



## A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Aysha Baqir's *Beyond the Fields*

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### ABSTRACT

Women have been the victim of gender stereotyping and gender discrimination since decades. They are fighting to have the recognition of their worthy identity under the movement of feminism across the globe. The present study has the motive to highlight this issue through the stylistic analysis of the novel, *Beyond The Fields* by Aysha Baqir. Feminism and Stylistics are two different fields but the term was coined by Sara Mills in her book *feministic stylistics*. Sara Mills's model of three level analysis has been applied to portray and reflect the gender stereotyping present in typical Pakistani society. The application is done at word level, phrase and sentence level and discourse level respectively. The analysis reveals that gender stereotyping is present in typical mindset of rural community. For this stereotyping, sexism is adopted towards the female gender and the model analyses this through the structure of linguistic patterns. The study opens the minds towards certain enlightenment to break the manacles of gender stereotyping and gender discrimination through the mode of education to lit the dark minds.



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## INTRODUCTION

Feminism is the name of a doctrine that advocates the equal rights for the oppressed gender namely the woman. Feminism aims to struggle for the balanced social role of the women folk. Feminism is one of the sociological theories that make the analysis of the status of women in society and aim to get better lives for them. Feminism does not belittle the opposite gender rather it works for equality not for the superiority of the backward gender.

The idea of feminism has not emerged instantly. It has an established history following the waves of the movement. Its earliest movement can be traced back to 18<sup>th</sup> century but Suffragette movement for the voting rights of the weak gender gave it a prominent rise to the first wave. The first wave was concerned mainly with voting rights so it got the claim of political theory. The second wave emerged in late 1960s and early 1970s in Europe and North America with the goal to awake consciousness about sexism, economic stability and political liberation. The third wave was motivated by middle class women realizing the issues of race and sexuality. With the start of new century, the feminism has turned into common phenomenon realizing that women can be as strong and powerful as men if they are given the chance to be.

### **Feminist Stylistics**

When we move towards literary texts, a theory or approach finds its expression in the choice of linguistic features. The rhetorical figures and syntactical patterns are chosen for a literary style. This comes under the umbrella of field of stylistics. Stylistics is the analysis of language used in literary texts to explain how specific meanings are created by using specific language. Different literary texts go with different stylistic aspects following a definite idea associated with literary texts. The works with the projection of feministic mode follow the patterns of feministic stylistics.

Montoro (2014) defines feministic stylistics as “the sub branch of stylistics which aims to account for the way in which gender concerns are linguistically encoded in texts and which attempts to do so by employing some of the frameworks and models pertaining in the stylistic tool kit”. The term ‘gender concerns’ takes with it variety of meanings that has resulted in the notion of feminism. Feminist stylisticians consider the gender issues and their embodiment in literary texts.

### **Beyond The Fields: A Story of Female Resilience**

In Pakistani society, the unconventional role of women is still not an acceptable option. Women are still fighting for the justified representation. The issue has been raised by different literary figures to fight against the marginalization. *Beyond The Fields* by Aysha Baqir (2019) also raises the voice against female oppression. The novel is a good choice for feministic stylistics application as the usage of words and linguistic patterns highlights the stereotypical roles taken by female gender in contemporary Pakistani society. *Beyond The Fields* is the moving account of Zara’s struggle to get her twin sister Tara back. Zara has to go through a hard journey to accomplish her goal. But her sufferings bring the worthy results. The tragedy commences when one afternoon, Tara is raped in the fields. The horrible reality of the village gets surfaced where home is the best choice for a woman while fields are meant for men. When a woman enters into the world of man, she is robbed of her honour. The novel addresses other gender biased issues like marriage, education, divorce as well. The novel carries multiple female characters and through these characters, the state of female in a bleak society can be visualized ideally.

