

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

## EFFECTS OF GENDER ISSUES ON FEMALE'S PSYCHE: A STUDY OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S NOVELS

**Aziz Ahmad**

Ph. D Scholar, Qurtuba University of Science & Technology, Peshawar

[azizuom@yahoo.com](mailto:azizuom@yahoo.com)

**Dr. Rab Nawaz Khan**

Assistant professor

Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan

[rnawaz1981@gmail.com](mailto:rnawaz1981@gmail.com)

**Aziz Ahmad, Dr. Rab Nawaz Khan, Effects of Gender Issues on Female's Psyche: a Study of Khaled Hosseini's Novels-Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(9), ISSN 1567-214x**

### Abstract

The current research study posits the effects of gender issues on the psyche of female characters in Hosseini's novels. Female characters of the three novels have been analyzed through close reading technique for the psychological effects they have suffered at the hands of not only men but the society at large. After analysis of the female characters and their sufferings, it can be said that women are not only physically oppressed and tortured by the patriarchal social values but they also suffer mentally and psychologically. Some women, like Sanaubar and Homaira are the victims of ethnicity, while women, like Mariam, Pari and Laila become the victim of society. It has also been observed that women like Homaira do not make any resistance to the society, while women like Nana succumb to the societal pressures. However, there are women, Soraya, and Mariam and Laila, who react and face the hurdles to become strong women in the face of all hardships and miseries.

**Keywords:** *Hosseini, gender issues, female's psyche, close reading*

### Introduction

The position paper elucidates the physical and psychological sufferings of women in the Afghan patriarchal culture as presented in Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And the Mountains Echoed*.

The novels are rich in discussing the political, religious, social and domestic milieu of Afghanistan. The researchers have identified numerous themes in these novels. Inayatullah (2013) highlights the political and historical perspective of Afghan issues in *The Kite Runner*. Soraya (2015) investigates the characters of Mariam and Laila in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* for women's persecution in the Taliban regime. Khan (2016) analyzes *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. His study highlights power issues and the use of different voices of gender in these novels. Gorden and Almutairi (2013) elucidate the patriarchal family structure of the Afghan society in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Hassan (2019) studied power and oppression in *And the Mountains Echoed*, while Ali (2018) worked on oppression in the same novel. Meanwhile, the works of Ahmad and Khan (2020) have highlighted the conflicting and challenging ideological underpinnings of gender-related issues in the three novels. Therefore, the current study takes into account an unexplored and important problem highlighted in Hosseini's all three novels. The article posits the physical and psychological effects of the patriarchal oppression on women in the Afghan society.

### Literature Review

Human beings have always been bifurcated on the bases of their biological properties and social roles assigned to them in society. Researchers, like Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) view sex as a biological phenomenon, while sex as a social characteristic. Because of the social roles assigned to human beings, they are viewed as male and female. Their parents, even before the birth of their children, gender them by thinking of pin dress and toys for baby girl and sports type dresses baby boys. In society, the physical distinctions lead to genders. It has become so mixed in our minds that we accept gender as natural. Eckert (1989) views gender and age as biological phenomena. However, the basic thing which serves the bottom line for expectations, roles and norms which contribute to gender. Indirectly, men and women are the two variants of sex. Similarly, in gender, there are differences in patterns too. Nonetheless, differences of sex remain the vital aspects of focus in society, rather than the variants of gender. The probable reason behind this kind of practice may be the observable differences between the two sexes as gender is complex, multidimensional and difficult to discern. As a result, different roles and ideologies are associated to genders, thus leading to distinctive social values for women and men. The two variants, therefore, experience life, culture and society differently.

Another theorist, Butler (1990), opines that gender is the name of managing things within a limited scene. People associate desires with gender which are not easy to detach. These desires are recognized in the long run. Further, the recognized desires are attached with power. One realizes one's gender when he/she gets the understanding of the external norms of the society

which design and retain it. The outer realization is essential to achieve one's true identity. The self must be set aside to fully comprehend it. In addition, sex and gender are materialized when they are represented through body.

