

THE CHOICES IN MARRIAGE & THE SOUTH ASIAN QUEER WOMEN: AN ANALYTICAL AND CULTURAL EXPLORATION

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ABSTRACT

*Marriage is part and parcel of the lives of women. While parents want to retain their cultural identity by ensuring that their children get married, the younger generation tends to have a different take on marriage. The pressure to get married is immense for women, and if they make their own choice in marriage, they are subjected to social stigma, hostility and sometimes rejection. This paper seeks to discuss how queer women fight for their relationships battling social, cultural and familial pressures and how their struggles shape their choice in marriage by analyzing S. J. Sindu's *Marriage of a Thousand Lies* and Shamin Sarif's *I can't Think Straight*. Marriage is often tied to women's identity/lives. For Queer women, their lives become even more difficult because they face the double whammy of being women and having a different sexual identity. In S.J. Sindu's *Marriage of a Thousand Lies* Lucky, a Sri Lankan American queer woman goes for a "marriage of convenience" with Kris, a gay man, to avoid an arranged marriage. On the other hand, Nisha, the woman Lucky loves, goes for an arranged marriage by concealing her sexual identity for the fear of cultural backlash from her Sri Lankan community. In Shamin Sarif's novel, Leyla, a British Indian Muslim woman, refuses to get into an arranged marriage as her attractions are towards women. Tala, a Palestinian Christian woman, is engaged to Hani, but she is drawn towards Leyla.*

KEYWORDS: *Battling Pressures, Choice in Marriage, Cultural Identity, Fighting for relationships, Social Norms.*