

## “Power dynamics and control in Pakistan Drama Baaghi”

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### Abstract:

Victimized by society-power-control and influenced by contemporary Pakistani society, the Pakistani television drama Baaghi (2017), with references to real life story of Qandeel Baloch, is a story of a young girl who attempts to strike a balance between her traditional and modern social life. In this article, the researcher will be examining how the drama presents all the types of systemic oppression familial, marital, institutional, and societal through the prism of its main character, Fauzia Batool. As the story starts with her fight against the patriarchal dominance of a village, the quest of transforming to a new territory of exploitation develops in the city the dimension of the media, fame, and limelight lead her to. The play shows the way in which power is exercised but not just explicitly like honor killing but also culturally and gendered expectations including moral policing. Nevertheless, with its crushing suppression devices in place, Baaghi shows Fauzia as a woman of defiance and free will, of making important choices and expressing herself. In this paper, I will argue that this movie serves as a critique of the patriarchal system as well as a cultural text posing critical questions on gender and autonomy and the price of going against social construct.

**Keywords:** Baaghi, Qandeel Baloch, (Pakistani) television drama, power dynamic, gender roles, patriarchal, female agency, honor killing, media discourse, social control, feminist criticism, cultural power, gender-based violence, agency, identity politics

### Introduction

The Pakistani TV plays have been in the crucial position of mirroring and defining the discourse on gender, power and social norms in the Pakistani society. The bold representation of the institutional forces that create and even demolish female agency in Pakistan can be found in such a series as Baaghi (2017), an autobiographical series based on the life of a social media starlet Qandeel Baloch. The play includes a three-fold narration that reveals the functioning of the patriarchal society through the force of the family, marital interactions, the cultural milieu, and the media space. The systems of control that, intersect and regulate the freedom of women also constitute the limits of appropriate female behavior in the society (Ali, 2018; Shaikh, 2020).

Baaghi is the film story of a young woman, Fauzia Batool living in a conservative village who tries to regain her identity and control over her life under the punishing society which does not allow people to choose their way to live. Her transformation into the fateful character of the controversial figure of a Kanwal Baloch is directed by defiance, however, as well by the tightening up of the mechanisms of both public and personal control, which culminate in her sad death in the name of honor. Academic researchers suggest that honor killings in South Asia do not represent individual violence practices but rather an extension of patriarchal authority to ensure conformity with gender structures by inhibiting the sexuality and independence of their female population (Chesler, 2010; Khan, 2019). In this setting, the motion picture of Baaghi is not merely the dramatization of a particular tragedy of life, but it stands

out as an artifact that reflects the cultural criticism that focuses on the gendered nature of power that permeates the Pakistani society.

It is also the theatre room to criticize the media in creating and dominating female accounts. The rise and fall of Fauzia as well as the moral outrage she receives as a result of her popularity raises the question of how women in the public spheres are treated and how their visibility is seen as a good yet their non-conformity is shown as they are punished for it because they do not live up to certain ideals. Through her mix of personal (specifically a focus on her motherhood) and political elements, Baaghi forces the audience to question who is allowed to be heard and what happens when a woman fails to live up to the standards. This paper will examine in what way, the film Baaghi reflects on power and control on different levels of society and the way the protagonist challenges them at the same time however at a huge personal sacrifice due to acts of agency, identity performance, and finally rebellion (Zia, 2017).

It has been quite some time since the Pakistani television dramas have been both pivotal in creating and relecting on the values of the society which primarily refers to gender roles and power relations (Ali, 2018). These plays are a cultural reflector, and reflecting the intricacies of family, honor and social demands in Pakistan society. That being a common media, they dictate the way people in the society perceive the place of women, and in most instances, they end up supporting the existing patriarchal standards. Yet, we are experiencing an increased proliferation of stories that subvert these traditions and provide more complicated accounts of female agency in the recent years. This change has heralded a new media environment that needs academic consideration (Shaikh, 2020).

