

Exploring Fear, Marriage and Female Sexuality in Kamal's Unmarriageable: A Psycho-feminist Study

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Abstract

As the title suggests, this article deals with marriage and the fear of being single in Pakistan. However, the institution of marriage plays a vital role in nearly all human societies. The general aim of marriage is to ensure future security and financial stability. In Pakistan, marriage is considered a life goal. This article aims to highlight the social norms related to marriage in Pakistan. The focal point of the argument is premarital issues and how these issues affect the psyche of an individual. One of the desires to marry is having socially sanctioned sex because sexual activities before marriage are not acceptable in many societies, especially in Pakistan. However, some people are single by choice, some are single because they are waiting for a compatible match, and some are single because others reject them. This paper intends to reveal that all human beings have an inherent need for intimacy and belonging and how much pressure single women face in Pakistan. The present article also highlights the reasons for marriage and the fear of being single.

Keywords: Marriage, Pakistan, Psycho-feminism, Singlehood, Unmarriageable

1 Introduction

Soniah Kamal is an award-winning Pakistani-American writer whose fiction and essays have been

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widely anthologized and appeared in notable publications such as *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*. Kamal's debut novel, *An Isolated Incident*, was a finalist for the Townsend Prize for Fiction and the Karachi Literature Festival. Kamal has written an outstanding and fascinating version of *Pride and Prejudice*, set in Pakistan, *Unmarriageable* (Kamal, 2019). The novel *Unmarriageable* retells Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1823), but Kamal's *Unmarriageable* is faithful to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Kamal's *Unmarriageable* interrogates the institute of marriages. However, Kamal also puts a modern feminist twist. However, the significant difference is that Kamal's novel is set in Pakistan in 2000, while Austen's is set in England. While the West has many transformations, *Unmarriageable* indicates how class structures and gender roles have remained unchanged over time and space. Kamal's Pakistani upper-class society and its gender roles are the same as Austen's, yet Kamal writes her characters in a way that makes the reader aware of these parallels.

The story is about a Binat family who lives in Dilipabad. They traverse through marriage, gender and sexuality in a heavily norm-ridden upper-class Pakistani society. The main characters of this novel are the father, mother and their five daughters. Alysba, also known as Alys, is the protagonist of this novel. Her mother carries the burden of our national obsession and remains worried about the fate of her five daughters. Sherif (1999) says, "Being married is considered more prestigious and celibacy is socially disapproved for both men and women." Alys wants to live her life on her terms and has radical views about marriage. Alys' ideas are contradictory to societal norms. Singlehood is the fastest-growing demographic relationship in the world (Kislev, 2019). All the characters have a different attitude towards marriage. Alys, Jena, and Sherry face much social pressure because they are marriageable and are getting old but remain unmarried. Sherry wants to be married for the sake of sex and financial security.

This study uses the psychoanalytic theory based on Sigmund Freud's principles. This theory dramatically emphasises the role of unconscious psychological conflicts in shaping behaviour and personality. Feminism deals with the inequality between males and females. The main aim of the present research is to investigate why marriage is considered the ultimate goal of life according to Kamal's *Unmarriageable*. This article also tries to explore how Kamal's *Unmarriage* reveals the profound psychological and sociological state of single women in Pakistan. This research article hopes to give new dimensions to tackle the problems of being marriageable and single.

2 Literature Review

Unmarriageable is the best book of 2019 for Financial Times Readers. Kamal's *Unmarriageable* is a delightful retelling of Jane Austen's classic novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1823). Kamal is a great admirer of Jane Austen and a member of the Jane Austen Society in North America. Kamal goes deeper, using Austen to explore class, feminism and postcolonial Pakistani society. "Marriage, which includes the coupling of two people possessing different interests, desires and needs, is a unique association given shape by social rules and laws and significantly affects individuals' development and self-realizations" (Ersanlı & Kalkan, 2008).

