4 Maha Naqvi

syeda.maha.naqvi1@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

How It Happened" is analysed from the feminist point of view of Sylvia. Walby's patriarchal theory. Patriarchy and the novel are satirically depicted. traditional marriage system in Pakistani society. With humours and irony and family In conflicts and social practices where women's freedom is curtailed, Shazaf Fatima Haider criticises them. and identity. The work examines the judgments that are made in the novel about women. Rather than intelligence, marriageability, beauty, obedience and family honours were considered. personal choice. Women characters are under pressure to adhere to traditional norms, independent thinking and emotional freedom are discouraged. The article investigates the six structures of patriarchy as outlined by Sylvia Walby, to explore how family is a key site of patriarchy. In society, males are dominant through culture, marriage, sexuality and social institutions. Although the character of Dadi is a continuation of patriarchy, women themselves. The novel also points to the conflict between the old and the new generation. Discuss traditional and modern values, through characters such as Zeba who is challenging social expectations. and seeks independence. Through which device(s) does satire become an effective literary technique? the novelist reveals hypocrisy, discriminating against gender, and emotional load imposed On women in a patriarchy. It is not just a comic family story, the article concludes: Also a powerful feminist attack on patriarchal culture and traditional marriage practices. South Asia. Ultimately the novel suggests that the social change is inevitable, and that it is possible to bring about social change: The oppression of women's freedom and individuality will never be put down for a long time.

Keywords

The concepts of patriarchy, feminism, satire, marriage system, gender inequality and Sylvia Walby are used in this article.

Introduction

Arranged marriage is a part of society and its formalization is called Society's Freedom, Women's Freedom, Arranged Marriage, Family Pressure. „How It Happened Introduction How It Happened is a satirical take on patriarchy by Shazaf Fatima Haider And the traditional marriage system of Pakistani society. The novel mainly focuses on family pressure, arranged marriage, gender expectations, control of elders over, women's choices (Opakunle, 2026).

The writer uses humour and irony to comment on the judge of women by their appearance. appearance, behaviour, caste, marriageability, not their intelligence or individuality.

How It Happened (2012) by Shazaf Fatima Haider. The story is narrated by, youngest of all the family members, a 15-year old Saleha. This story revolves around a Shia "Bandian" family progeny of the village of Bhakuraj in the Indian sub-continent who now lives in Karachi, Pakistan. For one thing, Shazaf spoke many a time tongue in cheek for The Pakistan culture and traditions. It is an observation that it is the values, traditions, ideologies that are noticeable.

Views of the world and lives continue to change over time (as they do now) Embarked on ideas and principles.

The story illustrates that marriage is considered the ultimate achievement for women and men are pursued with the aim of gaining the woman. More freedom and authority given. Women must obey family Follows traditions and gives up desires. In addition, the novel reveals the hypocrisy of patriarchal society where modern education is accepted, but independent thinking in women is discouraged. The author deems the treatment of these people to be unjust by employing satire. Patriarchy based oppression and the social barriers that come from the patriarchy-based marriage system (Sanjaya & Fitriana, 2026).

The youngsters of the family have their style of living. The student Zeba is studying with is a one-time college dropout. Has conflicting opinions on everything in the literature, A character from the novel is represented as her. sharp-minded and disobedient girl of the family. Zeba is considered the rebel of the family—her because she has her principles about how she wants to live her life. She is never apt to be complacent. To comply with the embedded customs, principles and traditions laid by the Bhakurajian family. At the same time, she appears to be interested in listening to the folks told by Dadi but she has no . . . convictions to spend her own life as old-fashioned as Dadi`s. A social drive takes the place of the school drive (Collins, 2025). To come up with ideas to buy her own life as old fashioned as Dadi`s. She`s motivated by the social .Norms of modern-day and by the conflicting differences between both traditions and perspectives along her educational journey.

In the novel changing roles of women have been portrayed greatly. Saima (Haroon`s Wife”)signifies women`s capability to work in the man`s world. Fattiphups is playing the role of a liberal woman, who`s is leading a life in accord with her mindset.

As change is permanent in human beings, it is observed that human beings need to change themselves.From the given arguments and analysis, it is concluded that human beings require self-change. In this mobile culture, a culture change is inevitable and Shazaf has proved that.

With her wit. Everyone has to take the fact that as Dadi had to agree with new trends, she had to too. In short, sooner or later, any culture must decay and a new culture must come into being in accord with social,Political and economic changes that take place with the time. This novel proves this fact .

By showing three generations among the same family. Each of the two parameters takes the gap of the other. Each of the two parameters receives the gap of the other. It`s back after all, it comes like old traditions of the Bakhuraj family! It was ended because Zeba, a Shia girl was married to a Sunni boy.

