

## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN ISMAT CHUGHTAI'S WRITINGS: AN EXPLORATION INTO META-ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

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### Abstract

*Ismat Chughtai as a literary icon and a trailblazer for feminist thought in South Asian literature. Jalil portrays Chughtai as a defiant and unconventional figure who challenged societal norms both in her personal life and through her writings. The essay highlights Chughtai's resistance to patriarchal structures, her critique of middle-class morality, and her fearless depiction of female sensuality, desires, and struggles. The study adopted exploratory research design and followed meta-synthesis method of investigation. The sample was drawn from the primary sources i.e. Chughtai's fiction, and secondary sources i.e. critique essays upon Chughtai as mentioned in Jalil (2017). Using a feminist lens, this analysis examines how Jalil foregrounds Chughtai's subversion of traditional gender roles and her contribution to the feminist discourse in Urdu literature. Jalil contextualizes Chughtai's works within the Progressive Writers' Movement while emphasizing her individuality and unique voice. Furthermore, this study reflects on the enduring relevance of Chughtai's writings in contemporary feminist thought, underscoring her role as a cultural disruptor who paved the way for future generations of women writers. Chughtai's unflinching critique of patriarchy, her bold exploration of taboo subjects, and her commitment to portraying women's lived realities continue to resonate in contemporary feminist discourse. Through her works, Chughtai not only challenged societal norms but also expanded the boundaries of Urdu literature, asserting the importance of individuality and creative freedom.*

**Key Words:** Ismat Chughtai; Meta Analysis; Liberal Feminism; Progressive writer's movement

### 1. Introduction

Feminist analysis of 'An Uncivilized Woman' by Rakhshanda Jalil highlights the women subjugation and the differences, which is visible in today's world. She has portrayed her real-life experience in the novel, portrayed the sufferings of women of our society, and emphasized that women deserve equal rights as men and they must have social, economic and political rights and freedom. She depicts that how women are painted in different genres like poetry, drama and fiction. Moreover, the topic explores that how the experiences of women are shaped by the factors like region, gender, class, religion. Uncivil women offer an insightful exploration of complexity and diversity. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a study and analyze the feminism portrayed by Rakshanda Jalil

Furthermore, Jalil, a well-known Indian writer and critic, multi award-winning translator and historian published more than 50 books, academic papers and essays. Her writing portrays the feminist perspectives, depicting the women voice in gender analysis. Her prominent works include the translation books from Urdu to English; and she made them accessible for every individual. In addition, the motive pursuing study is to read Asmat Chughtai writings translated by Rakhshanda Jalil. The writing highlights the issues and problems of women in the Asian society. Feminism discusses about the equality of women whether it is social, economic or political. Feminist literary theory reviews and challenges the traditional patriarchal frameworks often found in literature, highlighting how gender inequality, stereotypes, and social expectations are embedded in the text.

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Half world's population consists of women and every woman is facing oppression, inequality and subordination. There are many definitions of the feminism according to other feminists. It advocates the equal rights of both the genders and never favors the discrimination. The reason is that people in the society considers women as other and they are not allowed to do work as men, live freely like men etc. They are confined to home and are not allowed to pursue their carrier. Society has made

different norms for both the gender. Females are bound to follow those rules (Anderson and Zinsser, 2000). The Oxford dictionary defines feminism as womanly. Webster dictionary portrays feminism as having equal rights as men is having in the society. The main idea behind all these definitions is the mode of existence and women are having liberty to live freely according to their own choice and norms. Even they were not given permission to perform tasks socially like men.

According to Delaney, (2005). The idea which feminism depicts is that why women have been given less importance as compared to men. Why women have no right to claim their own individuality and life. They must consider themselves an independent being. Raina (2017) is of the opinion that the main goal of feminism is to identify the area of oppression of women. Moreover, it also discusses and advocates about the availability of resources for women as men is utilizing in their lives in order to excel socially. This movement struggles for the betterment of the women in the society and the end of the dominancy of men over women. In terms of career, children, house chores, labor they must be given respect and liberty to live the energetic life. There are many disciplines like sociology, economics and politics, which discusses about the feminism. According to Anderson, (2016), the time has been changed and women are raising voice for their rights. In a form of writings, many writers are advocating feminism in order to promote the equality and rights. The literature is a good source of education for every one in the society. It is filled with the writings of feminists, which highlights the sufferings of women in the society. Rakshanda Jalil is one of the prominent writers who portrays the subjugation of women in her writing an uncivil woman. She has demonstrated the strong character of women and supported the demands of women. On the other hand, man is a supportive character in her writings and empowers women.

A systematic review of the past researches reveal that in the United States both the genders are enjoying the equal rights in the society. both the genders are living free life according to their own choice. Women is having a right to start their own business, hold political jobs, and enjoy many rights. Laws are made especially for women there as if they have a right to divorce, abortion and birth control. In eastern society, people consider subjugation as part of the religion but it is not truth. Islam has given equal rights to both men and women.so; women of the eastern society are suffering than the western women. She is still struggling to get the major position in the society (Sisterhood, 2018). In addition, men make decisions and women are bound to follow them. While making decisions, they never think about the right and wrong choices. Therefore, eastern women are struggling to change customs made by men in the society in order to live a life according to their own choice and rules. In every society, man considers himself a superior being and women is considering an inferior being. In the work of Rakshanda Jalil, the characters are portraying the all the issues that are prohibited in the society and there is a need to address them. he has analyzed the criticism critically with women face in the society for no reason. The themes of education, domesticity and familial politics are the prominent things in the writing of Chughtai translated by Rakshnda Jalil.

### **1.2 Rational of the Study**

Ismat Chughtai is known as ground breaking fiction writer who discussed the taboos, unveiled the hidden realities, torn out the artificial masquerade of the so called civilized society, and forcefully violated the social conventions. Being woman writer, she attempted to unleash the social status and psychological aspects of women in her writings. Though much of the fiction is more than half a century old, still the themes and conflicts seem to correlate with existing society. Due to her bold description, she is often regarded as the risqué writer along with Manto, Krishanchandar, Bedi, and Khushwant Sigh. In her attempt to attain, individual liberty and psychological sovereignty Chughtai discussed the unforbidden aspects of premarital and extramarital affairs; resultantly received much notoriety from the literary and common masses. After careful examination of the previously conducted researches, it was found that not much significant or substantial work has been pursued on the critical debate upon Ismat Chughtai. However, Rakshanda Jalil made valuable contribution in