"Rewriting Jane Austen is an industry. But this version of *Pride and Prejudice* in Pakistan shines" (Mukherjee, 2019). Amber (2023), in her article "The concept of marriage in Pakistan concerning Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*", elaborates that marriage is a social contract where the partners are obliged to each other. Their responsibilities towards each other bound them to remain dutiful to one another. Masad (2019) concurs that *Unmarriageable* tries to portray both a fun, page-turning romp and a thought-provoking look at the class-obsessed strata of Pakistani society. McCarthy pens down a brief note on *Unmarriageable*. She says, "It is universally acknowledged that Jane Austen's story must be in want of a rewrite" (2019).

Austen has written six novels, but reinterpretation by other writers keeps multiplying the text. Kamal (2019) emphasises that *Unmarriageable* is a parallel retelling, not an 'inspired by' because

this book contains the same character and plot with rich Pakistani culture. She further clarifies that she wrote this novel because when she was young, she did not find anything to read that was written in English and set in Pakistani culture. So, she started to remap stories in her mind. Moreover, she says in an interview that she always dreamt about writing this novel and wrote this novel in just two months. Kamal also says, "The book seemed such a mirror of Pakistani society." Although Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was written almost 200 years ago, the pressure to get married is still extreme in Pakistan. "Our relationships are a source of joy and comfort, but they also bring much pain," says Zakin (2011).

In Yavuzer's view (2012), marriage is acknowledged as an institution. In this relationship, two people share intimacy and fellowship. Marriage also allows sexual intercourse and develops an emotional understanding. Hua, the author of *A River of Stars*, appreciates her: "Charming and insightful, Soniah Kamal's *Unmarriageable* connects the concerns of women across time and cultures in this delightful debut (2020)." Sharda (2020) also expresses the same view on *Unmarriageable*, that this novel focuses on the reality of our society that marriage is an ultimate prize for a woman, and we find humorous, witty dialogues, family tension and rich details of life in contemporary Pakistan. It is a new story of luck, love and literature.

Critics state that *Unmarriageable* is not about romance only but also about the harsh realities of money and class. Bose (2020) explores class and sexual differences in Kamal's *Unmarriageable* in her research article. This study tries to analyse the novel *Unmarriageable*, psychoanalytic theory from Sigmund Freud's (1927) paper and his paper entitled "The Psychical Consequences of the Anatomic Distinction Between the Sexes" explains "Women oppose change, receive passively, and add nothing of their own."

Many novels have been written related to marriage. For example, Fatima's story, *How It Happened* (2013), deals with issues related to marriage. In this story, Dadi seeks a compatible and perfect match for her grandson and granddaughter. In Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), we also discover marriage problems. In Sidhwa's novel, marriage is a transaction of body rather than money because a relationship has no mutual understanding. Hamid's in *Moth Smoke* (2000) discusses the issue related to sexual gratification, and he also pays attention to marital issues. The novel's protagonist, Mumtaz, considers marriage an institution of oppression. These marital problems are not new, but Kamal represents these problems uniquely and humorously.

A theory of oppression called psychoanalytic feminism contends that males have a deep-seated psychological drive to dominate women (Wolff, 2007). Men's need to rule over women and women's meagre resistance to servitude have their roots in the human mind. In order to comprehend and combat the oppression of women, this subset of feminism tries to acquire an understanding of how our psychological lives unfold. Additionally, the oppressive pattern is ingrained in society, resulting in the establishment and maintenance of patriarchy. "Feminism" is the central theme of this novel. Feminism advocates women's rights. In *Unmarriageable*, the protagonist, Alysba, thinks there should be mutual understanding and friendship in a relationship; getting married just for money is not fair at all. "It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages" (Nietzsche, 1910). Thus, the current article tries to investigate different views about marriage with particular reference to Feminism and how one's psyche is affected by society's conventional and unconventional norms.

3 Theoretical framework

The present article draws theoretical support from Psycho-feminism. Kamal (2007), in his research work, describes Psychoanalytic feminism as a social movement based on the work of Sigmund Freud and his structural theory of personality. Feminist movements were hostile to psychoanalysis, as they viewed it as a significant element in the oppression of women. The problems that feminists

challenged in psychoanalysis centred on Freud's formulations of the differentiation between the sexes in terms of the association of masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity. Psychoanalytic theory (1896) is the theory of personality organisation and personality development dynamics, emphasising unconscious mental processes. Feminism was established to defend the rights and roles of women.

