

**Citation:** Ishfaq, F., Nawaz, A., & Saddique, K. (2022). The Nuptiality of Arranged Marriage Traditions Leading to Generational Gap and Modernity in How it Happened by Shazaf Fatima Haider. *Global Language Review*, VII(II), 489-499.  
[https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022\(VII-II\).40](https://doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022(VII-II).40)



▪ DOI: 10.31703/glr.2022(VII-II).40

▪ URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022\(VII-II\).40](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/glr.2022(VII-II).40)

▪ Vol. VII, No. II (Spring 2022)

▪ Pages: 489 – 499

## The Nuptiality of Arranged Marriage Traditions Leading to Generational Gap and Modernity in How it Happened by Shazaf Fatima Haider

### Faiza Ishfaq

Visiting Lecturer, Department of English, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

### Arshad Nawaz

Lecturer, Department of English, Government College University Faisalabad, Sub-Campus Hafizabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

### Kalsoom Saddique

Lecturer, Department of English, Minhaj University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: [Afzaalkalsoom@hotmail.com](mailto:Afzaalkalsoom@hotmail.com)

(Corresponding Author)

- p-ISSN: 2663-3299
- e-ISSN: 2663-3841
- L-ISSN: 2663-3299

**Abstract:** *This paper aims to explore the conflict between the younger and older generation due to the two extreme beliefs and rigidity towards their notions. It attempts to achieve the objective of exploring the idea of arranged marriage and other marriage traditions as portrayed in How it Happened by Shazaf Fatima Haider. Using the qualitative method of research, this paper uses multiple secondary texts to analyze the primary text in light of tradition and modernity and generational conflict. It critically analyzes the chosen novel in the light of three different texts focusing on modernity and tradition. The primary text is evaluated in the light of texts by famous critics, that include Social and Cultural Transformations in a Muslim Nation by Mohammed Abdul Qadeer, 'The Problems of Generations' by Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim and The Consequences of Modernity by English sociologist Anthony Giddens. This paper finds out that it is due to the generational gap and modernity that the younger generation is standing against the older generation in the pursuit of pre-arranged marriage traditions resulting in a clash between them.*

**Key Words:** Arranged Marriages, Generational Gap, Modernity, Rigidity, Tradition

### Introduction

This research paper attempts to analyze a text of Pakistani Anglophone fiction *how it happened* written by Shazaf Fatima Haider. The text will be analyzed through the lens of Pakistani tradition and culture as Haider has explicitly elaborated on them through her characters in the book. Shazaf Fatima Haider was born in Islamabad in 1982 but later she moved to the United Kingdom to pursue her

Master's degree in Literature and lived there. Despite moving to a Western country, she claims herself to be a Pakistani writer instead of a diasporic writer. According to Haider, she is "unashamedly Pakistani", she asserts that she "still hears Pakistani voices and stories" (Haider, 2019) so she attempts to jot those things down and write about them creatively.

Her writings have autobiographical elements in themselves, as Haider herself

admitted that she writes about her society but also about her “own experiences”. She belongs to a Shia family in Pakistan and so inscribes about them in her first book in a comical way. Haider uses the tool of humour to make a social commentary on the indigenous culture and traditions which puts women in the status of a mere commodity that is to be sold at the best price during the time of marriage (Aggarwal, 2016).

Thus, the autobiographical rudiments in the book make the research close to reality. It is her life that has remained a constant inspiration for her writings, while writing about the local people she also focuses on her native audience, their real lives and problems and emphasizes that she creates literature “for a very desi audience” (Haider, 2019). It is the similarity between real life and fiction which makes the research nearer to the pragmatic and realistic grounds.

*How it happened* is a book consisting of strong characters whose tales and perspectives are equally important to shed light on the concerns of the people. Thus, Haider has attempted to create “well-rounded characters” (Haider, 2019) and “denigrates the idea of arranged marriages in the guise of humour and is a sad portrayal of the society where women are not even considered as human beings” (Aggarwal, 2016). The text shows the culture and traditions associated with arranged marriage particularly as practised by Bandians of the Bhakuraj family.

Viewed from a feministic perspective, “the book analyses, criticizes and debunks the tradition that allows its women to be treated like a chattel to be paraded and inspected by strangers with complete impunity and indifference” (Aggarwal, 2016). The text has received diverse responses from the redemption of people in it to the support of feminists (Aslam, 2013) and has allowed the readers to envision the adversities associated with the institute of marriage in a middle-class society.