editing and compiling the critiques upon the writings of Ismat Chughtai. This study is an attempt to commence a critical enquiry upon the secondary data existed and related to Chughtai's writings. The study further investigates the representation of female characters portrayed and deliberated by Chughtai in her novels and short stories.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What type of existing evidence regarding research upon Chughtai's writings does Rakhshanda Jalil mention in her book 'An uncivil Woman, writings on Ismat Chughtai'?
2. What kind of narrative techniques are used by Ismat Chughtai in her selected writings as discussed in 'An uncivil Woman, writings on Ismat Chughtai'?
3. How are female characters represented in Chughtai's writing with specific reference to An civil woman?
4. What theoretical perspectives of feminism can be applied upon literary fiction of Chughtai as mentioned by Rakhshanda Jalil?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant and innovative in multidimensional ways. At first, the theme selected for this study is quite inventive as the writers like Chughtai, Manto, Bedi, and Khushwant Singh are not the primary focus of the researchers due to their bold, risqué and controversial writing styles. Secondly, the research strategy chosen for this research is comparatively novel i.e. systematic review, where not only primary research is conducted but also it is pursued in the light of the findings of secondary and tertiary researches on any particular topic. The findings of the current study will be helpful for the readers and future researchers both in getting better insights, deeper understandings, and developed discernment of enquiry. The findings of the study enrich academic discussions around gender and identity in colonial and postcolonial contexts. The study further elevates Chughtai's status as a feminist icon in South Asia, acknowledging her role in challenging societal taboos and advocating for women's agency through her literature. The study's analysis of Chughtai's narratives provides insights into the cultural and historical specificities of gendered experiences in South Asia, fostering cross-cultural empathy and understanding.

### **1.5 Conceptual Framework**

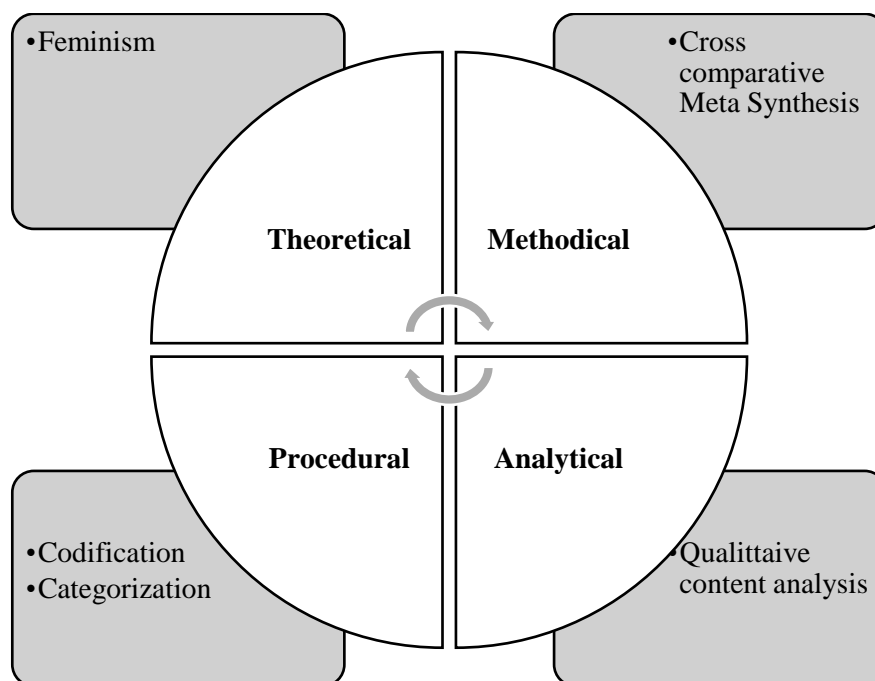


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

Feminism is a social, political, and intellectual movement that advocates for gender equality and women's rights. Feminism, which is rooted in the pursuit of justice, calls into questions the systematic institutions and cultural practices that have historically marginalized women and non-binary people. As Bell Hooks puts it, feminism is "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Hooks, 2000). The term "feminism" originated in the late nineteenth century, relying on prior campaigns for women's rights and education. The movement has now expanded into multiple "waves," each tackling different social and cultural issues. While the first wave (19th-early 20th century) concentrated on legal issues such as voting rights, subsequent waves expanded feminism's scope to include workplace equality, reproductive rights, and intersectionality—the recognition of overlapping oppressive systems based on race, class, and gender (Crenshaw, 1989). Feminism remains a dynamic and worldwide movement that transcends cultural and regional barriers. It aspires not only to deconstruct patriarchal structures, but also to establish an equal society in which people may prosper regardless of gender. Despite tremendous progress, misunderstandings continue, with feminism being seen as an anti-male ideology. However, current feminists emphasize inclusion, calling on all genders to work together to achieve equality (Beauvoir, 1949). Owen M. Fiss (1997), a well-known legal professor, describes feminism as "the set of beliefs and ideas that belong to the broad social and political movement to achieve greater equality for women." He goes on to say that feminism guides and shapes the women's movement. Women desire equality in all aspects of life and use a variety of techniques to achieve that aim. Fiss emphasizes that, while feminism is not limited to the legal sphere, law is an important tool in the quest of women's equality, both as a domain to be reformed and as a means of reform.

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Liberal Feminism

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Radical Feminism

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Socialist/Marxist Feminism

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Cultural Feminism

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Intersectional Feminism

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Ecofeminism

Figure 2. Types of Feminism

### 2.1 Feminism in Pakistani English Literature

Feminist themes in modern Pakistani English writing have gained worldwide importance, addressing both local and international gender inequality concerns. Bapsi Sidhwa, one of the most well known Pakistani English writers, depicts women's tenacity in the face of societal and cultural restraints. Her novel *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) focusses on the predicament of women in tribal tribes, whereas *Cracking India* (1988) investigates the gendered violence of partition. Kamila Shamsie, another well-known writer, explores topics of identity, gender roles, and familial ties. Her novel *Burnt Shadows* (2009) crosses generations and continents, incorporating women's stories into global conflicts. Fatima Bhutto and Moni Mohsin also contribute to feminist literature by criticizing patriarchal systems and investigating the connections between class, gender, and politics. Feminist themes are not limited to Urdu and English literature in Pakistan; they also appear in regional languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi. Writers such as Amrita Pritam, while predominantly connected with Indian Punjabi literature, had a significant impact on Pakistani feminist ideology. Her poems, notably *Ajj Aakhaan Waris Shah Nu* (Today I Invoke Waris Shah), captures the pain of women during partition.

Sindhi literature includes feminist voices such as Attiya Dawood, who criticises feudalism and patriarchal oppression in rural Sindh. Dawood's poems and articles explore the nexus of class and gender, capturing the terrible reality that rural women experience.