Sigmund Freud published a short volume entitled *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in [1905](#). Freud believes that sexuality is very important in psychoanalytic theory. Freud's discovery of the unconscious is centrally associated with studying female sexuality. Psychologists have been finding that single people are targets of stereotyping and discrimination (singlism). According to Sigmund Freud, Human personality is complex and has more than one component. "In the psychoanalytic theory, personality is composed of three elements: the id, ego, and superego" (Freud, [1923/1949](#)). These concepts can be used as strategies to analyse this novel, *Unmarriageable*. It is the reason for all psychic energy and entirely unconsciousness. It also strives for immediate gratification. The ego is a semi-conscious aspect of personality responsible for dealing with reality. The superego is entirely conscious and concerned with social rules and norms.

4 Research methodology

Research methodology is a structured and methodical approach to the theoretical examination of the processes, techniques, and equipment used to research a particular field. The two primary areas of research methods are typically qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative content analysis method is employed to systematically characterise the meaning of a text (Mayring, [2000](#); Schreier, [2012](#)). This qualitative research study comprises a detailed reading and textual analysis of Kamal's *Unmarriageable*. The study is based on a descriptive research approach, using the "close text" of the book *Unmarriageable* to meet its objectives. Based on qualitative research, this study seeks to understand the characters' psychology and perception of the outside world in the context of psycho-feminist theory. Since the entire study depends on the sample. Therefore, sample selection is one of the most critical aspects of the study. A random sampling technique is used in this research paper. This theoretical research endeavour is situated within the realm of psycho-feminist theory. The best hypothesis is to comprehend the dimensions of psychologically troubled people's unconscious world and how these psychological issues affect them. In light of women's marginalisation, the current study examines and analyses feminist characteristics and psychological experiences. This research article hopes to conclude the reason for being single and to what extent the concept of marriage has been infused in the minds of Pakistani people.

5 Discussion and Analysis

The institution of marriage plays a vital role in nearly all human societies. There is a deep connection between marital status and well-being. Kamal's *Unmarriageable* interrogates the institute of marriages. The story is about the Binat family who lives in Dilipabad. The family consists of a very gentle father, Mr Barkat Binat, who has no control over her wife, Mrs Pinkie Binat and five daughters, Jena, Alysba, Marie, Qitty and Lady. Alysba Binat (Alys) is the protagonist of this novel, a thirty-year-old unmarried girl with dark, beautiful features. Kamal introduces the main characters in such a way. *"There is the cheaper mother's family reputation to consider and the family itself. A loser father. A fundamentalist sister. A fat sister. A spitting sister. A decorum-less sister"* (chap#8 p.95).

The Mother of five daughters is worrying about their fate, and she carries a national obsession and thinks that girls should have the ability to grab wealthy men. Mrs Binat believes It was a full-time job as an excellent mother to get her daughters married well. Bhatti ([2014](#)) points out that parents are hurried to arrange their daughter's marriage, as the older their age at marriage, the greater the risks to their chastity and honour. According to psychoanalytic theory, the mother's ideology has been set during her childhood, so she considers marriage as a reward for a girl.

However, times have changed, and Alys was brought up in different environments. Hence, she thinks one should get married when they find a compatible match, but her younger sister, Lady, is obsessed with marriage.

Alys is an efficient and confident girl and English teacher in the British school of Dilipabad. She thinks it is unfair to marry for financial security. Mother and Alysba always argue about certain things because they have different opinions. In Alysba's opinion, everyone knows that having an uninformed mom is way worse than not having one at all. Alysba and her sister were raised under their mother's motto to marry young and well, but thirty-year-old Alysba and thirty-two-year-old Jena have not fulfilled her expectations. As she argues: "There is more to life than getting married and having children"(chap#1 p.14). She believes that a single woman can live within a society as a respectable person. However, our society considers respectful to only those who are married. During class discussion, one of her students says:

"Marriage is a cornerstone of our culture" (chap#1 p.16).

and Alysba replies:

"A truth universally acknowledged-- because without marriage our culture and religion do not permit sexual intimacy" (chap#1 p.16).