Among such plays, Baaghi is distinguished by an aggressive storyline centred on the life of Qandeel Baloch, a controversial social media figure whose biography can be seen as the symbol of social problems related to gender, control, and power in Pakistan (Khan, 2017). The play deals with the choice of Fauzia/Qandeel who sought her independence in a society in which gender representation is highly controlled. With its emphasis on personal and mass transformation that occurred in society, Baaghi is a relevant text in examining power relations in Pakistani media. The development of the defiance of Fauzia is the crucial insight that the cultural tensions on female agency exist (Zia, 2017). Feminist media theory and critical discourse analysis are able to draw on how the role of power and control in media is achieved through construction and contestations of gendered identities (Fairclough, 1995; van Zoonen, 1994). These frameworks demonstrate that Baaghi does not only present a personal narrative but it also deals with societal macrosystems that are in control of female conduct. In its storytelling and visual elements, the play provides criticism of patriarchal authority as well as an indication of restraints that face resistant women. Such bifurcation places the Baaghi as a paradoxical culture text that depicts continuous debates of gender and dominance (Noor, 2022).

Exercising power in Pakistani society is well achieved by controlling women bodies and conduct; a topic that is dealt with extensively by the studies of honor culture (Chesler, 2010). Moral policing and honor killings are the forms of conformity enforcement and media represent it as well as confront it, in rare cases. In that matter, Baaghi dramatizes the results of female rebellion bringing to the surface the dangers, which accompany going against the societal taboos. Such a story is, therefore, a critical statement on the underlying violence of gender relations (Khan, 2019).

The reception of the audience of Baaghi may also tell much about how the present-day population of Pakistan approaches gender issues (Rashid & Zaman, 2018). The responses of viewers vary between the support and adoration of the courage of Fauzia to the criticism based on the concept of conservative values. This polarization indicates the overall cultural anxieties and identifies television as an area of ideological bargaining. The discussion of the drama in social media shows how the media rhetoric can represent and shape the general opinion on the issue of women rights and social justice (Social Media Monitor, 2018).

In addition, the visual and narration style of *Baaghi* is based on the cinematic elements to develop a theme of oppression and resistance (Chambers, 2015). The scattering of light, framing, and color symbolism carry the drama involvement with power structure a step further, and instead of looking at a personal story, the reader becomes engaged in an aesthetic criticism of societal rules. This stratification makes sure that the drama is more effective and reinforces the significance of content and form analysis within media studies (Majeed, 2012).

Overall, *Baaghi* is an enriched reading to understand the issue of power relations and control in Pakistani media and society. The theatric presentation of the life of a woman who is breaking the walls created by the social construct of patriarchy allows the audiences to critically consider gender and their sense of agency as well as representations in the media. This paper seeks to examine these themes in *Baaghi* and contributes to the larger debates of media role in negotiating social change in Pakistan (Ali, 2018; Noor, 2022).

### **Literature Review:**

South Asian television tends to reflect and establish the existing social conventions which define and support gendered roles and patriarch culture (Liebes & Katz, 1993). Specifically, Pakistani dramas are a powerful tool of communication, which helps to determine and echo the opinion of society in terms of the role of women (Ali, 2018). These serials play a central role in passing cultural ideals; hence gender and media analysis of these texts would be relevant in the study. This background makes a pretext of analyzing *Baaghi* which deals with these rooted norms. The literature below positions *Baaghi* in context with other productions and the theorizations of media. This is because when there is some older people who are poor and in need of money, it is easier to quiet them (Liebes & Katz, 1993; Ali, 2018).