So How It Happened can be taken as comic satire on the Pakistani society Through the novel can be read as a critique of male dominated social structures that limit women`s freedom in the family and marriage, as outlined by feminist theory of Sylvia Walby.

Institutions.

A social structure where men outrank women and women are expected to be ‘subservient’. Stay submissive & reliant. For some cultures, marriage is one of the most powerful means of which patriarchy oppresses women. How It Happened by Shazaf Fatima Haider is an incisive critique on patriarchal culture and traditional marriage practices in Pakistani society. The novel is a hilarious disclosure of family secrets.

Social pressure, gender inequality and pressures. A great look through Sylvia`s eyes.

The novel uncovers how women are controlled by family in Walby`s patriarchy theory. Marriage norms, marriage expectations, and social values. This article explores how How It

Happened condemns patriarchy and the marriage system, and points to the difficulties. Many women, identifying and freeing themselves.

The theory of Patriarchy was developed by Sylvia Walby.

Sylvia Walby is one of the UK's most influential feminist sociologists. She has authored many articles on gender inequality, patriarchy, globalisation and violence against women. Her theory of patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices is an essential contribution to modern feminist sociology.

According to Walby's book Theorizing Patriarchy (1990), patriarchy should be not be seen as just individual men dominating individual women, but as a set of intricate social structures that are embedded.

She discovered six buildings:

Women's lives are determined by patriarchy, both in public and private life. This makes her work highly exam-relevant as it demonstrates how the family connect...It is multidimensional, so it goes beyond older feminist accounts and thus also to wider society. Patriarchy is, according to Sylvia Walby,

"a system of social structures and practices in..."

Men who dominate, oppress and exploit women and whose era is this? According to Walby, Patriarchy is manifest in various systems and structures like family, culture, paid Social, social institutions, work. Family and marriage are in big institutions which sustain the male supremacy.

Walby argues:

"Patriarchy is not made up of one single factor but a set of inter connected social Structures."

The notion is evident in How It Happened, where women are beauty is constantly assessed by marriage standards, beauty and obedience. The patriarchy is seen as working in various social institutions, like Walby argues, 's' the practice of religion is restricted in these institutions by the term limits. The terms limit practice of religion in these institutions. To widen the freedom for women and uphold male authority. Walby interprets that as a result of patriarchy. There are public and private aspects to it. Women are to obey in families. Fathers, brothers and husbands. Marriage is used as a tool by which women's Choices are controlled.

Six structures of walby's Theory

1. Household Production

Women are expected to do the domestic chores, which are not paid jobs, for example, cooking, cleaning, etc. Men benefit from their work, and and child care. Patriarchal society considers the traditional roles of women were associated with domestic duties.

2. Paid Work

Women are typically discriminated against in the workforce, in wages, and in the opportunities for employment. Opportunities than men. Women's economic participation and empowerment is restricted by patriarchal systems.

3. The Patriarchal State

The state, law and social institutions tend to promote male authority and traditional gender roles. Women's rights and freedoms can abate because of cultural or

Legal systems.

4. Male Violence

Male violence as a key instrument of patriarchy is a theme in Walby's work. Violence includes not only physical abuse but also emotional, psychological and sexual oppression once used for the control of women.

“Male violence is tolerated and even legitimized in a systematic way in patriarchy Societies.”

5. Sexuality

In patriarchal culture, female sexuality is subject to control through the setting of strict moral rules. It frees up time for women and increases freedom for men.

6. Cultural Institutions

The stereotypes are reinforced in the spheres of religion, media, literature, education and traditions and encourage the superiority of the male. Women are typically depicted as subservient and weak, or dependent. Walby's theory has become common in feminist literary criticism due to the fact that it assists in understanding the function of power.

Satire of patriarchy in How It Happened

Describe the power of the father in society and literary works. In many literary recent years, in the United States and Britain, women have been subjected to limitations on marriage, education, employment and personal relationships. Freedom due to patriarchal norms. Her theory also points out the manner by which women can internalize patriarchal values and unknowingly participate in the system of oppression them.

In How It Happened, Sylvia Walby's theory can be utilized to gain insight into how

Family traditions, cousin marriage, emotional pressure, and gender roles. Maintain patriarchy. Strict cultural rules limit the characters, such as Dadi. Walby's definition of patriarchal women's choices and freedom is evident. Institutions functioning in the family and in the community.

How It Happened is a work of Satire of Patriarchy.