It will be viewed in the research paper that the book consists of a family drama which plots the trajectory of two weddings in a Syed Shia family in Karachi” (Aslam, 2013). *How it happened* can be considered the comedy of manners representing the middle-class families of Pakistan and their marriage rituals (Haider, 2019). In this well-written social satire, “we are introduced to the unrest that can occur in well-furnished Pakistani drawing rooms when it comes to young people choosing their own life partners” (Mohyidin, 2013).

This book is considered to be an apt depiction of the people of different generations dealing with the idea of arranged marriages, it is through its characters and their behaviours that Haider makes it “slightly farcical” (Haider, 2019). It is quite evident that the reliance on the tradition of arranged marriage brings into light the prospect of the generational gap, this research paper attempts to explore how this generational gap widens and the younger generation becomes unable to cope with the acuties of the older generation about the perspective of arranged marriage and the cultural norms, traditions and moral values associated with it.

Concerning the level of reality being portrayed in the book, Haider herself claims that she undertones reality and gives the reader a faint recognition of multiple aspects of society. The author admits that the entire motive behind writing the text is to “show society a mirror of itself but in such a way that it would be able to digest it” (Aslam, 2013). The text views the contradiction of two distinct opinions of two distinct generations that causes conflict among them, and this paper views how this conflict becomes the conflict between modernity and tradition.

This research will use secondary texts to evaluate and analyze the research problems and to acquire the answers to the research questions. The first text entitled *The Consequences of Modernity* is written by a

well-reputed English sociologist Anthony Giddens. He is renowned for his aggregated views about modern societies and his famous theory of structuration. By using the concept of modernity and its impacts on society, this research paper will scrutinize how modernization and contemporary notions have altered the perceptions of society and individuals over time.

Secondly, the book views of Muhammad Abdul Qadeer will be kept under consideration in this research paper. This paper will employ the ideas portrayed in his text on social and cultural transformation in Pakistan entitled as *Social and Cultural Transformations in a Muslim Nation*. Through this medium, this paper intends to bring to light the accentuating challenges taking place between traditions and families – the younger and older generation.

On the other hand, prominent Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim's notions about generations will also be brought into play to form a critical analysis of the main text *and how it happened*. Mannheim formulates the argument that these are the generations which give a base for the comprehension of society. Mannheim's essay "*The Problem of Generations*" will be kept under consideration to converse about the essential facts which are concerned with the generations, and to show how the constant emergence of new members in the society is impacting the cultural process by highlighting the extraction of ancient generations in the process of traditions.

## Literature Review

Anglophone writers of the world have used their fiction writings to expose different perspectives of reality by using the medium of the English language and making their texts accessible to a wider audience. Pakistani Anglophone writers have done the same job and Pakistani English fiction has

become a medium of expressing society. It has received significant critical concentration but a large amount of literature written on Pakistani fiction confers about the issues having global significance like terrorism and fundamentalism. And the global trends of literary criticism relate to the concerns which are derived from the theoretical deliberations on topics like gender, power, violence and identity (Nazir, 2019).

Since most of the fiction writings of this part of the subcontinent revolve around global issues, this has also become an element of postcolonial fiction. But on the other hand, Shazaf Fatima Haider unapologetically writes about the subjects associated with the middle class of Pakistani society. Upon interrogating the reason behind her attempt to lift the curtain of middle-class society, she replied that many things can be explored within the set-up of a middle-class family (Haider, 2019). She further added that her writing approach allows her to discuss the values, cultures and inherited ideas possessed by them that are not kept under discussion because of their association with morality and dignity (Haider, 2019).

Similar to Shazaf Haider, Bapsi Sidhwa also used the power of the pen to express the hidden sides of her community. Her renowned piece of literature *The Crow Eaters* informs the people about the beliefs, myths, legends, rituals and numerous other aspects associated with her very own Parsi community (Pandey, 2016). As Sidhwa tells the tales of her minority Parsi community, Haider narrates the stories of people of the middle-class society of Pakistan.