As the history of Pakistani drama goes, it has made women homebound- daughters, wives, mothers who uphold oppressive cultural beliefs (Shaikh, 2020). Nonetheless, a new trend of powerful female protagonists who do not want to accept typical roles has been observed in recent literature (Zulfiqar, 2021; Ahmed, 2019). These depictions point to the movement toward the stories of power and self-sufficiency. Still, they mostly stay anchored to conservative framing, as the advocates of rebellion and moral prudence. *Baaghi* is a perfect example of a dichotomy between independence and consequences. The examples of the external communication strategy to change an event culture are the influence of information (Shaikh, 2020; Zulfiqar, 2021; Ahmed, 2019).

The male gaze referred to by Laure Mulvey is a critical approach to female objectification through visual media, as precisely that which is the object of male observers (Mulvey, 1975). This dynamic is also replicated in the angle and framing of the camera, such as in *Baaghi* in which frames using the female body as fetish material are frequent within the initial scenes. The gaze, however, is thwarted in the drama, underlining the embodied quality of the presence of the Fauzia her voice is foregrounded more than her visual appearance. Liesbet van Zoonen goes further than this by noting the construction of subject-positions of gender identity by the media discourse (van Zoonen, 1994). see (Mulvey, 1975; van Zoonen, 1994)

Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a three-tiered model text, discursive practice, social practice for uncovering hidden power relations in media (Fairclough, 1995). Within Pakistani media studies, CDA has been used to unpack ideological messaging in dramas (Majeed, 2012). Through detailed analysis of *Baaghi*'s dialogues, framing, and character interactions, CDA reveals how patriarchal values are embedded in narrative structures. Such an approach allows us to understand both surface-level content and deeper societal implications. (Fairclough, 1995; Majeed, 2012)

Honor-based violence, particularly honor killing, is extensively studied in South Asia as a tool of patriarchal control over women (Chesler, 2010). In Pakistan, this issue is systemic and culturally

sanctioned in many contexts (Khan, 2019). Baaghi dramatizes this phenomenon through Fauzia's death, echoing national debates and legal shortcomings around honor killing. However, Shaikh (2020) warns that media often sensationalizes such violence, risking sensationalism over social criticism. Baaghi exposes this tension. (Chesler, 2010; Khan, 2019; Shaikh, 2020)

Feminist media scholarship argues that female negotiation of power in media representations can both challenge and reproduce patriarchal norms (Noor, 2022). When narratives depict women resisting in meaningful ways, they can prompt social reflection. Yet, if results are tragic, resistance may be depicted as dangerous. Baaghi reflects this tension: Fauzia's assertiveness empowers viewers but ends with her murder raising questions about the cost of defiance. (Noor, 2022)

Audience reception studies in Pakistan reveal strong emotional engagement with stories of rebellious women (Rashid & Zaman, 2018). Social media reactions to Baaghi demonstrate a split: viewers praise the narrative for its bravery while criticizing its melodramatic aspects and tragic ending (Social Media Monitor, 2018). This dichotomy between progressivism and traditionalism highlights how media can both reflect and challenge societal norms. (Rashid & Zaman, 2018; Social Media Monitor, 2018)

Qandeel Baloch's real-life story sparked moral panic and debates about female public visibility in Pakistan (Khan, 2017; Zia, 2017). Baaghi navigates these tensions, dramatizing her life in ways that critique moral policing while also dramatizing scandal. This duality underscores how media can depict social debate while reframing real events for narrative effect. (Khan, 2017; Zia, 2017)

Chambers (2015) emphasizes the use of cinematic techniques—lighting, framing, color—to encode themes in visual media. In Baaghi, darker tones and close audiences shots convey oppression, while brighter scenes correspond to moments of empowerment. A combined CDA and visual analysis illuminates how Baaghi crafts ideological messaging through its visual design. (Chambers, 2015)

The dramatization of real individuals carries ethical implications for narrative accuracy and collective memory (Ahmed, 2022). As a media biography, Baaghi shapes audience perceptions of Qandeel Baloch, emphasizing her agency while dramatizing her struggle. Such portrayals impact public memory and cultural understanding of her legacy. (Ahmed, 2022)

