

CULTURAL RESISTANCE AND AFGHAN WOMEN: A CRITICAL STUDY OF “A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS”

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***ABSTRACT-** In 2001, after the terrorists' attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre, Afghan women became the central attention of the Western World due to their projection by US and Western media. The objective of this study is to analyze cultural resistance in patriarchal society like Afghanistan in the novel “A Thousand Splendid Suns” written by Khalid Hosseini. He portrayed the picture of women inferior status, son's importance and number of social restrictions on Afghan women. This novel is a story of two women, one educated and other uneducated and both were married to one person, who maltreated them all the times. At the end, these women revolted against unending inhuman treatment and got free themselves by killing their husband. At the end of novel, the author concludes that education for women is necessary to create awareness about their rights and resist against discrimination.*

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1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Background of Study:

Every society has some norms, rules, regulations, religious customs, social values and festivals, etc. The members of that society have to lead their lives according to those particular norms and values or according to its culture. To go beyond social limitations, we have to face resistance and creates hurdles in our ways. This is generally known as cultural resistance.

Khalid Husaini's novel 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' deals with this aspect of Afghan society. It depicts the role of Afghan women, their life style, their living standard, how women are treated and are tortured in Afghan society. It also reflects the role of feminism.

1.2 Main Research Problem:

The main problem of this research paper is to analyze Cultural Resistance against Afghan Women in the light of novel "Thousand Splendid Suns, written by Khalid Hosseini. Another objective is to analyze the role of Afghan women portrayed by different writers in their writings.

1.3 Objectives of Research:

The Objectives of this research study are as follows:

1. To check Cultural resistance and role of Afghan women in the literature.
2. To check cultural confrontations in Afghan literature.
3. To find out the roll of Afghan women in Khalid Husaini's work.
4. To find out difference between Khalid Husaini's concept of cultural resistance and other authors.
5. To find similarities between Khalid Husaini's concept of cultural resistance and other authors.

1.4 Scope of Study:

This research work will help in creating understanding about the text, co-text and context of “A Thousand Splendid Suns” and will also show elements of Feminism with critical evaluation of the role of women in feminism perspective.

1.5 Conceptual Framework:

Cultural resistance in patriarchal society is a global phenomenon is old as human history. In a patriarchal society, women become the subject to physical and emotional brutality done by men that is allowed, enabled and endorsed. This practice is longstanding and acceptable to both genders because the patriarchal ideology has shaped the attitudes of men towards the discrimination. That patriarchal ideology also leaves a little room for equitable thinking for struggling against the discrimination. Fasih (2012:12-13) divides cultural resistance into five dimensions: marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence and work load.

2.REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In a patriarchal society, feminism is a movement which women practice in retaliation to cultural resistance. Many women raise their voices for every oppressed woman to start a fight against the jurisdiction of patriarchal control. Bhasin and Khan (1999:3) state, feminism is a consciousness of patriarchal control, forcibly impoverish, cruel or unjust manner at a greater level in the matter of women’s labour, fecundity and sexuality on material and ideological levels, generally in society and at the workplace, and men and women take an active part to change the current situation.

2.1 Cultural Resistance:

Cultural resistance can be measured through artistic expressions that

it tells us about the opposition or criticism to religious, moral, social, economic or political or other reasons in society. Cultural resistance aware the people about the issues for justice not for the sake of pity or sympathy. Cultural resistance is a tool that helps the community activists to build a specific community.

Walby (1990:20) states that the social system of patriarchy is such a culture where men govern and use women along with keeping them down by force. Ray (2006:1), another scholar, explains the word "patriarchy" as just like a father who governs a family with enjoyable commanding position. It is a notion that is built on ideological and social doctrine by the individuals of society where men enjoy supremacy on women.

Saboory (2005:20) describes that the bigotry and inequality towards the women by the husbands is causing great difficulty and bringing forth many social problems such as insulting and abusive language, disallowing of living in the house of husband, home detention and the problem of child inheritance. Gender based unequal treatment with the women in a culture is called cultural resistance.

According to Butler (1999:6), nature has given birth to sex, while culture and social factors have built the gender. Cultural resistance has different forms which exist in different parts of the world. Work load, violence, stereotype, subordination and marginalization are the five kinds of cultural resistance which Fakhri (2012:12-13) mentioned in his study.