The novel is satirical and humorous and criticizes patriarchal attitudes. The family elders think that the success of a woman is largely dependent on marriage. Girls they are expected to be modest, get married at the “right age” and follow the family. Traditions. One of the main themes of the novel is marriage. The novelist satirizes the system of arranged marriages as it becomes a marriage of convenience.

The ***“social business” relationship is not a “love relation” or a “understanding relation”.***

“Good girls take husbands of their mothers' choice.”

In the above quotation, society expects girls to comply with family decisions rather than in the free market there is the option for people to select their own life partners. It ridicules the notion that a woman's goodness depends on obedience. ***“Her generation's heroine and the previous generation's Nightmare.”*** This line is about Zeba. It shows the conflict between modern and traditional thinking. Zeba is a symbol of independent women, One is an important issue. Highlighted in the novel is the pressure on women to marry at a certain age. An unmarried woman is regarded as lacking or even tainted. This social pressure reflects patriarchal beliefs that a woman's value depends upon marriage.

While for older people, this freedom seems to be dangerous.

“Take girls like cattle for a parade.

This is a sarcastic comment on the marriage system in which girls are shown up. Prior to the possibility of marriage, “before the man” or “before the husband” is a situation where women are treated like “things to be picked”. It strongly attacks patriarchal marriage culture. ***“A Pakistani wedding is no mean feat to pull off.”***

This engaging line is a joke on the social pressure, drama and expectations that come with it. To marriage in South Asian society. Marriage is more valued than personal happiness.

‘Dating-shating’

The phrase “dating-shating”, used repeatedly in the comics, ridicules conservative families. Anyone who is afraid of contemporary relations. The satire reveals the discomfort of society with women having emotional freedom. The character of Dadi is strongly represented. Patriarchal thinking. She meddles in younger women’s lives and constantly discusses marriage proposals. She’s a woman, but she supports male-dominated traditions.

A quotation from the novel is:

***In my family girls are always supposed to marry well before thinking.
About anything else.”***

In this quotation, it is clear that the dream and ambition of women are disregarded. As marriage becomes their first goal. The satire is now strong Since the novel introduces these grave topics in a humorous manner. Readers laugh at while the family’s obsession with marriage, they are also aware of the painful reality

Behind it. Even the educated women must continue to be dependent on men. This is in line with Sylvia Walby’s viewpoint that patriarchy restricts women’s opportunities and upholds the dominance of males even in contemporary societies. The novel above shows that often women give up on their dreams to please the family. Marriage becomes more important than personal ambition. Through satire, the novelist questions why society fears independent women.

Discussion and Analysis

The patriarchal systems of South Asian nations, women are frequently subjected to the devaluation of their status as human beings. The process of devaluing begins at the very moment of girls’ birth. From an early age, girls are often perceived as burdens or disadvantages to a family (Neuback, 1996). Nevertheless, their male siblings towards the dominant male figures by conveying her sense of being overshadowed.

When I asked her [Dadi] where Zeba Baji’s and my chests of drawers were, she replied, “Don’t I have framed photographs of both of my chandas on the walls?” Since her two chandas were lost amidst the sea of faces of her other grand offspring, it was clear that furniture storage space was to be reserved exclusively for Haroonmia (How it Happened, 2012).

In Pakistan, gender relations are primarily characterized by two fundamental beliefs: the subordinate status of women to males, and the notion that a man’s dignity is contingent upon the behavior of the women in his household. Thus, in traditional Muslim civilizations, women bear the responsibility of upholding the family’s honor. Society and culture impose constraints on women’s movement and impose regulations on their actions and conduct to safeguard the family’s honor. Women are compelled to adhere to “Purdah” and wear a veil in order to maintain their modesty and honor. Through the practice of Purdah, society and culture establish distinct worlds for men and women, literally and metaphorically, effectively segregating their activities. The majority of women in Pakistani civilizations dedicate a significant portion of their time to domestic activities n side their households.

Women in traditional Pakistani society are often expected to remain within the limits set by family and culture. Their movement outside the home is usually restricted to important or socially approved activities. Families who allow women greater freedom are sometimes criticized by society and considered disrespectful of cultural values. In How It Happened, Shazaf Fatima Haider portrays this mindset through the character of Dadi, who constantly warns her granddaughters against behaving too freely or independently. Dadi becomes uncomfortable with Zeba because she displays what the family considers “dangerous independence.” Simple actions such as wearing a sleeveless kameez or dining with friends become signs of rebellion in the eyes of conservative elders.

Dadi strongly disapproves of women working outside the home. She believes that respectable women should devote themselves entirely to household responsibilities, children, and family life. According to her traditional thinking, workplaces expose women to unnecessary interaction with men and threaten family honor. The novel satirically exposes these outdated beliefs through Dadi's exaggerated opinions. She repeatedly suggests that a "good woman" should only focus on pleasing her husband and maintaining the home. Through such dialogue, the novelist criticizes the patriarchal mindset that limits women's independence and discourages professional growth.