Religious identity and intercultural values often intersect in Pakistani media, creating tension between moral authority and feminist expression (Zia, 2017). In Baaghi, religious symbolism and moral discourse are interwoven with themes of autonomy and defiance, reflecting broader social debates between modernity and tradition. (Zia, 2017)

The study by Qaiser and Ali (2020) focuses on the ways in which the Pakistani television manipulates female bodies so that they become the kinds of places where moral anxieties lie. This is a larger negotiation in society about what the body represents, in this case Fauzia converts her body which was an object of policing into an object of empowerment in Baaghi. According to (Qaiser & Ali, 2020), the economy is characterized by the relations between the student and the organization.

Melodrama is an essential aspect of the South Asian narrative, due to which viewers are encouraged to make serious investments, but at the same time, there is a risk of a lack of novelty and an excessive emotional appeal (Shaikh, 2020). Baaghi exploits melodrama to make the themes of resistance and justice related to the specific scenario more significant, or, conversely, to run the danger of reducing important themes to the generic conveniences. (Shaikh, 2020)

Urdu television texts like the ones addressed by Zulfiqar (2021) and Ahmed (2019) tend to initiate cultural discourses about gender and identity since women can be conceived of as rebels. Baaghi follows this legacy, generating new-fangled conversation on moral standards, female power, and social prohibitions. It provides that the United States must join the common cause of humanity (Zulfiqar, 2021; Ahmed, 2019).

Strategy: response analysis shows a response to 50 percent positive with admiration of Fauzia resistance and 50 percent negative with reservations of conservative viewers According to [Social Media Monitor, 2018], in July, 2021 17 percent of all the experience and knowledge I have, 17 percent

comes from what you read on the internet, 17 percent comes out of my library, 17 percent out of my bed room, 17 percent out of my kitchen, 17 percent out of the cinema, 17 percent out of the meeting, 17 percent out of my magazine collection, 17 percent out of my bedroom, 17 percent out of what you read in the newspapers,. This bivalence highlights the idea of developments in terms of representation being dampened by continued observance of traditional values. (Social Media Monitor, 2018)

Integrating CDA and visual culture perspectives highlights how production choices reinforce ideological content (Chambers, 2015; Fairclough, 1995). In *Baaghi*, shadows and framing are purposeful, visually supporting themes of oppression and resistance. (Chambers, 2015; Fairclough, 1995)

Feminist film theory posits that screen visibility and narrative voice are critical for female subjectivity (Mulvey, 1975; van Zoonen, 1994). *Baaghi* grants Fauzia narrative autonomy but also portrays socio-cultural consequences for such visibility, echoing real-world tensions. (Mulvey, 1975; van Zoonen, 1994)

Ahmed (2022) argues biography in media can shape collective empathy and memory. *Baaghi*, as a mediated portrayal of Qandeel's life, invites moral consideration and cultural reflection on her choices, public image, and violent death. (Ahmed, 2022)

South Asian honor cultures often use storytelling to interrogate or perpetuate patriarchal norms (Chesler, 2010; Khan, 2019). *Baaghi* dramatizes the fatal cost of resistance holding a mirror to systemic patriarchy while sparking conversation about agency and justice. (Chesler, 2010; Khan, 2019)

Collectively, this literature establishes *Baaghi* as a pivotal case for exploring intersections of gender, media, power, and audience engagement in Pakistan. It highlights the value of theoretical frameworks like CDA and feminist media theory in unpacking ideology in televised narratives. (Ali, 2018; Fairclough, 1995; Noor, 2022)

### **Research Objectives:**

1. To analyze the portrayal of patriarchal power structures in *Baaghi*, particularly within the family and marital contexts, and how they shape the life choices of the female protagonist.
2. To examine the ways in which societal control is exerted through media and public discourse, and how *Baaghi* critiques the double standards faced by women in the public eye.
3. To explore the representation of resistance and agency in the character of Fauzia Batool, highlighting how she navigates and challenges gendered expectations.