Keeping in mind the distinction between sex and gender, people have attached religious and social myths with it. These myths are used as a source of rationalization against women's oppression. The myths are, further, continued in such manner that even women consider them natural and become accomplices in sustaining them. It has been seen that women are compelled to cease their struggles for liberation and independence (Uchem, 2001). Such a condition leads to patriarchy which, according to Bhasin (2006) "refer(s) to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways" (p. 3). Patriarchy has been described as a structures arrangement to dominate, exploit and oppress women (Walby, 1990). It has been further opined that patriarchy does not believe in the equality of women and men. Men are given dominance over women. The structured nature of patriarchy does not let women go against this system. As a result, patriarchy represents a systemized exercise of women's domination by men. According to Sultana (2011), patriarchy deprives women of all rights, especially legal rights along with rights of equality, property and mobility. Patriarchy uses tools, like low wages, violence, son preference, religion, discriminatory laws and dowry system to oppress women.

Patriarchy has psychological effects on women as well. Qasim et al, (2015) finds links between patriarchy and the phenomena of madness. Husbands oppressed their wives to such an extent that they went mad. Women verbally and physically assaulted. Women could not live independent lives being part of the patriarchal society. Women's resistance is not liked and any resistance from women is attributed with mental illness. It has been concluded that patriarchy, madness and oppression are interlinked.

In Afghanistan, violence against women is a common phenomenon. Most of the women are illiterate, there are forced and child marriages. Women are sold in the name of marriage. Most of the women die at child birth. They are not given legal and property rights. Oppression against women is deep rooted in the attitudes, customs and culture of Afghanistan (UNAMA & OHCHR, 2009). In addition, there are tribal codes in the Afghan society. The most dominant features of the code are "*nang*" and "*namoos*" (pride and honor). Women are considered the custodians of their honor and pride. Respectability depends on women. It is the duty of men to take care of women and punish women if they transgress.

### **Methodological and Conceptual Framework**

This study uses Greenham's (2018) close reading technique as a research method for analysis of the selected sample excerpts. These samples have been

purposely selected from the novels under study. Close reading technique has already established a sound ground in literary studies. This technique is viably effective in analysis of literary genres due to its levels related to analysis of literary and linguistic themes and issues. Greenham's most updated book on close reading technique highlights the modified and most advance version of close reading technique. His given six contexts/levels of close reading technique attempt to analyze a literary piece at the micro and macro levels. These contexts/levels of close read technique, which are applied in this study, are:

***The semantic context/level:*** The application of this level is related to the literal meaning of individual words used in a piece of writing.

***The syntactic context/level:*** This level deals with the analysis of various layers of meaning related to syntactic structures of a text.

***The thematic context/level:*** This level of analysis is applied when various themes of the text emerge as a result of close reading and the way these themes affect meaning.

***The iterative context/level:*** This level of analysis is applied when an analyst explores how repetition and patterning affect meaning of the text under study.

***The generic context/level:*** This level of analysis is related to how the text, during reading, changes analysts approach to its meanings.

***The adversarial context/level:*** This level of analysis is applied when the historical, political and theoretical concerns, background and knowledge are considered to reshape meanings of/in the text.

While on the conceptual level, the study takes into consideration Butler's (1990) ideas of 'performativity' in gender issues. She argues that "gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" (p. 4). Therefore, gender cannot be separated from the political cultural milieu in which it has been created and sustained. In many instances, feminism is dealt as a comprehensive term. As a result many individual cases of gender oppression and patriarchal abuses are disregarded. Gender is like a performed act. People perform and practice it so many times that they remember it and consider it natural. The repetition of the act makes the act a reality. Butler rejects the difference between gender and sex. Body makes these terms meaningful. Beyond performance, there is no identity. Performance makes a stable identity of gender which can be challenged through performance only.

