

**RESEARCH PAPER****Coming to Terms with Inter-sectarian Love Courtship and Marriage  
in Haider's *How It Happened*****<sup>1</sup>Sadia Qamar and <sup>2</sup>Aamer Shaheen\***

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper closely reads Shazaf Fatima Haider's *How It Happened* (2012) following the observations made by Simone de Beauvoir in her seminal work *The Second Sex* (1953). Beauvoir, talking about marriages, favours love marriages over arranged marriages. Focusing on the characters of Dadi and her two grandchildren siblings: Haroon and Zeba, the novel depicts the social picture of Pakistani society vis-à-vis the settlements of love marriages and to top that even inter-sectarian marriages – a phenomena yet quite rare in Pakistani society. The dramatic countering positions, on the issues of marriage, between Dadi and her grandchildren (Older/Traditional Generation versus Younger/Modern Generation) help showcase the familial complications and provide the readers a vantage point to reconsider their social understandings through the prism of Haider's novel. Haider, through the turns of events within a Shia Syed household, brings to fore, though in a comedic vein, the gradual progress in rigid traditional families for accepting the younger generation's stances of inter-sectarian love courtship and marriage enabling them to overcome the rigid positions vis-à-vis making matches that the older generations as those of Dadi's could not come to terms with.

**Keywords:** Courtship and Marriage, *How It Happened* (2012), Inter-sectarian Marriage, Love Marriage, Shazaf Fatima Haider, Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1953)

**Introduction**

Shazaf Fatima Haider's *How It Happened* (2012) is a light humorous comedy revolving around the domestic issues of inter-sectarian love courtship and marriage. Haider, lodging her novel's plot within the social context of a Shia Syed family headed by the dominant matriarch: Dadi, who is more patriarchal than patriarchy itself and controls the affairs of the family, gives her readers a case of courtship and marriage meant to bring in the elements of forbearance and tolerance vis-à-vis incidents of inter-sectarian love affairs. Haider uses the two siblings' cases of courtship and marriage: Haroon's with Saima and Zeba's with Omer as the moving motors for the novel. Dadi, a believer in the traditional values of courtship and marriage practised in her own times, is an ardent advocate of arranged marriages. Despite Dadi's assertions in Haroon's case of getting his knot tied with a Shia girl Saima, her matriarchal supremacy over the household decisions is challenged when her granddaughter is caught by her dating a Sunni boy. Haider through these turns of events within a Shia household brings to fore, though in a comedic vein, the gradual progress in rigid traditional families for accepting the younger generation's stances of inter-sectarian love courtship and marriage enabling them to overcome the rigid positions vis-à-vis making matches that the older generations as those of Dadi's could not come to terms with.

## Literature Review

*How It Happened* caught the audience's attention and was reviewed positively soon after its publication. However, the novel has gained a steady attention since its initial appreciation by a number of research articles. Payel Dutta Chowdhury (2016), talks about cultural norms and the clash of civilization between the old and the new generation depicted in Haider's novel. She also highlights their respective beliefs and established norms (pp. 1-6). Maria Khosa, Sadia Bano, and Mehwish Malghani (2018) talk about appropriation in Haider's novel and analyse it with regard to its linguistic features: borrowing, code switching and lexical innovations (pp. 87-92).

Zainab Akram has written extensively, both solo and in collaboration, on Haider's *How It Happened*. Akram (2019) highlights the theme of money by detecting the influence of *Pride and Prejudice* on *How It Happened* using postcolonial theory of rewriting as theoretical framework and finds Haider's novel as an extension of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (pp. 56-64). Hina Arfeen & Zainab Akram (2019), in their collaborative paper, bring forward a comparative analysis of British and Pakistani social contexts for marriages in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Haider's *How It Happened* (169-183). Zainab Akram & Saima Yousaf Khan (2020) in their collaborative paper, explore the factors fundamental in maintaining marital quality as depicted in Haider's novel using five dimensions: satisfaction, communication, togetherness, problems and disagreements as given by Allendorf and Ghimire (115-126). Zainab Akram (2022), in her solo latest study of the novel, highlights the crucial aspect of Pakistani society vis-à-vis marriage settlements of the youngsters by the family elders on religious grounds especially within similar religious sect (pp. 1-14).