### **Research Question:**

1. In what ways does the drama depict societal control through media, public discourse, and moral policing?
2. What narrative and symbolic functions does honor killing serve in the drama, and how does it reflect real-world gender-based violence in Pakistan?
3. To what extent does *Baaghi* challenge or reinforce dominant gender ideologies and cultural norms in Pakistani society?

### **Significant of the study:**

This study is significant in both academic and social contexts, as it contributes to the growing body of literature on gender representation, media discourse, and cultural politics in South Asia. By critically analyzing *Baaghi*, a widely viewed and socially impactful drama, the study sheds light on how mainstream media both reflects and shapes public understanding of power, control, and female agency in Pakistani society.

First, the research highlights how patriarchal ideologies are reproduced through familial, marital, and institutional structures, reinforcing traditional gender norms. Understanding these portrayals is

essential for unpacking the normalized oppression of women in everyday life, especially in rural and conservative settings where such narratives resonate deeply.

Second, this paper examines how media can be both a weapon and a tool of empowerment of women, to raise their voices and also to enforce the values of morals and social control. This study provides an idea of the relationship between visibility and vilification of gendered media narratives by analyzing the portrayal of public shaming, media sensationalism and moral policing as representative of *Baaghi*. Third, the study adds to the feministic debate by focusing on the notions of resistance. The experience of Fauzia Batool when she tried to live submissively and then tried to assert and stand up after that can create patterns to study how women can negotiate the territories of domination to claim their avalanche, even in the event of accruing death. Not only does it humanize seemingly controversial female characters, but it also disputes the mainstream narrative, turning them into stereotypes.

#### Research Methodology

In the current study, I am using qualitative research method that involves the application of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and feminist media theory to determine how the Pakistani television drama, *Baaghi*, uses the themes of power, control, and resistance in the life of Qandeel Baloch. Qualitative approach is the most appropriate in the interpretation of the media text that is filled with complicated sociocultural messages since it will help the researcher to work on the ideologies inherent in the language, format, and the visuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The main goal of the methodology is to critically approach the narrative and discursive parts of *Baaghi*, so as to perceive the exercise and confrontation of power in the story world. The play is also considered as a product of culture, that is it not only portrays, but actually constructs and influences values by themselves largely about gender, morality, as well as power. The author basing the research on the concept of entertainment shifts the status of *Baaghi* to a discursive space and creates different ideologies to behold (Hall, 1997).

The research applies the model by Norman Fairclough (1995) that has three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis as the major analytical framework. Fairclough argues that discourse must be analyzed on three levels; the micro level or the textual level to the meso level or the discursive practice level to the macro level or the social practice level. The level of text is dealing with the analysis of dialogues, camera angles, visual symbols, and the narrative techniques. Discursive level requires examination of the engagement of these factors with major ideologies in the society. Lastly, there is the social dimension of social practice which means linking the drama to other systems like patriarchy, media industries and the honor culture in Pakistan.

To complement CDA, the paper applies the theory of feminist media to question the representation of women within *Baaghi* and especially the main heroine Fauzia Batool. Noticeably, feminist theorists like Laura Mulvey (1975) hold that mainstream media would typically perpetuate the passive status of women as objects of the male gaze. The approach can also help in ascertaining the way visual and narrative decisions in *Baaghi* affirm or subvert stereotypical images of women. Moreover, Liesbet van Zoonen (1994) stresses that gender cannot be only depicted but is produced by media discourse an idea, which is at the center of this analysis.

The material used in the study has been obtained during watching the entire series (28 episodes) of the series *Baaghi*, which was released in 2017 by the Urdu1 television channel (produced by Paragon Productions). All the episodes were watched and then some parts were transcribed with important analysis. The researcher concentrated on the scenes that directly or indirectly were concerned with the issues of power structures, like family domination, forced marriage, emotional torture, media manipulation and honor murder. They were used to run through discursive analysis based on these scenes and make thematic coding.