### **Research Objectives**

The present study has specific aims that are as follow;

- to identify the words, phrases, sentences and discourses linked with the sexism

- to highlight the stereotypical representation of women in Pakistani society as presented by Aysha Baqir in her novel *Beyond The Fields*
- to give certain enlightenment regarding the possible solution of the issue of stereotypical oppressed representation of women folk in Pakistani society

### **Research Questions**

1. How does Aysha Baqir highlight the gender issues through the sexist language in her novel *Beyond The Fields*?
2. How does Sara Mills' feminist stylistics model get a reflection in *Beyond The Fields* by Aysha Baqir?
3. What are the ways through which gender biased stereotypical roles can be modified in the selected text?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study has a potential significance as it is aimed at giving expression to gender stereotypical vocabulary including words, phrases and sentences used by Ayesha Baqir in the novel *Beyond The Fields* using feministic stylistics. The term was firstly coined by Sara Mills and she has the credit of this field of stylistic analysis. Sara Mills makes textual analysis by using a minute linguistic study. In present study, Sara Mills' model has been adopted to make the interpretation of stereotypical representation of female in an oppressed social sphere

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

'Given that language is an instrument for the assignment of the phenomena of human experience to conceptual categories it is clearly not simply a mirror that reflects reality. Rather it functions to impose structure on our perceptions of the world. Language...is highly selective and in this sense...the process of linguistic encoding involves a significant degree of abstraction from 'reality' (Lee 1992, p. 8).

Norman Fairclough in his work *Language and Power* asserts that his motive is to raise the consciousness regarding language that how language plays its part in the domination of one group by another (Fairclough 1989, p.4).

Language analysis can be helpful in understanding the gender differences. Analysis of language conveys a great deal about self or subject (Millard, 1989). Feminist Stylistics represents an urge to analyse and explain the gender issues in terms of linguistics. McFadden analyses that literature depicts cultural aspects and gives the chance for its alteration so does the feministic stylistics. It can either raise voice to eliminate oppression of females or to perpetuate it. Feminist stylistics gives shape to the questions that are necessary for the gender's autonomy. In what way, does language used in literary works give representation to women and their gender relations?

How can gender play its part in one's writings? Feminist stylistics analyses the texts focalizing the feministic perspective. It shows that there are linguistic terms for the subordination of women in society and these terms highlight the issue to move towards its elimination. Feminist styliticians deviate from the traditional way of language use and go with conscious approach by using dialectical features as well as forms of expression in the texts. This thing covers a vast range of issues that are tackled in literary texts with feminism as its underlying ideology.

Montoro (2014) holds that the term 'Feminist Stylistics' can be accredited to Mills (1995). Although others followed her example yet it is Mills who is the real figure coining the term. Sarah Mills holds that there is a diverse variety of definitions of Feminism. She shares a view that is held generally among the feminists. Mills propounds that males and females are treated differently and it is the female section that is the victim of oppression and subjugation. This part of the society suffers personally as well as institutionally. The society always works for the good of male gender and this gender is benefitted to the maximum. It proves that society has a patriarchal mindset. Although we cannot blame the whole male gender to get the advantage of this bias or to make allowance for perpetuation of the imbalanced approach. Sara continues that women are treated differently and as an ultimate result, they develop an inferior view of themselves and others also consider them as gendered beings (Mills 1995, p.2).

In addition to this, she maintains that there are significant -differences even among women namely the differences of wealth, race, education, age etc. All the women are the part of sufferings. But feminism is committed to change the system to make it less ruthless and oppressive towards female (Mills 1995).

Sarah Mills herself gives the definition of Feministic Stylistics in the way that the term 'Feminist Stylistics' has a phrasal nature consisting of two parts namely 'feminist' and 'stylistics'. Both the words have complexity in them and can be taken differently by the readers. But the phrase is comprehensive to make the illustration of the things. For her it is "an analysis which identifies itself as feminist and which uses linguistic or language analysis to examine texts" (Feministic Stylistics, p.1).

Mills (1995) presents it as a kind of stylistics based on political motivation with the aim to give awareness about the way gender is treated in literary texts. Feminist Stylistics sets a rationale to make textual analysis with this objective. Feminist Stylistics after Critical Stylistics is the powerful weapon to unveil and unmask the patriarchal ideologies and assumptions based on these ideologies (Blaine 1990, p.3).