In recent decades, contemporary Pakistani literature has seen an increase in female voices addressing contemporary issues. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Fatima Farheen Mirza's *A Place for Us* (2018) both examine themes of gender and identity in diasporic and multicultural situations. Writers such as Saba Imtiaz (*Karachi, You're Killing Me!* 2014) and Mehreen Zahra-Malik focus on urban women's lives, confronting problems like professional constraints, love, and societal expectations with humour and candour. Feminism in Pakistani literature has grown into a rich and diverse body of work that depicts the intricacies of women's existence in a fundamentally patriarchal culture. From early criticisms of societal standards to more recent explorations of identity



and resistance, Pakistani writers have utilised writing to oppose injustice and fight for change. Their voices, whether in Urdu, English, or regional languages, continue to inspire readers and enrich the global feminist conversation.

## 2.2 Ismat Chughtai as Writer

Ismat Chughtai was well-established Urdu writer of notable stature whose story was rewritten and represented the progressive voice who stood against the strongly set stratified ways of the society, with a bearing on women side of the misery. She was born on 21st August, 1915 at Badaun in Uttar Pradesh and had great opportunity of bringing up in a literary atmosphere. Chughtai used her literature for voicing women's status in this respective society by portraying issues like gender inequalities, sexuality and women's woes. In her lifetime, she published many literary genres such as novels, short stories, plays plus essays. Some of her famous novels are 'Toba Tek Singh, Angarey and Kaghaz ki Kashti'; all of them are emotional, realistic novels. Chughtai's narratives are frank and assertive and give a special scrupulousness of humanity's relations expressed not merely externally but internally as well especially the feministic demarcation. Besides writing resilient, insightful, and inspiring novels and stories, Ismat Chughtai actively contributed to the progressive Writers 'movement in order work and write for the society. Her works were well appreciated that most of the times she was awarded including the Sahitya Akademie Award and the Jnanpith Award credits to her influence in Urdu literature. She continued writing until she died on October 24, 1991, which marked the end of a prolific litterateur, but laid the foundation for many other explorative writers to tap resources from. She worked until date, as for her work is a subject of discussions regarding gender and society in contemporary literature.

Ismat Chughtai was a most popular and progressive Urdu writer of the mid-20th century Indian society and she was famous for depicting the real life of women. Most of her literature themes include class relations, women's oppression, and confining roles within the culture. The local color of Chughtai's narratives relies on the wit and the audacity to address the hitherto forbidden areas. One of her most famous works is *Lihaaf*, which raises issues of female sexuality and lesbianism – all of which made quite a stir when the work was first published. It earned her fame as well as criticism, and possibly an obscenity trial, probably. The narrative of the story also probing at the fingers cross of women in a closed domestic space while at the same time parodying the hypocrisy of patriarchy. In her novel *Terhi Lakeer* (The Crooked Line), Chughtai narrates an autobiographical discourse of reforming a girl from a woman tracing her way to woman hood through society and its traditions. It tries to address wide issues such as; identity, rebellion and conflict between traditional and modern culture. In her novels, highly developed characters and remarkable descriptions of locations serve to address the problem of women's emancipation and personal identity. Other novels by Chughtai include *Gainda*, *Dil Ki Duniya*, and *Dozakh*, which are equally forward looking and realistic summaries of social problems with deep human understanding. She is famous for employing an informal style along with describing the middle-class lifestyle rigorously. Most of the time, she provided irony to attack the stereotype and highlight the paradox in her characters or their environment. Jaffer (2015) studies the work, life, and frameworks of well-known Indian cultural criticizer and Urdu novelist Ismat Chughtai. Kanika Batra discourses the effort of Ismat Chughtai, a debated author whose extensive literary profession outspreading over 4 decades unevenly resembles to the determinative phases of the 'Indian women's movement'. Subsequently Neetu Khanna re-enters the Marxist anticolonial feminist works of Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai via a materialist investigation into how the womanly physique with its stimulating curves and ridiculous bumps, its adhesive and sticky surfaces and liquids grow into the co-centred entity of what the writer standings the erotics of antipathy. Chughtai is possibly most famed for being annoyed for offensiveness in 1942 for one of her most well-known petite stories, *The Quilt*, which re-counts an encounter of young girl with the stimulating connection of a middle class Muslim female and her female helper. As per

Chughtai herself narrates, though she was blameless because the trial could not once opine to the careful arguments which were to be measured indecent. Ismat Chughtai’s *The Crooked Line: In his* titled article ‘A Silent Quest for Queer Space and Existence’, Ansari categorizes *The Crooked Line* into the first textual works that elicit the formation of the Tamil queer (Ansari 2023).

**2.3. Rakhshanda Jalil as a Writer**

Rakhshanda Jalil is an Indian writer, literary historian, critic, and translator, renowned for her significant contributions to the study and promotion of Urdu literature. Born in a culturally rich family with a deep appreciation for literature, she pursued her academic interests rigorously. She holds a Ph.D. in literature and has spent decades researching and writing about the syncretic cultural heritage of India, with a special focus on Urdu and its intersection with Indian history and culture. She worked for various organizations, including Jamia Millia Islamia, and as an editor and columnist for prominent Indian publications. Jalil is a strong advocate for secularism, reflected in her writings on cultural pluralism and communal harmony. Bruce (2015) introduces the significance of names and naming practices in Urdu literature, drawing connections to social and political contexts. The critique of familial naming practices and the satire of exclusionary discourses resonate with Jalil's exploration of identity, particularly in how names serve as vehicles for cultural critique.

