

**VOICE FROM THE MARGIN- A UNIVERSAL TALE OF LOSS, PAIN, TRAUMA AND
VOICELESSNESS: A STUDY OF SHAHNAZ BASHIR'S DEBUT NOVEL *THE HALF
MOTHER AND SCATTERED SOULS*, SELECTED STORIES**

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Received: 22 Mar 2018

Accepted: 28 Mar 2018

Published: 04 Apr 2018

ABSTRACT

*No human civilization on the subcontinent would ever witness such a massive human rights violations in the form of bloodshed, rape, and torture than the recent upsurge in Kashmir, next only to the mammoth brutality and savagery of humanity during Partition in 1947. In the contemporary world, Kashmir is another name for war, loss, pain, violence and relentless struggle. The essence of life and living in such a conflict-torn and anarchic state take a heavy toll on the lives of ordinary civilians of the valley. The constant feeling of insecurity, stress, death, loss, and pain jeopardize their mental health and equilibrium. Shahnaz Bashir, another artistic, literary voice of Kashmir like Agha Shahid Ali, renders such a gruesome tale of pain and trauma of the valley to the world outside. Bashir's novel *Half Mother* and short story collection *Scattered Souls* poignantly records an agonizing account of human subordination and marginalization against the repressive mechanism of power, authority, and militarization. The present paper aims to explore how the ongoing conflict in Kashmir brings in untold tragedies of loss, pain, trauma and voicelessness, a study of Bashir's debut novel *The Half Mother and Scattered Souls, Selected Stories*. The paper also seeks to throw some substantial light on the transformation of the Kashmiri people's voicelessness to a rebellious and protesting voice, a journey from the margin to the 'Centre'.*

KEYWORDS: *Oppression, Panopticism, Custody, Death, Pain, Trauma, Marginalization, Voicelessness*