Annisa (2010:10-11) contended that violence has three types that a woman suffers i.e. sexual violence, psychological and physical violence. The first type of cultural resistance is marginalization of women. It means to make the women estrangement or emotionally isolated. Marginalization

relegates people by excluding them socially and ceasing them from taking participation in social life (Young, 1992:63). In the same way, women's estrangement in social life restricts them from getting the equal rights of particular scope and freedom.

According to Young (1992:65), the concept of powerlessness relates to Marx's theory of socialism in an original manner i.e. some people have power and some have not. In feministic point of view, men are the ruling class and women are forced to take orders as they are powerless.

Giora (1997:76) states that in a male dominant society, women are not allowed to show the feelings of anger and they are punished for such trivial actions of getting dominance. In retaliation they become self-destructive.

2.2 Afghan Women:

There was a brutal discord and venereal savagery against women to an incomparable level throughout the time of secular war (1992-1996). "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women" (Bush, L. 2001). Women in Afghanistan had to face patriarchy, lack of security, social and economic problems and their life was full of anxiety, social problems, tensions and different issues that were assaulted in different ways. Despite of the daily tragedies, Afghan women knew how to struggle for their rights and they did not surrender their identity in front of Taleban (Kandiyoti, 2005: 6). Concepts of dignity, honor and shame, especially with regard to women, played a decisive role for the Taliban. Some of the restrictions the Taliban imposed on women are:

- Women were not allowed to work outside the home, except as health workers, or attend any kind of educational institution.

- Women were not allowed to leave their homes at all, unless accompanied by a close male relative.
 - Women were not allowed to be treated by male doctors.
 - Women had to wear a burqa all the times.
 - Women were not allowed to gather for public functions or festivals.
 - Women were not allowed to use cosmetics, to wear high-heeled shoes or any shoes that make noise, or bright colors in public.
 - The windows of women's houses had to be painted black, so that they could not be seen from the outside. They were not allowed to appear on the balcony of their houses to attract men.
 - Women were not allowed to talk or laugh loudly.
 - The names of places which included a reference to women were changed.
- (Franks,2003: 138-139).

2.3 A Thousand Splendid Suns:

Khalid Husaini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1965 and is an American writer. His father was an ambassador in Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mother used to teach History and Farsi in one of the high schools of Kabul. The Foreign Ministry transferred his father to Paris in 1976, and in 1980 the family got settled in San Jose, California, U.S.A. Khalid Husaini wrote his second novel having a title as, "A Thousand Splendid Suns" in May of 2007. This novel discussed the life story of three Afghan Women, Nana, Laila and Mariam. This novel also narrated social setting of Afghanistan from early 1960s to the early 2000s. The novel has four parts handling with the blood relation between daughter and mother and friendship between women.

First part of the novel has focused on Mariam and Nana with the continuation of Laila comprising the second part, the bond between Laila and Mariam in the second last part, and Laila's life with her dearly loved ones in the final part. In a smart manner, Husaini portrayed two opposite pictures of the women, one who accept the way they are being treated and the other who fight against the cruel patriarchy culture using their own strength and courage to abolish the so-called powered structure of the society.

The study on this novel is quite rare. Nevertheless, a student of University of Ottawa, Azam Kazemian conducted a research entitled with "A Thousand Splendid Suns: Rhetorical Vision of Afghan Women" in 2012.

This research paper finds the argumental view of perception of Afghan Women which is lodged solidly into the novel.

One more study regarding cultural resistance had been beleaded by Kardina Hadiani (2009) entitled "Cultural resistance and Its Impact in Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*". This research is an inquiry about cultural forces experienced by Chinese Mother residing in U.S.A.

A Thousand Splendid Suns deals with the complex and contrasted life stories of two Afghan women, Laila and Mariam, as both got married to same man who is abusive and a true instance of patriarchal society. Author has discussed the following facts in a very impressive way:

- (i) Inhumanity of man to man
- (ii) Organized Adversity on the part of Women by Patriarchal Society
- (iii). Nuptial Perversion
- (iv) Gain-stay to Adversity
- (v) Role and Power of Education.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Nature of Study:

Qualitative method will be used and investigatory research design will be applied to this research work. This study is based on a descriptive qualitative research which commences with the act of assuming a general philosophy or view of life, the feasible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems examining into the meaning individuals or groups impute to a social or human difficulty. The data sources of this research are words. To analyze the data, the researcher has used the content analysis. In short, this is a qualitative research study.

