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## **Can Subaltern Be Heard: An Analysis of The Kite Runner and The Thousand Splendid Suns by Khalid Hosseini Freedom**

Sohail Ghafoor<sup>1</sup>, Umer Farooq<sup>2\*</sup>

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to investigate the marginalized and the oppressed (subaltern) groups. Who are made subaltern socially and religiously and to recover the voices of the gender and the afflicted ethnic group? Hosseini's The Kite Runner and A Thousand Splendid Suns are brimful with such subalternised characters and they express their dilapidated condition through gestures and their actions. The researcher exploits the theory of Spivak's "subaltern theory" in the postcolonial context. In both novels, the oppressor and the oppressed are transformed into subalterns. Independent life is a dream in a country where stratification is the order of the day. The article examines how the subaltern individual and the group express their anger and show their reaction against the subaltern-building forces. The subalterns do not lose dignity but celebrate it by joining hands and by sacrifice. Amir repents and sacrifices himself for the new generation. Baba realizes the differences and pays the price. Miriam, the harami, the outcast bastard, suffers constantly from father to husband and sacrifices for Laila and her children by killing the joint-husband. Laila is the voice of a new generation who bravely challenges the subalternity and speaks loudly. The subalterns remain silent. It is its desire to be heard and recognized. Mariam is the subdued voice but Laila has given voice to the marginalized females. She is the subject and plays the role of the agency and agent who "acts out" (Spivak 1998). She saves the forthcoming generation and constructs the consciousness of the subaltern.*

**Keywords:** Subaltern; Spivak; Agency; Voices; Marginalized;

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<sup>1</sup>Govt. Elementary School. 21/EB. Arifwala, Pakistan. Email: Sohailghafoor1968@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>M Phil Scholar, Department of English, University of Sargodha, Pakistan.

\*Corresponding author Email: Email: [umerrahber@gmail.com](mailto:umerrahber@gmail.com)

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## Introduction

The term “Subaltern” is a compound word. It is derived from the Latin “sub” meaning “below, under” plus “alter” meaning “other” or alters (alternate). The subalterns mean “subordinate.” It denoted a “lower-ranking,” even an inferior individual. According to Concise Oxford Dictionary (2001) the term “subaltern” means “of inferior rank.”

Gale (2008) In “International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences” comments the word “subaltern” has a lengthy and unclear history. In the English of the middle ages, the term applied to “vassals and peasants.” In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the term “subaltern” was denoted as “Military term.” In the military context, it was applied to military commissioned officers “below the rank of captain.” This term stands for the junior officer and temporary command was given to a lower-rank officer during “trooping the colors in the honor of a monarch’s birthday”.

The concept of Subaltern was introduced by Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) in his article *Notes on Italian History* which appeared in the book *Prison Notebooks*, between 1929 and 1935. Gramsci defines “Subaltern” are those classes which are not allowed to play a significant role in the formation of power that curb them, instead of it, subjugating them. These subaltern classes remain under the will of “the dominant class” and take part in the hegemony created and controlled by that very class. The subalterns have no free space to speak and to express their voices because hegemony forces them to believe that the dominants are their mouthpieces. He believed that “now the responsibility is handed over to the intellectual to dig out the emblems of subaltern initiative and class consciousness and effective political action” (Fisher 2010).

Many researchers such as Imran et al. (2020), Joyia and Gull (2017) and Ullah et al. (2018) utilized the concept for the classes of “inferior- rank” individuals or groups of people in a particular society that is suffering under the hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class. “The term also refers to the subordination of class, caste, gender, race, language, and culture and was used to signify the centrality of dominant/dominated relationship in history” (Imran and Chen 2020). The Subaltern group is constituted by women and widows, untouchables, landless peasants, workers, craftsmen, and other underprivileged people. The elite class does not want to acknowledge the basic rights of the subaltern and denies their participation in making the native history and culture which are formulated by the other elites. At the time of the introduction of the notion, “subaltern” Gramsci had in mind only the workers and the peasants who were oppressed and discriminated against by the National fascist party leader, Benito Mussolini, and his agents. Gramsci was keen to investigate the roots of the subaltern classes, their consciousness, culture, and yearned to make their voices heard. He did not believe the narratives, represented by the state agents or the ruling class agents. The subaltern classes are not accumulated and cannot join until they swing into a “state.” Their history is constituted by the individuals who are in power or the dominant ruling group.