Hafsah Yasir and Farah Hashmi (2020) determine the ways women are portrayed in Haider's novel as stereotyped objects in a sexist culture, using Sara Mills' model of feminist stylistics (pp. 27-37). Nida Tabassum, Muhammad Owais Ifzal, and Ghulam Murtaza (2021), through their analysis of Haider's *How It Happened*, reflect upon the socio-cultural suppressive crises faced by the Pakistani women and evaluate the standards through which Pakistani women are (mis)recognized. Their paper endeavours to reverse the suppressive patriarchal patterns, bringing women from the periphery to the centre, also providing a voice to silenced women entangled in the stifling culture (pp. 30-37). Khadija Majeed, Aniq Rashid, and Samina Ali Asghar (2021), using the postmodern terms of 'irony' and 'nostalgia' as broached by Linda Hutcheon, read the Pakistani family system presented in Haider's novel (pp. 143-155). Faiza Ishfaq, Arshad Nawaz, and Kalsoom Saddique (2022) explore the conflict between the younger and older generation due to their extreme and rigid beliefs with regard to the arrangements of marriages (pp. 489-499). Aimen Batool, Arshad Ali, and Muhammad Asif Javed (2022) investigate the use of code-switching, hybridization and echo words employed by Haider for depicting various cultural, social and religious identities and acculturation, demonstrating the author's inventive and artistic talent (pp. 1604-1614). Syeda Amarah Zahid, Memona Mujahid, and Syed Muzaffar Hussain (2023) find that Haider, through her postmodern characters, challenges the long-standing metanarratives of Pakistani culture and replaces them with local narratives (pp. 259-270). The present paper aims to shed light on the aspect of inter-sectarian love courtship and marriage depicted in Haider's *How It Happened*.

## Theoretic Framework

The present paper closely reads Haider's novel in the light of the critical observations made by Simone de Beauvoir in her seminal work *The Second Sex* (1953). Beauvoir talking about marriages favours love marriages over arranged marriages (p. 421). As shown in this novel the young generation marries for love whereas their elders had their marriages arranged. The patriarchy only supports the younger generation's marriages after they fail at objecting. Beauvoir favours working women and the young generation shown in the novel are career oriented. Although patriarchy does not favour these trends of working

women having love marriages it has, lately, started to accept the changing scenario. Beauvoir talks about pregnancy and motherhood in detail and stresses that marriage ultimately results in pregnancy and she describes woman as “caught for pregnancy”. Haider’s novel also talks about pregnancy. As it ends with the birth of children it emphasizes that procreation is the ultimate goal of marriages. Though the novel shows a gradually steadying grip of younger generation women, in contemporary Pakistani society, with regard to their courtship and marriage it at the same time expresses the persevering fact too that still there is a long way to go to achieve complete autonomy in the matters of courting and marrying. The patriarchy always lurks at the margins. The matriarchs like Dadi serve its cause unknowingly.

## **Results and Discussion**

*How It Happened* is a light humorous family tale. The novel highlights the factors of arrange marriages in traditional migrated families from India with their cultures and traditions in which they take immense pride and which proves to be their legacy they are carrying from ages. The story revolves around a joint family living in Karachi. Haider shows the matriarch grandmother (Dadi) as a strong headed personality with strict codes. In her estate live her son Hussain and his wife and three children. The character of Dadi- Gul Bahar Begum is brilliantly conceived from appearance to character traits. She, being the head of the house, manages all the necessary arrangements for making the matches of her grandchildren. The story revolves around Bhakuraj: a fictive place in India and The Bandian Family that had settled in Karachi after partition. Haider has selected this imaginary land of Bhakuraj because people living in Pakistan after partition are very conscious about their ancestral land and their identity. So Haider doesn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings and selected an imaginary name of Bhakuraj. The writer has used conversational and descriptive style for writing and used Saleha as the narrator.