The novel also highlights how social interaction between men and women is viewed negatively in conservative households. Dadi considers modern social behavior a sign of moral decline and often associates it with Western influence. Her statement that ***"dignified young women never imitated courtesans"*** reflects the harsh judgment placed upon women who challenge traditional expectations. At the same time, the novel exposes the double standards of patriarchal society. Men are allowed personal freedom and modern ***lifestyles, but women are expected to remain modest and "pure."*** As the narrator humorously observes, ***men may freely enjoy "kissing-shissing" and "dating-shating," yet still demand wives who are "pure as snow."***

Furthermore, the idea of the ***"ideal woman"*** remains deeply rooted in Pakistani culture. A woman's worth is often measured not by her education or intelligence but by her obedience, modesty, and ability to manage household duties. Through satire and irony, *How It Happened* reveals how these social expectations place emotional and psychological pressure upon women while restricting their individuality and freedom. She also knows how to manage a home with kindness.

To understand Shazaf Fatima Haiders book "How It Happened" we need to look at the Pakistani household and how it works with modern public systems. Her book is a sharp criticism of arranged marriages. Even though its light hearted it's an example of how patriarchy is a system of connected structures. Rubin says in her paper that men and women boys and girls are more alike than different.. Society makes us think that being the same is a bad thing. In society there are rules for how men and women should act.. These rules are based on what people think is male or female.

There is a lot of inequality between men and women but its especially bad in Asian countries. In Pakistan people expect men and women to act in ways. For example women are supposed to dress. There are rules for how women should dress.. If they don't follow these rules people often judge them. The main character, Dadi doesn't like it when women act like men or wear mens clothes. She thinks it's against their norms. She has a time accepting that women today can wear mens clothes and challenge old traditions.

"They have no shame... Working with men makes them act like men! Yesterday I saw a businesswoman on TV and she was wearing a suit " she says.

The rules of society and culture limit what girls and women can do. This leads to violence against women. Hurts them physically and emotionally. Women are forced to accept that they are less important than men, which's very bad for them. Societal norms limit what young girls and women can do, leading to violence and negative impacts, on their health. Women are forced to accept that men are better.

She has qualities like being calm putting others first being patient being organized able to adjust to things taking care of things and being able to manage the household with hospitality. To understand Shazaf Fatima Haiders "How It Happened"

using Sylvia Walby's Six Structures of Patriarchy we need to look at the Pakistani household and how it works with modern public things. Haiders book is a sharp criticism of the way marriages are arranged. The tone is light. The underlying system is a great example of Walby's theory that patriarchy is a system of connected parts.

Rubin says in her paper that girls and boys well as women and men are more similar than different. Society is the one that makes it taboo for them to be the same. In our world there are rules that say how people should behave based on whether they're a boy or a girl. This is not fair. It happens all over the world but it is especially bad in Asian countries. In Pakistan people think boys and girls should behave in ways. For example ladies are expected to dress in a way. There is a dress code for ladies. If someone does not follow this code they are often treated badly. Dadi does not like women who act like men or dress like men because it goes against what she thinks is right. She has a time accepting that modern women can wear mens clothes and challenge the traditional way of thinking about men and women. Shazaf Fatima Haiders **"How It Happened" shows how women like Dadi think about these things.** Women like Dadi have ideas about how women should be. They think women should be calm and patient and take care of the household.

Shazaf Fatima Haider's book "How It Happened" is, about how these ideas affect women. well-being. Moreover, women are indoctrinated with conventional beliefs and Attitudes towards gender roles. For instance, Qurrat Dadi (Dadi's cousin) redirected all her hopes and focus onto her daughter Parveen after her son's How it Happened, (2007) also garnered her numerous accolades. She also won many awards for being an unfortunate bride of a "plump African American woman" (How it Happened, (2007). (2012). Parveen's marriage has been well planned and she has never failed to do so. meet expectations. She has had a daughter named Noureen. "She not only mimics her phonetically, in obedience and submission as well." (How it Happened, 2012).

The Household Production

The household is the main arena in which women's work, both paid and domestic, is performed, writes Walby. Both physical and reproductive—is exploited. A girl is a stranger in her own house till She heads home to her true home. Structural temporality of women in the (reflecting) domestic production cycle). The domestic sphere is regulated by in The novel. Dadi. A woman puts the laws of men into practice, paradoxically. The **"labor"** here is The training of girls for marriage. Their worth is calculated by their the capacity to make a house and to give offspring. This is known as the **"viewing season"**. When different families are visiting Zeba to propose to him. House is perpetually on alert and in labor. In the kitchen was the power house of the house.