Hosseini, Afghan-American, novelist highlights the oppression and the condition of the Subaltern in Afghanistan during the war era. He returned to Afghanistan in 2003 and visited his breath-taking cities. He observed and learned the current situation of Kabul. His nostalgia is clear in the early parts of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and both novels were written in the backdrop of Afghanistan (Rebecca 2009). The Halcyon era of pre-war and the destruction of the Russia-Afghan war knit the warp and woof of both novels and they portray the social life of the various classes and gender of the specific era. The upheaval in the political system, the coup, the regime of the communist, and finally the iron period of the Taliban do not bring festivity in the life of the elite and the marginalized classes. The voices of the marginalized classes and the gender were suppressed, they tolerate and accept the cruel treatment and then show resistance and express it through gestures. The effects of the different political eras are crystal clear on the life of the victims. The marginalized people are socially deprived, religiously inferior, economically, frustrated, mentally upset, and ethically “the subaltern.” Rebecca (2009) explains that the social and cultural instability in Afghanistan is due to the inherent weakness of cultural prejudice and class discrimination.

*The Kite Runner* is paragoned with sociological and psychological issues. It contains iron barriers of sects, caste system, class difference, and modification of culture through the internal and external invasion. There is a conflict between the elite (Amir) and the subaltern (Hassan) and the

conflict between nostalgia and the bitter reality. The novel also propagates how the barriers and the conflicts make the people subaltern and how the resistance takes place. In this novel, Hosseini moves between to and fro like the pendulum and kisses the betrayal and redemption, tastes the ancient culture, observes the damaged infrastructure, desires for the restoration of the monarchy, and saves the feminized (castrated) generation. *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are the result of their personal experience and their memories during their childhood in Afghanistan (Rebecca 2009). In an interview, Hosseini said, “whatever I composed and comprehended, it was I perceived from the surrounding and the people” (Sethna 2003).

*The Kite Runner* is a series of autobiographical episodes with a fictional look. In this novel, a specific ethnic group is suppressed and subalterns by various elite groups. The Pushtuns belong to the elite and the Hazara belong to the subaltern. In *The Kite Runner*, The male is subaltern and it is balanced with *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, where the females are subalterns. In this novel, there are two polar apart pictures of Afghanistan, in one picture, there were free Afghan women who had the freedom to attend school and seek professional employment. They were protected from outside intrusion. In the second picture, the aftermaths of the war and the extremism have been ruining and devastating women. The women have been restricted within the home and veiled under the burqa. The dusty streets and locked the tongue were their fate. The women were denied education, had no right to move freely, and had no access to adequate health care under the Taliban and there is subalternity within the subalternity.

Amir, with his Baba, and two servants, Ali and Hassan, live in Kabul in a nice home. Amir belongs to the Pushtun tribe and Ali and Hassan belong to the Hazara tribe. Pushtuns are in majority and the Hazaras are in minority. Baba’s fast friend, Rahim Khan constantly visits the house and there is an exchange of views about politics, soccer, and the business. Hassan and Amir are coeval and often play together and Hassan is an expert in slingshot and kite running.

The novel is written in flashback technique and nostalgia dominates the lives of the characters. Kite flying is the major and official sport of Afghanistan. The tournament is celebrated in the winter. The boys participate in the tournament with zeal and zest. They use different materials to sharpen the flying string. When the kite is cut, the boys struggle to catch the kite. It is called the kite running and the catcher is called “The Kite Runner”. Amir wins the laurels of the tournament and Hassan struggles and catches the losing and dropping kite. He was trapped by the three hooligans, Wali, Kamal, and Assef in a blind alley. Asif rapes Hassan and Amir sees the whole situation but does not help Hassan. The drift of separation starts and it completes when Amir stuffs money and watches under the pillow of Hassan and tells Baba about the theft. Hassan admits the charge and leaves the house with his father Ali.

There is an outbreak of war in Afghanistan and Afghan people migrated to other countries, both Amir and Baba also migrate to America through Pakistan. During the journey, they are stopped by the Russian troops and a soldier demand the female to rape. Baba shows his courage and the soldier has to retreat. Amir continues his education and Baba works on a gasoline pump. On Sunday, they hold the flea market where they met the Afghan family, general Tahri, and his daughter Soraya. They exchange a speechless message of love. They get married before the death of Baba who is diagnosed with lung cancer.