The novel begins with marriage and ends with marriage. The writer in her fictional world does not give any account of the political world around and only focuses on family story and making matches. The writer introduces Dadi with her marriage that how her knot was tied to Dada. Dadi being a beautiful spinster of her time was waiting for proposal because her three engagements had been broken so she was eagerly waiting for a bachelor. Dadi reasons that her marriage delay was due to evil eye. Although Dadi was not white like milk but her features were very sharp while all the other girls around were white but were not blessed with sharp features and petite with a narrow waist. Dadi tells about her first meeting with Dada which begins with Dada coming on black horse and when glances at Dadi she faints or acts to faint and Dada suddenly comes to rescue her and goes to her father for asking about her hand in marriage. Her father takes time to think and finally says yes. The story has been told so naturally and beautifully by Dadi that one can visualize it. And Dadi gives the reference of her courtship and marriage throughout the novel.

Dadi tells her grandchildren that in India the practice of spice burning guarantees warding off of all the evil spirits. There is a philosophy involved as regards to the odour of burnt spices. If the burning results in acrid odour it signifies of no evil eye whereas no odour means some evil eye is circling the person. Dadi practices this exercise once in a week (p. 5). Dadi strongly protests love marriages as she is a strong believer of arrange marriages and thinks that this is the only Islamic way. She keeps talking in favour of arrange marriages in front of her daughters and grandchildren. And if anyone talks about favouring love marriage she protests and narrates any episode of love marriage ending in a disaster from her family history. Saleha the narrator informs the readers that Dadi and Dada gave birth to six daughters and three sons, sufficient a proof to tell about love in their relationship. All the six daughters of Dadi: Sakina, Fatima, Zainab, Rania, Haseena and Malika were married away through arrange marriages. The two sons Abbas and Fareed both met a tragic end of death and Hussain- father of Saleha- was the only son left. Among the three sons, Dadi remembers, Fareed died because of love as he had left the family in search of a girl he could love, but

didn't return. Dadi believes that he died because he wanted to marry after love. In reality he had died during the war of East Pakistan because he served in Armed Forces. The narrator Saleha gives a brief description of her father's family and then moves to her own family. Hussain- Saleha's father has three kids: Haroon, Zeba and Saliha. Haroon being the eldest has to get married first. But Haroon is Dadi's precious stone. Dadi wants to arrange his match with great care and wants his wife to be perfect. All memories of Haroon from childhood to youth have been preserved by Dadi in drawers containing his photographs: all the photos of potty-training, wearing new Kurta and going to school. As Haroon completes his graduation from IBA Karachi he desires to go abroad for further studies but Dadi fears that her grandson will marry a gori (white girl) there and eat McDonalds and haram meat. Dadi, being very careful about her traditions, couldn't bear her grandson to indulge in any such activity. Since Haroon has got a fully funded scholarship from USA so he has to go. He convinces Dadi that he will come back and marry to a Syed Shia girl of a nice Urdu speaking family and leaves for America for higher education. But before he leaves Dadi does not spare him from giving a grand lecture on American women chasing for Pakistani men for marriage. However Haroon returns safely after two years of education in America. As soon as Haroon gets a very good job in a company in Karachi, Dadi starts looking for girls. Dadi has made a checklist for the qualifications of the girl which include: to be fully female, not a lesbian, Syed Shia, fully virgin, belongs to a decent family, qualified, and shorter in height than Haroon. As for the standards of her beauty she must be tall, fair, and thin with long hair as well as well-dressed and shall maintain a fine balance between modernity and modesty (p. 32-33).