The narration of the tales through the lens of the characters puts the text on realistic grounds and exposes the truth which is sometimes concealed or less talked about in a subtle literary way. Accordingly, the chosen postcolonial text views the significant realities of Pakistani society, the author without getting involved in any political

means and describes the labyrinth of different affairs which include matters concerning religions, prejudices and beliefs of common people related to marital affairs (Akram, 2022). Thus, Haider highlights the prospects of political and religious influences on the lives of the people. It has also been observed that Haider has successfully layered culture and religion with each other, she concentrated on the actuality that at the back of each custom there was a sacred justification and the people attempted to make a connection with the belief by assuring a detachment with a different sect. (Akram, 2022). These norms lead to the idea of marriage, the treatment of women and differences between the generations. Haider is studied as a feminist writer who unrepentantly reveals the plight of women, their life bound by social and cultural norms as well as their challenges and issues. Haider showed the lives of Pakistani women and highlighted the major concern of child marriage (Tabassum, Ifzal, & Murtaza, 2021). Hence, she is one of those South Asian women writers who have contributed their say in highlighting the unseen and less talked about realities of their respective communities. Their art has broken the silence and retells the tales of family and community. These writers are artistically using their circumstances and native life as a source of their writing and as a consequence conceal the real world (Pandey, 2016).

She projected the ideas in her novel within the sphere of cultural beliefs, her ideas reflect upon the traditions of the older generation and the modernity of the younger generation. "Haider while highlighting the social morals has mixed up the old and new moralities. (Akram, 2022, p. 7). Keeping this subject of patriarchy under consideration, it is shown how women are unable to make their own decisions and how they are deprived of their consent and choices, this alarming indecisiveness paves way for the men to rule and eliminate women's self-

esteem (Tabassum, Ifzal, & Murtaza, 2021). The dependency of females on males shows the constructed boundaries for women and the limitless liberty of men as aptly portrayed in *how it happened* and sketches the heartrending image of the society where females have to suffer because of the wrongdoings of males. Moreover, through the lens of customs and traditions, Haider has shed light on the institute of marriage and the rigidity of older generations and the contemporariness of the younger ones. The author is also believed to highlight the institute of marriage within the tribe as the source of differences in classes and their positions in society.

Haider vividly points out that what people go through during the time period of marriage arrangements, it is assumed that the bond is made on the basis of a clan and particularly linked with the same religious group. It is shown that the differences between different sincere groups create an environment of pride and higher societal position (Akram, 2022).

"Juxtaposition of Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction" states that it is the younger generation that is most of the time driven by the vigour of modern development and is compelled to adapt to the material and contemporary development. The cause behind their desire is their life in a post-modern world, living in this modern-day realm it is unavoidable for them not to delve into the facilities and benefits of society. And simultaneously the culture and tradition are the ties tied to the younger generation which are difficult to cut (Nazeer & Yaqub, 2019). Thus, their desire to adapt to a modern world and their inescapable cultural roots cause the conflict. Viewing the attitude of the younger generation towards the traditional and rigid concept of arranged marriage, it is noted that in South Asian countries the proportion of youth willing to choose their partner is increasing in number. (Zaidi, 2002).

The generational gap is prominently depicted in the story, and many reasons behind this can be deciphered. Haider has explicitly shown “a stiff arrogance of the first generation in developing bond and association with the specific spiritual group and further urging the matrimonial ties to be established inside and never allowing a contrary situation” (Akram, 2022, p. 11). Keeping into account the trend of love marriage over arranged marriage, it is studied that Pakistan is similar to other parts of South Asia, where middle-class families encourage arranged marriages. And couples, particularly the females who have eloped from their homes without the consent of their families are more at risk of becoming the victim of subject violence. Thus, there remains the possibility of violence and hostility accelerating toward the people who defy the norm of arranged marriage (Das 1995; Mody 2008 as cited in (MAQSOOD, 2021).

Haider through the young characters as her mouthpieces shows the resistance of the young generation towards the old cultural traditions. She has shed light on the contemporary perspective of South Asian society. Her text shows how tradition and modernity are binary opposites and their existence in a single society causes upheavals.

Tradition and modernity have traditionally been viewed as diametrically opposed concepts that cannot coexist. It has been observed that old social structures may sustain modernity and that modernity need not always weaken them. Traditional societies can nonetheless have a modern mentality and worldview despite being structurally homogeneous and normatively unchanging. It is wiser to merge the two phenomena and accept their contrasts because modernity's growth in current countries cannot be completely stopped. (Nazeer & Yaqub, 2019).