3.2 Type of Data:

As this research is qualitative study, the data is taken from novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns" for analysis. The data has been related to: (A) the types of cultural resistance which has been faced by three main characters of the novel: Laila, Mariam and Nana and (B) their behavior in the direction of cultural resistance they have been facing throughout since long.

3.3 Sample of the Study:

The novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns" was selected as a sample of this research work.

3.4 Selected Themes:

The research tool for this study will be the observation together with content analysis.

3.5 Analytical Techniques:

Creswell (2009: 185), depicts that in qualitative research data analysis comprehends six major steps entitled arranging and assembling data, perusal of the data, steganography of the data, classifying data, interrelating the description and elucidating the meaning of that description. Following is the detailed description of those six steps.

1. First, the researcher organized the data which was taken from the novel by preparing some notes.
2. In order to contrive the data into two significant subject matters under the research i.e. cultural resistance and approach of women towards discrimination, the researcher read and reread the whole of the data.
3. The researcher classified data into thematic divisions corresponding to cultural resistance and behavior of women regarding bigotry.
4. Sorting data is another step in which the researcher arranged and classified data. Consequently, the admissible data was excluded.
5. The process of data analysis proceeded so as to approach linkage between the conjecture and elucidation of the data to acquire findings based on the objective of research i.e. to divulge the categories of cultural resistance and women's stance in the vicinity of it as far as Husaini's novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns" is concerned.
6. The researcher was indulged in composing elucidation of the findings constructed on understanding about the notions used in the novel.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF TEXT:

It is the patriarchal system that institutes male domination in the society and designates men a certain kind of prerogative. Men possess power to control women's lives occupying a higher-up and prevailing place. Men

decide and regulate women's future and possibilities for them to approach suchlike public facilities mainly consist of health and education and calling and so forth. The supremacy which men have over women later intensifies gender issues betwixt men and women, which we call cultural resistance. Cultural resistance is an unjust and oppressive system built on unfair behaviour towards gender. Khalid Husaini's "A Thousand Splendid Suns" is a novel that reveals the unfortunate situation of women who undergo cultural resistance in a sturdy patriarchic community like Afghanistan. There are four types of cultural resistance found in the novel, they are: savagery, servitude, marginalization and stereotype.

All these kinds of cultural resistance are observed by the three women who are the main characters in the novel namely Nana, Mariam and Laila. According to (Annisa, 2010:11), in A Thousand Splendid Suns, the women observe sexual violence which includes all the activities executed by resorting to force without having willingness or Yes of the female i.e. incest, marital rape, sexual harassment and rape. etc.

The first female character, Nana, is raped by Jalil, her employer, in the very beginning of the novel. It is narrated that "Nana had been one of the housekeepers. Until her belly began to swell" (Hosseini, 2008:6). This quote is explicit that she got rapped since she becomes pregnant. Being a house keeper, she beseems defenseless and unprotected to be rapped. Meanwhile, Mariam and Laila, other female characters in the novel, undergo marital rape. Their husband Rasheed always compels his sexual wants on them without considering their condition.

"But it was inevitable that they would run into each other. Madam passed the girl on the stairs, in the narrow hallway, in the kitchen, or by the door as she

was coming in from the yard. When they met like this, an awkward tension rushed into the space between them. The girl gathered her skirt and breathed out a word or two of apology, and, as she hurried past, Madam would chance a sidelong glance and catch a blush. Sometimes she could smell Rasheed on her. She could smell his sweat on the girl's skin, his tobacco, his appetite. Sex, mercifully, was a closed chapter in her own life. It had been for some time, and now even the thought of those laborious sessions of lying beneath Rasheed made Madam queasy in the gut (Hosseini, 2008:215).

The above quotation vividly explains that Mariam is grateful for she has not to undergo sexual relation anymore with her husband. This is the thing for her which makes her annoyed and fatigued. Thinking about sexual intercourse would make Mariam languid and fed up because her husband never asked about her willingness.

Laila also observe the same about her sexual life just like Mariam. The other type of violence is the one which is more harmful i.e. psychology violence as it affects women's self-respect and dignity. It consists of threatening, menacing, isolating from family and friends and any action that brings consequences in form of psychological strain and anxiety (Annisa, 2010:10-11). Rasheed often threats his wives, Laila and Mariam, mocks and insults them throughout his marriage as the following quotation shows.