She means to say that only for the sake of sex are people bound to get married because pre-marital sex is a sin in our religion. Alysba's student asks her if she decides to stay single. Alysba replies: "I did not think any man I have met is my equal, and neither I fear, is any man likely to think I am his. So, no marriage for me" (chap#1 p.15). She has accepted her unique personality and unconventional marital views. She also faces criticism from her mother and school principal. Her younger sister, Lady, has the opposite point of view. She wants to get married as soon as possible. She is beautiful, and she likes boys. However, due to her elder sisters, she has to wait for marriage. There are some similar characteristics between Lady and her mother. Lady and mother's personality is composed of id because both of them want immediate gratification of their desire. So, the id is like the impulsive part of our personality that wants pleasure and avoids pain. However, here is the thing: our psychic apparatus, which includes the id, ego, and superego, can sometimes have conflicting demands. It is like they are all pulling us in different directions. For example, the superego can make us feel guilty if we do not follow the rules. So, when the id and superego clash, the ego becomes the middle person. It is like the referee that tries to find a balance and resolve the conflict. Our minds work, constantly dealing with these inner battles.

The concept of marriage has been infused in the mother's mind. Mrs. Binat was not the only mother concerned about marriage then; all mothers in Pakistani society were also. She preaches marriage all day, and Lady's psyche is deeply affected by the fantasy of marriage. "A loose woman is a flower every man wants to pluck and chuck"(chap#24 p.242). Freud (1920s) identifies that love, sex and fantasies are present in the human mind consciously or unconsciously. Kamal is also critical of how marriage dominates the imagination. As a result, Lady and Wickham elope. However, love is not the foundation of this marriage. Although it can appear to be a love marriage, this is not the case. Lady is stupid enough to mistake her emotions for what Wickham has misled her into experiencing. Lady takes this step because she wants immediate gratification. The id is like the impulsive and unconscious part of our mind that responds immediately to our basic urges, needs, and desires. It is all about seeking pleasure and avoiding tension. When the id gets what it wants, we feel good and experience pleasure. However, when it is denied, we feel a sense of discomfort or tension. The id is made up of two types of biological instincts or drives. One is the sex instinct, also known as Eros, which includes the libido. It is fascinating how our minds work, constantly driven by these primal instincts. Hence, their marriage is an emotional step, not a romantic one. Alys comments, "Women are never forgiven in our society, but men can be."

(chap#24 p.240).

Mrs Binat is worried about her five daughters and thinks that if her daughters look ugly, no one will marry them. When Alys and Jena are told the good news of their employment, Mrs Binat screech: *"Teaching will ruin your eyesight! Your hair will fall out marking papers! Who will marry you then? Huh? Who will marry you?"* (Chap#2 .29). She believes that if a girl is beautiful, then there is more chance to get a good and wealthy husband. If a girl is ugly, nobody would like to marry her. The mother worries because her daughters are getting older with each passing day. An idea that has persisted throughout time is beauty. Keep in mind that beauty, particularly human beauty, is transient. As time goes on, it loses its lustre and ages. *"All you need is one rich man to become besotted with your looks and, jantar mantar, abracadabra, your destiny is changed."*(chap#12 p.129).

Ageing is also a drawback for girls. This represents the stereotypes and objectification of traditional women. Feminists oppose these stereotypes. Good looks are necessary to find a good spouse. Kamal in Unmarriageable explores different elements of cultural norms about colourism, ageism and body shaming. Mother says that Alys has ruined her complexion by sitting in the sun. Teachers discuss their marriage contribution to the family income in a staff room. So, they say that teachers have tricks to marry those men who share equal duties of housework and kids and prepare meals without thinking it is a benevolent favour. As we know, society distinguishes duties for men and women. A wife should commit herself entirely to her spouse. In exchange, the wife receives protection and financial fulfilment from the husband. The husband and wife are both satisfied in marriage in this way. However, feminist wants equality and try to recognise their identities.