Then Dadi along with family goes for searching a good wife for Haroon and in the search meets several girls. The meetings are beautifully set up and explained by the writer with the colour of reality. The discourse too is also very natural and lifelike as we speak naturally. Finally some are rejected by Dadi and some by Dadi and Haroon together. Haroon being the protagonist feels disgusted with this routine. He could not bear interacting new people and act stupidly in front of them. So finally Haroon chooses a girl for himself and tells his family about her. This situation raises many questions to which Haroon answers calmly because the girl belongs to a Syed Shia family. Dadi gets worried because the previous family history does not bode well for love marriages. However Haroon convinces Dadi as he knows Dadi loves him very much. Further he emotionally blackmails Dadi by saying that if Dadi does not like the girl, he will not marry her. So Dadi gets the feeling of importance and agrees to visit their place for proposal.

Saima's family has given a very warm welcome. The family has all the blend of traditions that the matriarch Dadi wants. The ways of greeting 'adab' and the ways of dressing and presenting things are in accordance with Haroon's family traditions. Dadi gets impressed with Saima and her parents which help them in finalizing the decision. They reach with buckets of sweetmeats and fruits after a week when Saima's mother calls them and greets with the news of acceptance of the proposal. Saima's mother tells Dadi and Saleha's mom about Saima that she is very precious to her and moreover she is not perfect therefore requests them to take good care of her. Saima's mother affirms: "In accepting your proposal I am handing over the dearest person in my world to you. Please give her respect and love and I assure you she will return all that you give her ten times more" (p. 70).

Dadi points to her daughter-in-law about Saima's inability to cook and sew but Haroon's mother explains to her that modern times are different. Now girls cannot cook big pots. Even her own daughters cannot so why to blame Saima. Further she gives the example of Dadi's daughter Fatima who couldn't cook or sew to which Dadi keeps quite. The narrator gives a brief account about Fatima- Dadi's daughter who being a widow with no children hires a cook and herself works for a magazine. When her husband had died years back she had decided to live instead of mourning. She wears red sari and moves in front of her family. She asks everyone to leave her happy instead of offering her their condolences. Haider describes the character of Fatima, in short Fati, as a woman of modern values and life style.

In fact she is a rebellious character in a pure Shia family. She wants to live free instead of in the clutches of patriarchy, so all the family leaves her at her own to decide for herself. She works for a magazine and writes on bold topics about women liberation and gays in society. Dadi often criticizes her for being so blunt in front of her grandchildren but her brother Hussain always admires her and loves her for her confident nature.

Haroon's wedding brings all the far off relatives and friends to their home. Dadi calls with excitement to her acquaintances and calling her cousin reveals another texture of Dadi. Dadi calls Qurat Dadi and switches the speakers on because she wants everyone to listen to their conversation. Dadi proudly tells her cousin that Haroon is getting married. After a moment of silence Qurat Dadi shows her excitement and enthusiasm. A second later she tells Dadi that her granddaughter Naureen is also getting married soon as they will say "yes tomorrow" (p. 78). Haider, through this scene, exposes her character's small sharings and happiness. The old female matriarchs have a strong sense of courtship. Dadi calling her cousin and revealing the news with an open speaker is a sign of her omnipotent presence in the home that she is the ultimate decision maker. She decides for her family members' matches. Dadi proudly announces that it was an arranged marriage which was contrary to the reality but as love marriages are not welcome in our society so she does not want any embarrassment.