Amir is now young and settles in America. He receives a call from Rahim Khan, Baba’s old friend, who is now sick and wants to see Amir. Amir reaches the war-torn country. He observes around and becomes heart-rendering. Afghanistan looks like a ghost, ruins and the remnants of old Afghan culture scattered everywhere. Poverty is the order of the day, starvation and hunger penetrated the motherland. Amir met Rahim Khan and tells that war and local Afghan communal groups destroyed the heritage. The Taliban treated the people haughtily. They have closed the schools and universities. Their violence is increasing day by day even they ban the fundamental pleasure activities and needs of life. They target females and ethnic violence is on a high scale. Rahim Khan also tells him about Hassan’s son Sohrab and his wife Farzana. The Taliban demolishes the house of Baba, shot Hassan and Farzana, and sent Sohrab to the orphanage. Amir must search Sohrab and look after the house and Sohrab.

Amir searches Sohrab. He reaches the orphanage with the help of a local person. He expected that Sohrab may be here. The orphanage is in sorry condition. There was nothing to eat. The dwellers were in ragtag and ragamuffins. The director tells that Sohrab was taken by the Taliban. He may find such an official Taliban in the soccer stadium, where Amir sees the horrible event. A man and woman were stoned to death in an adultery case. Amir meets the Taliban and recognizes him, who is Assef. Amir meets him in solitude, Amir is in disguise and the life-taking dual takes place. Amir is knocked down and Sohrab saves Amir's life using a slingshot. Amir takes back Sohrab with great troubles that are symbolically castrated. Rahim Khan also tells that Hassan was not only a servant but also has a blood relation with Amir. Baba had affair with the mother of Hassan (Sanaubar) and Sohrab was his half-brother. The fact made Amir guiltier that he betrayed Hassan in the rape scene and the theft occasion.

Amir realized that Kabul was not a safe place. He wants to take Amir to America but there are immigrant troubles. With the help of Mr. Cladwell, Amir completes the process and takes Sohrab to America. Amir realizes that baba and he has great sin toward Hassan. The process of adaptation is not easy. It is very difficult to prove that Hassan has lost his parents. Amir tells Sohrab that he might be going back to the orphanage. Sohrab has already big trauma in the orphanage. Amir comes to know that Sohrab wants to kill himself. Fortunately, Sohrab was alive.

There was a big gathering at the Lake Elizabeth park in Fremont, America. People were flying kites there. Amir brings a kite and asks Sohrab to fly it. He tells that both Amir and Sohrab's father flew the kites when they were youngsters. Sohrab tried to fly the kite. Amir also showed the trick that how to flying kite and how to run and catch the losing kite. Amir chased the kite for Sohrab. All the gathering smiled and there was a smile on the face of Sohrab. Amir says "for you, thousand times is over" (Hosseini 2003).

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* were released in 2007 and received groundbreaking fame. It is one of the master world pieces and remained in the New York Times best book for more than a hundred weeks and more than four million copies were shipped. The novel comprises 30 years of Afghan history, a heart-shaking story of a family and friendship of the subaltern. It presents that there is salvation in love. The title of the novel is directly adapted from the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Iranian poet Saib Tabrizi's poem "Kabul" translated by Josephine Davis:

Every street of Kabul enthralling to the eye  
Through the bazaars, caravans of Egypt pass  
One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs  
Or *the thousand splendid suns* that hide behind her walls  
Tabrizi, 1960. (Encyclopedia Iranica).

Mariam for the first time listens to the word "Harami" from her mother Nana who lives in Kolba outside the city of heart in Afghanistan. Their area of activities is confined to the village, Gul Daman. Nana worked as a housekeeper in Jalil's house, a wealthy cinema owner. Jalil has already three wives and eleven children. All the children are legitimate except Mariam. Jalil, every Thursday, visits Mariam and Nana, brings gifts, tells stories, and spends the weekend with them. Mariam adores her father. Mullah Faizulla, the religious teacher teaches her Koran and pays heed to her difficulties, and encourages her.

One day Mariam insists her father visit the cinema for "Pinocchio", a cartoon film. Jalil agrees but does not fulfill the promise. Mariam leaves the house and knocks at the jail's door but the door is not opened. She sleeps outside the house and waits for the Jalil. On the next day, Jalil's driver carries her back to the Kolba and the heart bruising incident takes place. Her mother Nana, commits suicide. The period of hardships and troubles now commences for Mariam.