Although Mr Binat thinks differently, Mrs Binat has typical ambitions for her daughters and wants grooms, no less than princes and presidents. Mrs Binat explains that absurdities (men from humble middle-class backgrounds) and abroad (middle-class men from a foreign country) are not marriageable because they cannot afford the luxuries of life. So, the plan is to remain in Pakistan and wed a Rich Man. The second component, Ego, is more prominent in the father's personality as he is very realistic. The importance of marriage is related to money. All the sisters have different opinions. People marry someone just because they are smart, but Jena thinks they marry for the wrong reasons. They should consider kindness and intelligence. Lady says:

"Criteria is Criteria"(chap#3 p.39).

As we can see in the mother's character, her ideology is set up by the society that a girl should marry, and she also sets criteria for a good spouse. However, this criterion is not set by Mrs Binat. Society has set this criterion. She adheres to societal norms. Jena once said, *"She is the product of her time and this system"* (chap#16 p.168). The component of "Ego" is prominent in Jena's personality because it deals with reality. The element of "superego" is also present in the mother's character because it deals with societal norms. Alys and their mother have different views. No one can change the mother's view because these stereotypes and societal norms have infused her mind.

Alysba is a true force to be reckoned with. She stands up against societal norms that pressure women to marry for wealth and status. Not only that, but she also challenges the dominance of English culture, highlighting the importance of embracing and celebrating native traditions. In a society where women often rely on men, Alysba's decision to remain unmarried is a bold move that defies expectations. *"Would singledom be accepted if I were still twenty and owned my own thriving business?"* (Chap#12 p.130). It is fascinating to analyse her character from a feminist perspective, as it sheds light on the social expectations and limitations placed on women during that time. Marriage was seen as the ultimate path to honour and recognition, but Alysba's choice showcases the desire for independence and the need to break free from societal constraints. Alys is single by her own choice because she thinks she earns well and has a respectful life. As she says:

"...marriage should be a part of life and not life." (chap#1 p.15).

Feminism aspects are manifested through the Alys. Alys's exceptional feminist views are perceived madly by her mother. A woman can survive without depending on a man psychologically and financially. When someone asked, is she single? Moreover, Alys replies, *"It is all right. Single. Happily single, much to the disappointment of many who prefer that single women be miserable"* (Chap#10 p.107, 108).

Kamal introduces another character in this novel who is contrary to Alys. Syeda Shireen Looclus (Sherry) is Alys's best friend and an Urdu teacher at the British school of Dilipabad. She is a Forty-year-old unmarried woman and hopes that her Shehzada, prince charming, will someday come. She is single but not by choice and prays for her marriage. Alys and Sherry had a late-night conversation. Sherry says that Alys once they get married, their mother will stop dictating their life, and Alys says, *"...than your husband dictates it"* (chap#4 p.45). Alys believes that men marry to control women's lives and that women marry men for financial security. The component of the superego is very prominent in Alys's character because she is very conscious about her desires. She knows what she wants. On the other hand, Sherry is worried because her parents are worried about her marriage. She says that she was engaged twice, but this engagement did not work, and people started calling her "manhos", and now she is over age for perfect Rishta. She gets proposals from widowers and divorced men. Sherry blames herself by saying: *"I must get married, and I am failing. I am a failure."* (Chap#7 p.83). Again, another criterion is set for women by a society that young age can stretch out marriageable years; men have no such standards. An older girl has no choice but to select her spouse. However, men have this choice throughout their lives. Sherry says that she wants gratification from her sexual intimacy, and a proper way to resolve this intimacy is marriage because there is no other respectable way for a girl in this country to have sex.

"It is universally acknowledged that a good girl ought to keep her mouth shut about whether she has been keeping her legs shut" (chap#4 p.49).

Sherry openly expresses her desire. She says to Alys that she would love to experience sex before dying. Everyone has an inherent need for intimacy. Freud's (1961) sexual theory also explains the issue of sexual gratification and how sexual innuendos start. Pre-marital sex may cause many problems, such as abortion. However, abortion is not an issue because married women use abortion as birth control. The issue is pre-marital sex. Is the girl a virgin or not? Our society does not accept these types of girls. On the other hand, men are free. There are no such restrictions for men. Some people are single by their choice, as Alys, and some are single by luck, as Sherry, but both face the same pressure of singlehood from society or family. Someone must marry, but if someone is unmarried, they are considered a failure. Society considers you a failure if you are a successful, independent, goal-oriented and unmarried woman. The case is the opposite with men. The portrayal of Sherry's character differs from that of the other characters. Her marriage is a truthful representation of the social anting of women in Pakistani society. The marriage of Sherry is incompatible. There is no matching.