Feminist Stylistics has the structure of sexist language to describe the unfair differences tackled with the consideration of gender bias. Mills (1995) upholds the theory of linguistic determinism that determine that the difference in structure of language is mainly based on the views people hold about the world. Our thoughts get its shape in the cultural patterns and the community we are living in. Feminist believe that circulation of the established thoughts and their language promote and strengthen sexism in language and ultimately in society. Nneka (2012, p. 1)) maintains that sexist language includes all but intentionally or unintentionally skips a gender that can be either of the categories. The issues of use of sexist language is debatable as some linguistics consider the use of sexist language to be the sign of sexist society while other think it to get the society sexist with its influence. Cameron 2005, p.12) asserts that language

gets a shape based on cultural norms and any culture is sexist following its own cultural set of norms and one culture is different from another culture on the basis of its sexism. Wareing makes a distinction between sex and gender. Sex according to him is a biological term while gender is socially constructed term linked with particular behavior (p.58). Sexism is encoded in language that decides that men and women do not have equal representation and one of the sexes is having lower position. Men are stereotyped at the cost of female disadvantage. Herman asserts that sexism is at the peak in lexical terms. He gives his stance an authenticity by giving the examples of sexism in linguistics. There is frequent use of pronoun 'he' in educational stuff to give edge to males. Female titles of Miss and Mrs. provide their sexual availability while there is only one counterpart namely Mr. for all men. Women are shown as belonging of men like 'John's girlfriend'. Bill's wife'etc. He shows that this phenomenon is applicable to almost all the languages where application of feminine terms over men is the subject of disdain while application of male terms over female makes their status upgraded. Lakoff in his book *Language and Women's Place* discusses that women are to experience linguistic discrimination in society. This takes its shape in two ways, the usage that is taught to women about language and the treatment they get through the use of language. In both the ways, women fall at the status of object of sex or a servant (p.4).

Mary Vetterling-Braggin (1981, p. 2) holds that sexism can be traced in a statement if it is strong enough to encourage oppression against the weak gender. Mike Bygrave (1991, p.14) asserts that the people who blame others for sexism in their language consider their own language purified and beyond questioning. Eberhardt (1976) discusses that sexism in language has short term and long term effects. It upsets peoples' relations and their self-image and confidence. Gender free language can be adopted as conscious choice to make people believe that the speakers do not take world as something to be dominated by males. Selven, Saravana, & Sugana (2013) assert that Language is biased and leads towards marginalization of subdued sex. There is chauvinism in language that holds a belief that males are superior and women are inferior to men. 'Sons and Daughters'. Adam and Eve' are just the pairs but the preference is given to male counterparts in the context. Wood & Eagly (2002) discuss that men and women are to adopt different roles. There are certain expectations attached to both the sexes. Men are likely to adopt tasks engaging strength, power and dominance while women are supposed to take roles confined within the walls of their home. It is this thing which makes males as agentic and females as communal. All this stereotyping is reflected in language use. (Frye1981, p. 9) asserts that sexism in language is not a kind of use, it holds certain beliefs about sexual differences and their impacts. Spender (1981) discusses that language is in fact man-made. The women have to view themselves through the gaze of MEN and they are not supposed to create new meanings.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is carried out with qualitative research method and the novel has been analyzed by applying feminist stylistics model of Sara Mills in her *Feministic Stylistics*. Sara Mills's book is a stepping stone in the field of feministic stylistics. Other stylisticians followed her in the application of the term.

The model of analysis has been divided into three levels namely word level, phrase or sentence level and discourse level. Word level analysis tackles gender discrimination through the

usage of sexist words used in text. Phrase or sentence level is the part that makes analysis of the sentences projecting sexism towards the oppressed gender. Discourse level analysis takes into account large structures examining the overall sexist behavior. Carter & Simpson (1989) give a comprehensive view of textual discourses. Discourse, according to them, not only makes the analysis of context at micro level but also at macro level analyzing the wide social sets or patterns. At this level, the lexical items are connected with the significant ideology.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study has been done with the feminist stylistics approach on a novel written by a female writer to reveal the sexism and gender stereotyping. Feminist Stylistics is theory or approach that gives insight, awareness and logicity regarding the female situation in a text and ultimately the message to the society in general. The approach embodies the gender issues and language at a time. Sara Mill's model of feminist stylistics raises the issue of sexism and gender stereotyping analyzing words, phrases, sentences and discourses. Her model has been discussed from two angles i.e. the production and the reception. According to her, sexism in text does not come into existence abruptly. There are certain factors that are at the screen behind to encourage the text production. Every society follows certain constraints in language and then there are sociological factors as well that put their impact on the production of text. Reception of the text is influenced by the audience and readers who buy the text.