“It wasn't easy tolerating him talking this way to her, to bear his scorn, his ridicule, his insults, his walking past her like she was nothing but a housecat. But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid. And Mariam was afraid. She lived in fear of his shifting moods, his volatile temperament, his insistence on steering even

mundane exchanges down a confrontational path that, on occasion, he would resolve with punches, slaps, kicks, and sometimes try to make amends for with polluted apologies and sometimes not (Hosseini,2008:97-98).

Rasheed's violent behaviour always makes Mariam frightened. On the other hand, Laila also observed Rasheed's threats, mocks and insults. He expressed his hate and hostility towards Laila often. He objects on many of the things belong to her as her yellowing teeth, the way she dressed up and combed her hair, the way she smelled. He asked his daughter Aziza one day to be a beggar on street. On listening this, Laila started arguing with him and he threatens her with his gun.

In the novel, general view of punishing women for every mistake they do is a legal way to have control over them, has been portrayed in a very realistic manner throughout the story in public and domestic life as it is visible in the quotation given below.

"Tectonic," Laila said. It hurt to talk. *Her jaw was still sore, her back and neck ached. Her lip was swollen, and her tongue kept poking the empty pocket of the lower incisor Rasheed had knocked loose two days before.*

Before Mammy and Babi had died and her life turned upside down, Laila never would have believed that a human body could withstand this much beating, this viciously, this regularly, and keep functioning (Hosseini,2008:234-235)."

Laila got dreadful physical wounds on her mouth, tongue and lips. She got deprived of her lower incisors.

The Taliban, in the novel, who took over the city from Mujahideen, struck all the women who violated the rules made by Taliban. They even throbbed Laila who dared to travel by herself to see her daughter in an

orphanage and didn't accompany Mahram. The following quotation shows how she was treated by a young Talib.

One day, a young Talib beat Laila with a radio antenna. When he was done, he gave a final whack to the back of her neck and said, "I see you again, I'll beat you until your mother's milk leaks out of your bones." (Hosseini, 2008:313)

The above quotation shows how terrible it is to reside in such a country where men have the right and control to carry on maltreatment and violence against women whenever mistakes are done by them. Obsequiously submissive behaviour on the part of women has become the war women have been fighting for, for centuries.

There is no doubt that patriarchal system, which submits the notion of dominion of male, has pushed the women towards the lower stature. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, seven types of women's submissiveness have been described remarkably i.e. in polygamy women be handled disgracefully, they can't go anywhere and have to stay at home all the time, they are not allowed to prettify themselves, daughters are given less importance to sons, they are compelled to get married, they are estranged, etc.

In patriarchal boundaries, men give more importance to their repute without considering the self-respect of women. They can do whatever they intend to without being obsessed of women's lives and emotions in order to get acquainted with their own ideas of social prospects of future.

When Jalil happens to know about Nana's pregnancy with his baseborn child, in the novel, he endeavors to maintain his repute and name and to keep himself away of any disgrace.

"When that happened, Nana said, the collective gasp of Jalil's family sucked the air out of Herat. His in-laws swore blood would flow. The wives demanded that he throw her out. Nana's own father, who was a lowly stone carver in the nearby village of Gul Daman, disowned her. Disgraced, he packed his things and boarded a bus to Bran, never to be seen or heard from again (Hosseini, 2008:6)."

It is very disdain able that Jalil estranges Nana for keeping his name and repute at the time when he truthfully should stand by liability for what he has committed to her. He is swindling of his own victim by refusing to marry her, alienating her, and not accepting his legitimate child, his daughter. Moreover, Mariam and Laila are the best examples in the novel to be forced to get into a forcible marriage with undesirable suitor. In diverse time and circumstances, they are compelled to get into marriage with Rasheed, an elderly man and a shoe maker.

Regardless of Mariam's abnegation, Rasheed and his family arranged the marriage. This depicts the women's lives being petty and insignificant. Their voices are heard in no way and their wishes are no more admirable. In a different way, Laila marries Rasheed as she is pregnant and deprived of parents. Both the situations are indefensible in the patriarchal society as it is not an option for a woman to live alone. The following quotation can be seen for instance.

At this, Rasheed smiled sadly.

"There is another option," he said, scratching the sole of one foot with the calloused heel of the other. "She can leave. I won't stand in her way. But I suspect she won't get far. No food, no water, not a rupiah in her pockets, bullets and rockets flying everywhere. How many days do you suppose she'll

last before she's abducted, raped, or tossed into some roadside ditch with her throat slit? Or all three?" (Hosseini, 2008:209).