Beauvoir (1953), on the other hand, is not in favour of "arranged marriages" and stresses on the freedom of choice (p. 421). But in Pakistani societies love marriages are criticized. Even marrying outside the sect is not welcomed. So Dadi proudly announces that the girl is of Shia Syed sect. But Qurat Dadi retorts by asking Dadi not to worry as her granddaughter will marry soon. Dadi gets hyper and awards her with salutation as 'Nagori Churail' meaning the clever little witch (Haider, 2012, p. 80). But this conversation begins with a new idea for searching marriage proposal for Zeba. Haroon and Saima both want to have a simple marriage with Nikah and reception. But both families disagree and open a Jantri, a yearly guiding manual, used by Shias to look for the auspicious dates. The families decide to have a joint 'Mehndi' and then 'Barat', and after that a 'Valima' ceremony. Haider gives minute details on all the traditions followed by Pakistani families which includes 'Mayon', 'Mehndi', 'Barat' and 'Valima'. She also furnishes her readers with the minute details on each custom and tradition. Haider also describes how new generation does not feel comfortable with the old traditions but just to pay them respect and to remain happy in their happiness they act accordingly. Dadi being a matriarch also gives her own reference throughout the novel which gives the reader good information on old cultural traditions and the reader can easily compare between the two generations.

Haroon's marriage brings new hope and happiness in the family. During the wedding some small battles were fought by Dadi and Haroon's mother which end in happiness. Dadi does not leave a single opportunity to criticize youngsters on colour selection. Dadi's three daughters arrive while the other three couldn't come. Rania comes with her two daughters: Maw and Robs (Mehwish and Robaba). They come from India and are very bold. They talk openly about the issues considered as taboo in Pakistani society. Dadi strongly criticizes their dressing. Dadi's other daughter Zainab arrives from Canada with her two sons: Mansoor and Alam. Haseena Phupo: Dadi's third daughter could not come but sends her son Hassan. The modern Fatima also reaches with her style. During the wedding Dadi wants to get Zeba tied to a good boy but couldn't. Zainab shows her interest in Zeba for Alam bhai. Alam starts flying around Zeba as a fly all the time which gives Zeba a bad feeling. Zeba being a student of literature does not get impressed with such tactics of sticking nature. So Alam bhai's tactics fail badly. Alam tries to seduce Zeba by telling her that Canada had all the domestic liberties which one cannot enjoy in Pakistan like fully air conditioned houses with no load-shedding but Zeba remains unmoved and rejects the proposal plainly.

As in the case of Zeba's refusal of Alam's courtship, it can be seen that Alam tries to impress her with his Canadian nationality and high domestic pleasures she can enjoy there.

He has no concern for Zeba's individuality which is a big slap on arranged marriages. Alam wants to get married to Zeba because her mother wants. Alam's tactics are very stupid as he has no opinion of his own. Haroon's and Saima's marriage was celebrated with full enjoyment. Dadi keeps herself busy on her new mission of engaging Zeba. For that she remains busy in highlighting all the domestic expertise which Zeba had never indulged in. Zeba has no knowledge of cooking but Dadi portrays her culinary expertise in a way which gives the impression that she was a chef. Dadi's courtship techniques were directed in new direction for Zeba. Haider has given her a simile of a goat-seller selling goats on Eid-ul-Azha. Several women approach her for Zeba which give a shelter to her hopes. Finally Saima enters Haroon's home with respect. The wedding night seems to be more interesting for the cousins than for the couple. The cousins openly comment on their wedding night making Saleha and Zeba swoon with shyness because in Pakistani traditional societies such topics are considered as taboo and not to be discussed openly.

Haider gives a subtle touch to the narrative by giving the relevant details of post-marriage domestic situations in Haroon's family: their expectations from the bride and inability to digest the new situations. Haroon has to face criticism from his sisters that he had changed because now he spent all his time, after office hours, with his wife - the time that he used to spend with them previously. Everyone wants sometime together with his/her spouse after marriage. This was a hard pill to swallow for the matriarchs of the home. Even if Haroon praises her wife's cooking it is received with crooked faces. A new hidden politics against Saima was prevailing in the home. When Saima becomes prescient of this home politics she starts spending more time in the company of her mother-in-law and Dadi. She asks her mother-in-law for help. Dadi shows her old family pictures which she praises affectionately. This new behaviour of Saima melts the snow off their brains. Zeba minutely observing all this and being a student of English literature understands about human relationships. She talks to her grandmother and, mother together: "If you two don't loosen your grip you're going to lose not just your daughter-in-law but your son as well" (p. 138). This infuriates both the ladies but gives them some sense too. After this the new topic of Zeba's marriage begins with a phone call from a far off relative. This phone call helps the ladies to furnish their attitude with new rules and regulations because now they have to behave differently from the times of Haroon's courtship and marriage.