Sara Mills speaks in favor of her model in her book that the model will help the critics to evaluate sexism in language of the text as the same evaluation cannot be done with "traditional code model". That model is not good to observe the reason behind the production of the text. Apart, the traditional model studies the individual as isolated identity and not as the members of whole group to see into a collective identity.

### **DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS**

Beyond The Fields by Aysha Baqir is the novel tackling certain gender issues. The novel depicts the narrow mentality of the people living in rural setting of Bahawalpur. The story revolves around the protagonist Zara and Her twin sister Tara. Tara has to face a tragic fate in the name of rape. The incident changes their lives altogether because Tara now appears to be a person bringing dishonor to their family. She is transported to Lahore and she is married to a person without the knowledge of his whereabouts in order to avoid the public shame. A newspaper piece brings again turmoil in their lives when her husband is revealed to be a person running a brothel. Zara, irrespective of her social constraints and limitations, steps out to make the salvation of her twin sister possible. She sacrifices her own virginity but is determined to break the shackles. Zara, in the novel, can be seen a ray of hope for thousands of other women living a miserable life. The novel addresses the issues of gender inequality, gender oppression and patriarchal supremacy in the typical Pakistani society.

### **Analysis at Word Level**

Sara Mills has given reference to gender biased individual words and their analysis. According to her, the gender roles get influenced by the words we use. Mackay (1983) has stated that the use of generic 'he' is somewhat confusing as it does not make the sense whether it is something generic or gender specific. He gives the example of statement, 'the more education

one attains, the better his occupation is likely to be. Professors, scientist, engineers are the labels attached commonly with males while nurse, model, secretary are the terms normally linked to the females.

Sara Mills discusses that there are different types of the words like generic nouns and pronouns, insulting names for women, derogatory terms for females that are responsible for sexism against women. So a term can be sexist if it promotes unfair discrimination (Mills,2005). If we make the analysis of *Beyond The Fields* at word level, there are certain words or terms that specify gender roles or gender stereotyping. It can be divided into three parts namely Generic Pronouns, Generic Noun and Naming and Andocentrism.

### **Generic Pronoun**

The Generic Pronouns in the novel has been used according to the gender specification. For the male figures like Abba, Omer, Saleem, Khalid Chacha, Jameel Sahb, Riaz Chacha, Kamran Sultan, Akbar chacha etc. have been tackled in the male gender and pronoun 'he' has been used as generic pronoun. The characters from the opposite gender like Zara, Tara, Amma, Kulsoom Chachi, Bari Masi, Nasreen Masi, Sehr Madam, Gloria, Bushra, Surriya, Saima Appi, Nazia, etc have been given the Generic Pronoun 'she' following the gender distinction. 'They' as Generic Pronoun has been used for both the sexes but the context of the usage makes its application clear.

### **Generic Nouns**

Generic Noun is used for the purpose of generalization. It is used as a symbol for the whole class or group. Kept in rural setting mostly, *Beyond The Fields* is replete with the repeated nouns used in typical rural setting of Pakistani society. The male gender is addressed in the words like Abba, Chacha, Bahi, Sahb, shopkeeper, driver etc. to fix these terms for the male gender. The opposite gender namely the female is addressed in the way like Amma, Chachi, Nanny, Sister, Appi Masi etc.

### **Naming & Andocentrism**

Cameron (1990) asserts that language itself is sexist as it gives representation to male point of view following the beliefs based on stereotypical standpoint. According to Sara Mills, sexist words can have different effects on women including the effect of feeling pressurized to think of themselves in a negative way. (Mills,2003, p.72)

In the Book I of the novel *Beyond The Fields* namely JOURNEY Zara is referred to as "jaahil" by the bus driver in a roared voice (Baqir 2019,p.6). The word is strong enough to declare the intellectual mark of a female in a sexist way. Interested in the only purpose of a female life namely 'marriage', Amma has shown Zara to the seekers and is rejected on the grounds that is not "White Enough" and does not have much of a 'Dowry' (p.8). Both the terms are considered something very much essential in the typical eastern society and specially the Pakistani. The terms have negative connotation in them to exercise sexism against female gender. Describing the old city in Lahore after the night prayers, professor Mrs. Niaz tells that it is pulsing with the beat of "Drums" and the 'tinkle of Anklets' (p.10). The words in the context are of negative value as both the sounds describe female in the capacity of prostitute that is gender stereotyping against the helpless gender. 'Chores' is the word that has been used at many places in the novel.

