



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 10. Issue.2. 2023 (April-June)

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

WOMAN AND VIOLENCE: A STUDY OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S
A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

Dr. Deepak Lathwal

Assistant Professor (English) Govt. College, Sampla (Rohtak)

email: dlathwal78@gmail.com



Article information

Received:18/5/2023

Accepted:11/06/2023

Published online:20/6/2023

doi: [10.33329/ijelr.10.2.165](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.10.2.165)

ABSTRACT

Relations between women and spousal violence have a long back history that can be inspected through a literary and historical prism. Women in the past had not had the courage enough to articulate violence in spousal relations but, over the course of time this notion has transposed, and their tribulation and misfortunes are being enunciated in literature. Afghanistan had been never a cordial nation for natives and, amidst this violence against women never put an end. There is an old Afghan saying that 'A woman is best either in the house or in the grave' delineates the dilemma of Afghan Women. Khaled Hosseini's second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* published in 2007, in which he portrayed women in Afghanistan with the central character named, Laila. Hosseini regards it as the mother-daughter story. The novel brings the most traumatic experiences of Afghan women. In order to concentrate on the hazardous existence of Afghan women, Hosseini has introduced two female protagonists. This paper studies Hosseini's projection of the subjugation of Afghan women. Further in-depth analysis will explore the different levels of spousal violence from the feministic outlook of the novel.

Keywords: Oppression, Patriarchy, Taliban, Violence, War.

Gender inequality and violence against women are disparagingly discoursed by numerous scholars around the world. Domestic violence is one of the most crucial problems that have to be confronted by numerous people around the world. A. L Ganley estimated domestic violence repeatedly consequences in "death, injury, and sometimes even the victim chooses to commit suicide and mental health problems." (Ganley, 26). Domestic violence typically embroils physical, sexual, and psychological incursion. Domestic violence in a nation like Afghanistan which believes 'woman is best either in the house or in the grave', for instance, "has a negative impact in several aspects, such as quality of life, social and physical health" (Palwasha, 2). The executors of violence in Afghanistan are generally lugged out by husbands or mothers-in-law. Afghanistan is a nation that apparatuses a patriarchal arrangement, where all organizations are lined by men. Maximum patriarchal men believe a man should be the high-handed, the leader, and the mighty one to the object that harassing women might be seen as not a disapproving object. This conduct of oppressing women triggers injustice undergone by numerous Afghan women.

D. A. L. Roshan believes that Afghanistan has almost developed into a nation "that wants to give special attention to women" (Roshan, 6). Though, the aspirations of all women in Afghanistan have not yet been appreciated for the reason that now they have to allocate living under destiny, pressure, and degradation. The

onset of the Soviets to Afghanistan occasioned a power struggle between countless ethnicities and enclosed. The war in Afghanistan seized a lingering time, instigating diminishing confidence in Afghan women. In the year when the Taliban arose and took over, it was also that women befitted scapegoats for oppression, where they disoriented their "freedom and security and were treated unfairly" (Roshan, 1). The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* designate Afghanistan as a nation full of shaking history and jutting to its culture. The lives of the Afghan people altered when there was a foreign invasion took place where the Soviet invasion and Taliban rule twisted the Afghan people's standard of living into agonizing and thrilling anarchy.

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a powerful novel set in Afghanistan, a country that still adheres to a patriarchal culture, and carries to the forefront the most traumatic occurrences of women in Afghanistan. In order to put emphasis on the unwarrantable survival of Afghan women, the author has presented two female protagonists. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* portray how the two main female protagonists, Mariam and Laila, have to confront domestic violence in their bigamous marriage with Rasheed. In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Nana, another character, is bearing her husband Jalil's denunciation of her as his wife. She drops her freedom in society and family and is tweaked psychologically at every moment. Though Jalil is not acting any physical or verbal incursion on her, whatsoever he does, has deeper startles on her psyche. Nana discloses to Mariam that Jalil has no guts to stand before his people for the sake of Nana's honour. Rather than protecting her reputation, Jalil drives her out of his house and compels her to live unaided in Kolba. Nana's mental heartbreak can also be distinguished beyond her expressions when she abuses Jalil in front of Mariam by exclaiming "harami" constantly. In regard of this distasteful experience Nana tells Mariam that "Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman" (Hosseini, 7).