My mother and cook were:

" They were bound to the oven..."

The quote refers to the house as a machine (engine room). It highlights that women don't just make tea, they are working under high pressure to make tea a "perfect" image. Their use of the word "enslaved" highlights the point that they have no They had no alternative but to work in order to uphold the reputation of their family. In Pakistani communities and culture, the notion of a "good woman" is firmly ingrained, in addition to the conventional teaching on appropriate behaviour for women. A woman's education or lack of it does not make any difference; what

is important is that she have qualities such as composure, selflessness, tolerance, organization, adaptability, maintenance, and the ability to manage household affairs with hospitality.

"A woman's knowledge of the kitchen is essential for her completeness." (How it Happened, 2012).

In addition to domestic responsibilities, a virtuous woman should devote herself to her spouse and offspring.

Paid Work (

Walby notes that barring or limiting women's access to the labor market keeps them dependent on men. While characters like Zeba are educated, there is a subtle structural pressure that their education is a "decoration" for their marriage profile rather than a tool for financial independence. The "how it happened" of the marriage often depends on the groom's "settled" status (economic power) versus the bride's "homemaking" potential. This is mentioned when the narrator, Saleha, observes how the family views Zeba's university degree. While Zeba is intelligent, the family doesn't want her to have a career.

"A degree is a good ornament for a girl... But heaven forbid she actually wants to use it to earn a living."

This explains that education for a woman in the Bandian household is a "marketable asset"—it makes her look "high-quality" to a groom's family, like an expensive piece of jewelry ("ornament"). The phrase "heaven forbid" shows the family's genuine fear and disapproval of a woman being financially independent. Women face occupational segregation (concentration in "feminised" sectors like care, clerical and service work. There is a persistent gender pay gap in the UK (still around 14–15% in 2020).

Women are over-represented in part-time jobs, often due to childcare responsibilities.

"The younger they are, the more malleable! They will be able to learn and adapt to our way of life"(How It Happened, 2012)

. Young girls can be easily shaped to conform to gender and cultural expectations within the context of family. Nevertheless, women who are both young and educated exhibit a lower propensity to adjust to unfamiliar situations. During that stage of life, women possess malleability akin to that of pliable clay. According to How it Happened (2012), women may be readily shaped and influenced by their spouses and in-laws.

The Patriarchal State

Dadi's rule in the novel is main character of a state. Even if the state isn't the main character, Walby's "State" structure is felt through the legalities of the **Nikahnama** and social policing. The novel highlights how social "laws" (shame, honor, and family reputation) act as a shadow state. The characters operate under a rigid set of rules that dictate who can marry whom based on sect (Shia/Sunni), caste, and class. This is an introductory description of Dadi (the grandmother). It sets the stage for how the household functions like a mini-country under a dictatorship.

"Dadi was the Chief Justice, the Prime Minister, and the Army Chief of our house..."

By calling Dadi the "Chief Justice" and "Army Chief," the author shows that Dadi controls the "law" (who can marry whom) and the "force" (punishing those who disobey). Even though she is a woman, she enforces the patriarchal rules of her ancestors. The Patriarchal State (Dadi's Rules) in How It Happened: A Feminist Analysis Through Sylvia Walby's Theory In How It Happened, Shazaf Fatima Haider satirically presents the patriarchal structure of South Asian families through the strict rules and authority of Dadi. Although Dadi is a woman, she represents the patriarchal state because she protects and enforces traditions that favor male dominance and restrict women's freedom.

This idea can be analysed through Sylvia Walby's concept of the patriarchal State, which explains how social institutions and authority systems maintain male power over women. According to Sylvia Walby, the patriarchal state works to preserve male dominance through laws, traditions, customs, and family structures. In the novel,

Dadi acts like the head of a small patriarchal state inside the household. She controls marriage decisions, family behaviour, and women's roles. Her authority becomes symbolic of a system where individual freedom is suppressed in the name of family honor and tradition.

One clear example of Dadi's patriarchal mind-set is her obsession with cousin marriages. She believes that marriages should remain within the family to preserve cultural purity and family control. Dadi repeatedly imposes her beliefs on younger family members without considering their personal desires. Her strict attitude reflects the patriarchal idea that elders and male-centred traditions have greater importance than women's choices.

A significant quotation that reflects Dadi's authority is:

"Our family does not marry strangers."