Giving voice to the routine of line, Zara exclaims” As soon as we learnt to walk, Amma set us on’ Chores”.(p.33)This term has a negative application in the context of the novel as the female gender is supposed to be kept within the walls of the home and chores is decided as the sole purpose of their lives. In order to please their in-laws, they must be good at chores.” Match – Making Aunties” and”Dealers” (p.56) are two derogatory terms used to involve sexism in language. The role of Match-making is discussed in negative colors as the females are always in the search of their hunt and they play the part of a dealer involving the tricks to tackle the marriage knots like a business. The term ”Watta-satta” (p.60) is again a term promoting sexism against the female gender. It is a stereotypical word used in the typical and backward Pakistani society for two exchanged marriages without giving place to the female will and approval. Wearing of ‘Burka’ is something presented horrible in the context.”I was not going to let a burka beat me”(p.67) is conveyed by Zara to get rid of this traditional way to save the so called izzat attached to a female. Burka is declared as a cage to captivate the passions, dreams and everything of a female. Rape and Zina are another two names when attached with a female are considered to be sexist in nature. Riaz Chacha declares,”Tara Beti will have to prove she was raped or they can accuse her of Zina”(p.115) .A girls is robbed of her honour but in the name of rape but she cannot clear herself or prove herself innocent. ’Bitch’(p.206) is again a derogatory sexist term used for oppressed gender to get it fallen at this mean status. ’Client’ is the word that is used in the novel in negative terms”” she got lucky when my client demanded two for tonight”(p.215).Client is the term used for males on. For those who come to the helpless prostitutes to satisfy the sensual lust at the brothel.

### **Analysis at Phrase& Sentence Level**

The second part of the model is related with the analysis of language beyond the level of word i.e. The level of phrase and sentence. Phrase and sentences provide sense according to their context, usage history and background knowledge that is needed (MILLS,2003). The analysis is taken at four further levels dividing this level into its components.

### **Ready-Made Phrases**

These are the expressions having some negative connotation for female gender. Or it is portrayed in this way. In it, pre-existing knowledge has a special place that establishes a weak persona of a woman.” The horn blared and” childlike eyes” looked up from the folds of cloth” (p.6). The phrase childlike eyes have been used for the innocent look of the eyes a female has. It is that innocence with which the male world tries to suppress them and crush them. The only purpose of Zara and Tara’s mother is to get her daughters married because to the rural world, marriage is the only way to provide happiness to the females.” She has shown me off to aunties wanting ‘good girls’ for their nephews.” (p.7) The expression ‘good girls’ is again marked within commas to give it the negative meaning. Good girls are those with bright face and having a command over the domestic chores. ”In Amma’s world, there were three types of girls. First class girls married whom their parents chose, second class girls never married and third class girls married against their parents ‘wishes”(p.8).Three terms ,first class, second class and third class are used as common phrases for the things in order to rate them. But here, these are used with girls or females to make their rating only on the issue of marriage that is something personal.”Dancing Girls”(p.10) is a phrase used for prostitutes who try to please the males with their bodily skills.”Pithu gol garam” and”Chuppan chhupae”(p.28) are the local phrase used for two games. But in the novel, these are allowed to female till certain time,”Amma said that



running out was haram. Playing in the streets was haram”(p.28)..”Another girl,’ she had mourned”.(p.32). Although the phrase is simple and commonly used but in the context, it is strong enough to mark sexism. Zara and Tara are born as twins but after the birth of one girl, the dai has expressed mournfully when second child is also a girl. “If I rebelled, I dishonored them and my family name”(p.49).The family name and dishonor are the two expressions that go parallel in the novel and both the things are attached with the female only who are held responsible to maintain or shatter the family honor. Zara feels herself caged in the so-called social constraints set for a girl in a conservative community. She expresses” ‘I felt like a goldfish in a plastic bag”(p.49.”Tell me who is that pretty thing”(p.58) and ”Shy little thin”(p.59) are the simple sentences but are expressive to declare the status of a female as thing. The landlords’ men are described as “Wild Dogs”. The term is commonly used but here it is used for the oppressive and violent nature of men in general.