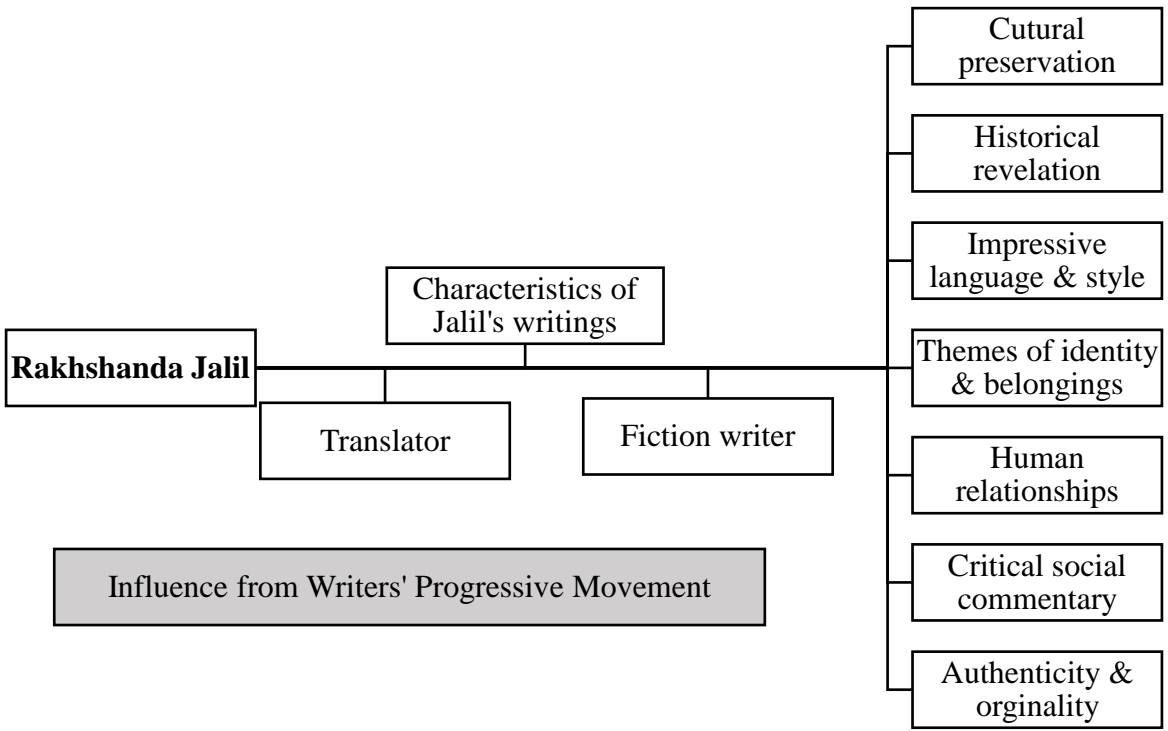


Figure 3. Characteristics of Jalil’s writings

**2.4 Meta Analysis**

The cross comparative meta-synthesis technique has recently gained significant recognition as a vital and transformative approach for synthesizing qualitative data with remarkable efficacy. This technique offers a deeply nuanced and multifaceted comprehension of various phenomena that span different contexts and disciplines.

Table 1: Kinds of Meta analysis

type	researchers	pretation
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<b>Analysis</b>	Qualitative Analysis	Ma-Woods et al., 2007; Howski & Barroso, 2007	Researchers evaluate the findings obtained from previously conducted researches to see if there are similar or different patterns.
	Quantitative Analysis	Mees & Olkin, 1985; Glanville, 2003	Analyses numerical data from previous studies to measure quantitative relationships and illustrations.
	Methodological Synthesis	Meade et al., 2009; Harden et al., 2010	Researcher gathers both type of data from multiple studies to explore new findings related to any phenomenon.
<b>Synthesis</b>	Thematic Synthesis	Crabtree & Harden, 2007; Ma-Woods et al., 2005	Researcher evaluates the themes from multiple studies to reach at common findings.
	Conceptual Synthesis	Crabtree & Avant, 2007; Brooks et al., 2011	Researcher develops a conceptual framework or model that integrates findings from multiple qualitative studies.
	Qualitative Synthesis	Crabtree & Lincoln, 2000; Landolt, 1994	Researcher evaluates and synthesizes findings from multiple qualitative studies focusing on issues of power, equality, and social justice.
	Interpretive Synthesis	Crabtree, 2008; Schutz, 1962	Researcher uses interpretive methods to re-size findings from multiple qualitative studies, often focusing on timing and context of the findings.
	Integrative Synthesis	Howski & Barroso, 2007	Researcher analyses findings from multiple qualitative studies to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.
	Meta-Synthesis	Crabtree et al., 2005	Researcher focuses on understanding mechanisms and contexts that underlie findings from multiple qualitative studies.

### 3. Research Methodology

The current study selected systematic review based research design. Systematic review technique is used to collect data from existing research studies rather than collecting new data. The method used in this study was 'Cross-comparative Meta-synthesis' investigation. Such frameworks involve rigorous process to identify, select and examine the relevant studies about any phenomenon. Jalil (2017) has included the secondary and tertiary data about Chughtai's writings in her book. The data was gathered, analyzed and interpreted qualitatively. The cross comparative meta-synthesis technique has emerged as a pivotal method for synthesizing qualitative data, providing a nuanced understanding of diverse phenomena. In their seminal work, Barth & Thomas (2012) present a comprehensive framework for meta-synthesis, which emphasizes the interpretive nature of synthesizing qualitative findings. They argue that the process resembles ethnographic interpretation, whereby researchers engage in a reciprocal translation of studies to uncover new, integrative meanings. Their approach delineates seven distinctive steps for conducting a meta-ethnography, underscoring the importance of maintaining individual interpretations while identifying overarching themes. This foundational work sets the stage for understanding the complexities inherent in qualitative synthesis and the methodological rigor required to achieve meaningful interpretations across case studies. After exploring the nature of data existing in primary text (Jalil, 2017), researcher considered it essential to



examine the original fiction of Chughtai from the lense of previous critics who, in their previous studies, investigated multiple dimensions of Chughtai from social thinker, story teller, absurd writer, intellectual figure, historiographer, and controversial personality.