Moreover, the studies show that the text combines the positive and negative aspects of

Pakistani society, its culture and norms. Similar to writers like Bapsi Sidhwa, Kamila Shamsie and Daniyal Mueenuddin, Shazaf Haider has aptly reflected the concealed realities of her society through the medium of the English language. Her contribution to Anglophone literature is pertinently known for explicitly showing the contrasting side of tradition and modernity. There have been many studies which highlight that Haider in her text mirrors the adversities of women in a patriarchal society, it shows the clash between generations and the aspect of marriage which becomes the pivot point of her thematic concern of tradition versus modernity. She takes the assistance of her striking humour and intellectual wit and brings to light the secreted realities of Pakistani society. Hence the text elucidates the truth and the horrendous consequences of the contrasting culture.

The review of literature examines the research done on the chosen text *How it Happened* and attempts to figure out the research gaps, one of which is the tradition of marriage as a source of intensifying the generational gap between the traditional older generation who stick to their values and customs, and the contemporary younger generation who attempt to adapt themselves in the modern environment and milieu. Hence, this research paper will draw attention to the institute of marriage and particularly the concept of arranged marriage as the source of escalating the generational gap in Pakistani society as portrayed by Shazaf Fatima Haider.

## Theoretical Framework

This research paper uses a qualitative method for research to meet the research objectives. It critically analyzes the chosen text and evaluates that according to the given research objectives. *How it Happened* by Shazaf Fatima Haider is taken as the primary text, while research articles, journals and other relevant pieces of literature will be used

as the secondary sources. The theoretical framework includes the evaluation of the selected text through the lens of a few critics such as Anthony Giddens's concept of Modern Culture in his text *The Consequences of Modernity*, ideas of Muhammad Abdul Qadeer in his text on social and cultural transformation in Pakistan entitled as *Social and Cultural Transformations in a Muslim Nation* and *The Problems of Generations* by Karl Mannheim would also be kept under consideration.

### Analysis and Discussion

Haider's novel *how it happened* tries to bring into light the aspect of contemporary Pakistani society in which the cultural practices and norms regarding the prospect of marriage are confronted by the younger generation. But these cultural practices seem outdated to the youth. The novel gives an insight into the arranged marriage tradition in the Bhakuraj family. The term tradition is often used in Pakistani households but we need to closely observe what tradition is and how it affects our social life. "Tradition is described as any human custom, value, institution, or artefact that has been passed down from one generation to the next. Certain traditions unquestionably play a bigger role in culture than others. Some are passed down from the distant past, while others are passed down only via one generation. Similar to how some customs are unique to a certain area or caste/clan, others are practised by everyone in society. Traditions cannot be uniformly opposed to the principles of modernization given the diversity in their composition and breadth. (Qadeer, 2006).

The text revolves around the tradition of marriage, which according to the older generation is arranged in the right way, while the younger generation advocates otherwise. This reflects the generation's approach towards tradition and modernity and becomes the main cause of conflict between

generations. As in the text, Saleha highlights the marriage traditions and elaborates, that no one of our female relatives had escaped from the sacred tradition. Each one looked into a silver mirror put on her lap at the ceremony Ar-see-masaf to see her spouse and the Representative of God on Earth, just catching a fleeting glimpse of the face that would rule the rest of her life. (Haider, 2012). Saleha is of the view that it is prudent to explain how holy the halo of prearranged nuptiality is that it is hovering around our family honour. And she states that we have to depend on elders for the management of all proposals and we must never take any matter into our hands.

The primary text of the research reflects on the conflict between tradition and modernity which are often taken as counter-narratives of each other but a wiser approach would be to consider it as a part of the development of the human spirit. A Hegelian concept is that any idea or thought can be defined by the process of the history of human evolution but here, evolution is not just oriented to the physical adaptation of humans but also the psychological developments of perspectives and the development of narratives they possess. And these are the psychological developments of different generations which Haider has aptly depicted in her debut novel.