The analysis of data commenced following the initial phase of open coding in which the major trends in dialogue, actions of the characters, and visual imagery were detecting. These themes were then

subjected to the wider categories of structural control and agency such as the patriarchal authority, media shaming, female resistance, and honor-based violence. It was an inductive and deductive analysis by being inductive in order to get the themes to emerge out of the material and deductive through the use of theoretical frameworks to interpret it (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Contextual and intertextual factors comprise media interviews with the creators and celebrities of the show, the response of the people on social media, and the response in Pakistani news. These outsider texts were studied to comprehend the uptake of the narrative of *Baaghi*, the interpretation that is given to the discourse and in some cases the counter discourse as understood by the general population. This strategy contributes to the placing the drama not only as the independent text but as the component of the extended cultural and ideology field.

In this study, ethical considerations are quite low in comparison, since the target of the research is a publicly available fictional media product. But the ethical sensitivity prevailed in presentation of the depictions, which are premised on a true-life story of a controversial figure, Qandeel Baloch, whose killing in the name of honor outraged the country and the whole world. It was avoided to sensationalize the problem and to discuss the topic in academic acceptance and with due consideration to sociopolitical meanings associated with it (Chesler, 2010).

### Discussion

There are multiple layers appearing in the analysis of *Baaghi* that are animated in the given simulation of power and the system of control, especially the way it applies to women in patriarchal systems in Pakistan. The drama, made through the character of Fauzia Batool, demonstrates the presence of gendered power on the personal, family, and societal level. Early into the movie, *Baaghi* establishes that the family is the centre of patriarchy, with male rule played by the father and brother of Fauzia determining the boundaries of their patriarchic rule. This is what Kandiyoti (1988) calls the so called patriarchal bargains where women find it necessary to conform to the codes of family honors to be able to make it within the machinations of the family even by sacrificing personal identity.

The resistance or rejection of forced marriage and striving towards independence is where Fauzia starts her fight to these structures of power. The play, however, highlights the fact that easing off the old confines will not necessarily make liberation empowerment since new norms of control are established in mediated cities. Although entertainment and modeling industry give Fauzia the exposure she needs, at the same time, those industries exploit her identity and turn it into an object of piece and sex. Kanwal Baloch marks her own body and power over the body and voice, but she also stands exposed to the moral police and constant shaming. This shows the critical work of Zia (2017) regarding how the Pakistani media was created to support the patriarchal values in the name of modernity.

The hypocritical attitude towards entering women in the work of *Baaghi* is one of the main tensions in the film. Fauzia is more condemned because of her sexuality and voice in comparison with the men who use, enjoy, and profit themselves with her sexuality. She is criticized of breaking social morals, yet her abusers and male admirers are not scrutinized. These are in tandem with the conclusions of van Zoonen (1994) who makes it clear that women who feature in the media tend to be subjected to codes of patriarchy, and whereby female presence is symbolic to lack of virtue and promiscuity. The presentation of this hypocrisy in the show creates a sharp commentary on the operation of society in forcing control even in areas that seem to be a place of freedom.

More so, *Baaghi* presents honor killing as the supreme weapon of patriarchal revenge. The fact that Fauzia has been killed by her own brother has symbolic meanings pointing to the forcible imposition of conventional codes of female behavior. As opposed to appearing as a spontaneous intervention of violence, her death is shown as all but a natural consequence of a culture that perceives female independence as disgrace. Literary critic Chesler (2010) has stated that honor killings should not be viewed as some isolated acts that happen but are rather culturally prescribed acts of gender control.

Baaghi is no different as it reflects that the legal system, law enforcement and the opinion that they hold always facilitate such crimes and commit crimes through silence or complicity.

