MARRIAGE AS AN OPPRESSION OF WOMEN: AN ANALYSIS OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S NOVELS

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ABSTRACT
In third world countries like Afghanistan, marriage is a source of physical and mental agony for women. Women are sold, exchanged, and used to settle disputes and they are treated inhumanely in the name of marriage. This study attempts to provide a textual analysis of Khaled Hosseini’s novels to show the miserable lives of married women in Afghanistan. The theoretical foundation of this research is based on the feminist interpretation of marriage. The fictional shreds of evidence taken from novels are supported by the real-life events reported in empirical studies. This study reveals that the female characters of Hosseini are oppressed through violence, forced and child marriages which reflect the reality in Afghan society. Thus, this research highlights the need for reformation in marriage traditions to ensure the provision of basic marital rights to Afghan women.

Keywords: Afghan Women, Khaled Hosseini, Marriage, Violence, Women Oppression.


1.0 INTRODUCTION

Marriage has been a source of misery and pain for many Afghan women. This fact has been presented in local and international media and human rights organisations reports. For example, Khadija, a 23 years old woman from Herat, was forced to attempt suicide because of the continuous domestic violence. “Women never have any choices, if I did, I wouldn’t have married him. We’re all handcuffed in this country”, she told TIME magazine from a hospital in Herat (Bohn, 2018). Women in Afghanistan are bartered (exchange marriages), sold (bride price), used to solve disputes (baadal marriages) and forced to marry at a young age. The patriarchal society of Afghanistan never allows women to take charge of their lives. Therefore, the most critical decision of their life is also taken by the head of their family. The women are never asked or consulted in this decision-making process, and they are just informed or forced to accept the decision. This study attempts to provide insights into the miseries of Afghan women in the name of marriage through the analysis of female characters of Afghan – American novelist, Khaled Hosseini.
Hosseini is a well-known figure in the world of modern fiction writers. Hosseini has successfully depicted the traditions and customs of Afghan social life in his novels. Although, Hosseini's first novel has limited involvement of female characters, his second and third novels are dominated by female characters (Mechanic, 2017). Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1965 but they had to take refuge in America due to the Soviet-Afghan war in 1979. Hosseini completed his education in medicine and worked as a physician from 1996-2004 (Stuhr, 2009).

The Kite Runner was the first novel of Hosseini published in 2003. The novel was a bestseller, and it made him famous around the world. It also allowed him to work for human rights organisations, and he visited Afghanistan in 2003, after 27 years. This visit also proved an inspiration for his second novel, A Thousand Splendid Suns, as he told in his interview with Book Browse:

In the spring of 2003, I went to Kabul, and I recall seeing these burqa-clad women sitting at street corners, with four, five, six children, begging for change. I remember watching them walking in pairs up the street, trailed by their children in ragged clothes, and wondering how life had brought them to that point... Their life stories were truly heartbreaking...When I began writing A Thousand Splendid Suns, I found myself thinking about those resilient women over and over (BookBrowse, 2007 Para 4).

His third novel, And the Mountains Echoed, was published in 2013. The story revolves around the miseries of Afghan immigrants and the poor state of Afghans living in rural areas. Recently, Hosseini published a short story, Sea Prayer, in 2018 in remembrance of the Syrian immigrant child whose dead body was found on a Turkish seashore in 2015 (Tundelkar, 2016; Mechanic, 2017).

1.1 The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyse the female characters of Hosseini to understand the plight of women in the name of marriage in Afghanistan. The study focuses on different forms of marriage which are always used to exploit women in Afghan society. Hosseini is aware of this painful experience of Afghan women, and he has narrated the stories of women being forced to marriage at a young age and facing violence at the hands of women. Qamar and Shakeel (2015) studied the representation of the institution of marriage in Hosseini's novels from the perspective of Williams’s (1994) cultural theory. They concluded that Hosseini has somehow misrepresented the Afghan institution of marriage in favour of Western discourse, especially in the novel A Thousand Splendid Suns. This study is in agreement with the findings of Qamar and Shakeel (2015) that Hosseini has misrepresented patriarchy in the shape of Jalil and Mr Wahdati. Moreover, he has not provided the matchmaking details marriages in And the Mountains Echoed. However, the study claims that Hosseini has indeed portrayed marriage as a source of exploitation of Afghan women, and it is proved through the textual shreds of evidence.