The term generational gap can be more appropriately defined in the dimension of tradition and modernity, as the novel *how it happened* also counters the same line of argument. Here the characters depict two stages of the evolution of history, the current modern generation of Zeba, Haroon is a modernist and Dadi is portrayed as a traditionalist, a former part of history by default. The Matriarch of the family, Dadi was measured as an absolute spinster during her time because her marriage was arranged and then un-arranged for consecutive three times. Here the question arises is this

narrative of tradition vs modernism the first of its kind that humanity has faced in this process of evolution?

Giddens' statement that "according to evolutionism, 'history' can be recounted in terms of a 'storyline' that imposes an orderly picture upon the mixing up of human experiences' provides the explanation for the response to the above-mentioned question. History "begins" with small, isolated hunter-gatherer civilizations, progresses through the establishment of pastoral and crop-growing groups, and from there, to the foundation of agricultural states, which is when modern societies in the West first emerged." (Giddens, 1990). If tradition and modernity are two narratives in contemporary times then the world surely has gone through several orders and narratives of history from feudalism to Asiatic modes from hunters to cultivators and the development of tradition continues till now. With the development of human history question arises was the development of history as the whole process of perspective development a continuous process or were there several breakers on the way or more lucidly "discontinuities". (Giddens 1990)

The novel how *it happened* while keeping the notion of marriage into consideration involves the discontinuities associated with the modern world and these discontinuities might be highlighted in the light of traditions because for some people the transition from tradition to modernity is not easy. This is shown in the text as the character of Dadi explicitly entails that it is difficult for her to adapt the modernity. This difficulty might be due to the inherent sense that our times were better as she usually clouds herself with nostalgic memories of her past time and her tales of Bukhraj and this rigidity becomes the cause of the generational gap.

The issue with tradition or traditional persons is their strong reluctance to adopt the slightest change around them because it

can break the sand castle of their traditions. To avoid that, the character of Dadi resorts to manipulating the younger generation by telling tales of Bukhraj which serves as an ultimate guide on the way she wants her grandchildren to live their lives. As Giddens talks about the discontinuities he talks about the transformation of tradition into modernity as quite swift as compared to any other transformation. Moreover, this modernity shadowed tradition so fastly that some people got stuck in that whirl as a result they couldn't keep pace with changing times and started idolizing their old values in the name of tradition. It is shown through the character of Dadi, that she is fed up with modernity and whenever she encounters any narratives of modern times she confines herself to her old tales psychologically she tries to impose her narratives on others just to have desired results she transforms tales to her convenient results. Thus, this plays a major role in escalating the generational gap.

The disagreement and divergence between generations are portrayed through the characters of Dadi and Zeba, who belong to two different realms of ideas and perspectives. Dadi had faith in a few fundamental things which include "spices, prayers and arranged marriages" (Haider, 2012). Moreover, "she repeated the tale of her marriage often because it illustrated a philosophy she had ingrained in her daughter and her daughter's daughters, there was greater romance in arranged marriages than in the irrational immorality of love marriages" (Haider, 2012). While on the other hand, Zeba is the representative of the modern progressive generation and is the eldest granddaughter who interrogates her grandmother with a question, "Dadi, surely someone in our family must have married for love? All good girls marry boys of their mother's choice that was the predictable reply that Dadi has given to Zeba in terms of love marriage (Haider, 2012)".

The narrative about the transformation and development of modernity has also been deeply analyzed by Haider in her novel where the character of Zeba depicts how modernity has influenced our narratives due to the interconnection of the world. Our narrative and perspectives have changed as Zeba talks about how she wants to marry someone who can give pleasure to her but Giddens explains that this change occurs quite rapidly and it is quite difficult to interpret it as it is the case with Dadi that she is unable to grasp the narrative of Zeba regarding marriage for pleasure. The phenomenon of tradition explained by Giddens entails the trust which traditionalist people put in their ancestors. Their approach can be more empirical in the sense of learning and relying on past values as Dadi consider that the sole way of living a successful life is her traditional way. These two narratives have taken place as counter-narratives as Zeba is to Dadi, as Giddens further elaborates that in the inherited idea of modernity there is always a contrast with tradition (Giddens, [1990](#), p. 36).

Another incommensurable issue which Haider encounters is how the generations interact within one vicinity. The norms or culture of the previous generation affect the new generation and are sometimes perpendicular to the current social order. This issue of generations is also addressed by Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim. His text "*The Problems of Generations*" explains the phenomenon that different people gather information in two ways one from direct experiences or the other from the past of others but the directly gathered information has much profound impact on human narrative development.