Although the book ends tragically, throughout the story Fauzia is not only portrayed as a victim of social circumstances but she is elevated to the status of defiance and a model of change. Her transformation as a subjugated village girl to become a self assertive media person is depicted in a sympathetic and sophisticated manner. The play puts a human face on her drive, making her efforts not a fame-seeking drive, instead of a way of seeking dignity, independence and respect in a world that is out to get them. This conforms to the feminist theories which measures resistance as resistance through rebellion as well as through a daily struggle of self-definition and boundary-breaking (hooks, 1984).

Baaghi also requires a larger thinking about the statement of storytelling as a method of challenging the societal norms. Dramatizing the life of a woman who was a real person, whose murder appalled the nation, the show reclaims her storyline from the provocative media coverage and attempts to present her as a three-dimensional person with motivation not of her own creation. Although some critics claim that the play can even sensationalise her life, the main impact of the work is its ability to inspire empathy and even raise serious the question of gender justice. To that extent, it is a cultural intervention and a call to action.

However, it is necessary to mention that though Baaghi questions a lot about being a patriarch, it is at times dependent on melodramatic types that are typical of South Asian TV. Sometimes, the problems of Fauzia are simplified and referred to a victim and the show even tries to support the notion that women who disrupt the society cannot leave without doing some wrong. This is a wider pattern in media narratives because when female empowerment is achieved then, according to the logic of the story, the female must be punished morally or given a tragic ending instead (Shaikh, 2020).

### **Data Analysis:**

The data of the present research consisted of an entire series, the Pakistani telecom Baaghi, involving 28 episodes that were thematically analyzed in the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and feminist theory of media. This part presents the results categorized by the main theme content that helps to define the way Baaghi depicts the power and control, as well as resistance within the framework of the gendered social order. It was performed by viewing each episode, writing down key scenes, noting frequent tropes, and labeling major themes connected to the themes of patriarchy in the family life, media abuse, and violence on the basis of gender.

#### **1. Patriarchal Authority and Familial Control**

Among the most vivid findings that we derived out of data was the lingering family control on identity and decision-making among females. Fauzia does not have control over her education, career choices and marriage life even at the beginning. Her father and brother are drivers of classical values, who constantly refer to the ideas of honor and obedience. This is in tandem with what is referred to by Kandiyoti (1988) to be patriarchal bargains, where the roles of women are limited to the expectations of male relations. A very early rebellion, like refusing a forced marriage and a desire to work, results in attempts to control Fauzia by guilt- tripping and isolating her, thus preconditioning her coming later rebellion

#### **2. Marital and Emotional Abuse as Tools of Control.**

The data also point out the way in which relationships within a marriage recreates a patriarchal power structure, usually by means of emotional disregard and control. The first husband left Fauzia at the altar, and the second partner uses love to her control. These associations indicate the manner in which marriage which is mostly romanticized in South Asian discourses, can serve as a disempowering institution. Devices and Vignettes portray the growing lack of patience and mental collapse Fauzia is experiencing when understanding that being married could not protect her against the prejudicial



judgment of the society or gender and male privilege as one of the major points by van Zoonen (1994) concerning the gender experience in media discourse.

### **3. Media Visibility and Moral Policing**

As Fauzia becomes a celebrity in the name of Kanwal Baloch, the statistics indicate a massive change in the shape of this control. The media is a place of empowerment and monitoring. In as much as the existence of social media allows her to have a voice, it also subjects her to massive moral punishment. In several instances, television anchors, social critics, and internet users malign her actions categorizing her as an enemy of the Pakistani culture, Islamic values. This conforms to what Zia (2017) remarked that the media in Pakistan can be used to promote conventional gender behavior and shame women who want to make themselves easily seen in society.

### **5. Resistance and Female Agency**

The most frightening possible trend in the statistics, perhaps, is the fact that honor-based violence aimed to reign in female independence is increasingly becoming accepted as a matter of course. The story carefully sets the stage to the murder of Fauzia and presented it as a systemic murder and not a personal one considering that there is a culture that accepts murder in the name of honor. The act is not condemned to her brother, who is presented to be getting the social approval of the act. This confirms Chesler (2010) who argues on the idea that honor killings are a patriarchal instrument that forces conformity and benefits family image. The violence represented in the drama is highly emotional and critically judgmental in the ethical sense so that the viewer is confronted with the lethal aspects of unmolested power attributed to patriarchy.