In light of the above discussion, the researchers have analyzed the novels of Hosseini for the effects of gender issues on women psyche and the role

women practiced to either yield to patriarchal oppression or come stronger through their performance in the face of all hazards and hardships.

### **Analysis of the Novels**

All the three novels of Hosseini have women characters, like Homaira, Nana, Sanaubar, Soraya, Mariam, Laila, Parwana, Nila and Wahdati, who suffer either because of ethnicity, patriarchal social values or because of individual characters. The resultant sufferings of women have lasting effects on the lives of women. These effects are not only physical but also psychological.

In *The Kite Runner* (2003), Homaira suffers because she was ethnic Hazara. Though the direct mental reactions and feelings of Homaira has not been mentioned in the novel, but words like “suffered” and “the world always wins” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 87) elucidate how that woman would have suffered. She feels discriminated twice: as a woman and as a Hazara. Afghan men can love Hazara women, they can have illegal children from them but when it comes to give them a respectable position in society by marrying them, men feel ashamed.

Another female character of the novel, Soraya, endures the patriarchal double standards of the Afghan society. She runs from her home to marry her choice but is brought home by her father. Her hair is trimmed so that she may not go out of her home because of shame. Because of her this adventure, her mother feels concerned to marry her, and hopes Amir is her “would be” suitor. Jamila (Soraya's mother) is “eager” to materialize her hopes and “heartbreakingly” expects some positive development from Amir (Hosseini, 2003, p. 130). Jamila cannot hide her emotions because of her intense desire.

Soraya feels “broke down” (Hosseini, 2003, pp. 156-157) when she hears women stigmatizing her character. She is very upset. Her discourse and anger is a reaction against the dual social values of men. She is at the verge of mental disorder. Soraya uses slang “fucking” which illustrates that she not only sad but also angry. Usually, a Pashtun woman does not use abusive words in the presence of her husband. Women are considered to be respectable and decent. On the contrary, she refutes the “unfair” values attributed to women. She is furious at the duplicity and hypocrisy of people. The word “sons” refers only to the male youngsters. The male could enjoy “nightclubs,” relish “meat” and afford “girlfriends.” “Nightclubs” are only meant for the male children. However, women are not supposed to have boyfriends and go to clubs and drink. The noun “meat” is significant in both literal and connotative meanings. Meat is a rich source of protein and is considered good for physical health. In the context, men prefer to eat meat to get bodily strength to enjoy physical relationships. The word “pregnant” is

significant and meaningful. There is one kind of values for men. Nobody minds men's adventures, while all values and customs are for women in the patriarchal society. Even men may have babies outside "wedlock." However, women are expected to be respectable and take care of their *nang* and *namoos*. The word "goddamn" elucidates annoyance at these hypocritical values. Soraya does not accept the unjustified customs in her society.

Men can have "fun" and enjoy almost all the pleasures of life. However, even the small mistakes of women are remembered till their death. People do not forgive women for any mishap in their lives. The "single mistake" ruins a woman's life. Soraya makes a single mistake in her life by eloping with a man of her choice. Her father catches her and brings her back to her home. This ruined her life because she has violated the "nang" and "namoos" of her father. Being traditional Pashtuns, the pride and honor of her father are dear to the society rather than the wishes of a girl. Women are considered the custodian of men's honor. Men can do anything, but women cannot bring disrespect to their families. Such women are not allowed to live a respectable married life. Soraya also faces such a situation. Women talk against her character. She has rubbed her face in dust because of her elopement.

Hosseini, in his second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), points the mental sufferings of women and illustrates how women have reacted to the oppression of men and society. Nana succumbs to oppressive social pressures, while Mariam and Laila come out strong.