2.0 FEMINISM AND THE INSTITUTION OF THE MARRIAGE

Marriage is a social and legal arrangement where two people, often a man and a woman commit to living together, and this union is regulated by the law, religion, culture and tradition of the society. The couple vows to take care of the basic needs of each other, i.e. sexual, economic, social and domestic. However, the negligence of one partner to others or a
conflict in roles can often put an end to this bond through separation or divorce. Marriage can be of various forms depending on the society or the culture, e.g. polygamy, polyandry, exchange marriages and temporary marriages (Brake, 2016).

Feminists have always criticised marriage as a social institution to be the primary reason for women’s exploitation and oppression in society. Wollstonecraft (1792) was the first feminist to mark marriage as a form of oppression for married women. She wrote that marriage restricts fundamental rights of married women, and they have to work as an unpaid domestic servant. Susan B Anthony, another famous feminist and suffragist, declined to marry and marked it as a curb on her freedom. These feminists accused law to treat a married woman, not as an individual but property of her husband. It was because of this reason that women activists in England and America started their struggle for women’s right to vote and own their property. However, the achievement of these rights did not ensure equal rights of women in the household, and the feminists like Friedan (1963) tried to understand the dilemma of married women. She concluded that the unjust, unpaid and unacknowledged domestic labour was a significant reason of the unhappiness of married women in America. Though the liberal feminists criticised the oppression of women in the name of marriage, they never advocated for abolishing the institution of heterosexual marriage. However, radical feminists viewed the death of marriage as the only solution for women to get equal rights in society. They believed that marriage is sexist, and there is no way for married women to get equal rights. Therefore, De Beauvoir (1949) viewed marriage as the primary tool to socialise women in a feminine manner. Thus, women are trained not to focus on their study or career but only on their beauty.

Furthermore, Firestone (1970) marked that the reproductive functions of women are the core reason of their unequal status in society. Therefore, she suggested that women should avoid marriage and take control of their bodies to be more robust in society. Marxist feminists also criticised the traditional marriage as a "world-historical defeat of the female sex" (Engels, 1884 p. 120). They believed that men use marriage as a source to subdue women. Therefore, Marxists marked marriage as a tool of patriarchy, and resultantly it gives ownership of women to men. This mindset helped men to keep family problems inside the house in the name of the private sphere, and it enabled men to treat women the way they want. On the other hand, cultural feminists though agree with the liberals that the domestic work and childbearing is a hindrance in the emancipation of women, they approve that women should pay equal weightage to their rights and their children rights as well (Carbone & Brinig, 1990; Chambers, 2012).

The struggle of women rights activists raised awareness in women, and it resulted in cohabitation in Europe and America during the 1960s. In this setup, a man and woman could live together without a formal marriage contract. This relation could prove as a precursor for a permanent marriage or provide the couple with a hassle-free separation without the complexity of legal divorce. However, research has shown that cohabitation is unable to overcome the dilemma of gender inequality though it is far less as compared to formal marriage. Another problem with cohabitation is that women are at risk of economic instability in case of separation in the absence of a legal marriage contract (Brake, 2018).

Thus, radical feminists like Firestone (1970), presented lesbianism as a solution to the problem of patriarchy and monogamous marriages. These radical feminists advocated for the rights of lesbians and gays. They also worked for the legalisation of these relationships in the form of a legal contract. Barker (2017) quoted Hunter that same-sex marriages would, "disrupt both the gendered definition of marriage and the assumption that marriage is a form
of socially, if not legally, prescribed hierarchy” (p. 35). This struggle resulted in the permission of same-sex marriages in about thirty countries around the world.