Haider gives interesting details of a girl's mother about how to indulge in arranging marriage of her daughter. A girl's mother should be passive. She should not furnish with any information until asked for it. She should be reserved, low in tone and must be respectful to inquiries. So Zeba's courtship begins and the first proposal was Mrs. Haq's son from America coming for two weeks. When Mrs. Haq calls Zeba's mother and tells her that her son from America is coming for two weeks' time and during this time they want to tie the knot of their son. Zeba's mother doesn't like the tone of Mrs. Haq but Dadi being a matriarch says that now we are from girl's side so try to be modest. Their son is coming for two weeks only so it is not easy for them to arrange everything so soon. Then Dadi tells them about her times that when her suitors visited in Bhakuraj she did not welcome them sitting in front of them rather she sat at a place with the angle that her reflection only could be seen through a mirror. Zeba refuses to act that way. Then Dadi gives a detail lecture to Zeba but Zeba, being a confident lady, protests. Dadi tells her that a women's duty is to hold her kids in her hand and keep her husband well fed. Zeba retorts that in return woman also wants some pleasure or not? Dadi strongly protests that "[w]hat is this pleasure-shleazure business?" (p. 144). Dadi continues that this pleasure has no sense. A woman should fulfil her duties silently and patiently. Then Dadi starts telling her stories from her days of Bhakuraj. Dadi gives her a few rules regarding her conduct. These rules include that she should enter like an Eastern girl with her sister's support. Then Dadi gives her a detailed lecture on the clothing and strictly forbids her to wear red and black. The light pink colour shalwar kameez with full sleeves was fine. The attitude should not be confident rather she should be 'shy' and present the tea herself. She should not discuss politics or literature. In short Dadi ends her discussion of

rules with the conclusion that “Good Eastern Girls should never have strong opinions of their own, [but] only those of their husbands or in-laws” (p. 146). Zeba, on the contrary, acts opposite to Dadi’s set of rules by wearing black sleeveless suit. She wears red lipstick and does not serve the guests herself. Mrs. Haq’s grandson creates such a fuss that they have to leave and never call again. Then a series of proposals come and end up in disaster. Zeba gets fed up with this routine story. The narrator Saleha concludes Zeba’s matrimonial affairs by observing: “Zeba Baji’s matrimonial affairs had me preoccupied with the whole business of marriage. I was more certain than ever that arranged marriages were the only route available to decent, respectable girls. Still, it seemed quite upsetting that a drawing room was the only court of romance available” (p. 152).

Haider, providing a detail of Saleha - the narrator of the novel with the first person pronoun ‘I’, narrates that as she gets sixteen she finds new situations. She was forbidden to attend her friend’s birthday party because he was a boy. At the age of sixteen Saleha learns that she has grown up. She reads all the romance stories from her mother’s cupboard secretly. Beauvoir (1953) observes regarding the formative years of a girl that “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (p. 273). Beauvoir furthers her discussion that femininity and female traits are present in women because of their peers. They make them realise that they are grown up now. Similarly Dadi forbids Saleha to attend the boy’s birthday party. She gives her the signal that she is not young any more. The romantic stories further give her knowledge of sex and pleasure. She enjoys reading them but when her mother learns about this she enrolls her in a French class just to keep her busy. But there Saleha gets a crush on her teacher because she newly gets the knowledge of being young.