"A woman is nothing and no one without her virtue. Her virtue is the jewellery of her soul, but this is forgotten by modern women" (chap#24 p.241).

When the Binats reached the wedding, the mother aimed to grab a Rich Man for her daughters. She also gives tricks to her daughters. In the wedding, Fahad Bingla (Bungles) shows some interest in Jena and Valentine Darsee's encounters with Alys. Bungles and Darsee are rich, eligible bachelors, but Bungles are easily franked with girls while Darsee is a gentleman. Bungle is liked by the whole Binat family, especially Jena, but they consider Darsee arrogant, full of Pride and rude. Alys comments on Darsee: *"All decent people think Darsee is a decent person because he chooses to treat them decently."* (chap#11 p.116). Darsee also does not like the Binat family.

Mother is sure that Bungles will propose to Jena at Nikah's event. The wedding place is perfect for flirtation and scandals. From the psychoanalytic perspective, ego is the prominent component in Bungle because he is unaware of his feelings; he likes Jena but is unsure whether he loves her. However, in Darsee's case, their superego is very high because he is conscious and pretty sure about his likes and dislikes.

Being marriageable but remaining unmarried is tough. If a man is single, society considers him intelligent and witty. However, if a woman is single, then society takes pity on him and considers a woman as an imperfect lady. She lacks something in her personality, or maybe she does not have enough attraction to grab a husband. Biologically, as time passes, it is difficult for women to conceive a baby. Due to overage, ovaries die, and women have infertility. Alys believes that men are lucky because they do not face such problems. They do not face any mishaps or lose anything. Feminists oppose this idea because men and women are equally responsible for fertility. Alys says: *"As content as a single girl in this country can be when all anyone ever asks her is why she is not married yet, and they tell her she better hurry up before her ovaries die. It is a man who is lucky."* (Chap#10 p.108,109).

Mrs Binat repeatedly uses the term 'grab the men', which sounds bitter. "What do girls like this call it- catching a man, trapping a man, grabbing a man. Right?" (Chap#8 p.94). These words from the mother's mouth show her mentality and how much the concept of marriage has been infused in her mind. The component of Ego is again very prominent in her personality. The id thinks in a primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy-focused primary process. This thinking process is selfish and wishful and does not understand objective reality. The id functions according to Freud's (1920) pleasure principle, which states that all unconscious impulses for pleasure should be instantly gratified, regardless of the results.

Women are discriminated against and do not get proper rights. Society implements another restriction on women that they do not have the right to propose to men. As Mrs Binat says, if only girls from good families could propose, how easy everything would become. Instead, we must wait until the man decides it is time" (chap#7 p.80). Again, women are dependent on men. Feminists oppose this concept that men have all the rights even though they can freely choose their life partner, but women do not. There is a conversation between Alys and Sherry, and Alys points out that in a relationship, only females have to suffer, and men are relaxed. She says: *"It is universally acknowledged that hasty marriages are nightmares of bardasht Karo, the gospel of tolerance and compromise and that it is always us females who are given the despicable advice and told to shut up and put up with everything. I despise it"* (chap#7 p.83).

Alys is a practical girl. She observes that people are desperate for marriage to fulfil their intimacy and want to marry for the sake of money, security, and children but then get stuck in a financially dependent relationship. Her marriage is not a love story but a social contract. One should marry for love, and a relationship should have mutual understanding. There should be respect and affection and no compromise in a relationship. She says that she is looking for a compatible match. Thus, Alys is ambitious and believes she can earn bread without depending on men. Alys emphasises: *"I am not a gold-digger. I refuse to seek a rich roti. I am going to make my own money and live happily ever after on my terms."* (chap#12 p.130). Feminist support this concept of being independent, and society oppose this idea because society expects women to complete domestic duties and bring up babies. Men are supposed to earn money for the family. *"No need for a wage-earning wife. A woman must look after the children and run household"* (chap#11 p.122).