However, this solution has not worked as per the desires of the advocates of same-sex marriages. Though it is claimed that the division of household work is more just and negotiated according to the interests of both partners, research has shown that partners with high paying jobs or power tend to work less than low earning partner just like the heterosexual marriages. Therefore, gender inequality has not been diminished even from same-sex marriages as per the dreams of many feminist activists (Brake, 2018).

3.0 MARRIAGE IN AFGHANISTAN

Marriage is considered the most important social event in Afghan society. An individual, family or community wait and prepare for years to celebrate the wedding of their near and dear people. However, marriage is not an individual, but a family affair as most of the marriages are arranged in Afghanistan. Therefore, marriage in Afghanistan is a contract between two families, and most often, it does not care about the emotions of the two individuals. The male head of the families mostly takes the decision, and the primary consideration in decision making is always the political and financial wellbeing of both the families. Most of Afghans and especially Pashtuns preferred to marry within families due to less bride price and inheritance issues. As a result, cousin marriages are common in society (Landinfo, 2011; Wahab, 2006).

Afghanistan is home to various ethnic groups, and resultantly the marriage traditions also differ from group to group. However, this study takes into consideration the commonly practised traditions in society under consideration. The research focuses on the exploitation of women through the institution of marriage. Therefore it takes into consideration customs and traditions, which result in the suppression and subjugation of women. Thus, the following are the primary shapes of women's exploitation in the name of marriage.

Marriage in Afghanistan is costly as the groom has to pay a massive amount of money called the bride price to the family of the bride. This price is often so high that the groom has to work for several years to meet the expenses. Sometimes, the groom's family has to sell the valuables like land, livestock or take a loan to pay the bride price. Bride price is widely practised across Afghanistan and though it is illegal in Islam and Afghanistan legal code. Recent research taken by APPRO (2018) reveals an interesting fact that Mahr which is legal in both Islamic sharia law and Afghanistan legal system and which is the right of bride in case of divorce or husband's death is practised by only 16% of people. Still, the bride price is practised by 81% of people in five provinces of Afghanistan (APPRO, 2018). In regions like Helmand, Kandhar and Kabul, bride price reaches $10,000, making it difficult for poor and jobless men to marry.

On the other hand, wealthy and older people can marry second or third time with young, beautiful girls because they can fulfil the demands of the bride's family (Girls Not Brides, n.d.). Therefore, girls are turned into objects which are property based on their beauty, education, age and family. Bride price is a stigma on the social institution of marriage in Afghanistan.

3.1 Bride Price

Bride price is the money given by groom's family to the family of the bride. It is prohibited in Afghan law and Islamic Sharia law but is still widely practised across Afghanistan. The legal
and religious provision of the economic welfare of women in case of divorce known as Mahr is different from bride price as it is the right of the woman. However, as it benefits the bride, so most families do not talk about Mahr and show more interest in the bride price. Bride price has turned marriage in Afghanistan to a highly expensive business, and the war-affected, poor men of Afghanistan find it incredibly challenging to meet the demands of the bride's family. The price is demanded based on various factors like the education, family and beauty of the bride. It can be increased or decreased, keeping these factors in mind. However, in general, the bride price can be around $2000 – 7000 in Nangarhar to $14000 – 40000 in Kandahar and Helmand (Muzahry, 2020). Men and women are equally affected due to this tradition as girls have to accept the decisions of their families and then grooms have to work for years to pay the enormous amount of money. Muhammad Nabi from Khost province worked for seven years in Saudi Arabia, and Niamatullah from Ghazni province stayed for four years in Iran to save money for bride price. On the other hand, 15 years old Aziza had to accept a 60 years old man as her groom because he was ready to pay the amount needed for her father medical treatment (Muzahry, 2020). Thus, bride price is the primary motive behind the child and forced marriages as gives the family much needed financial boost in a society where earning money is not easy.