### **Metaphorical Representation**

Metaphor in this view is not seen as a literary form but as an integral part of thinking used at the level of language (Johnson, 1980).

At metaphorical level, the novel is having some good choice” A tiny lie can push you down a slippery slop” (p.7). Here, the statement has a thematic significance as the twins’ parents lie to save their face after Tara’s rape. But Zara, when steps out to free her sister, thinks that the lies can push a person to a position from where there is no way to come back. She does not believe in the lies to conceal the reality about a female.”Abba had threatened me to chop into mince if I shamed the family name” (p.20) is again metaphorical and proverbial. The statement shows a hard, violent and intolerant approach of strong gender against the weak. To cover the head is something consider mandatory in typical conservative society. Bari Masi declares it in the way, ”Cover your devil’s tail for shame. Grabbing my braids, Bari Masi had pulled me inside” (p.31).”My obedience was a yardstick of my parents’ standing in our villag” (p.49) is metaphorical statement used for the expectations of obedience attached to a female kid. In rural world of Zara, it is considered to be a yardstick that can provide support to a parents’ persona in the village. ‘Fields, mud hut and burka have been used metaphorically in the statement,” I ran away from the fields that fenced me and the mud hut that buried me. I had speed and strength. I was not going to let a burka beat me”(p.67).The things are discussed as shackles for female freedom. Zara wants to get rid of the slavery she is bound to follow.”A thick gold chain looped from her nose to her ears, reminding me of a buffalo led away by its owner”(p.94) has metaphorical representation where a bride is taken as a buffalo with nose chain and that is being led by the person who has its possession. In deciding about the marriage knots, preference is always given to sons.”I like you family and your daughter, but my son is a rare jewel. One in million”(P.130) is the conversation testifying the edge given to male factor. Dreams of females are neglected in a typical setting in order to snatch the basic rights from them. Zara has certain dreams to make her future with studies. But her parents are the representatives of the rural mindset not letting the daughters to get enlightened. She states,” The viper was back, coiling around my windpipe, crushing my dreams” (p.145) at the time when her Amma does not give a hopeful reply to master sahib about her education. Marriage proposals and specially the good marriage proposals are something very valuable in Pakistani society. It is expressed by Kulsoom Chachi,”A good proposal is like a pearl in oyster shell”(p.154).”Moth danced a frenzied dance around the naked lights”(p.220) has again metaphorical significance as in the backdrop, Zara

loses her own virginity to get her sister back. The statement is bleak enough to project the tragic fate of Zara. Women in the typical mindset is often expected to be dumb not to speak a word against oppression.”Their silence strangled them” (p.271) is conveying the things in the right fashion when silence is there to strangle the voices. Zara, at the end of the novel, is somewhat successful to achieve her goals at the cost of her virginity even. But she gets inspired and declares,” A surge swelled inside of me.I soared higher and higher. I was up in the sky. Flying beyond my village, beyond the fields” (p.276).

### **Jokes & Humour**

The novel has a serious tone but at some places, sentences convey humour but with sexist approach. Sexism can get a cover of humour and reader can perpetuate sexism in text if it makes him laugh (Mills,2005).” When Amma went inside to nap, leaving us with more chores, we created adventures. Washing clothes, we pretended to fight monster scrawling up the river bank; soaking rice and lentils, we stirred the brew to poison the witch who had captured many of the villagers: dusting we searched for hidden treasures, pretending to be sailors from Treasure Island. We grew up imagining new adventures and creating characters out of the stories”(p.33).The adventures seem to be silly and humorous but infact, they are the dreams of the oppressed gender to be active and adventurous like the opposite gender. The women under wears are also tackled in humorous but sexist way” ’I giggled with my cousins, spotting the heaps of women’s underwear stuffed with foam”(p.159).

### **Transitivity Choices**

Internal and external experiences are expressed in different transitivity patterns that are the part of overall functions of language (Wales, 1989). Transitivity choices are related with the representation of actions, the different roles the participants take and the decision making capacity. All these are shown syntactically through transitivity choices (Mills, 1995). Transitivity choices are dealt at material action intention, mental action intention, and relational process with the actors in the background as male or female agents. Transitivity choices decides about the active our passive state of any character and females as the victim of sexist attitude can be easily comprehended through transitivity choices (Mills,2005)

In the novel, transitivity choices are distributed between male actors and female actors showing them as active or passive.

