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DEPICTION OF WOMEN AS A BODY IN SONIA FALEIRO'S  
*BEAUTIFUL THING: INSIDE THE SECRET WORLD OF BOMBAY DANCE  
BARS*

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**Rincy Philip 1\*, Dr. V.S. Bindhu 2: Depiction Of Women As A Body In Sonia Faleiro's  
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**ABSTRACT**

Sonia Faleiro is a narrative figure of many non-fiction works. She travel all over India and explores the complication and sufferings of women and children. She is also the author of *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay Dance Bars* and a novel named *The Girl*. Faleiro is also a co-founder of Deca, a global co-operative of award winning journalists. Her writings acclaimed worldwide and appeared in The Newyork Times, The Financial Time and The California Sunday.

Faleiro try to reveal a deplorable condition of women who sexually molested and repressed in Mumbai metropolis. Writer tries her best to illustrate masterfully the complexity of these living occurrences through her work *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay Dance Bars*. Many of these worked in these areas are addicted to drugs and they are suffering from severe and chronic sexually transmitted diseases with awful health conditions. For India, it is a shame that this much of secular country treat women as a body. This non-fiction work is a vivid portrayal of Faleiro's journey to the world of dark and destructed souls.

The paper entitled 'Women as a body in Sonia Faleiro's *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay Dance Bars*' discusses about the women who worked as a dancer in liquor shops and bars or pubs in Bombay metropolis. Bombay is India's most luxurious metropolitan city with vast, social, political and cultural diversities. City is differ from caste and religion with different languages. Many from different parts of the world are permanent residents of Bombay. Bombay is also the capital of drugs. A huge number of bar, massage parlours and pubs can see in this metropolis. In this bars nearly 75,000 women are working. Most of them

are waiters and a few of them are dancers. When dance bars banned, they named bars as Silent Bars, Ladies Service etc., which provide sexual service or prostitution to their clients. Women treated only as a body in these areas of society. Her investigative story about these dancers gave her a firm grasp of women who are poor, uneducated and lead a substandard life. They need money for their daily bread and survival. Most of the women raped or sold in early ages by their own relatives. This work is a perfect portrayal of a journey to the dark crucial world of Bombay dance bars and massage parlours. Book shows a reality of life happening in a vast metropolis.

Women started working as bar dancers in Mumbai metropolis is quite so far. It is in the beginning of 90s. Bar dancing got popularity that it is a form of sexual entertainment for men who living in high stakes. In most cases, mainly husband sent his wife to bars for making money. They forced to do work in bars. From the home itself, they sexually molested and repressed. Then they directed to do earn money through prostitution. Dominance of patriarchy over women can see in these areas. Main fact about these bar dancers is that there is no importance for gender, caste, creed, religion or community. Only objective about these bar dancers is that they should be young and charming. For instance, most of these dancers have a background of prostitution or sex labour. They are from Mumbai's heavyweight brothels or streets. As they already, have experience and performance skills.

Gender has a prime role in bar dancing. Bar owners, make use of women as a sexual object. Dancing in bars later leads to prostitution. At a certain period of time Mumbai metropolis suddenly gave rise to a major number of dance bars. So that sexual labour and prostitution expanded and bar owners began to earn money from this. Poor remuneration given for bar dancers and women need to sell their own body for better life proceedings. Many of these dancers have their own family especially children. They all need to withstand by selling their own body. Another form of job among women in bars is that they have to work as 'service girls'. Women had to supply liquor among customers and to clean tables and floors. In this case, there is no equality among men and women. Along with dancing and singing they have to service for bars. Although performance has, no value bar owners make money from customers that bar dancing is a form of sexual entertainment. They all need to attract customers to bars and to earn money. Before 2006, Dance bars are legal in India. In June 2006, Maharashtra government bans dancing bars. However, the fact is women still work in bars as service girls. Only dancing in bars banned. At that time also women directed to do prostitution and owner earn money as like as older time. Commercialization of women can see in these dance bars and pubs. Dance bars are under the control of thugs and criminals. These dance bars mainly opened at night under strict restrictions. Mainly women and Trans genders are dancers. Mostly they dance something for someone. Performance has no importance in this. Dance bars banned mainly for two reasons. First, the main point is that bar dancers destroy the moral ethics of society so that many youths were addicted to drugs and sex. Secondly the reason behind is directed to the case of women who were exploited in bars and bar owners use them for commercial purpose

Sonia Faleiro reveals a perfect description of women whose life happenings lead her to do prostitution and sexual malpractices. Most of these are slum dwellers as that they need to face difficulties in life. They all like to live in a secured and healthy life situation. In most of these families women is supposed to do work, they only have income for bearing hardships in life. For that, women need to struggle for money. They need money for daily bread, need to pay bills and to educate their children by selling body. Searching of job may directed to do performances. Then they automatically moved to dancers, singers, obviously service girls, and later ends with prostitution.