Another perception in the so-called patriarchal society is about giving preference to sons over daughters. This comes forth due to the notion that girls are a burden to the family and sons are taken as divine reward and dignity of the parents. Since sons possess special place than girls, the society has established this notion on a larger scale.

"Do you want a boy or a girl first?"

"The Minarets! Oh, what beauty! What a gorgeous city!"

"Boy is better, Mariam jan, they carry the family name" (Hosseini,2008:66).

Furthermore, Rasheed is very cut and dried about his valuation and partiality for son. He is altogether pleased for he is sure that Mariam is carrying a boy baby in her belly and that is why he is particularly happy for the pregnancy as well. He takes the right to name the baby if it is a boy, as shown below.

Rasheed was drumming his gloved fingers and humming a song. Every time the bus bucked over a pothole and jerked forward, his hand shot protectively over her belly.

"What about Zalmai?" he said. "It's a good Pashtun name."

"What if it's a girl?" Mariam said.

"I think it's a boy. Yes. A boy."

"If it's a girl," Rasheed said, "and it isn't, but, if it is a girl, then you can choose whatever name you want" (Hosseini, 2008: 85).

Sadly, Mariam undergoes spontaneous abortion, which further occurs seven times. Rasheed ultimately puts his expectations on Laila. Yet, Laila cannot make him happy since she grants him Aziza as her first child. Subsequently,

the circumstances change when she gives birth to Zalmai whose existence proves that Rasheed will have a place in his heart only for a son. He treats differently with both Aziza and Zalmai. He does not let Aziza sleep with him and allows Zalmai to sleep with him. He provides everything to Zalmai from his clothes to toys and many more even when he is impoverished and is not in position to fulfill all the desired needs of the family.

In the novel, Rasheed emphasizes on the significance of dignity and self-pride of women by keeping themselves hide from other men's eyes excluding their husbands. In his view, wearing a Burqa, which a cloth that protects the whole female body from other men's eyes, is the only way for women to keep their dignity and honour. Almost thirty years afterwards, Afghan Government commanded officially for the women all over the country to wear Burqa whenever they go out of their homes.

"You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten.

Cosmetics are forbidden.

Jewelry is forbidden.

You will not wear charming clothes.

You will not speak unless spoken to.

You will not make eye contact with men.

You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten.

You will not paint your nails. If you do, you will lose a finger"

(Hosseni,2008:271).

The Government enforces different punishments for women on breaking the rules made by them. beating women for not wearing Burqa and cutting the fingers for painting their nails are the practices they have enforced

for women. Women are not allowed to go anywhere they want and they are prohibited to travel except having a Mehram i.e. legally responsible male.

Besides, Rasheed also banned Mariam and Laila, his wives, to move outside the house from the start of their marriage.

“You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a mahram, a male relative. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home” (Hosseini, 2008:271).

This rule prohibits women from achieving what they want and making career outdoors. It gives women restricted access towards life and makes them dependents on men and men, on the contrary, preserve right to control women’s lives.

Polygamy has become very widespread and common in the country since it has been declared by both the country’s and religion’s legislatures. In Saboory (2005:21-22) pinpointed that in the country polygamy has a common practice whether the person is rich or poor, educated and uneducated.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Rasheed blatantly plays a roll of cultural resistant being incapable to comply the requisite condition of polygamy which has been set in the law of the country.

Rasheed deals with both Mariam and Laila unfairly after marrying Laila. Regardless of Mariam’s faithful support, loyalty and devotion towards Rasheed, he frequently keeps on insulting her whilst Laila always acquires his commendations. He makes them compared by calling them cars. Unwisely he says that driving a Benz and a Volga is distinct from each other and he calls Laila a new, first class, shiny Benz while Mariam a Volga.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, this unjust faith has surrounded the society so fervently that a lot of girls are compelled to quit their education. Nana's point of view clearly describes how society looks upon women's education when Mariam wants Nana to send her to school.

"What's the sense schooling a girl like you? It's like shining a spittoon. And you'll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don't teach it in school. Look at me." Hosseini, 2008:18)

Nana refuses Mariam to send her to school since she is of the opinion that Mariam is no wiser and is incapable of learning at school.

Society holds the stereotype that women are silly and lack sense because it believes that men and women are formed diversely.

When Mariam, Laila and Aziza try to escape to Pakistan without having a male relative or a mahram, they are arrested.