This statement highlights how personal choice is denied under patriarchal systems. Marriage becomes a family-controlled institution rather than a relationship based on love or mutual understanding. Through satire, the novel exposes the irrationality of such rigid customs. Dadi also believes that women must remain obedient and modest. She criticizes girls who challenge traditions or express independent opinions. Another important line state top of form:

"Girls who answer back bring shame to the family."

This quotation demonstrates how patriarchal authority silences women and associates female obedience with family respectability. According to Walby, Patriarchal systems maintain control by limiting women's voices and freedoms, Which is exactly what Dadi's rules accomplish in the novel.

Moreover, Dadi's character shows how patriarchy can be internalized by women Themselves. Even though she is not a man, she continues supporting a system that Oppresses other women. She becomes an agent of patriarchy by teaching younger generations to follow restrictive gender roles. This reflects Walby's argument that Patriarchy survives not only through men but also through cultural practices and Institutions accepted by society.

The satire in the novel becomes powerful because Dadi's extreme behaviour often appears humorous, yet it reveals serious social problems. Her exaggerated Concern with family honor, marriage traditions, and women's obedience exposes the absurdity of patriarchal thinking. Readers laugh at her rigid rules, but at the Same time they recognize the harmful impact such attitudes have on women's Lives. Dadi's rules in How It Happened symbolize the patriarchal state described by Sylvia Walby.

Through her authority, the novel demonstrates how traditions and family structures are used to control women's choices, especially regarding marriage and behaviour. By using satire and irony, Shazaf Fatima Haider criticizes a patriarchal system that values obedience and family honor more than women's individuality and freedom.

Male Violence

Walby defines this not just as physical abuse, but as the threat of violence Or social death that keeps women in line. In Haider's world, the "violence" is psychological and social. The threat is ***"Log Kya Kahenge" (What will people Say?)***.

This social coercion forces compliance with Dadi's rigid matchmaking. The "violence" is the erasure of the woman's individual will in favour of the family's collective "honor." Whenever Zeba or Haroon try to argue with Dadi or Suggest a marriage she doesn't like, Dadi begins to perform a "drama" of falling or having a heart attack.

"Dadi's tears were more effective than a whip... the walls of the house seemed To close in on us..."

This quote shows that you don't need a "whip" (physical violence) to control Someone if you can use guilt. Dadi uses her age and health as a weapon. The **"walls closing in"** represents the feeling of suffocation the grandchildren feel—they are trapped by their own love and respect for her.

In Pakistani society, the male heads of the family and the female figures with lower authority hold influence over family affairs. They attempt to ascertain the destiny of the youthful members of the families; nonetheless, they overshadow the viewpoint of subordinate women in affairs, notably in the selection of a life Partner. The novel *How It Happened* by Shazaf Fatima Haider provides insight on the adherence of the elder generation to gender stereotypes within Pakistani Culture, within the context of gender education and gender roles.

Early parenting and socialization significantly influence an individual's personality and their attitudes towards society, culture, and conventional, stereotyped ideas. A similar pattern may be observed in the personality of Dadi. She has been indoctrinated to exhibit submissiveness and obedience throughout her lifetime. Consequently, upon assuming a position of authority, she anticipates her daughter-in-law and granddaughter to demonstrate comparable levels of obedience and submission. In Order to conform to gender norms, she endeavors to apply them to her granddaughters, daughter-in-law, and grand-daughter-in law.

Satire of Patriarchy and male violence in *How It Happened*. A feminist analysis through Sylvia Walby's patriarchal theory. *How It Happened* by Shazaf Fatima Haider is a satirical novel that exposes the Patriarchal nature of South Asian society and the traditional marriage system. The novel humorously presents family traditions, cousin marriages, and gender discrimination, but beneath the comedy lies a serious criticism of women's Oppression. This oppression can be understood through Sylvia Walby's Theory of Patriarchy, particularly her concept of male violence. Walby defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women." In the novel, male violence is not always physical; It appears through emotional pressure, social control, and restrictions on women's freedom.

The novel satirizes the marriage system by showing how women are forced to follow family expectations rather than their own desires. Dadi strongly believes in cousin marriages and considers family honor more important than women's happiness. Through this character, the writer criticizes how patriarchal traditions continue from one generation to another. As Dadi says,

"A girl's real home is Her husband's home."

This statement reflects the patriarchal belief that a woman has no independent identity outside marriage. According to Walby, patriarchy controls women through cultural and household structures, and this idea is clearly Visible in the novel.

Male violence in the story also appears in psychological and emotional forms. women are constantly pressured to obey fathers, brothers, and husbands. If they resist, they are shamed or emotionally blackmailed. For example, when younger family members question arranged cousin marriages, elders react with anger and emotional manipulation. This demonstrates Walby's argument that patriarchy maintains male dominance through fear and control rather than only physical force.