Nana lives an isolated life in a "*Kobla*," away from the rest of the people. Jalil has kept her separate from the rest of her wives because she is poor and a servant and she is not acceptable as a wife in the same family. Nana gives birth to an illegitimate child, Mariam, who is not acceptable to society. She is called "*harami*" and whenever Nana or Mariam try to mix with society, they are reminded of Nana's past mistake. Nana's reaction is quite negative to society and its double standards. Nana is annoyed and depressed because of her affair with Jalil. She cannot undo her relationship now. Her past haunts her. Nana says, "I wish my father had had the stomach to sharpen one of his knives and do the honorable thing." This depicts the mental condition of Nana. For women, living with an illegitimate child is horrible in the patriarchal society. The society compels her to commit suicide. In the patriarchal society, the killing of women like Nana is considered honorable, while living makes life a kind of hell for such women. The society is not ready to accept such women because they cannot claim "love, family, home acceptance" (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 4-7). This is a common practice in the Pashtun patriarchal society to kill a woman by the "*nang*" and "*namoos*". This kind of murder is called honor killing. Through this act, face is saved from the pointing fingers of the people.

Nana tells another truth to Mariam. An allegory of the “compass needle” is mentioned to Mariam. As the “compass needle” always “points north,” similarly, the “man’s accusing finger” aims women. Nana tells Mariam to “remember” her words. She teaches her a lesson because Nana herself has experienced the situation. Jalil lives a respectable life, while she has been compelled to live in isolation in *kobla*.

According to Nana, women should learn “only one skill.” That skill is “*tahamul*” and “endure” (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 17-19). The word “endure” is the English counterpart of “*tahamul*.” In the patriarchal society, women are so much oppressed and tortured that they should formally learn the skill of enduring. However, this skill cannot be learnt in schools. That is why she asks Mariam not to go to school but develop this skill in home to avoid the pointing accusing fingers of people. However, it is Nana who is unable to endure the atrocities and double standards of the society and succumbs to it and commits suicide one day.

Mariam, in the beginning of the novel, is a poor “clumsy *harami*.” Her mother commits suicide because she could not bear the atrocities and double standards of society. However, Mariam comes out to be strong and resilient at the end of the novel. She suffers, initially, because of Jalil’s wives. She is just “fifteen.” However, Jalil’s wives want to get rid of her and marry her to Rasheed, who is fifty (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 47-48). Mariam is a burden to them and remind them of Jalil’s action.

Mariam does not wear *burqa* before marriage. After her marriage with Rasheed, she has to wear it. She is now not a girl but a wife and a wife in the patriarchal society is the possession and property of a man. She is now Rasheed’s honor. Her face now belongs to Rasheed. Her body too belongs to Rasheed now. It is Rasheed’s right to see and touch it. Rasheed is a traditional Pashtun. He asks Mariam to wear *burqa*. She does not know how to wear it so Rasheed helps her. The headpiece of the *burqa* is soft and padded, however, it is “felt” “tight and heavy” (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 69-71). There is a “mesh screen” in the headpiece through which she can see. The screen is an obstruction between the world and the woman. She can see the world but the world cannot see her. With difficulty, she wears the *burqa*. She does not fit into the *burqa* as is indicated by the noun “hem” because the *burqa* is long, heavy and “stumbling.” The phrase “peripheral vision” indicates that a woman who wears *burqa* does not see the nearby things. This causes a woman to stumble. To Mariam, the *burqa* is “suffocating.” The headpiece is straight “against her mouth.” Mariam feels choked because her mouth is squashed in it. *Burqa* is an easily accessible tool to men in the patriarchal society to keep them under certain bondage and limit their access to the outside world. It is because of this reason that *burqa* has been considered an oppressive patriarchal tool.

Mariam finds herself a “disappointment” to Rasheed (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 81-82). She is young and simpleton and cannot satisfy the sexual desires of Rasheed the way he wants. She finds this one day when she is sweeping Rasheed's room. In magazines, there are nude women in different sex positions. By looking to them, she feels “bored contempt.” On the one hand, Rasheed talks of his “*nang*” and “*namoos*,” while on the other hand he is violating the “*nang*” and “*namoos*” of other people. There is a realization in the mind of Mariam at this moment. As he is a man, so his needs “differed” from hers. For men, “honor” and “propriety” are but just words. These are the words which only matter in the lives of women. Women are killed and oppressed in the name of honor. Mariam felt their “coupling” as “tolerating pain” in the rest of her life. All her ideas about Rasheed are shattered at this moment and ask from herself a question “but was it unforgivable?”