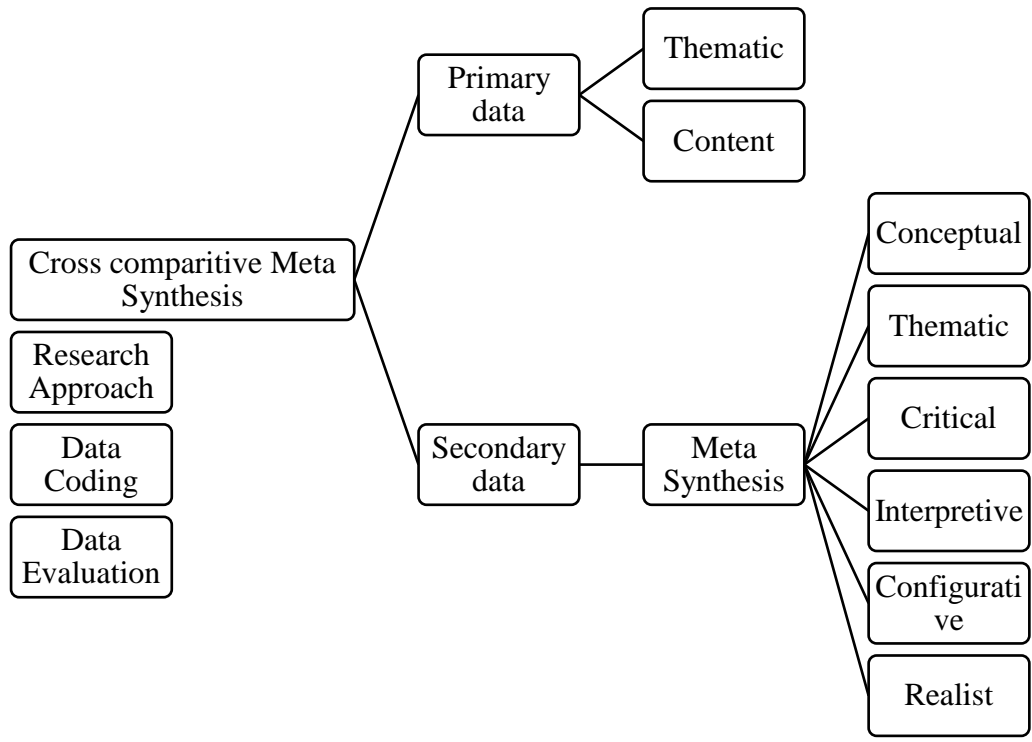


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework of the study

3.1 Sample of the Study

The sample comprises the book consisting different writings upon famous writer Ismat Chughtai. The book is sort of framed narrative of different authors who critically discussed the writings of Ismat Chughtai considering multifaceted perspectives. Researcher will use mixed purposive sampling technique to determine the sample size and textual content. Critical appreciation and reviews provided by different literary critics were examined.

Table 2. Sample Description

	<i>or details</i>	<i>re</i>
	lderly Discernments: How Does One Look at Ismat Chughtai? How What Can Be Seen? Ismat Chughtai on t	civil woman
	ing for Ismat Chughtai: Journeys in Reading Naqvi	civil woman
	translation- Chughtai: A Talk with One of Urdu's Most C Coppola	civil woman
	spoken Women Writers	
	Anari: A World of Laughter and Lessons a S. Hameed	civil woman
	ing the Line of Fear - Hajra Masrur shanda Jalil	civil woman
	Dozakhi Ismat Chughtai - Upendranath Ashslated by Rakhsham	civil woman
	Chughtai: An Individualistic and Quirly-ur Rehman Azmi	civil woman
	or	
	'Sex Appeal' of Ismat Chughtai's Language Ahmad Faiz	civil woman

### 3.2 Data Processing Tools

Rakhshanda's feminist interpretation of the text requires that data processing should be done with care and organization. This highlights the study's importance in feminist literary discourse while guaranteeing its breadth and integrity. In addition to highlighting Ismat Chughtai's feminist legacy, this study critically examines how Jalil's anthology curates and contextualizes that legacy through a methodical engagement with primary and secondary sources. Because it can bridge the past, present, and provide a deeper knowledge of gendered narratives and their societal ramifications, rigorous data processing is justified. The data obtained from primary, secondary and tertiary researches will be gathered and processed through the techniques of observation, codification, and inductive reasoning. All these techniques are used by the researchers to process and cross-examine the data in the light of the rational and pre-set research objectives. The data was arranged in different codes, categories, and patterns with assistance of data processing tools.

Finding recurrent themes in the main texts in Chughtai and Jalil's anthology, such as intersectionality, patriarchy, and female desire, is the first step in data processing. These themes are not abstract; rather, they reflect experienced realities that are relevant to all eras and cultures. For example, Chughtai boldly examines same-sex desire in *Lihaaf*, challenging social expectations and igniting heated discussions. A thematic framework facilitates a more thorough analysis of these texts, enabling us to chart the ways in which Chughtai's stories challenge patriarchal notions while providing a feminist vision of empowerment. Multidimensional coding of the text was done to investigate the themes of intersectionality, ethical and cultural sensitivity, thematic and contextual categorization, and subversive meanings, often embedded in writer's nuanced portrayals of women's lives.

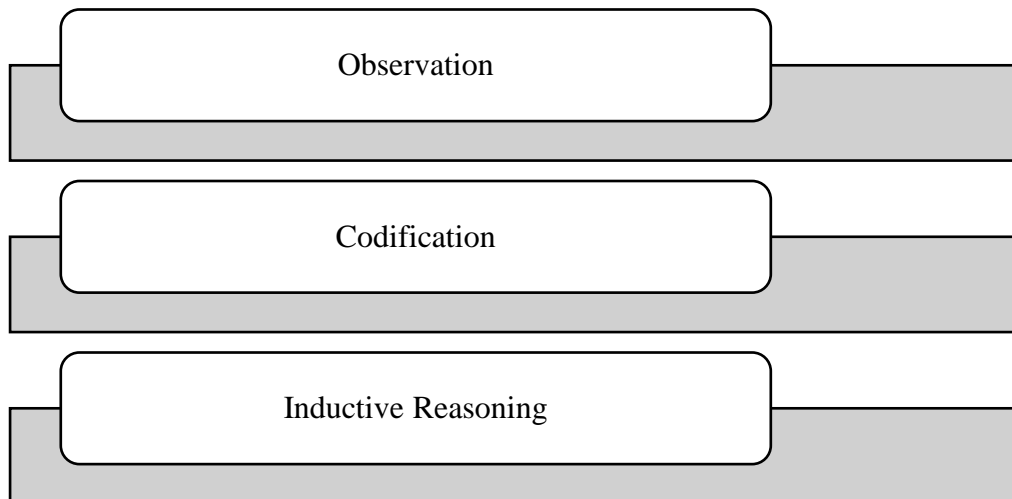


Figure 5. Data Processing Tools

Theory of feminism was applied on the textual features of the short stories and narrative interpretations of other researches upon them. Researcher has developed following framework to analyze the data textually, contextually and thematically.