Dadi and mother’s prayers regarding Zeba’s marriage bring new hopes. Dadi comes across a new proposal of a migrated gentleman from Bhakuraj- a Shia Syed and a banker. Dadi becomes excited at the knowledge but when Gullan comes to meet Zeba with his family Zeba couldn’t control her laughter when she saw Gullan: wearing starched shalwar kameez with pink embroidery; a red handkerchief on his mouth; and his hair being matted with Sesame oil exuding its strong smell. Dadi gets excited and wants the family to say ‘yes’ to this proposal but Zeba protests and goes to attend a teacher’s workshop for a week at Islamabad. After her return the first question that Dadi asks is regarding the proposal to which Zeba replies in negative. Then Zeba asks Dadi to arrange a meeting with Gullan without chaperone so that she can decide for herself. Dadi creates a full drama on this suggestion. But a formal meeting was arranged in a hotel where Zeba asks a few questions about his interests. Both have different interests and entirely opposite personalities so finally Zeba refuses. In the meanwhile the writer gives details of two incidents regarding Zeba and Saleha. Zeba gets attracted towards a person named Omer in Islamabad and talks to him on phone secretly. Her friend Saba knows about him. Saleha falls in love with her teacher who has no idea about Saleha because he loves someone else. When Saleha tells this secret to Zeba, she reacts normally and asks her the relevant details and concludes that it was not love but a temporary crush that most often happens at this age. Saleha listens to Zeba talking on phone and inquires Zeba about it. She finally tells her that she is in love with Omer. Omer was a doctor and lived with his father in Karachi. His mother was no more and he had no siblings as well. But the problem was that he was a Sunni and on top of that his name Omer was enough to make the situation more complicated. His name is enough to reveal his identity. Zeba got caught up in a severe problematic situation. In this situation Moharram begins and during the forty days mourning period no marriage issue will be discussed in the family. Zeba gets calm after Gullan’s chapter closes. But soon after Gullan’s family gives the proposal for Saleha however Saleha’s mother refuses politely as this was not Bhakurajian style to come for one and tilt for the other.

Haider gives a detailed account of Moharram and the practices of ‘Majlis’ (a Shia religious congregation). In ‘Majalis’ (plural meaning congregations) many women approach Zeba and ask for her number. One day when Saleha and Dadi were coming from ‘Majlis’ Dadi

got thirsty and asked her son to bring her some water and medicine too from a chemist shop. As Dadi catches sight of Zeba with a boy, both feeding ice cream to each other with their spoons, she at once opens the car door and rushes to the restaurant where Zeba was sitting. Dadi reaches Zeba and roars at her with a loud tone. Zeba takes her hand bag and leaves with Dadi and Saleha. But Dadi gives a lecture in loud voice not only to Zeba but to other couples as well and strongly condemns and criticizes their dressing, language and culture. Zeba doesn't know how to react. Dadi creates a scene and her dad gets pale. He asks Zeba about the boy and his name. She replies slowly 'Omer' to which Hussain holds his head. Then after some time Zeba is called to the lounge and is inquired about Omer and her relationship with him. She is presented to the whole family as a criminal in a court. Zeba gives all the information that the situation demands. She even talks about her feelings when she was presented in front of men and their families. She spoke against those traditions to which Dadi reacts badly. Zeba questions her parents that how they do feel at her disgrace and the tension that she has to suffer when she has to act in front of different families. And especially she gives her severe criticism with regard to Gullan and his family. Everyone listens to her and then they decide to meet Omer and his family. Dadi protests and exclaims that the younger will learn their lesson. Zeba abruptly tells them about Saleha's crush. Saleha's mother looks at her with sharp eyes and ends her French classes.