Mannheim talks about the binding power that how information acquired through personal experience serves as a binding force as we can observe the character of Zeba which is considered a constant antagonistic force towards Dadi because she is acting on the experience of her own time

e.g. the culture of dating is what is now part of the social order of current generation. This antagonist force and distinct views about arranged marriage play a vital role to formulate a significant generational gap. Moreover, when Mannheim talks about the moulding ability of the younger generation is the phenomenon which Haider entails through Zeba because she is dating a Sunni Muslim boy which is considered a sin being a member of a Shia family as claimed by the traditionalist Dadi. But since the wave of pluralism and the mitigation of sectarianism in the current world spread, this narrative met its death and new narratives were formed where things are discussed more openly concerning traditional people e.g. Zeba use words like "orgasm" openly and left Dadi in complete shock. (Haider, [2012](#))

When social narratives and practices are performed by several generations they are known as traditions which are held sacred for several people as a pathway to prosperity but modern time is inherently attached to constant changes and these changes are more rapid as a result several narratives were under constant change and couldn't turn themselves into traditions or they were in transition mode. The lack of transition and acceptance become the reason for conflicts and gaps between generations (Mannheim, [1952](#)).

And Haider reflects on how these traditions become the cause of conflict. It is said that if traditions are the guide to life then why it is often observed that people resent the traditions we observe, this behaviour is usually on the account of the younger generation because their narrative and perspective building is under development as Haroon proposed girl in her working space and it was against the tradition of the family. Sometimes traditions are not stagnant as usually proclaimed about them, they transform and adapt to new forms as it is witnessed that Dadi being a strong supporter of arranged marriage accepts Haroon's bride



may be as compensation that at least she is a Shia, but it still transformed the tradition in one way or another as Qadeer explains “certainly, Pakistan’s experience bears out that tradition does not just die out in the face of modern forces. They are reinvented and reincorporated to meet new challenges” (Qadeer, [2006](#), p. 22).

Since Haider has depicted a typical middle-class household in Pakistani society where traditions are formed as a result of several differences based on religion, ethnicity and caste. The same culture has been shed light on in *How it Happened* as Dadi insists that the Bandian promoted arranged marriage since the start because that is the only religious method to get married. She believed in the superiority of Bandians over everyone else. The female author in *how it happened* truly depicts how the intimate relationship of an individual with a homogenous social group takes place and how this is given the name of tradition because the aura of an individual is usually surrounded by people just like themselves and any heterogeneity is unacceptable in traditional families of Pakistan.

Another factor which plays important role in the formation of tradition in Pakistan is sectarianism; people adhere to their sect so rigidly that they consider other sects as enemies or inferior to them. Especially, in Pakistan sectarianism has widened the gap of nationality to the extent that any inter-sect activity has to face severe opposition as was the case with Zeba’s affair with a Sunni boy. The novel explains how the process of matchmaking is nothing more than a circus where girls are paraded, observed and even weighed. Sometimes even a character certificate is granted by elder females in society. Though this process of matchmaking has gone through several transitions the degradation of females remains there. As Qadeer affirms, particularly among boys, education and industrial/professional employment encouraged new marriage

expectations. Despite the elders’ veto, boys gradually started to be involved in the selection of their partners. At the time of independence, these were the accepted practices for matchmaking. Films portrayed romance as a challenge to conventions, with heroes and heroines caught between love and upholding family honour. (Qadeer, [2006](#), p. 193).

If we observe the current generation, we see that it is caught between changing times and due to this, the norms are changing and now people are seeking different methods to connect; that is why the matchmaking industry has also seen some drastic changes as “A whole generation has been caught in changing norms” (Qadeer, [2006](#), p. 194). Similarly, Haider in her text has shown how these changing norms are becoming a hindrance to the assimilation of the concepts and notions of two different generations, causing the idea of an arranged marriage to become a reason behind the generational gap. But one thing in this whole parade which is regressive is the role of women as mere commodities and this treatment is not just a result of patriarchal regression but also a matriarchal one because when a girl is transformed into a mother or mother-in-law she is the one who carries out all the patriarchal oppression on the younger people as the novel entails how Zeba is served on her grand auction and the instructions of Dadi are observed more patriarchal and she gives instructions like, “she should be brought in with a dupatta on her head” (Haider, [2012](#)), “she must not wear red, which would make her look too eager to be wed” (Haider, [2012](#)) and she “should never have strong opinions of their own, only those of their husbands or in-laws” (Haider, [2012](#)).