Brute violence against women is an unexceptional one that incorporates hitting, pinching, slapping, wounding, thrusting, fisting, overheating by flowing hot water over the body, detainment, and striking with a pebble or a stick. The vicious Rasheed in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* occupies a leather belt in his hand to beat Mariam even as "Mariam slides out of her bed and begins backpedalling. Her both arms instinctively crossed over her chest, where he usually strikes her first" (Hosseini, 255). This terror, budding out of their temperament of Rasheed, has been the trigger of everlasting psychological torment for Mariam for several years. Hosseini portrays the ferociousness of Rasheed with Laila in the expression: "And then he is on Laila, pummelling her chest, her head, her belly with fists, tearing at her hair, throwing her to the wall... Rasheed pushes Laila to the ground and begins kicking her" (Hosseini, 326). With the exception of it, both females have to confront double viciousness first at the hands of Rasheed and under Taliban rule. Furthermore, the young women have to challenge sexual hostility in which the domineering husbands are seen undertaking to ascertain sexual relationships by imposing, harming sexual organs, and embargoing and hurtful sexual relations.

Vocal violence contains embarrassment, dishonour, humiliation, separation, and abuse of an oppressed person in front of his family and associations. Isolation is also a kind of hostility against women. Hosseini pens that after the confrontation in the bathhouse, Rasheed has got transformed. It is exhibited that most nights when he arrives home, he barely communicates anymore as revealed in the description "He eats, smokes, goes to bed, and sometimes comes back in the middle of the night for a brief and, of late, quite rough session of coupling (Hosseini, 100). He yet exits with Mariam for an outing but he moves hurriedly without communicating with her, and "he isn't so ready with a laugh on these outings anymore" (Hosseini, 100). In reaction to Mariam's interrogation, "Are you angry with me?" (Hosseini, 100), in reply he habitually makes sighs sometimes and does unendurable acts that frustrate Mariam psychologically. Additionally, another variety of verbal violence is perceived when he discovers an error with her cookery and "complains about clutter around the yard or points out even minor uncleanliness in the house" (Hosseini, 100). In this regard, the section of stone chewing is an amalgamation of both verbal and physical intensity.

The main purpose of man-woman affiliation is to produce children. It is on one segment the indication of pride and on the other side it focuses the male vigour. Childbirth here is not just child birth but the birth of a male child is above considerable. This can be comprehended in the occasion of Rasheed who favours Zalmai to Aziza. Unvarying Aziza's birth enhances incessant anguish for Rasheed. He continuously denounces the deeds of

Aziza. Once upon a time, Mariam states, "Look! She's reaching for the rattle. How clever she is" (Hosseini, 253). In reaction to this, Rasheed utters, "I'll call the newspaper" (Hosseini, 253). Rasheed's extraordinary expectations about a male child be disloyal to him and he turns out to be more furious with Mariam and Laila. He deliberates the name of the estimated birth of a baby boy and recommends he be called Zalmai. Incongruously, this name drives to the illicit son of Tariq and Laila. The same anticipations, Rasheed retains with Laila when she gets expectant. When Laila chances with Rasheed at his shoe maker's store, he feels her belly not through the shirt but under it, which swelling so rapidly, Rasheed declares, "It's going to be a big boy. My son will be a Pahlwan!" (Hosseini, 247). The birth of a male child is no less than a miracle for Afghan families, as they brand their descendants memorable.

The initial pages of the text *A Thousand Splendid Suns* intimated the ill-treatment of women in fundamentalist Islamic societies when one of the two protagonists talks enthusiastically about what it means "to be a woman in this world" (Hosseini, 6) where "like a compass needle, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman" (Hosseini, 7). The Taliban, a radical mercenary detained power first in Herat in 1994 and then in Kabul the capital of Afghanistan on September 27, 1999 and sadistically dropped Afghanistan into a vicious and fierce state of authoritarian despotism and gender apartheid in which women and girls were deprived of their prime human rights. Upon capturing power, the Taliban rule inaugurated a system of gender apartheid efficiently pushing the women of Afghanistan into a status of virtual house capture. Under the Taliban administration, women were denied of basic rights. When they seized control in 1996, the Taliban primarily foisted strict proclamations. They expelled women from the labour force and bolted schools for girls and women and banished women from universities. Taliban forbade women from send-off their homes unless escorted by a close male family member. The following extract brings to light the ill-treatment of women by Taliban rule. "One day, a young Talib beat Laila with a radio antenna. When he was finished, 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, 313).