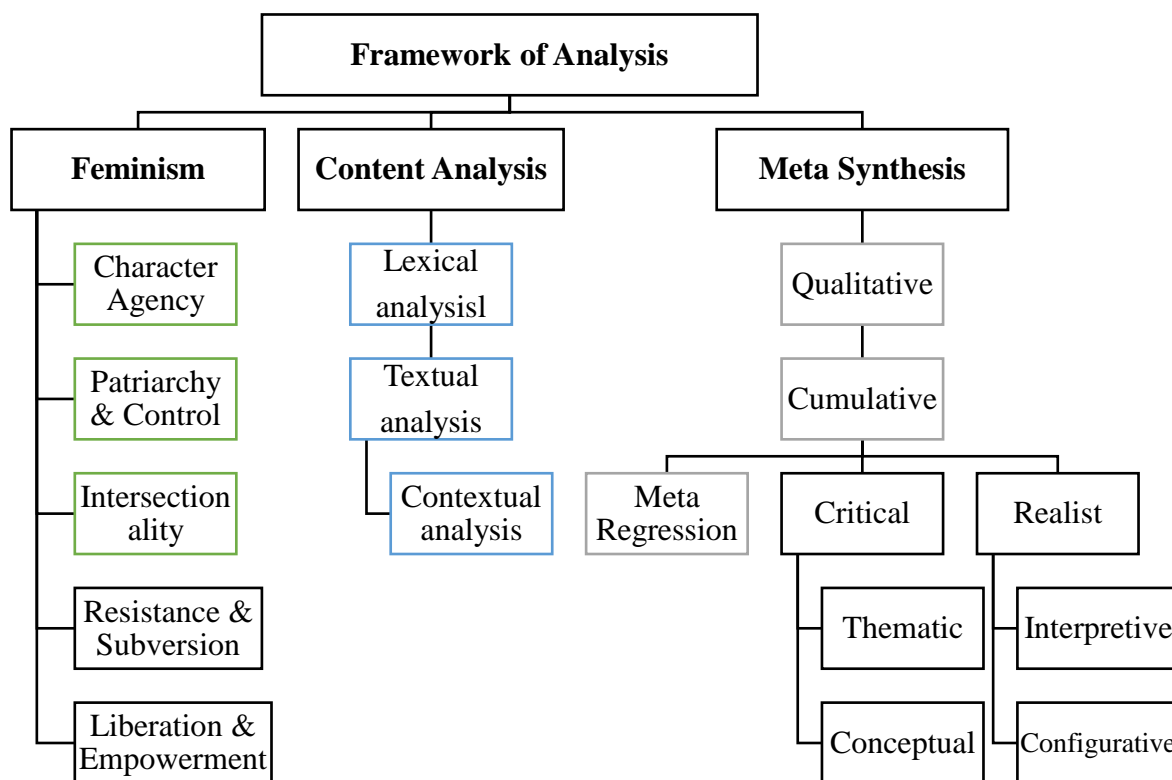


Figure 6. Framework of analysis

#### 4. Analysis and Discussions

A Civil Woman: Writings on Ismat Chughtai comprises a selection of essays on womanhood and politics in the context of Ismat Chughtai, a well-known Urdu writer. One critic finds Chughtai on sensual relation as delightful, humorous and light, whereas another critic finds this a description of the social class Chughtai lived among and as an incorrect generalization on women. One critic finds Chughtai's work important for its discourse and by implication superior to that of other writers, whereas the other thinks it would be better to have academics studying the other writers instead. Both readings inform the Chughtai whom each critic highlights. One critic uses the personal and sometimes the anecdote to criticize Chughtai and thereby causes the woman writer to speak for herself. This critic criticizes particular stories and characters; it is around such details that 'The Subversive and Affirming Power of Traditional Women: Chughtai's Direction' Ismat Chughtai was an Urdu writer, who wrote short stories as well as radio and television plays. She wrote close to a hundred stories, and her most famous story is 'Lihaf' 'The Quilt'. Challenging popular perceptions and critical reception of Chughtai, this Perspective asserts that her potentially radical, liberator, and class-conscious texts, which have generally been neglected and marginalized from feminist discourse, need to be re-historicized and reassessed to fully comprehend her progressive and subversive feminist legacy today. Despite her present-day sanitized and commodified image as a grand dame of Urdu literature, Chughtai's works provided imperative and unique socio-historical insights into complex human emotions, familial relations, childhood anxieties, and social evils, while debunking patriarchal and middle-class hypocrisies in twentieth-century north Indian society.