The idea that women are submissive is the second stereotype in the novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns." Women are taught to obey men what they say and to be submissive to them by the strong patriarchal society. Lines are drawn between men's and women's roles socially to make them realize that there is difference between both the genders and that men are conferred with higher place and power.

Patriarchal society setbacks women by excluding them socially and impoverish them from many domains of life i.e. political, educational and recreational. Moreover, they are alienated form many basic facilities of life such as health care etc. For instance, nobody comes to Nana's aid when she gives birth to Mariam. The extramarital father of her baby, Jalil, does not even come to take her to doctor. Jalil deprives Nana off from the facility of

healthcare by not convening a doctor whilst he is aware that she needs doctor or a nurse's help in delivery. Ultimately, Nana delivers Mariam and cuts cord on her own with the knife. Afterwards, the saddest and unexpected event of women giving birth happens again many years later, when Nana is going to give birth her second child, and the hospital in Kabul rejects her from treating as it does not treat women any more.

At last, Mariam and Rasheed take Laila to Rabia Balkhi in no choice. Sadly, the hospital is very far from their home. According to the young woman's descriptions, no facility is available in the hospital even not of anesthetic. The doctor tells that Government provides funds to men's hospitals which is donated by the NGOs.

"You think I want it this way?" she said. "What do you want me to do? They won't give me what I need. I have no X ray either, no suction, no oxygen, not even simple antibiotics. When NGOs offer money, the Taliban turn them away. Or they funnel the money to the places that cater to men."

"But, Doctor sahib, isn't there something you can give her?" Mariam asked.

"Tell me what's going on!" Laila said. She had propped herself up on her elbows.

"The doctor took a breath, then told Laila that the hospital had no anesthetic. But if we delay, you will lose your baby. Then cut me open," Laila said. She dropped back on the bed and drew up her knees. Cut me open and give me my baby." (Hosseini, 2008:283)

The above quotation describes that in spite of having no facilities, the doctor says that the delivery should be done right now without delay otherwise Laila will lose her baby. It is very strange and painful that Laila

undergoes an operation without anesthetic, though it is extremely laborious and painstaking.

In the novel, being relegated from education is the second type of marginalization observed by women. Mariam never experiences schooling and yet she does not know about the feelings of sitting in a classroom. Since Nana does not allow her to go to school when she asks her for permission for school. Hence, Mariam is taught by Mullah Faizullah, how to read, write and understand Koran. After some years, Taliban over take Kabul and set new rules for the country along with the rule of schooling for girls. They announce that "*girls are forbidden from attending school. All schools for girls will be closed immediately*" (Hosseini, 2008:271).

This is how Taliban's Government disregard women's rights of acquiring education. They clearly announce the punishments for girls who, if, seized going to schools. From that time, no girl ever has courage to go to school, Aziza, Laila's daughter is also among them.

Unusually, though Nana, Mariam and Laila observe cultural resistance in the same way as most of the women in a patriarchal society do, yet they behave differently in facing it. Nana is the representative of the most of the Afghan women who have shown acceptance towards discrimination since this notion has accepted generally by them that this is their fate to obey men and endure pain. In contrast, Laila and Mariam are ones of those small group of women who have said "NO" to discrimination and dare to withstand against it. Both the behaviours of accepting discrimination and standing against it are affected by many factors.

It has been a dilemma of women's lives that they have to endure pain and misery caused by men in the patriarchal society throughout their

lives. They have to face unjust treatment even after being discriminated. It is the irony of their life that even a woman, if raped, gets blamed for being careless and for not taking care of herself or it happens because she herself seduces men. Furthermore, instead of the rapist, women get punished for being raped. Same happens to Nana. She is sent to a far off place even after being raped. Instead of being sympathized, she gets punished. It puts a lot of burden on Nana to bear after becoming prey of Jalil's rape. She has nothing to feel but sadness, anger and frustration, for the whole of her life. Consequently, she turns into a self-destructive person and commits suicide. Before she actually destroys herself, a thought of killing herself always comes into her mind and finally she executes it.

“Mariam saw a gust of wind blew and parted the drooping branches of the weeping willow like a curtain, and Mariam caught a glimpse of what was beneath the tree: the straight backed chair, overturned. The rope dropping from a high branch. Nana dangling at the end of it.” (Hosseini, 2008:35-36).