3.2 Child Marriage

The legal age for a female to marry in Afghanistan is 16 years. Suppose a woman is married before reaching her legal age. In that case, Article 71 of Civil code demands for the imprisonment of the offender for at least two years. Moreover, the woman is allowed to decide the fate of her marriage according to her wishes. However, according to a UNICEF report, 25% of the marriages involve women younger than 16. Child marriage plays a significant role in the deprivation of girls from education as they are married in their school-going age. Furthermore, it also results in the health complications for the girls because of their childhood pregnancies, and the country records one of the highest maternal mortality rates globally (Rasmussen, 2017).

3.3 Baadal Marriages

Baadal is another tradition of miseries for women in the name of marriage. Baadal or exchange marriage is an arrangement between two families to exchange their daughters or sisters through marriage. Though exchange marriages are forbidden both in Islamic and Afghan law but still it is a widely spread menace in Afghanistan. People in rural areas and poor people especially find it suitable as they do not have to pay the bride price. Mas’ad, Tagoranao & Muradi (2014) quoted that an 80 years old father forced her eight years old daughter to marry a 50 years old man. In exchange to that, the 80 years old man will marry 14 years old daughter of that 50 years old man. Therefore, most of the men use this tradition to marry young women.

Furthermore, such marriages are a constant threat for both women as the failure or unhappiness of one marriage affects the other as well. If one woman is maltreated in her house, the husband of another woman is bound to take revenge of her sister by flinching similar pain to his wife. Therefore, not only both women face an unending series of violence, but their families also remain hostile to each other. Resultantly, the relation which should be a source of happiness becomes a constant source of pain for the families.

3.4 Baad Marriages
Baad marriages are used to settle the disputes between two families. In this marriage, a young girl or girls of aggressor family are given in marriage to a man or men of the victim family. This kind of marriages may prove an end to family feud or conflicts but prove lifelong sufferings for the women given in the marriage. They are not given the status of a family member and always treated as reminiscent of their enemies. In most cases, these women are not allowed to visit their parents, and they lead their life in a kind of prison. Therefore, women have to pay for the crimes of their male family members. These marriages are most common in Pashtuns (Smith & Manalan, 2009). Islamic Sharia and Afghan law both prohibit Baad, but the weak Afghan government is unable to protect the women of the country from this menace.

3.5 Temporary Marriages

Temporary marriage or seegha/fegha is common in the Shiite community of Hazara tribe because Sunni sect of Islam forbids this kind of weddings. It is a brief and pre-established contract where a woman and man can live as a married couple for a fixed time. The period of this relationship can range from a few hours to many years, but this marriage finishes automatically after the contracted time. The groom has to pay a specified amount of money to the family of the woman. The researchers have shown that the temporary marriages became common in Afghanistan after the return of refugees from Iran and the number of men involved in seegha is increasing day by day in the places like Mazar Sharif and Daikundi without any difference of widow or virgin women. Men are primarily attracted towards seegha because of the poverty and joblessness in Afghanistan as seegha is inexpensive and easy. Though in some cases these temporary relations are converted to permanent marriage it is not a norm. A woman once in temporary marriage finds it nearly impossible to get into a permanent relationship as virginity is considered primary requisite for marriage in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, seegha is considered a shameful act, a legalised form of prostitution in the society, and once such a relation is revealed, it always stigmatised the woman. Besides, there are cases where women are forced into temporary relationships because their guardians took money from the groom. In short, a woman is always at the suffering side in this kind of relationships (Responses to Information Requests, 2012; Sakeenah, n.d.).
4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper takes into consideration three novels written by the novelist Khaled Hosseini. The novels selected for this study are the Kite Runner (2003), A thousand Splendid Suns (2007) and And the Mountains Echoed (2013). The study critically analyses the selected novels to evaluate how the institution of marriage exploits the interest of female characters of Hosseini? The Feminist ideals of marriage set the theoretical foundations of this study. Marriage, which has always been seen as a reminiscent of patriarchal forces by feminist scholars, also plays its negative role in the lives of Afghan women. This is a qualitative study, and the method of close reading is used to analyse the novels.