Pakistani traditions and culture do have the ability to adapt but the process of adaptation is solely oriented to the people who are blindly following their traditions which are costing people’s happiness and often lives, how can our tradition serve as a

pathway for our development when they are costing our happiness as questioned by Haider through the words of Zeba who is the female rebellious character of the novel,

What a legacy you've given us, to suppress all-natural emotions and think that loving someone is impure. How can you expect me to be quiet and let you decide my future when you show absolutely no regard for what I want? (Haider, [2012](#)).

## Conclusion

---

Conclusively it can be stated that the cultural traditions and practices which the family Matriarch, Dadi, indicative of outdated culture, tries to pass on to the younger generation become the cause of disagreement. Because the methodology used by Dadi and her persuasive and dominant attitude lead the younger generation towards rebellion. She tries to keep the traditions and norms of the past alive in front of the new generation. But the younger generation on the other hand is

looking at those cultural norms and traditions from a critical point of view. Young people like Zeba and Haroon are the ones who believe in progression and have room for the acceptance of new ideas in their lives. Haider through the power of the pen highlights the significance of coexistence and empathy.

This paper concludes the severity of elderly people toward their traditions and their ignorance of contemporary beliefs become the momentous cause of the divergence between the two generations. And as portrayed in *How it Happened*, the idea of arranged marriage and the older generation's rigidity and holy approach towards it cause the curse of the generational gap to grow. And the author of the novel also draws attention to the existence of acceptance because that is something which moves people to change, and calls the rigid people "living life as a sheep" because of their inflexibility toward modern notions (Haider, [2019](#)).

## References

---

- Aggarwal, I. (2016). *Book Review: How It Happened by Shazaf Fatima Haider*.
- Akram, D. Z. (2022). Sectarian Marriages: A critical analysis of religion and marital bond in a Pakistani Novel. *Rahat-Ul-Quloob*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.51411/rahat.6.1.2022/341>
- Aslam, A. (2013). *What Just Happened? An Interview with Shazaf Fatima Haider*. <https://desiwriterslounge.net/articles/what-just-happened-an-interview-with-shazaf-fatima-haider-or-how-shazaf-poked-fun-at-everyone-and-got-away-with-it/>
- Giddens, A. (1991). *The consequences of modernity*. Polity Press.
- Haider, S. F. (2012). *How it happened*. Penguin Books India.
- Khosa, M., Bano, S., Khosa, D., & Malghani, M. (2018). Appropriation in Shazaf Fatima's novel and how it happened? *Walia journal*, 1-6.
- Mannheim, K. (1952). "The Problem of Generations". In *Kecskemeti, Paul (ed.)*. *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge: Collected Works, Volume 5*. New York: Routledge.
- Mohyidin, R. (2013). *Review: How It Happened by Shazaf Fatima Haider*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/797403/review-how-it-happened-by-shazaf-fatimahaider>
- Nazeer, S., & Yaqub, D. M. (2019). Juxtaposition of Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction. *City University Research Journal of Literature and Linguistics*, 2(1), <http://cusitjournals.com/index.php/CURJLL>
- Nazir, F. (2019). Deconstructing 'Deconstruction' Deconstructing 'Deconstruction': Postcolonial Theory, Postmodernism and Poststructuralism. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335788774>
- Pandey, I. (2016). Ethnic Anxiety, Cultural Clash reflected in the work of South Asian Writers. *Literary Yard*, 6. <https://instagram.com/onkarsharma2178/>
- Qadeer, M. (2006). Pakistan - Social and Cultural Transformations in a Muslim Nation. *Pakistan: Social and Cultural Transformations in a Muslim Nation*. 1-322. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203099681>
- Tabassum, N., Ifzal, M. O., & Murtaza, G. (2021). Socio-Cultural Trauma and Gender Objectification in Haider's *How It Happened: A Cultural Feminist Study*. *Global Social Sciences Review*, VI(II), 30-37. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021\(VI-II\).04](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-II).04)