Faleiro in her non-fiction work *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay Dance Bars* depict the life of bar dancer with more strife and complexities. Her main character is Leela. She is a young, poor woman with low living standard. She is a high paid dancer in one of top dance bar in Mira road, Mumbai. Leela helps Faleiro to probe the truth of sex trade that controlled Mumbai Sex Mafia. Her work helps to battle the enigmatic world of drug and sex. Through Leela, Faleiro shows her as a symbol of thousands of women who struggled and worked to pursue better life in the lower depth of Bombay with more physical and mental destructions. According to Suketu Mehta, about Bombay is that, "the world that the dancers and the patrons call the bar line, is unique to Bombay and, for me, it is the intersection of everything that makes the city fascinating: money, sex, love, death and show business (285)". Thus, the clear portrait of city captured.

Another main point that Faleiro depict is Gender inequality. Women especially from Adivasi or Dalit strive for life and they are much victimised. *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay Dance Bars* helps to inspect inequality among women mainly in dancing fields. They are not dancing for Bollywood cinema or films, have no fans or mentors. They are the dancers of bars and liquor shops. Cinema actors or dancers have high attention and privilege also they have high pay for their work. Performance had equal value for that. This is not befitting in the case of bar dancers. They only got low wages, as they should work from late night until early morning. Women who were working in bars are also addicted to liquors and alcohols. So that their health conditions are gradually, become getting substandard. In addition, they are suffering from several Sexually Transmitted Diseases. These diseases primarily spread by unprotected sex. Faleiro's study provide an authentic analysis and survey that shows a present hard life scenario of gender inequality and socio - economic and cultural realities that haunt low class women who struggled a lot for daily bread and to survive in his harsh world. Bar dancing, is a job inter connected with gender inequality, caste structure, sex trade and sex labour.

According to the words of B R Ambedkhar, "Caste is a system of graded inequality in which castes are arranged according to an ascending scale of reverence and descending scale of contempt". He explained the interconnection between patriarchal system and caste structure. For that, he totally neglected the mythical beliefs of sati, girl child marriage and widowhood. Both patriarchy and caste system has control over women's sexuality. On feminist aspect, bar dancing has major issues that women who were dancers in bars branded as 'bad'. Faleiro reveal it as one who was

raped repeatedly before the age of ten says to her, 'I decided that if this was going to keep happening to me, then at least I should profit from it, I should eat from it..

Falerio reveals a nation with widespread suppression of sexuality that over ruled both men and women. On the other side Falerio's main character, Leela expresses a world of personal freedom. While interviewing Leela, reveals a story of extreme happiness that she and her friends possess. Leela wishes Faleiro not to feel sorry for her, 'when you look at my life, don't look at it beside yours, Leela says 'look at I beside the life of my mother and her mother and my sister-in-law who have to take permission to walk down the road. They all indulged in the lower depth of Mumbai metropolis in fact they are submissive victims. Leela herself knows about her job and the world of darker and harsh realities that her job is a tool for everyman and make all fool. At the end, Faleiro tensed about a reality is that Leela is missing. When dance bars are banned, these bar dancers have no another job to do and no another place to go. For daily bread and survival, they moved on to prostitution or otherwise they committed suicide. *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay Dance Bars* expresses the culture of Bombay that most of them lead a bored life. Already dance bars banned but the police authorities frequently allows dance bars in working condition that these bars are working overnight. Above all, Faleiro expresses a world of desires, thoughts and aspirations that acquire through the life of Bombay. On a clear statement, that bar dancers are aware of their own work is that it is dirty, bad or immoral. For that, she clearly narrates the life with their own perspective, collocating with emotional perplexity.

Sonia Faleiro through her non-fiction work *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay Dance Bars* points out a forbidding delineation of sex labour, rape, physical abuse on women. She recreates the brutal world of bar dancers under glowing light. It is a journey through dark, muddle world without giving any solutions. Faleiro with all her restrictions captured the world of dark life happening that controlled the drug mafia and sex industry.

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