The primary sources of this study are the three novels of Khaled Hosseini. The study also benefits from various secondary sources which report the reality of Afghan society.

5.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Hosseini has presented the ordeal of Afghan women in the name of marriage. Although he is unable to give a complete picture of Afghan institution, for instance, there is no mention of bride price, baad and baadal marriages in his novel. Moreover, he has presented some of his male characters like Jalil, Babi and Suleiman Wahdati as subdued by their wives which is less likely to happen in the patriarchal society of Afghanistan (Qamar & Shakeel, 2015). However, his portrayal of women sufferings in marriage and the name of marriage truly depicts the situation of women in Afghanistan. He presented the malice of child marriages, forced marriages and the violence faced by women at the hands of husbands in his novels. Therefore, in the following lines, we discuss various instances of exploitation of women represented through the female characters of Hosseini to understand the actual plight of women in Afghanistan.

5.1 Representation of Forced Marriages in Hosseini Novels

Hosseini has depicted the dilemma of forced marriages through his female and male characters. In a forced marriage, a person is forced to marry against her/his wishes. The motives behind such marriages can vary from case to case. For example, Basira was forced to receive money from her groom, “I was 15 when my father forced me to marry a 40 years old man without my consent against 500,000 Afghanis” (Stanekzai, 2017). Though it is a fact that most of the victims of forced marriages are female characters, there are instances where male characters have to bow their head before the traditions or decisions of the elders. Mariam in the novel A Thousand Splendid Suns, Sanubar in the Kite Runner and Adil’s mother in the novel And the Mountains Echoed were forced to marriage though in different circumstances. Mariam was forced by her father and step mothers to marry at the tender age of 15 because they wanted to get rid of Mariam. They never asked Mariam for her agreement and just informed her about her groom, three times older than Mariam. ".... What are you, fifteen? That's a good, solid marrying age for a girl" (Hosseini, 2007 p. 44) was the only argument of Mariam's stepmother to convince her for marriage.
On the other hand, Sanubar was forced by her father to marry her disabled cousin Ali because it was considered unethical to marry out of the family. However, Sanubar showed resistance against this decision and did not accept her relation. Eventually, she left Ali to accompany a band of singers. The case of Adil’s mother was different than the previously discussed issues as her family was threatened by the Commander to face the consequences in case of refusal to his proposal. “But if you tell me this one is taken too, then I’m afraid I may have no choice but to think you don’t care for me” (Hosseini, 2013 p. 253). Therefore, the family sacrificed her for the safety of other members, and they have to arrange her marriage with the Commander unwillingly. All these instances prove that feminist like Wollstonecraft (1792), De Beauvoir (1949) and Firestone (1970) indeed claimed that patriarchal societies use marriage as a tool to control and subdue women.

However, Hosseini also depicted in his novels that the traditions, customs and circumstances not only oppress women but sometimes men are also forced to accept the marriage relations against their will. In the novel Kite Runner, Ali was aware that Sanubar is not willing to marry him, and her character is also questionable. Still, he was forced by his uncle to marry Sanubar in the name of family’s honour. He faced humiliation at the hands of Sanubar. The people of vicinity ridiculed him for the immorality of Sanubar, but he endured all this in the name of family traditions. Therefore, Ali was also a victim of the tribal traditions and customs of Afghanistan.