"If we women mention career, we are considered aberrations of nature or barren" (chap#10 p.109). Feminist believes that a woman can do both. Alys, being a feminist, believes that we also earn bread for ourselves, and science allows for babies at any age. In the past, gender roles were defined in a way that emphasised male dominance and worth. Men are seen as representing power,

responsibility, and security. They are viewed as belonging to the group that needs to leave the house to pursue careers like hunting. It is well known that males dominate. Despite women competing with them, males are still seen as being moulded for these jobs in the modern world. Women were once expected to stay inside the home and handle household matters. The male household member is viewed as autonomous, whereas the female member is seen as his dependent. Women are seen as a representation of sentimental and emotional values. It is interesting to see how these roles are evolving.

However, Mrs Binat is a mega-gold-digger, and society believes that like a mother, a daughter. However, Alys considers that it is selfish to be a gold digger. She dreams about her teaching job, grading papers, making lesson plans, and not dreaming about more. *"Pakistani girls can dream of, and a controlling man will suffocate you"* (chap#21 p.216). Alys affirms the feminine perspective. Alys also explains to Darsee that everyone has their standard of perfection. Men have set different criteria for women, and women have set different standards for men. Meanwhile, men and women do not respect each other's opinions or standards. Alys emphasises that if women decide to marry according to standards, then they are gold-diggers, but if men weigh women in matters of looks and chasteness, then they are brilliant. Men complain that women do not like them; they like their money or family name. Women do not marry for themselves, but they marry for their assets. These double standards are present in all segments of society. Stereotyping, objectification and infringements of human rights are included in feminist issues.

Marriage has always remained central to women's lives in Pakistan. Being single is not only unacceptable in Pakistani culture but also perceived as non-compliance to the cultural hegemony of the institute of marriage, especially for women. Kamal points out this issue and says that Pakistan is the home of the marriage-industrial complex. Kamal highlights:

"Weddings are our nation's bread and butter and foundation and flag." (chap#18 p.196).

It is someone's matter to marry or not. Everyone has different standards for happiness. In Pakistan, Marriage is considered an institution of power for men, as they think of themselves as superior and try to control women's lives. West has acceptance for Singlism, but in Pakistan, singlism is considered a weird phenomenon because pre-marital sex is a sin. Moreover, Single women deny the traditional life-cycle models.

"Legal sex is a big reason people in Pakistan get married" (chap#18 P. 188).

To some extent, singlism is accepted by men, but single women are considered imperfect in Pakistani culture. Besides this, singles are considered less worthy, frustrated and abandoned. Being single does not mean a person lacks something in his/her personality. Alys is sick of this hypocrisy and double standards of society. Alys wants to be in a relationship with someone who can understand her imperfect personality and respect her opinion. Mrs Binat used to say who would marry her daughters but never asked whom they would marry. Alys says:

"I am not useless or good for nothing. I do not want to get married just for the sake of it. I do not need to" (Chap#16 P. 171).

At the novel's end, all prejudice is sorted out, Bungle proposes to Jena, and they marry. Darsee and Alys fall in love, and they marry, too. Darsee has set aside his pride and pays attention to Alys because she possesses a superior and unique personality. Alyssa comes from a household that is considerably lower class and kinder. However, since she demonstrates that a woman can be strong and independent, her character is one of the best in literature. She does not care about his arrogance till he becomes humble. When she realises the truth, Alysba also succeeds in overcoming her prejudice against Darcy as being untrue. Marriage is a bond of love for them. The choice to be married should be left up to the people who will be a part of this relationship. Their union is an

example of economic merging when one person falls while the other rises. Mrs Binat's three daughters are married and happily settled in their lives, and Mrs Binat takes a breath of relief. The most prominent element, "id," is now satisfied because her desires have been fulfilled. All her prayers are answered. Mr Binat advises his daughters that they may return to their fathers' homes if they get any trouble in their husbands' homes. Thus, this novel has a happy ending. Alys defies traditional norms and conforms to her unconventional views.