She is unable to give him child, especially a son. Therefore, Rasheed becomes intolerable: “talking this way to her,” “to bear his scorn,” “his ridicule,” “his insults,” and “walking past her like she was nothing but a house cat” (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 97-99). Now, Mariam has “to bear his scorn, his ridicule and his insults.” The metaphor “house cat” signifies the status of Mariam in Rasheed's house. She makes no difference to Rasheed and his life. She has been treated like “nothing.” Rasheed loses his interest in Mariam because she is unable to give him a male heir. In the patriarchal society, an issueless woman like Mariam becomes useless and meaningless. As a result, she is maltreated and oppressed. Rasheed wants and prays for a male child. He intends to name the child as “Zalmai”(a proud young man). However, Mariam disappoints him seven times. Rasheed starts mistreating Mariam because of her miscarriage.

She reaches to a conclusion “after” she spends “four years” with Rasheed. A woman has to “tolerate” so many things, especially when is “afraid.” Mariam tolerates so many things because she is afraid of Rasheed. The “kicks,” “slaps,” “punches,” “shifting moods” and “volatile temperament.” When Rasheed is in home, Mariam remains in consistent fear of him. There are usual beatings in the house even on small pretences like the noise of plate. The verb “pounded” depicts that beatings have become normal practice in Mariam's life. Consequently, Mariam is terrified of him whenever she sees him. Rasheed searches “excuse” to pound at her. One other reason behind Rasheed's beating Mariam is that he believes that his “son” died because of her. In addition, Mariam is not able to “give him a son.”

Rasheed describes Mariam as “Volka”, “*dehati*” and “*harami*” when he compares her to Laila (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 216-217). At this moment she recalls the words of Nana that Mariam is no more than a mere “*little clumsy harami*.” They have lived together for twenty years since their marriage. Mariam has become habitual to his insults and abuses because she not seen any happy days in her life, rather Rasheed has persecuted and



exploited her. She has just seen “his scorn and reproach, his ridiculing and reprimanding” (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 233-235). The words “scorn,” “reproach,” “ridiculing,” and “reprimanding” represent Rasheed’s offensive and insolent behavior towards Mariam. She has “learned” to accommodate Rasheed’s affronts now. Mariam knows that she has no other choice than bearing Rasheed.

Mariam feels fear in Rasheed’s presence and “shivered” because of this. As goat is frightened in the presence of tiger in cage, similarly Mariam is terrified in the presence of Rasheed. The word “fright” depicts the mental status of Mariam. The point of comparison between goat and Mariam is their weakness. By the same comparison, Rasheed has been compared to an animal. As tiger devours goat, likewise Rasheed avidly enjoys oppressing Mariam. The metaphor aptly represents the fear of weak woman in the presence of an oppressor man who enjoys torturing and persecuting her.

Laila is another woman character in the novel. Rasheed marries her because she was young and beautiful. Rasheed knows that Laila is pregnant from Tariq but still he marries her. However, Rasheed soon becomes violent towards Laila too because she has given birth to girl child, Aziza. It is because of this reason that Mariam tells her “you see, your sin is even less forgivable than mine” (Hosseini, 2007, pp. 243-244). Soon, Laila herself realizes this. She is “stunned” that how a man could be so brutal to a woman. As she is an educated woman, she does not remain silent like Mariam. She argues with Rasheed whenever there is an opportunity. Even she saves Mariam from Rasheed on several occasions.