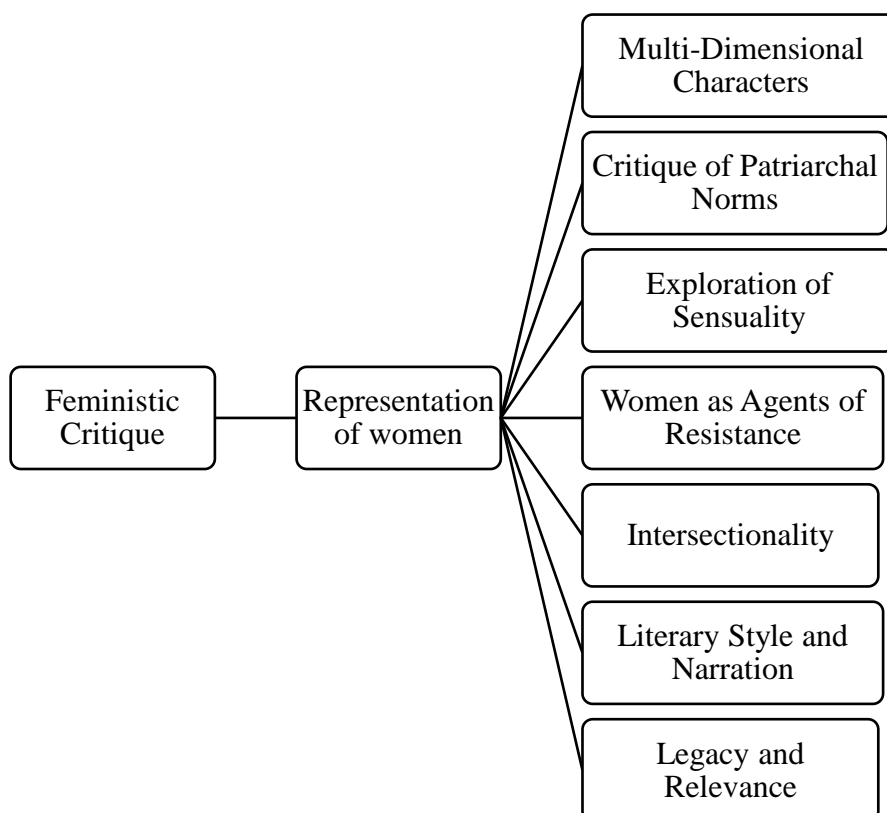


Figure 6: Feministic analysis of the stories

Mani (2016) further expands on the discourse surrounding post-independence women's writing, challenging the notion that this era represents a period of stagnation for feminist thought. By analyzing the character of Deepa, who grapples with personal aspirations and societal expectations, (Mani, 2016) underscores the complexities of feminine desire as a critical site of feminist theoretical discourse. This perspective invites readers to consider how Chughtai's characters navigate their desires against the backdrop of societal constraints, reflecting the broader struggles of women in a changing socio-cultural landscape. Muhammad (2017) examines the intersection of cultural and patriarchal norms in Jordanian literature, particularly through the lens of Faqir's narratives. The portrayal of women like Maha and Um Saad, who resist male authority and seek to reclaim their agency, resonates with Chughtai's depiction of female protagonists who confront the limitations imposed by their environments. (for Translation & Literary Studies & Muhammad Alqahtani, 2017) analysis of the silencing of women's voices and the space they carve for themselves in literature provides a compelling framework for understanding Chughtai's own characters and their quests for autonomy. In another study, Sahana, (2019) brings attention to Chughtai's "Sacred Duty," highlighting how the story critiques the notion of secularism in the context of interfaith marriages. By employing a comic and sarcastic tone, (Sahana, 2019) reveals the underlying communal tensions in contemporary India. This exploration of identity and belonging is crucial for understanding how Chughtai's narratives reflect the intricate dynamics of gender, religion, and national identity, particularly in a post-partition context. The exploration of patriarchal ideologies in Khaled Hosseini's "And the Mountains Echoed" by (World English Journal et al., 2020) further illustrates the tensions between traditional and liberal feminist ideologies. Their analysis of characters challenging patriarchal norms echoes Chughtai's own thematic concerns, as her characters often navigate the complexities of societal expectations while asserting their rights and identities. Almufayrij (2021) discusses the representation of rural women's mistreatment in Catherine Jemmat's work, framing feminism as a contested concept that transcends political movements.

Chughtai's portrayal of female sexuality in this story is notable for its frankness and refusal to shy away from taboo subjects. The protagonist's sexual autonomy is an essential part of her identity, and the narrative does not demonize her for exploring her desires. Instead, Chughtai uses her character to show how society views the sexual independence of women as a violation of societal norms. The protagonist's actions and behavior around her sexuality are judged harshly, but Chughtai provides a sympathetic portrayal of her, showing the complexity of her situation and motivations. The character's "uncivilized" behavior is rooted in her refusal to internalize shame about her desires, which positions her as a challenge to the dominant patriarchal structures that regulate women's bodies and sexuality. Chughtai's female characters, including the protagonist in *"An Uncivilized Woman"*, are not merely passive victims of social oppression. Instead, they are portrayed with psychological depth and as active agents in their own lives. The protagonist makes conscious decisions that reflect her agency, even if those choices are seen as rebellious or socially unacceptable. The protagonist in *"An Uncivilized Woman"* chooses to pursue relationships and behavior that are seen as inappropriate by societal standards, but her choices are depicted as acts of self-determination. The story critiques how society tries to deny women the right to make choices about their own lives and bodies. This deepens the portrayal of the protagonist as a character with psychological complexity, rather than a mere stereotype of defiance.

Another significant aspect of the representation of women in Chughtai's work is the isolation that the female characters experience, particularly when they do not adhere to societal norms. In this story, the protagonist faces judgment and alienation from society due to her perceived "uncivilized" behavior. The protagonist's non-conformity leads to her being ostracized and labeled as a misfit. This reflects the social pressures women face when they challenge traditional roles, and Chughtai comments on the ways in which society punishes women for stepping outside of accepted boundaries. The protagonist's isolation is both a consequence of her refusal to conform and a commentary on the narrow roles available to women in her social context. Chughtai's treatment of the female character in *"An Uncivilized Woman"* reflects her larger thematic concern with the struggles women face in a patriarchal society. Chughtai does not vilify the protagonist for her behavior; instead, she explores her complexity with empathy, shedding light on the limitations women experience within restrictive societal structures. The story invites the reader to question the definition of "civilized" behavior for women and to empathize with the protagonist's desire for freedom and autonomy. Chughtai's narrative technique, with its focus on the emotional and psychological state of the female character, highlights the tension between a woman's inner world and the external societal pressures she faces. The book by Jalil (2017) examines the feminist undertones, narrative style, and social commentary embedded in Chughtai's literary work. It brings to light her courage in addressing the realities of women's lives in a patriarchal society. Jalil explores Chughtai's skill at capturing the subtleties of female identity, demonstrating how her characters deal with limitations while claiming their autonomy in unusual ways. Ismat Chughtai makes a daring yet nuanced critique of patriarchal conventions. She celebrates women's strength and originality while exposing the limitations, injustices, and hypocrisies of a patriarchal society through her stories. She is a trailblazing voice in feminist literature because of the way her writing challenges readers to face difficult realities about gender, class, and power. Essentially, Chughtai destroys patriarchy, one tale at a time, rather than just criticizing it. Her works continue to stand as a potent reminder of the ongoing fight for gender equality and the unwavering determination of women who will not be silenced.

## 5.2 Justification of the Research Questions

### 5.2.1 What type of existing evidence regarding research upon Chughtai's writings does Rakhshanda Jalil mention in her book 'An uncivilized Woman, writings on Ismat Chughtai'?



In *An Uncivil Woman: Writings on Ismat Chughtai*, Rakhshanda Jalil provides a comprehensive overview of the critical discourse and research that has been conducted on Ismat Chughtai's life and works. This book is a curated anthology of diverse writings, offering both primary and secondary evidence of the literary and scholarly engagement with Chughtai's legacy. Jalil contains scholarly writings by a range of academics who have examined Chughtai's writings from a variety of critical perspectives, including postcolonial studies, feminist theory, and psychoanalysis. The recurrent topics in Chughtai's writings, including female desire, sexuality, class conflicts, and patriarchal limitations, are examined in these pieces. They go into additional detail about Chughtai's daring stylistic decisions, such as her use of Urdu prose, her unwavering depiction of taboo issues, and her unique narrative style. The book's writings place Chughtai in the broader context of Urdu literature, emphasizing her contributions to feminist debate and progressive writing. Jalil compiles pieces from journalists, academics, and critics over the years. From Chughtai's early contentious career to her status as a feminist icon, these articles show how her works have been received over time. Important turning points in her career, such as the release of her well-known works (*Tedhi Lakeer*, *Lihaaf*) and the reactions they elicited from the literary and public spheres, are highlighted by the previously studied data. It also demonstrates the various cultural and historical contexts in which Chughtai's work has been viewed.

