

Cultural diversity and Cruelty of Polygamy in khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Sun

A.SANGEETH KUMAR. M.A.,M.PHIL.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
SACRED HEART COLLEGE (AUTUNOMOUS)
VELLOR (DT),TIRUPATTUR
TAMILNADU.
PHONE:9566449862
MAIL:sangeethliterature1@gmail.com

Abstract

This novel gives a vivid portrait of imposed of war and the impact of cultural diversity due to religious ideology and subaltern status of two women, Mariam and Laila ,who were wives of Rasheed .Hosseini's women characters shows the culture of polygamy ,practiced in Afghanistan. This novel explores the dream of two women and their consequence to attain desired end when they undergone beyond oppression then stereotypes of veil. The acute exploration and suffering of women in the novel depicts the struggle of Afghanistan people lifestyle. The backdrop of the novel is war zone of Kabul, Afghanistan. I wish to explore my point that passion of sisterhood was maintained as a tool for both women to sustained the torture from their husband and in leads to the sacrifices of Mariam life for Laila 's future .The situation of women in afghan is worst in early 1990's when Taliban came into power .History of Afghan is marked by political arrogant and that shows their restriction toward women .

Key words: Women discrimination, Polygamy.

Full paper:

Afghanistan, situated in south central Asia, The history of this country and its culture marked by the regime of political leaders and their authority toward ordinary human especially on women .Still for the past three decades the condition of the women in afghan is not good. Women's rights were violated and they were projected as object into society in Taliban regime in late 90's .On the other hand history of Afghanistan explore the fact that the country is among strongest oppression imposed due to the rule of Taliban and Mujahidin. Lina Meril points out in her work *An Introduction to Afghanistan Culture(2006)* "In 1747, the Taliban, the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan, established their dynasty in the eastern and southern portions of the country. By the early 1900's, the Pashtuns had effective physical control over all of Afghanistan". (I. A. C. 2) The purpose of this paper is to discover the hidden detail of Afghanistan's women and their characteristics have been embedded in the novel to explore their struggle in patriarchal society.

The novel opens with character Mariam, who was introduced in society as daughter of 'Harami' .First time she has not aware of the word, it means bastard. "Nor was she old enough to appreciate the injustice, whose only sin is being born" (T. S. S. 4).The word could make the reader to predict the status of the character in further chapters .Harami is unwanted by the family and society ,who was brought up by her mother Nana ,visited weekly once by her father Jalil .He has many legitimate wives but he fails to accept Nana as one of them as she is poor girl and he is rich wealthy man, who owned cinema theater .

The readers can understand about the practiced of polygamy in Afghanistan and it leads to present a pathetic condition of women character in this novel. Nana commits suicides, the first female character end up her life in tragic way. Mariam wants to go to school but she was

denied because of her birth “They will call you Harami and they will tell terrible things about you , I will not have it” (T.S.S.18). Mariam now understand her status ,she asked her father to take her to cinema but he fails and readers can find his regret ,when he convey his apology in a written a letter ,that reaches the hand of Laila in the end of the story .The cultural ideology could be expressed through the character Rasheed, who marries Mariam even though he is 30 years elder than her .He wants her for his sexual pleasure and to beget child for him .Through this desire Hosseini has point out the condition of the plight of afghan women .Edward said argues in his book *Orientalism* (1978) .that “My own experience of these matters is in part what made me write this book .The web of racism ,cultural imperialism, political imperialism has come to feel as his unique destiny “ (Orientalism27)

The writer has expressed the same idea in his previous novel *The Kite runner* (2003). Through the character Soraya. Even Rasheed forced her to wear burqa and insists the value of Islamic culture “Mariam had never before wore burqa ,Rasheed had helped her “ (T.S.S.71).The war and the sacrifices of human life could be known to the readers through the two characters (Ahmed and Noor .They have gone and joined in Jihad .He paints a picture for his readers of a land of cultures and abundance. He evokes the glory of the city through these characters. One part he pays attention to the female characters struggle and another point he focused on war zone, civil chaos, cruelty, injustice were clearly expressed through Ahmed and Noor in this novel .”Ahmed and Noor had left Kabul for panjashir up north to joint command Ahmed Massoud’s force and fight the Jihad” (120) again they were portrait as “A shiny Allah pendant around Ahmad’s neck.A patch of black hair on one of Noor’s ears” (T.S.S.120) .

Another important character is Laila , who revolt against Rasheed ,Laila is in love with Tariq but married to Rasheed. Laila got pregnant when she has relationship with Tariq, who fled the country to Pakistan as there is attack of Taliban .The author explains the war condition and diversity of the life of Lila through the character Tariq .This is a reason Laila accepts to marry Rasheed to protect her child in a womb. In previous chapter Mariam wears burqa to escape from religious authorizes likewise Laila also done the same. If she born in U.S she may not married Rasheed. Taliban force bring many foreigners as Jihad to fight against Soviet Union. The history of afghan war and conflict is morality. Jordan explains the value of culture in his book *Literature into culture: Cultural studies after Leavis (2006)* He says “culture is one of the several ideological state apparatus ,Culture is a site of confliction meaning and value ,which represent different class interest “(L .C.78) like this statement here conflict is there in this country.

The soviet tries to bring destruction not only to country but also for the ideology of Taliban. Laila father lose his teaching job in soviet but he grow Laila as educated women unlike Mariam. The soviet brings education for women .As Mujahedden armed to control Kabul, women educations were denied. Peter Barry points out Jeremy Bentham idea in his book *Beginning Theory* He says that “ The panoptic was a design for a circular prison conceived by eighteenth century utilitarian ,panoptic state ,however ,maintained its surveillance not by physical force and intimidation but by the power of its discursive practices ,which circulates its ideology through the body politics“(B.T.170). Laila creates compassionate love toward Mariam. Hosseini shows the innocence of love between Mariam and Laila .She is companion for bearing physical and sexual torture of Rasheed .Laila uses to protect Mariam whenever Rasheed beats her .” No Resheed you should not beat her, Let us go “(T.S.S.231).The story

depicts Mariam and Laila as symbol of sisterhood bonding and they protect themselves very much against pain and sorrow. Aziza, Laila 's daughter admitted to educate and Laila and Mariam teach Koran .

This point recollect the impact of religion,where Mariam was educated by Mulla Faizullah .The two character try to come out from the male domination society.when the story end Mariam has attacked Rasheed to protect Laila so he dies.Mariam urges Laila to flee from the country and Mariam was sentences to death for Mariticide .The sacrifices of Mariam' life leads the novel to known that she is a symbol of sacrifices. The paper brings the status of women who lived their crucial life in Afghanistan.

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