“Why did I suddenly feel trapped” (p.43) (mental action with female agent)

“And what if Abba finds out” (p.62) (mental action with male actor)

“I caught Tara’s warning look” (p.77) (mental action with female actor)”

“NO one in our village will forgive her” (p.80) (mental action with male as actor and female as passive)

“His eyes scanned the horizon” (p.106) (mental action with male actor)

“I nodded ,feeling my throat tighten” (p.111) ( relational process with female actor)

“If we can not prove rape, the criminals can accuse Tara”(p.115) ( relational process with male actors and female as passive)

“Abba’s hawk like eyes fixed on Amma”(p.145) (relational process with male as actor and female as passive)

These are few of the sentences chosen to apply the transitivity choice concept.

### **Analysis at Discourse Level**

Discourse level analysis is taken above the level of word or phrase and sentence. The first part is related with the making of characters. In this regard stereotypical notions are taken into account while describing the characters. It is based on views of society about how men and women are.

Beyond the Fields is a novel replete with female characters and some characters are described in the physical capacity.” She was a narrow-jawed woman with Kohl-lined eyes and crimson lips”( p.8) These comments are made by Zara about Professor Mrs Niaz traveling with her in the bus. Talking about foreign maid, Gloria, Zara states” I stared at the lithe woman with long dark hair. She glided forward in a loose black top and tight black pants. Her arms and legs moved fast like a spider. Gloria.” (p.14). The statement is enough to verify the role of Gloria in the story. Zara herself talks about her own complexion in negative terms exhibiting the gender stereotyping enclosed in the color of skin. ”In days, Tara’s yellowness had faded to a creamy peach color. My redness had cleared too, but the sunbeams had done their work leaving me dark as berry. I knew I was darker than Tara much Darker than Amma” (p.33) The gender stereotyping is seen even among the female characters. Zara, at Saima Appi’s wedding states some horrible lines, ”She resembled an evil clown. The ghost like foundation had cracked. Blood red lipstick smeared the sides of her lips”.(p.94) This type of stereotyping is visible again in the talk of a female looking at the twin sisters with the purpose of ‘rishta’.”They look old enough. Good height and slim. And thick long braids’I see. Can’t stand girls who primp and fuss before marriage” ( p.96)

The discourse level deals with gender specific larger structures as well. From these structures, one can assess the sexism in language.

“As soon as we learnt to walk, Amma set us on chores. She woke up us at dawn. we cooked breakfast, dusted the rooms, swept the floor, sorted grains, fed and washed the livestock” The feeling of oppression and sexism in the language can be traced in this discourse” This was my village, obsessed by honour and shame. Fathers had hacked their daughters into mince, buried them alive or drowned them for shaming the family name. The men got rid of anyone that threatened their family honor and family name” (p.122).

### **CONCLUSION**

After making the analysis of *Beyond The Fields* at three levels proposed by Sara Mills in her book *Feministic Stylistics*, it is evident that gender stereotyping is present in the typical Pakistani society. Female gender is always oppressed having a weak representation in life. Almost all the characters in the novel are stereotypes of a conservative and reactionary society. The character of Abba who has hawk-like eyes, the character of Kamran Sultan, the character of

Jameel sahb, husband of Saima Appi, etc are the male agent who believe in male domination. In order to maintain this, they are ready to sacrifice even their blood relations and those relations who have sacrificed their all for them. On the other hand, we have the weak and fragile characters like Zara, her twin sister Tara, Amma, Sehr Madam, Surriya, etc who are victimized since the day of their birth. This thing is also surfaced that not only men but also the women are involved in stereotyping. The character of Bari Masi, Sakina Masi and so-called match-making aunties is also deplorable. They try to victimize their own gender to give more strength to sexism and oppression against the females. As the novel portrays the rural setting where the gender oppression is at its peak, it can pave the way to modify the traditional norms. A big deal in the novel is there for the need of female education. It is the tool of education that can modify the stereotypical gender representation and Zara carries this message, the message of dream of education and this dream can bring a positive change it becomes a reality. Another issue through which the stereotypical representation can be modified is the free will regarding marriage. Marriage can be a personal matter for both the sexes but in the typical society, this matter is dealt by others specially in case of women. Aysha Baqir awakes a positive mentality regarding it.

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