A meeting is arranged at Omer's house but Dadi refuses to go. So the rest visit him and his father. Omer and his father are very nice and decent and they behave very responsibly to Zeba and her family. Fatima Phupo plays a key role in dragging everyone to this decision. After meeting Omer and his father, Hussain is impressed by them and shows his willingness. Fati Phupo informs Dadi that Omer was to visit with his father for the dinner the next day and if Dadi does not show up then Zeba will get married without her blessings. Haider shows that the old generations and patriarchy are very strict in their decisions and traditions. They do not want to adjust themselves with the new designs and opinions. Dadi truly represent the patriarchy of strong will and doesn't want to spoil it. But Haider also sheds light on human relationships which are strong than every tradition. Zeba goes to her grandmother and asks her to give her blessings even if she thinks Zeba is on a wrong track but she cannot make such a big decision without her blessings. Qurat Dadi's granddaughter's wedding gives them a relief from Zeba and Omer. Dadi gets excited there and gives Saleha instructions regarding dressing. But everyone asks Dadi about Zeba. Dadi gets irritated and finally announces that Zeba is getting engaged soon to a pathologist. This news makes everyone delighted and astonished at the same time but Dadi leaves the place immediately because she was not prepared for answers yet.

Next day Omer and his father arrive at their place. Qurat Dadi gives a surprise to them by visiting them when Omer was there with his father. This creates a difficult situation for Dadi. But Dadi gathers courage and answers her that her son has married to an African American Christian so she has no right to question her. Qurat Dadi spreads the news to her family and it spreads like fire catches the fields. Dadi gets worried about people that how will they react and say. People start visiting Dadi with sweets and question her that how this happened. But Dadi very tactfully handles the situation. She tells them that Omer, a renowned pathologist, fell in love with Zeba at first sight and then she sings to Zeba's beauty. Dadi exaggerates Omer's profession, salary, and his house without a mother. When people talk about his sect, Dadi reacts normal and says that he, being a motherless guy with Zeba as the only dominating woman in the home, will easily convince himself and his family to follow their sect. Dadi was continuously following a custom of lightening a candle in the window since the day of Fareed Chacha's death. But this year Dadi had not lit any candle. When asked whether she had forgotten to light the candle she replies: "He's dead" and hugs Zeba with tears and asks her not to leave her after the marriage (Haider, 2012, p. 299).

Omer's father was against dowry but still on Dadi's instructions, the entire dowry was given to Zeba because Dadi believed that in this way respectable girls could live with



strong head among their in-laws. Dadi approaches family Maulana for Nikah. Zeba's wedding was followed with all the traditions of Bhakuraj. Things get settled in routine and events took an exciting turn when Saima and Zeba discovered their pregnancies. The role of pregnancy with the news of pregnancy also gets significant. When Dadi gets the news of Saima's pregnancy she replies: "It's about time!", and when Zeba gives her news of pregnancy Dadi says: "So soon?!" (p. 309). Then Dadi gives her philosophy of pregnancy that modest girls should take at least three months' time to knock up. After nine months Saima gives birth to a baby boy whom Dadi named 'Fareed'. He became the reason of Dadi's happiness. Zeba gives birth to a beautiful baby girl whom Omer wants to give the name: 'Ayesha', enough a cause to give Dadi heart attacks. So he names her as 'Shehar Bano', Omer's late mother's name. Finally the novel ends with a happy ending and a message that life is to go on. Haider has beautifully dealt with patriarchal rules and pressures on the young generation but young generation paves way for their selves with the blessings of elders.

### **Conclusion**

*How It Happened* doesn't show a shrewd and cruel patriarchy rather one with the mixture of emotions and rules. The space that young generation desires is given to them but under certain limitations which is a good sign. The novel also highlights that the respect elders demand or wish to get from their young ones is present in the novel. It also highlights the problems of sectarianism but handles this topic mildly so that no sect should get bad feelings. Dadi being the main matriarch of the family controls the family according to old traditions and doesn't like to spoil them through the younger generation's interventions. But young generation protests and carves its own destiny according to its whims but at the same time also pay respect to its elders. The novel sheds light on the manners of young generation towards its elders and elders in return coming to terms with the younger generation's inter-sectarian love courtship and marriage.

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