Laila is a strong resilient woman. She bears the beatings and abuses of the Taliban when she goes alone to orphanage to see Aziza after the Rasheed refuses to go with her. Sometimes, when she was lucky she would receive only “tongue-lashing” or “kick in the rear.” On the most occasions, she would receive “wooden clubs, fresh tree branches, short whips, slaps, often fists” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 313). However, all this made her stronger and stronger with the passage of time. At the end, Mariam saves her by killing Rasheed and accepting her action before the Taliban jury.

In *The Mountains Echoed* (2013), we also see some women characters, like Parwana, Pari and NilaWahdatiwho show their mental reactions at the atrocities of society. These women suffer physically and mentally only because they live in a traditional patriarchal society. Pari is sold to Wahdati’s in the novel. Parwana insists Saboor to act like this because in the previous winter she loses her son because of the cold weather. Abdullah finds it shocking that nobody talks about Pari when she is sold. Parwana feels “sorry” for the action. However, she tells Abdullah that it was necessary to sell her. She says “she had to be the one... the finger cut, to save the hand” (Hosseini, 2013, p. 48). Pari is sold because she is a girl. Being a woman, Parwana feels coldhearted towards Pari. However, as woman she knows that Abdullah is a

helping hand in the family and Pari, being a girl, has to be sacrificed. Gender victimization and exploitation is so much infused into the society that women take part in it to exploit and oppress other women.

The abusive behavior of Parwana is mainly because of men's reaction to both Parwana and Masooma when they are together. The movement of Parwana is presented as "shuffling." She is described as "flat chest" and "sallow complexion" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 63-64). Parwana has been depicted as "shadow" in the presence of Masooma. Men do not pay any attention to Parwana because she is nothing like a shadow. The word "pathetic" presents the mental status of Parwana. She does not feel well when men react differently to these two women. Parwana feels "torn" inside her mind. She is also a woman and demands admiration and attention from men. However, only Masooma remains the center of attention, while Parwana is completely ignored. She feels envious of Masooma yet she desires to be present with her so that she may also be seen and admired by men. Unfortunately, she is disappointed and "torn" mentally. The words "envy" and "thrill" present the "torn" mental condition of Parwana. Further, Parwana is presented equated as a "weed." She ("weed") may create currents for "lily" (Masooma). Her presence intensifies Masooma's beauty.

Parwana feels inferior because she has no value before men. Physical beauty has a major role in their acceptance in the eyes of men in the patriarchal society. She desires to be loved as Masooma is loved by men. However, she is denied all the hopes of being loved in the presence of Masooma. They receive different and dissimilar treatment, though both of them are girls. The "pathetic" character of Parwana adds to her stone heartedness. She kills her sister to win Saboor and later on she sells Pari to support her family and save her sons.

Nila Wahdati has quite a strong reaction to the oppressive and patriarchal behavior of men in Afghanistan. In her interview, she depicts her feelings to the interviewer. She also illustrates the reasons behind her leaving Afghanistan. King Amanullah wants to reshape the country by any means. He wants to end child and forced marriages. He intends to send girls to schools. However, when his wife, Queen Soraya, comes before people "barefaced" he faces strong resistance from "*mullah*" and runs away from the country to save his life (Hosseini, 2013, p. 181-183). Nila is a liberal educated woman and she likes the king's struggle to "enlighten" the country.

Nila believes that, in the West, people respect Afghan women. The repressed Afghan women are considered "heroines" in the West. The word "turned" depicts that the real status of women in Afghanistan is not known to people in the West. They are suppressed and subjugated by the patriarchal society. They do not have their own independent lives. They are far from

being “heroines.” these women are not heroines in Afghanistan but for the West they appear to be “heroines” because of their “hard lives.” However, they “admire” Afghan women “from a distance.” It will be hard for the western women to “walk in their shoes.” In the West, women enjoy freedom to a large extent. They cannot think of the hard and troublesome life of the women who live the whole of their lives in a consistent servitude.