Saboor in the novel And the Mountains Echoed was forced by his circumstances to marry against his will. He and Masooma were in love, but after the disability of Masooma, he has to marry another woman as it is not considered normal for a young man or woman to be single in Afghan society. However, his wife died immediately after the birth of her daughter Pari and then he had to marry again as it was difficult for him to take care of his children and do the labour work as well. Therefore, he married Parwana, sister of Masooma, but he could never love any of his wives because of his love for Masooma. Thus, it is evident that circumstances and society even force men to act against their will to fulfil the demands of family, tribe or culture. Suleiman Wahdati was another victim of the ideals of society. He was a gay man and was in love with his servant, Nabi. However, it was never easy for him to disclose his reality in Afghan society. Therefore, he had to accept a cover marriage with Nila Wahdati just to avoid the growing pressure of his family to marry. Thus, the pressure of family and society forced him to act against his will and marry Nila.

It is evident from these instances that in Afghanistan, not only women but men are also forced to marry against their desires. However, in women case, the force takes the shape of violence in case of resistance, but in men's case it is mostly limited to the social and family pressure, and they do not have to face violence.
5.2 Representation of Child Marriage in Hosseini’s Novels

Hosseini has portrayed the dilemma of child marriages in Afghanistan through his female characters. In the novel, A Thousand Splendid Suns Mariam and Laila were forced to marry at the young age of 15. Her stepmothers forced Mariam, but Laila was compelled by war and poverty to accept Rasheed as her groom. Mariam could never attend school, and Laila had to discontinue her studies because of the war. Still, their untimely marriages closed all the doors to continue their studies, albeit their wishes and dreams to be educated members of the society. Moreover, these female characters also suffered mental and physical violence at the hands of their husband because they were so young that they do not know their religious and legal rights and so unable to defend themselves from the atrocities of their husband.

5.3 Violence against Wives in Hosseini’s Novels

Young (1988) marks violence as the worst form of oppression. It is an attempt to humiliate a person or damage the property of that person. Violence against women is defined as an act that results or likely to result in mental, physical or sexual harm to women (UN, 1993). A survey report shows that about 80% of Afghan women face violence at the hands of men in their lives (Bohn, 2018). Unfortunately, these men are mostly family members, i.e. father, brother, husband and in-laws. Bride price, Baad and Baadal marriages in Afghanistan have turned women into a saleable item, and they are treated violently by their husbands. Hosseini has depicted the physical, mental and sexual exploitation of his female character in his novels.

Khanum Taheri, in the novel Kite Runner, has to quit her singing passion for marrying General Taheri. It proves that Wollstonecraft (1792) was right in her claim that marriage is a tool to restrict women's attention only to her beauty and the search of the prospective groom. Khanum lost her career and passion in her quest for a suitable match. However, she was not happy even after her marriage. She keeps herself busy in the household chores, but General always finds problems in her cooking, and it makes her cry.

I learned that he could be petty, such as when he’d take a bite of the _qurma_ his wife placed before him, sigh, and push it away. “I’ll make you something else,” Khanum Taheri would say, but he would ignore her, sulk, and eat bread and onion. This made Soraya angry and her mother cry (Hosseini, 2003 p. 151).

Friedan (1960) writes about the dissatisfaction of her fellows who left education to marry their lovers but did not find the solace in their relationship. She gave this problem the name, Feminine Mystique. In Kite Runner, Jamila is also a victim of feminine mystique.

Mariam and Laila, in A Thousand Splendid Suns, suffer physically, mentally and sexually at the hands of their husband, Rasheed. Mariam was so young that she was even unaware of the kind of relationship between husband and wife when she was forced to have sex with her husband. "….a moment of hesitation, and then his hand was on her neck ….the pain is sudden and astonishing. Her eyes sprung open” (Hosseini, 2007 p. 81). Then, she has to face the brutal physical violence of Rasheed as she was unable to give birth to a son. Rasheed never wasted any opportunity to humiliate her both physically and mentally.
All these years and still she shivered with fright when he was like this, sneering, tightening the belt around his fist, the creaking of the leather, the glint in his bloodshot eyes. It was the fear of the goat, released in the tiger's cage when the tiger first looks up from its paws, begins to growl (Hosseini, 2007 p. 216).