Taliban commanded that the windows of women's houses should be undercoated and painted in black and compelled them to carry the burqa or chadari, which absolutely cover the body, allowing only a small net-covered breach through which to see. Taliban banned women and girls from being considered by male physicians while at the same time obstructing female doctors and nurses from working. To restrain it all, women were refused even treatments for their diseases. By establishing those kinds of laws Afghan women cannot either go to a male doctor or get medication from a female physician. On the other hand, The women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* have very dissimilar educational familiarities. Mariam is educated by Mullah Faizullah in the Koran, and she acquires how to read and write. Yet when she enquires her mother about moving to school, Nana asserts that the only lecture that Mariam needs to learn is to 'endure', she utters, "Mariam, Women like us, we endure (Nana said) Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter; like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always find women. Always. You remember that, Mariam" (Hosseini, 7). Nana's disturbing expressions bring to light the distress of Afghan women who are predestined to tolerate whatever men impose on them.

The first-generation woman Mariam acquired experiences of life through suffering. She twigged that the significance of education was to know oneself and the human race around her. So, she cheerfully attempted to educate the third-generation girl Aziza through what she experienced. Aziza could by now recite by compassion the surah of ikhlas, the surah of fatiha as Mariam had started tutoring Aziza verses from the Holy Koran, and knew previously how to act the four ruqats of morning prayer. Mariam spoke to Laila "It's all I have to give her, ..., this knowledge, these prayers. They are the only true possession I've ever had." (Hosseini, 290). Still, some fathers are also devious and unsympathetic towards their daughters. Jalil is a kind of unsympathetic father who deserts Mariam. Unintentional the fact she admires her father and loves her kind words from him like 'my princess.' Although her mother contended with the fate of being a woman and also being a woman without acknowledgment for being an illegitimate child, she lives in a utopian world devoid of coming to relations with reality.

In contrast, Laila has a father who stresses the value of education, he accentuates that Laila's education is as essential as that of any boy. As the condition of women in Kabul is not as it should be he persists

in tutoring Laila himself. He analyses the significance of women assisting universities. Father said to Laila that he knows she is still young, but he wants her to be aware of and learn this now, he stated, "Marriage can wait, education cannot. You're a very, very bright girl. Truly, you are. You can be anything you want, Laila." (Hosseini, 114). Her father was aware that once this war is terminated nation is going to require her as much as its men and maybe even more. He said it is indispensable since "society has no chance of success if its own women are uneducated, Laila. No chance." (Hosseini, 114).

In epochs of war women were sufferers and easy targets of assault. Taliban military men gang-raped and killed countless women. Mariam got to know about those men who in the name of honour slayed their wives and daughters if they'd been outraged by the militia and about those women who were killing themselves due to fear of being raped. Child marriage was a customary malevolence in Afghan society. Mariam discloses "My mother was fourteen when she had me. Thirteen when she married" (Hosseini, 208). Adultery or Polygamy is very usual in Afghanistan. Rasheed exclaims to Mariam, "Don't be so dramatic. It's a common thing and you know it. I have many friends who have two, three, or four wives. Your own father had three. Likewise, what I'm doing now most men I know have done long ago. You know it's true" (Hosseini, 209). Women are supposed to be so obedient to the advantage of their partners. They are assumed to recognise the preferences of their husbands and comport themselves accordingly. Mariam verbalizes Rasheed's tastes to Laila "Put them (washed and dried clothes) in the almari, not the closet. He likes the whites in the top drawer, the leftovers in the middle, with the socks" (Hosseini,220).

The investigation acquired that Mariam and Laila both underwent innumerable pieces of violence. Mariam suffered sexual, physical, and psychological configurations of violence. Physical violence that Mariam underwent is hitting, kicking, and pushing. In the meantime, the psychological violence she has suffered is abusing, insulting, comparing her with Laila and discussing the past. Sexual violence is when Rasheed uses intimidation when he desires to have sex. Furthermore, Laila also gets a lot of physical violence, similar to Mariam, in the figure of dragging, kicking, and punches. Laila also faced psychological violence in the configuration of physical abuse and death extortions. Additionally, the violence faced by the two central female characters transpires because the male character believes that he has beyond power and full authorisation over his wives to the advantage of doing violence over his wives is rationalised. The form of forbearance that Mariam has an expressive effect on their lives is conclusive to execute Rasheed. Mariam has acquired psychological autonomy because she still has to be apprehended and accountable for her trials in prison. Psychological freedom is also the utmost essential object in her life. In the interim, Laila has never submitted Rasheed's words since the commencement of the narration. The struggles that Mariam and Laila devote to preserving themselves were no more futile. Mariam and Laila acquired the freedom they intended and envisioned, although they can no longer harmonize in one place.

References

Ganley, A. L. Understanding Domestic Violence: Preparatory Reading for Participants. 2002

Hosseini, K. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Bloombury, 2018.

Palwasha, S. Determining the Types and Severity of Violence Against Women In Afghanistan, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches to Medicine*, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University 2021.

Roshan, D. A. L. Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 2019.