The data also indicate resistance and the exercise of agency, the former becoming more pronounced, by Fauzia, despite the overpowering nature of the forces of control. She takes deliberate choices to abandon abusive settings and retake her own body and speak up in opposition to social hypocrisy. She gives a voice to the idea of fighting the rules of double standards, the privilege of men, and religious gated communities through her monologues on social media. These scenes, which do get punished, are subversive because they are against the kind of power stated by Mulvey (1975) that thinks of the female subject as passive. Since Fauzia is the narrator and the interrupter of her narration, she makes her presence a political act against any force.

### **6. The use of Eye and Symbol Language**

Another aspect of the drama that lends to the debate of control and resistance is the visual play. A dark light, close camera angles, isolated shots are often a metaphor to Fauzia, who seems to be trapped in the confines of her emotions particularly when she is home. On the other hand, the scenes where she puts herself in control of her image in social media or feels confident of herself are accompanied by lighter and wide-angle shots. These film ways help to emphasize thematic opposition between oppression and empowerment, showing that even the visual aspect of the play works in the favor of the ideological criticism in it.

### **Conclusion**

The Pakistani drama Baggie exuberates the politics of gender and power effectively in the Pakistani society. The series gives prominence to the individual empowerment against the societal oppressions through the life of Qandeel Baloch who disregarded societal restrictions, especially the patriarchal modes of control, which tame the female bodies and actions. The theme of oppression used to describe the plight of Fauzia shows the starkness of lives of women who dare to go against the norm hoping to please the masculine principle and it is this aspect of showing danger of female empowerment in conservative culture that is brought to light. Through this story we find revelation of the dominating role of honor culture and controlling of women through moral policing.

The Critical Discourse Analysis and feminist theory approach to the analysis of Baaghi show that the drama attacks power constructs but at the same time shows support. Although the character of Fauzia

has been allowed to speak her voice and make relevant choices, the story line that ends with her dramatic death signifies how far the rebellion of women can go in popular media. The visual aspects such as framing and use of colors, as symbols, help the text to present her captivity and rebellion, which is an indication that the society was in a state of transition between the two proceeds. This contradiction of representation throws into variation the contradictions of the Pakistani television gender approach.

The reactions of the audiences to *Baaghi* are additional evidence of how female independence and female autonomy are complex issues when it comes to culture. The fact that people are both admiring and uncomfortable with Fauzia because of her breaking of the gender norm is an indication of the larger issues that society has with changing notions of gender. The reception of the drama shows that media does not only reflect the cultural values but it also involves itself directly in constructing arguments about morality, honor, and rights of women. The interaction makes *Baaghi* an actor in terms of raising issues on gender-based violence and social justice in Pakistan.

The ethical implication of playing real-life stories, however, is there. As much as *Baaghi* turns the tables on humanizing Qandeel Baloch, eliciting compassion, it poses a danger of sensationizing her life and her passing, which is the conventional criticism of melodrama. The dilemma of authenticity versus entertainment also begs the question of the role of the media producers to represent people that are less privileged. Nevertheless, no one can deny the cultural influence of the play, which introduced critical social issues into the core of society and led to the consideration of gendered constructs of power.

To conclude, *Baaghi* is a reflection as well as an intervention regarding the media production in Pakistan, power, and control, and gender. It is an attempt to oppose the patriarchal world in that it represents female rebellion but it also takes away some of its glory with an unfortunate twist in the tragic end that reminds a viewer of the existing risks that women face whenever they dare to cross the boundaries. The play therefore represents the constant process between modern depiction and the established order of the society, and the potentialities and boundaries of television as the medium of social change.

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