The novel also highlights how women's voices are suppressed in family decisions. Men are given authority, while women are expected to remain silent and obedient. One important line in the novel states,

"Girls who answer back bring disgrace to the family."

This quotation reveals how patriarchal society links female silence with family honour. Such thinking creates psychological violence because women are denied the right to express opinions freely. Another example of male dominance can be seen in the unequal freedom given to men and women. Men are allowed to make personal choices, while women are Judged harshly for seeking independence. The novel mocks this double standard through irony and humour. The narrator observes that family members become more concerned about a girl's marriage than her education or ambitions.

This reflects Walby's theory that patriarchal culture values women mainly in relation to men and marriage. Furthermore, the satire exposes how emotional suffering is normalized within patriarchal families. Women sacrifice their happiness to maintain social respectability. They are taught to tolerate oppression quietly because resistance is considered dishonourable. Walby explains that male violence functions as a mechanism to preserve patriarchal power, and How It Happened illustrates this through emotional intimidation and social restrictions placed upon women. How It Happened satirically criticizes patriarchy and the traditional marriage system through its portrayal of male violence and female oppression. Using Sylvia Walby's Patriarchal Theory, it becomes clear that patriarchy operates through emotional control, social pressure, and cultural expectations that limit women's freedom. Through humour, irony, and powerful dialogue, the novel exposes the injustice of a system where women's choices are suppressed in the name of tradition and family honour.

Patriarchal Relations in Sexuality Walby discusses the control of female sexuality to ensure "legitimate" lineage.

This is the core of the novel. Sexuality is strictly regulated through the "arranged" system. Love is seen as a "disorder" or a "scandal," whereas a clinical, screened marriage is "safe." The "rebellion" of the younger characters is an attempt to reclaim their own sexual and emotional agency from this structure.

"Love in our family is like a rare disease; we hope it doesn't happen, but if it does, we try to treat it with a good marriage."

This is a warning given to the girls in the house. It usually comes up when there is a rumor of a girl talking to a boy or being seen in public.

A girl's reputation is like a mirror, Saleha. Once it's cracked... the reflection will always be distorted. The "mirror" metaphor is powerful because a cracked mirror can never be perfectly fixed. It teaches the girls that their entire value is based on how society sees them. If their "reputation" is questioned once, they are considered "ruined" forever, which keeps them living in constant fear and self-censorship.

“The sole desire a woman experiences is the desire to embrace her child and ensure her husband is well-nourished and satisfied” (How it Happened, 2012).

Women in Pakistani society are consistently required to make concessions with their viewpoints and conceal their feelings. Not all women who possess independent thinking and have their own opinions are accepted in eastern culture (How it Happened, 2012). During her instruction to her granddaughter on proper etiquette when receiving marriage proposals, Dadi defines a well mannered young woman in Eastern culture as:

“We hailed from the ancient village called Bhakuraj in India, a village that has become famous for its female population’s singular of unquestionably deferring to the mother’s wishes when it came to the matters of matrimony. [...] Through bottom of form top of the use of guile, blackmail, and several subtle and not-so-subtle pressure tactics, our great grandmothers, and mothers had managed to avoid the stigma of love marriage blackening the name of our prodigiously chaste family tree. None of our female relatives had been exempt from the Sacred Tradition: each saw her husband and Representative of God on Earth through a silver mirror placed on her lap during the ceremonial” (How it Happened, 2012).”

Women are denied any form of agency in their marital unions. When a woman develops an attraction towards someone, she is required to make concessions and prioritize the wishes of a family as a rational choice. Bandian women are aware that the concept of love-shove is completely nonsensical (How it Happened, 2012). Women are supposed to emulate Naureen, a compliant and subservient daughter of Qurrat Dadi (Dadi’s cousin), who only understands how to acquiesce with “Yes” and “of course” to their parents’ desires. In Pakistani society, women are limited in their ability to work due to the expectation that they will either marry or devote their life to caring for their dad and brothers (How it Happened, 2012). Haider quietly notes that gender norms are enforced by matriarchal systems. Cultural Institutions (Religion and Tradition)Walby highlights how media, religion, and education normalize patriarchy .pDadi uses religious narratives and "ancestral traditions" to justify her control. She represents the "Cultural Institution" in human form. The novel shows how these traditions are cherry-picked to maintain a hierarchy where elders (and specifically the male line) are served by the younger women. This happens during a conversation where Dadi is lecturing the younger generation about why they cannot marry outside their specific sect or caste conversation where Dadi is lecturing the younger generation about why they cannot marry outside their specific sect or caste

“We are Syeds, Saleha. Our blood is different... We have a history to Protect.”