After that, Laila was also forced by her circumstances to join the painful and miserable life of Mariam. She has to accept Rasheed as her husband because she was left alone after the death of her parents. A young, beautiful and pregnant girl couldn't live without the company of a man those days. She was aware of the fact that in the absence of parents and friend, the birth father of Aziza, she has no option other than to marry Rasheed and get a roof on her head. She also had to suffer physically and mentally as she gave birth to a female child. "Laila didn't see the punch coming. One moment she was talking and the next she was on all fours, wide-eyed and red-faced, trying to draw a breath" (Hosseini, 2007 pp. 239-40). Rasheed forced her to have sex soon after the birth of Aziza, even against the advice of the doctor. Rasheed has been represented as the real face of patriarchy in Afghanistan. He could go to any extent to achieve his wishes, and women for him were only a source of pleasure and children. Therefore, if they are unable to give him a son, they can be treated in any way. This attitude of patriarchy forced Firestone (1970) to argue that women are subdued in society because of childbearing and child-rearing capabilities. Thus, if women decline to carry or look after children, they will be able to gain an equal status to men in society. Though it is debatable and already contested by other feminists that child-rearing and caring is not the only reason for women's inequality in the society. Still, it is a fact that people like Rasheed have always used this characteristic of women to subdue them.

5.4 Marriage as an Oppression of Women in Hosseini’s Novels

Feminists contested that the patriarchal societies intentionally develop the feminine qualities in the women. Therefore, they are taught from childhood to take care of their beauty and then use these good looks to find a prosperous man as a guarantee of their economic wellbeing. Thus, marriage is put forth as the only solution to all the problems of women. This mindset creates jealousy among women, and instead of fighting for their rights; they fight with each other to get the attention of a prosperous man (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Hosseini presented this dilemma through his female characters. Nana proved easy prey for Jalil in the novel A Thousand Splendid Suns as she saw the solution of her poverty in the wealth of Jalil. Therefore, without giving a second thought to the fact that he is already married, and they have a vast social gap and entered into a sexual relationship with him. Resultantly, she lost her job, home and looked after her daughter alone. Her miseries ended only with her suicide.

The jealousy and search for a perfect match is depicted through the characters of two sisters Masooma and Parwana in the novel, And the Mountains Echoed. Both sisters were in love with a single man Saboor. Resultantly, Parwana pushed her sister from tree and Masooma got handicapped. Thus, the jealousy of Parwana took the life of her sister. Therefore, feminists, like Wollstonecraft (1792) rightly suggested that women should come together to fight for their rights and not against each other.

6.0 CONCLUSION
This research concludes that the representation of the institution of marriage in the novels of Hosseini reflects the complicated and ambiguous marriage traditions of Afghan tribal society. The various ethnic and religious sections of Afghans have different traditions of marriage, and Hosseini has successfully portrayed these traditions in his novels. However, one feature is common in all the tribes and people of cities and rural areas that marriage is at the heart of the society. Contrary to the feminist ideologies, Afghans consider marriage as the most important social and religious event in the life of an individual and an individual is considered incomplete if he or she is unmarried. Hosseini has depicted this mind-set of society through his characters like Khala Jameela. However, it is also a fact that marriage has mostly proved a source of pain and agony in the lives female characters of Hosseini. Their families forced them to marry at a young age, without their consent in the most critical decision of their lives. Furthermore, they were humiliated, both physically and mentally at the hands of their husbands. Therefore, this study demands a change in the attitudes and behaviours of Afghan society not to treat women as saleable items but equal human beings like them. It is necessary for the wellbeing of not only Afghan women but overall progress and prosperity of Afghan society as well.

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