Afghan women, according to Nila, are conscious of their genuine “desires” and “dreams.” However, they can do nothing with male dominance, while men play and ruin all their dreams and desires. The disturbing aspect of male oppression is that women are contended with their lives and do not resist and complain. Nila intends to make a point that it is worse to be silent in such a situation. Women’s subjugation is not good but their silence is worse than it. The women “smile” and “pretend” notwithstanding their miserable lives. There are “misgivings” in their lives but these women are so much brave that they do not show it. Afghan women are “contended” in their miseries, in spite of sufferings and their awareness of it. She believes that Afghan women are subjugated and kept inferior by the Afghan patriarchal men. Unfortunately, women do not have the courage to defy their joyless fate. Instead of resisting the blood-filled fate, they succumb before it. By observing “closely” the West will realize the actual position and mental status of Afghan women. The word, further, illustrates that as Nila has lived there so she knows the real miseries. From here (France) it is not easy to see their pathetic lives. Women in Afghanistan have “helpless look” and “desperation” which you can feel only from the close. The Afghan women warrant mercy because of the “hypocritical” behavior. Their lives are “quite pathetic.” Nila illustrates her intentions too. She does not want this kind of miserable and pathetic life for Pari (“my daughter”).

Nilā also illustrates her anger at the patriarchal attitude of her. Majority of the fathers, in patriarchal societies, believe that it is their duty to guard their daughters from immoral activities. The Afghan father will never desire that his daughter should indulge in illegitimate sexual drives. Nilā Wahdati illustrates such an attitude of her father while expressing her own reaction to it. She does not favor this attitude of her father. Her sexual adventures are her strong reaction against the “attitude” of her father. She does not want her father to “protect her” from her “body” (Hosseini, 2013, pp. 211-212). The body of a woman is not her property but represents the pride and honor (“*nang*” and “*namoos*”) of the whole family. Her body is the possession of either her brother, father, son or husband. Nilā resists this attitude of her patriarchal father. Nilā wanted to exercise her right over her own body. She considers it her birthright to decide about the biological needs of her body because it is her body. Her father meddles in her needs which make her “angry.” In patriarchal societies, women are repeatedly told by men (and women too) what to do and

what not to do. She tries to justify her anger. The Afghan parents will not want their children to get involved in illegal sexual gratification. Resultantly, Nila makes affairs friendships with men to revolt and resist the oppressive patriarchal behavior the society and, especially her father.

She reacts to men's belief that women are "immature" and "vulnerable" towards "physical temptation" and are prone to mischief, while men have "self-control." Because of their weakness, women need protection. It is a common patriarchal ideology and a tool to oppress women. Women may cross any limit to satisfy their sexual desire. They are "hypersexual." Therefore, men consider it their duty to keep women under control. The names, "Ahmad" and "Mahmood" suggest that women in Afghanistan may indulge in sex with anyone who comes their way. Consequently, they are restricted to make them respectable. Nila tells the interviewer that because of the same patriarchal attitude of her father and the society too, she has left Afghanistan and does not want to go back for the sake of her daughter, Pari.

### **Conclusion**

The preceding analysis of the novels illustrate that women have been oppressed physically and mentally. These oppressions have not only physical effects on the lives of women but also have mental and psychological effects. Reaction of women is different towards the patriarchal oppressions and values. Homaira has not been heard what happens to her. She suffers as a Hazara and as a woman in the patriarchal society. Nana is so much depressed and oppressed that she succumbs to the patriarchal pressures and commits suicide despite the lesson of endurance she teaches to her daughter, Mariam. Women of resources, like Nila Wahdati and Pari feel suffocated in the traditional and patriarchal environment, so they leave that place to live a liberal and comfortable life. Women, like Soraya comes out stronger in the company of educated and enlightened men like Amir. The analysis also shows that when women emotionally and psychologically support each other, they can face all types of situations. When Mariam and Laila were not friends, they were abused and oppressed by Rasheed. However, together, they faced not only Rasheed but also the atrocities of the Taliban. They came out stronger and resilient.