### **5.2.2 What kind of narrative techniques are used by Ismat Chughtai in her selected writings as discussed in 'An uncivilized Woman, writings on Ismat Chughtai?'**

One of the most important authors of Urdu literature, Ismat Chughtai, is renowned for her fearless, unrepentant style of writing, particularly in the way she depicts women's life, sexuality, and social issues. Her investigation of the feminine experience in a patriarchal society and her resistance of conventional conventions are frequently reflected in her narrative tactics. Chughtai frequently illustrates her characters' innermost feelings and thoughts by employing the stream of consciousness approach. This method highlights the characters' inner conflicts, desires, and concerns while giving the reader a raw and unvarnished look inside their minds. Through a stream-of-consciousness narrative, Chughtai examines the protagonist's psychological and emotional struggle in her novel "The Quilt" (*Lihaaf*), enabling readers to comprehend her profound sense of loneliness and repressed desires. Chughtai occasionally presents a subjective and distorted interpretation of events through unreliable narrators, which complicates the story. These narrators, who are frequently women, are not very reliable since emotional biases, societal training, or personal fears may influence their impressions. The little girl in "The Quilt" describes how she saw her aunt's interactions with the woman who was living with her. The child's naive yet observant perspective filters the story, allowing for ambiguity and several possible interpretations. The results also show that Chughtai usually presents events out of chronological sequence, a technique known as non-linear time. This enables her to deviate from conventional narrative conventions and concentrate on feelings, connections, and mental states as opposed to a rigid timeline of events. Chughtai alternates between the past and present in pieces like "The Hollow" (*Khali Jhaadi*), offering tidbits of her characters' lives and relationships while frequently leaving the reader to fill in the blanks. This adds to the feeling of emotional instability and fragmentation.

### **5.2.3 How are female characters represented in Chughtai's writing with specific reference to An uncivil woman?**

Rakhshanda Jalil examines Ismat Chughtai's short story "*Aik Be-adab Aurat*" (*An Uncivilized Woman*), offering a detailed analysis of the ways in which Chughtai portrays female characters, particularly in terms of defying societal norms and exploring the complexities of female identity. Jalil's analysis highlights how Chughtai's portrayal of women in this story serves as a critique of the patriarchal structures that limit women's autonomy, freedom, and sexual expression. The female lead in "An Uncivilized Woman" represents a rejection of conventional norms on appropriate behavior for

women. She is deemed "uncivilized" by society since she does not fit the mold of a docile daughter or a faithful wife. She stands out as someone who defies conventional gender standards because of her independence, boldness, and resistance to subjection. Rakhshanda Jalil emphasizes the protagonist's defiance of the traditional view of women as submissive, passive individuals. This "uncivilized" woman rejects a patriarchal society's predetermined duties for women. She questions the norms imposed on her gender and navigates the world on her own terms, refusing to let male-dominated structures to define who she is. The female character's sexual autonomy is a crucial component in Chughtai's portrayal of her in this tale. Rakhshanda Jalil claims that because Chughtai's image of women as sexual creatures differs from more subdued and passive representations of women's sexuality, it was radical for its period. The protagonist's sexual independence is portrayed as an essential component of who she is, rather than something to be suppressed. Instead of passing moral judgment, Chughtai refrains from moral judgment, instead offering a sympathetic portrayal of the character's need for self-assertion through sexual freedom.

#### **5.2.4 What theoretical perspectives of feminism can be applied upon literary fiction of Chughtai as mentioned by Rakhshanda Jalil?**

Rakhshanda Jalil portrays Chughtai as a pioneer who addressed issues of gender, class, and religion with unparalleled candor. Jalil's analyses often stress Chughtai's relevance in contemporary feminist discourse, noting how her stories resonate with ongoing struggles for gender equality. The findings of the current study elaborated following types of feministic themes as discussed by different authors in the fiction afore stated.

- Liberal feminism emphasizes achieving gender equality through reform within existing social and legal structures. Works like "*Lihaaf*" (*The Quilt*) and "*Gainda*" illustrate how women resist societal expectations in subtle yet profound ways. Jalil (2017) often highlights how Chughtai advocated for women's rights to education, financial independence, and personal freedom. Her heroines question traditional roles and norms, embodying the liberal feminist struggle for equality.
- Radical feminism critiques the root structures of patriarchal systems, emphasizing the need to dismantle male-dominated power dynamics. It often focuses on issues like sexual oppression and the normalization of male authority. Themes of sexual oppression and patriarchal dominance are central to Chughtai's works. Stories like "*Til*" (*The Mole*) and "*Lihaaf*" expose the exploitation of women's bodies and critique the control men exert over women's sexuality. Jalil (2017) underscores Chughtai's bravery in addressing taboo subjects, such as female desire and same-sex love, which were considered scandalous in her time. These bold portrayals align with radical feminist goals of challenging patriarchal norms.
- Psychoanalytic feminism examines the psychological underpinnings of gender identity and relations, exploring how societal constructs of gender influence the subconscious. Her characters often grapple with feelings of guilt, repression, and desire. Jalil interprets these psychological explorations as a means to understand the impact of patriarchy on women's psyches. For example, in "*Lihaaf*", the protagonist's yearning for affection reflects her emotional deprivation in a loveless marriage.
- Postcolonial feminism analyzes the intersection of gender and colonial history, focusing on how women experience double oppression—both as colonized subjects and as women in patriarchal societies. For instance, stories like "*Tedhi Lakeer*" (*The Crooked Line*) explore the tension between tradition and modernity, as experienced by women striving for independence.

## 6. Conclusion

An *Uncivil Woman: Writings on Ismat Chughtai* by Rakhshanda Jalil is a seminal work in South Asian literature and feminist literary studies. This book offers a sophisticated examination of Ismat Chughtai's life and literary impact, going beyond simple remembrance. Chughtai is shown as a feminist trailblazer who utilized her writing to challenge social norms and elevate underrepresented voices, in addition to being a fearless storyteller who bravely addressed taboo topics like feminine desire, sexuality, and patriarchy. Jalil's anthology also brings attention to the cultural and historical backdrop against which Chughtai wrote colonial and postcolonial India, with its unique intersection of religion, politics, and gender norms. By analyzing Chughtai's works within this context, Jalil amplifies the intersectional dimensions of her narratives, demonstrating how Chughtai's characters navigate multiple forms of oppression and resistance. Her works explore the intricate relationship between individual agency and social limits, while also boldly addressing subjects such as religious dogma, class hierarchy, marital oppression, and gender inequity. Jalil places Chughtai in the Progressive Writers' Movement and positions her as an antecedent of modern feminist discourses in *An Uncivil Woman*. Chughtai's bravery in tackling issues like emotional neglect (*Til*), same-gender attraction (*Lihaaf*), and the psychological effects of patriarchy (*Tedhi Lakeer*) was revolutionary for her era and still has resonance in discussions about gender and sensuality today.

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