Both Mariam and Laila belong to distinct background according to education. Laila has acquired both traditional and untraditional education from her father, whilst Mariam never been to school and is taught by Mullah Faizullah.

“It was Mullah Faizullah who had taught Mariam to read, who had patiently looked over her shoulder as her lips worked the words soundlessly, her index finger lingering beneath each word, pressing until the nail bed went white, as though she could squeeze the meaning out of the symbols. It was Mullah Faizullah who had held her hand, guided the pencil in it along the rise of each

alef, the curve of each beh, the three dots of each she." (Hosseini, 2008:15-16).

The above quote tells that, unlike Laila, who learns a lot of things from her father, Mullah Faizullah teaches Mariam to read and write Arabian Letters and words only. Although, Mariam never goes to school, Laila teaches her many lesson in their companionship.

Women's awareness is the second most significant factor that compels them to strive against the discrimination they face. An awareness of being abused and discriminated creates strength and will within women to fight for the same.

Mariam and Laila possess different approach about life since they are born a decade apart and raised by different parents. Yet, later they become wives of Rasheed by fate and start living together. They share a very strong bond with each other and become sisters. But it does not happen exclusively in one day.

Laila suggests Mariam that they can get themselves free from unlimited discrimination and subordination by escaping to Pakistan.

"Mariam was in the doorway. Laila could tell that she hadn't slept either. She wondered if Mariam too had been seized all night by bouts of euphoria and attacks of mouth drying anxiety. We'll leave in half an hour, Laila said" (Hosseini, 2008:251).

The day they have to depart brings an intense happiness for them. Both of them feel uneasiness also, but hope for a better new life strengthens them. This is going to be the worst act of rebelling against Rasheed, which Mariam, Laila and Aziza do to him. Laila spends a sleepless night before the day they have to depart. As soon as the three of them reach at Lahore gate

station, they need to find a man who can allege to be their mahram or relative, which is going to be the perilous and difficult thing for them. Eventually, they find a suitable man with kind face and tender eyes. Laila talks to him thus.

"Forgive me, brother, but are you going to Peshawar?"

"Yes," he said, squinting.

"I wonder if you can help us. Can you do us a favor?"

He passed the boy to his wife. He and Laila stepped away.

"What is it, hamshira? "

She was encouraged to see that he had soft eyes, a kind face. She told him the story that she and Mariam had agreed on. She was a biwa, she said, a widow. She and her mother and daughter had no one left in Kabul. They were going to Peshawar to stay with her uncle.

"You want to come with my family," the young man said

"I know it's zahmat for you. But you look like a decent brother, and I "

"Don't worry, hamshira I understand. It's no trouble. Let me go and buy your tickets."

"Thank you, brother. This is sawab, a good deed. God will remember."

(Hosseini, 2008:254-255)

Laila tells that man that she is widow and that Mariam is her mother. The man shows his consent and willingness to be feigned to be their relative and buy bus tickets for them. Unluckily, when they are going to board the bus, to their surprise, the man informed the police and consequently they were arrested. Even though Laila and Mariam become unsuccessful in escaping to Pakistan but this failure of their efforts reflect their intention to break the chains of slavery of patriarchal society.

Mariam never shows her anger to Rasheed as she has been a submissive wife. While Laila has been a different kind of woman. Being educated she is fully aware of her rights and is familiar how to exercise them. Both education and her family form her to be a strengthened woman in such a way that at least she can show her anger, saying 'No' to discrimination and escape from Kabul. She decided to fight against inhuman treatment of Rasheed.

Then Laila punched him.

It was the first time she'd struck anybody, discounting the playful punches she and Tariq used to trade. But those had been open fisted, more pats than punches, self-consciously friendly, comfortable expressions of anxieties that were both perplexing and thrilling. They would aim for the muscle that Tariq, in a professorial voice, called the deltoid Laila watched the arch of her closed fist, slicing through the air, felt the crinkle of Rasheed's stubbly, coarse skin under her knuckles. It made a sound like dropping a rice bag to the floor. She hit him hard. The impact actually made him stagger two steps backward (Hosseini, 2008:292).

The fight happens when it Rasheed came to know that Laila talks to Tariq, Aziza's biologic father, who appears after many years and is considered dead by her. Afterwards, Rasheed gives some money to a man and asks him to lie to Laila about Tariq's death and she will be deceived easily.