### **References**

- Ahmad, A. Khan, R. N. (2020). Conflicting and Challenging Patriarchal and Liberal Feminist Ideologies and Norms in Afghanistan: Critical Stylistic Study of Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*. *Arab World English Journal*, 11 (2) 154-167. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no2.11>
- Bhasin, K. (2006). *What Is Patriarchy*. Women Unlimited: New Delhi.

- Butler, J. (1988). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), pp. 519-531. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207893>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*.
- Eckert, P. (1989). *The whole woman: Sex and gender differences in variation*. Language Variation and Change (print), 245-267.
- Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003). *Language and gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedan, B. (1963). *Feminine mystique*. Retrieved from <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org>
- Gimenez, M. E. (2005). Capitalism and the Oppression of Women: Marx Revisited. *Science & Society*, 69 (1), pp. 11-32.
- Gordan, M. & Almutairi, A, S. (2013). Resistance, a facet of post-colonialism in women characters of Khaled Hosseini's a thousand splendid suns. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 2(3), pp. 240-247. Doi: 10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.2n.3p.240
- Greenham, D. (2018). Close reading: The basics. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203709979>
- Hassan. S. (2019). of Gender and Oppression: A Critical Study of Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* (MPhil dissertation). AWKUM, Pakistan
- Hosseini, K. (2003). *The kite runner*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Hosseini, K. (2007). *A thousand splendid suns*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Hosseini, K. (2013). *And the mountains echoed*. New York: Riverhead books.
- Inayatullah, N. (2013). Pulling threads: intimate systematicity in the politics of exile. *Security Dialogue*, 44(4), pp. 331-345.
- Johnson, A. G. (2005). *Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*. Philadelphia, PA, USA Temple University Press.
- Khan, R. N. (2016). *Identity and Power Issues: A Study of Voice in Discourses in Khaled Hosseini's Novels* (Ph. D dissertation, NUML).
- Millett, K. (1977). *Sexual Politics*. London: Virago.
- Mills, S. (2001). *Discourse of difference: an analysis of women's travel writing and colonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Olaussen, M. (1992). *Three types of feminist criticism: And Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea*. Åbo: Institute of Women's Studies at ÅboAkademi University.
- Qasim, N., Mehboob, S., Akram, Z. & Masrour, H. (2015). Women's liberation: the effects of patriarchal oppression on women's mind. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 5(7), pp. 382-393.
- Ramazanoglu, C. (1986). *Feminism and the Contradictions of Oppression*. London: Routledge.
- Soraya, S. (2015). The subaltern voice in a thousand splendid suns. *Jurnal LINGUA CULTURA*, 9(2), pp. 81-87. Retrieved from <http://journal.binus.ac.id/index.php/lingua/article/view/827>
- Sultana, A. (2011). Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis. *The Arts Faculty Journal*, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.banglajol.info/index.php/AFJ/article/view/12929>

- Tyagi, R. (2014). Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in Relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 1 (2), pp. 45-50.
- Uchem, R. (2001). *Overcoming women's subordination in the Igbo African Culture and in the Catholic Church: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women* (Ph D Thesis). Doctor of Philosophy in Theological Studies, Graduate Theological Foundation, Indiana and Fordham University. New York.
- UNAMA & OHCHR. (2009). *Silence is Violence End the Abuse of Women in Afghanistan*. Kabul, Afghanistan.
- Von Struensee, S. V. (July 23, 2004). *The Contribution of Polygamy to Women's Oppression and Impoverishment: An Argument for its Prohibition*. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=563282>
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: Oxford, UK and Cambridge USA.
- Wollstonecraft, M. (1792). *Vindication of the rights of woman*. Oxford Press (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.
- Ali, Z. (2018). Gender ideology and resistance: an analytical study of Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* (M Phil dissertation). Qurtuba university of Science & Technology, Peshawar
- Zwiech, P. (2009). Discrimination against women in professional life in chosen pro-feminist theories. *Recent Issues in Sociological Research*, 2 (1), pp. 96-104.