This quote illustrates the structural exclusion of others. Dadi believes that their History and “blood” make them a separate, superior category of humans. It shows that tradition isn’t just a habit; it’s an identity they feel they must “protect” from Being “polluted” by outsiders. Marriage in the novel is shown as a social pressure rather than a personal choice. Families focus more on status, caste, and public opinion than on happiness and compatibility. Women are treated as objects whose value depends on their appearance and ability to satisfy family expectations. The novel mocks the traditional “rishta culture” in which girls are judged during marriage meetings.

Their education, cooking skills, beauty, and behavior are carefully examined.

“Like Good Eastern Girl, she would be brought in with dupatta on her head...she would not discuss politics or literature under any circumstances because this would reveal her in all

her opinionated glory. Good Eastern Girl should not have a strong opinion of their own, only those of their husbands or in-laws” (How it Happened, 2012).”

In addition, a commendable lady demonstrates the qualities of a “good daughter in-law” by treating her mother-in-law with the same respect and care as she would her own mother, even when faced with limitations and maltreatment from her. According to Dadi, it is expected that well-behaved girls should maintain a quiet presence and refrain from expressing their opinions. That is the way their relatives via marriage prefer them! (How it Happened, 2012). Dadi meticulously compiles an extensive inventory of regulations and prerequisites that a prospective suitor for Haroon must meet. Dadi, a symbol of a culture where women have power, states on the list that: “the girl must possess the necessary qualifications to secure a lucrative employment.

Another important quotation is:

“A girl’s real home is her husband’s home.”

This statement reflects the patriarchal belief that a woman does not truly belong to her parents’ house and must eventually depend on a man. Sylvia Walby’s theory explains this as part of private patriarchy, where family structures limit women’s independence. The marriage system in the novel also creates anxiety and fear among women. They are constantly reminded that remaining unmarried is a social failure. Through satire, the writer exposes the emotional pressure placed on women by society. Despite patriarchal control, some female characters challenge traditional expectations. They question old customs and try to make their own choices. Their resistance represents the modern feminist struggle for freedom and individuality. Walby believes that patriarchy can be challenged when women gain awareness and independence. In the novel, education and personal confidence become important tools of resistance. Women slowly begin to realize that their worth is not limited to marriage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, How It Happened is a powerful satire on patriarchy and the traditional marriage system. Through humor and irony, Shazaf Fatima Haider exposes the social pressures faced by women in patriarchal society. Using Sylvia Walby’s patriarchal theory, it becomes clear that family traditions, cultural expectations, and marriage practices all work together to control women’s lives. The novel not only criticizes these systems but also encourages women to seek identity, dignity, and independence beyond marriage. By applying Sylvia Walby’s patriarchal theory, it becomes clear that patriarchy operates through family structures, cultural values, and marriage institutions. Women are expected to remain obedient and dependent, while men hold authority and decision-making power.

However, the novel also gives hope for change. Through satire and feminist awareness, it encourages readers to challenge outdated traditions and support women’s freedom, equality, and individuality. Thus, How It Happened is not only a humorous family story but also an important feminist critique of patriarchal society. Both the male and female heads of the household actively encourage this type of conduct. Gender roles that are socially and culturally established have an impact on the lives of women in Pakistan. Women experience lifelong oppression, with their wishes being disregarded and their expectation to conceal and sacrifice their desires for the sake of family traditions and honor. Women are not only obligated to adhere to the societal and cultural expectations of Patriarchal roles, but they are also prohibited from

openly expressing their ideas and emotions, since they are supposed to be submissive and silent, as the saying Goes

“Good girls should be seen and not heard” (How it Happened, 20112)

Moreover, it is not customary for girls to engage in employment outside of office settings and actively pursue their professional aspirations. Their main responsibility is to provide care for their spouse, offspring, and legal obligations. From a young age, they are ingrained with the belief that a woman's sole desire is to embrace her kid and ensure her husband is well-fed and satisfied (How it Happened, 2012). Women are typically exclusively expected to fulfill the role of a homemaker. She must possess proficiency in culinary arts, needlework, and several domestic tasks. If a female lacks culinary skills or has no inclination towards domestic tasks, she is seen without value and ineligible for marriage.

Furthermore, a deliberate effort is made to cultivate a feeling of inferiority complex among young girls by giving priority to the demands of their brothers above their own. The younger family members are overshadowed by the elder ones who impose limitations on their desires. Saleha, the protagonist of the tale, experiences a sense of being overshadowed as her grandma displays greater affection towards her older brother, neglecting both Saleha and her sister Zeba. The novel examines the impact of socially and culturally established patriarchal roles on individuals' lives.

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