Mariam, on seeing Rasheed violating Laila harder, does not hold herself and springs into the fight. She is stronger than ever because of her love for Laila. It does not happen in her life ever that she dares to indulge herself into a fight against her husband. Mariam claws at Rasheed and beats him. She also bits his fingers, which is choking Laila's neck. Below is the situation of the fight.

Mariam clawed at him. She beat at his chest. She hurled herself against him. She struggled to uncurl his fingers from Laila's neck. She bit them. But they remained tightly clamped around Laila's wind pipe, and Mariam saw that he meant to carry this through. In the toolshed, Mariam grabbed the shovel. She steadied her feet and tightened her grip around the shovel's handle. She raised it.

She said his name.

"Rasheed."

He looked up.

Mariam swung.

She hit him across the temple. The blow knocked him off Laila. ...

And so Mariam raised the shovel high, raised it as high as she could, arching it so it touched the small of her back. She turned it so the sharp edge was vertical, and, as she did, it occurred to her that this was the first time that she was deciding the course of her own life.

And, with that, Mariam brought down the shovel. This time, she gave it everything she had (Hosseini, 2008:339-341).

This event shows that Mariam kills Rasheed with a shovel. She dares to hit him in order his fingers to be uncurled from Laila's neck and again with the sharp edge of shovel, she kills him.

To end cultural resistance, women can use education as a mean. It imparts awareness to the people and makes them broadminded about equality between men and women. It impacts women's conduct in a positive way to strive against discrimination and on the other hand, it teaches men and influence their mindset not to discriminate women.

We see how Laila, as an educated woman, causes Mariam's awareness and inspires her to strive for her rights. Being fully informed of the significance of education, Laila offers her services to teach in the orphanage where Aziza lives after their family being involved in bankruptcy. The end of the novel tells this thus:

Laila passes beneath the sign and enters the classroom. The children are taking their seats, flipping notebooks open, chattering Aziza is talking to a girl in the adjacent row. A paper airplane floats across the room in a high arc. Someone tosses it back.

"Open your Farsi books, children," Laila says, dropping her own books on her desk (Hosseini, 2008:400).

The quotation tells that the lesson is started and children are ready in their chairs with the books and Laila asks them to open their Farsi books. With the end of the novel, hope arises within women in Afghanistan as it puts a dire need of access of women towards education.

5. FINDINGS OF STUDY:

Patriarchal institution which reserves unusual and peculiar prerogative to men, has set up male supremacy within the fraternity. Since men hold a dominant position, they have the right to control women's lives. They decide possibilities to approach scopes such as public facility, education and carrier etc. This dominance leads to raise gender problems between both, which are entitled as cultural resistance. Husaini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a narrative that has shown the unfortunate situation of women who endure cultural resistance in a vigorous patriarchal community, Afghanistan.

In *A Thousands Splendid Suns*, women's subordination is of seven kinds, i.e. women's way of living and dressing is restricted, they are forced to get

married, they are dealt immorally in intermarriage, sons are considered superior to girls, women's maneuverability is limited, and they are made to feel isolated or estranged.

In a patriarchic community, to maintain their reputation, men can enjoy their lives by doing whatever they want to. They only value their name, prestige and status without contemplating women's lives and emotions.

Women have been disadvantaged by the patriarchic community in many of the fields of life. They have been marginalized in educational, health, political and many other fields. Furthermore, they are evicted from many of the public services like health facility and places for worship.

Society forces women to endure sufferings caused by patriarchic environment throughout their lives. Usually they become the prey of cultural resistance. Many of them are still treated unfairly by the society even after being discriminated because they are victimized. It can be exemplified by the fact that when a woman is raped, the society inclines to assume that it is because of her own carelessness as she has failed in taking care of herself or it is because she herself has seduced men intentionally. Moreover, woman gets punishment in place of rapist.

6. CONCLUSIONS:

A Thousand Splendid Suns has highlighted a sturdy system of patriarchy which creates many gender problems. The three women in the novel Laila, Mariam and Nana meet four kinds of cultural resistance i.e. savagery, servitude, marginalization and stereotype. Savagery relates furthermore three kinds i.e. physical, psychological and sexual violence. Servitude on the part of women happens in many forms: i.e. women's way of living and dressing is

restricted, they are forced to get married, they are dealt immorally in intermarriage, sons are considered superior to girls, women's maneuverability is limited, and they are made to feel isolated or estranged. In the meantime, there are marginalization from education to health from marriage to nourishment. and marginalization from health facility.

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CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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