6 Conclusion

Marriage is an old phenomenon. Although its dimensions and contents have changed during human history, its universality remains the same over time and space—this novel is concerned about Pakistani culture, particularly marriage. The idea of marriage being less about one's heart and more about one's wallet is repeated throughout the story. Pakistan is a place where marriage is mandatory, and single persons, especially women, are criticised. Society believes that a single woman cannot survive alone in this cruel world and that woman is dependent on man. Feminist opposes this idea. However, Pakistani traditions are not frozen, but the pressure to get married is still extreme. Now, there is the transition of ideas; some women have enough power to oppose this culture of marriage and also have enough power to earn bread for themselves without depending on men. This novel focuses on the description of the character's psychological development. Kamal also deliberately pays attention to the psychological changes of characters and how their lives are affected. Sexual drive is one of the more significant factors in determining someone's psychology. In the case of Lady and Sherry, this factor is very prominent.

We find four marriages in this novel. Each marriage has a different purpose, and each character has deep meaning. All of the characters in this novel have different attitudes towards marriage and life. Darsee and Alys' marriage stands for love and compatibility. Sherry and Kaleen's marriage is a product of social traditions. Lady and Wickaam's marriage are the result of sexual gratification. The marriage of Bungles and Jena stands for conventional norms and affection. So, we can conclude that Society and norms also play a vital role in someone's psyche. Marriage is not a life goal but a part of life. Single persons are not less worthy. They are also respectable. The stereotypes of being marriageable are inappropriate. It is an individual's matter to marry or not.

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Appendix

The novel *Unmarriageable*, written by Soniah Kamal, is a contemporary retelling of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, set in Pakistani culture. It explores the societal and capitalist conflicts surrounding weddings in Pakistan, a country where the middle class struggles to meet their financial needs while also participating in culturally significant activities that require substantial funds. The mothers are eager to arrange marriages for their daughters, while the fathers prioritise financial considerations. The story takes place in Lahore and Dilipabad, shedding light on the challenges faced by traditional Pakistani society even in the modern era. The protagonist, Alysba Binat, is a strong-willed character who openly opposes societal norms such as early marriages, the pursuit of wealthy spouses, class divisions, and arranged marriages. The novel delves into

important themes such as materialism, feminism, the institution of marriage, and the fight against conservative mindsets. It offers a compelling exploration of the social issues prevalent in Pakistani society.

Thematically, the novel holds immense importance as it addresses the ongoing conflicts within Pakistani society regarding crucial social issues. Despite the advancements and growing sense of freedom, many families still adhere to traditional stereotypes and impose forced and unwanted marriages, particularly on girls. This remains a major challenge faced by our younger generation. Furthermore, social institutions play a significant role in shaping societal norms and influencing individuals' perspectives. As a result, specific segments of society continue to perpetuate exclusionary thinking. The responses from parents and female members of society, who view a woman's worth as being dependent on agreeing to marriage proposals, exemplify the impact of societal norms on people's mindsets. In Pakistani society, marriage is seen as necessary for women's safety and security. There is a strong focus on materialism and wealth, often seen as a source of protection and freedom. Unfortunately, women are often marginalised and considered the most insecure members of society. They are expected to serve as housemaids, while women in Western societies have more opportunities for employment and independent careers. It is a cultural issue where women are viewed as domestic helpers rather than equal members of society. After marriage, women are often seen as the head of the household rather than prominent members of society. This can make women feel that their social skills and status are being undermined. Challenging these societal norms and working towards a more inclusive and equal society for everyone is important.

It is unfortunate that women in Pakistani society often face challenges when it comes to finding husbands on their terms. Society sometimes labels them as materialistic if they want to improve their financial situation or fulfil their social desires. A girl's value is often tied to her relationship status and having an acceptable proposal. This thinking limits women's success and reinforces stereotypes that they can only be successful if they have a suitor ready to marry them. We need to break free from these stereotypes and create a society where women have the freedom to pursue their happiness and success, regardless of their relationship status.