After Nana's burial services, Jalil takes Mariam to his house where his wife and Jalil force her to get married to a person, who is older enough than her, Rasheed. Mariam protests but no one listens. Rasheed, a distorted person, takes her to Kabul where he works as a shoemaker and remains sweet to Marim. With time, he uses abusive and vulgar language with physical punishment. Mariam gets pregnant seven times but faces miscarriages due to health complications.

Laila, an urban girl was born in the city, a liberal girl and lives in a neighborhood of Rasheed. She has her boyfriend, Tariq who loses his leg in a mine attack. They grow up and fall in love with



each other. Her two brothers, Noor and Ahmad, are martyred in the war between Russia and Afghanistan. After their deaths, Laila's mother Fariba loses her senses and she remembers her lost sons passionately. Danger and helter-skelter dominate all around. Laila's father, despite the trouble, sends her daughter to school. Hakim wants to leave Afghanistan but his wife does not. Both Tariq and Laila have sex.

After a few weeks, Tariq leaves Afghanistan. The bomb blasts and Laila's house is demolished. She is the sole survivor of the blast and knocked unconscious. Laila is taken to the house of Rasheed. She is treated, cared and healed but her auditory sense is affected. Laila received the news that Tariq has lost his life and Laila feels devastated again. The marriage of Laila and Rasheed takes place in the house of Rasheed. First, a fuss is a fuss between Rasheed and Mariam but then the dispute is settled. Laila is already pregnant and she saves her life to get the wedding lock. Rasheed comes to know about the pregnancy and he becomes ecstatic and desires for the male baby. Laila gives birth to the female baby and her name is Aziza.

Soon after the birth, Rasheed demands sex. Laila refuses that she is in ill health, conceives that Mariam is the main instigator, and beats Mariam. Laila takes courage and stops his blow. It was the very first time that someone has shown courage and supported Mariam. It was the starting point of diffusing tension between Laila and Mariam and the period of friendship starts between them. The inner strength of females against the "subalternity" awakens.

The political upheaval takes place in Afghanistan. The Taliban hold the rein power and draconian laws are forced on the females. These laws are more harmful which Rasheed has imposed in the house. Women no longer travel, move, buy and education is banned on every level. The strict veil law is imposed and their basic rights are taken away.

Mariam and Laila plan to flee away from the house. They saved money and handed it to an agent who discloses the secret. The policemen handed over them to Rasheed. He becomes harsh and shackles them in a room that is as hot as the sun on the summer days. He gives no food; water for a day and does not pity his children. He threatens to kill them.

Laila gives birth to a male baby "Salami". Rasheed's happiness needs no bounds. He worships salami and buys toys, clothes, and luxuries item for the boy. During the war, the shop of Rasheed is burnt down and the period of hunger and starvation starts. The house affairs are disturbed. Mariam approaches Jalil for help but he is already dead.

Aziza is put into the orphanage. Rasheed refuses to visits the orphanage. Taliban beat Laila and Mariam on being alone. Laila uses a pad against the beating and punishment. Rasheed becomes the waiter in a hotel to feed and to fulfill the need of his family.

Laila comes across one day Tariq on the thresh hold of Rasheed. She is thunderstruck, sheds tears and they lock each other in their arms. He describes his past, his story in a refugee camp, his prison, and finally his release. He joins the hotel as the janitor. She discloses her marriage, the birth of Aziza, and the attitude of Rasheed. One day Zalami discloses the secret and Rasheed is furious. He beats her and wants to kill her. Mariam interrupts and picks the shovel, using it as a liberating tool. Rasheed is killed in the attack. Laila is fully aware of the consequences and wanted to leave this horrifying place. She insists Mariam to a company with her and Tariq. She denies it because there will be a constant danger for Laila and her children to be caught. They rushed for Pakistan and never saw her again.

There is a so-called court proceeding. The jury of Talbans does not ponder the features and facts and does not fulfill the features of justice. Mariam argues that she tries to defend herself and tells the unnatural behavior, showing the broken molars and the punishment cuts. This evidence is ignored and declared the personal affairs of the husband and wife. The judge declares the death sentence to Miriam and is publically checks the taste of death.

Laila and Tariq got marriage, made a new nest, and started a new life. The 9/11 incident brings a horrible change in Afghanistan and the American president declares the "war on terror." The war toppled the Taliban regime. The situation in Afghanistan is starting to improve. Laila and Tariq are determined to return to Afghanistan to rehabilitate Afghanistan. After a few years, both visited Nana's kola. Mullah Faizulla's son hands over a box to Laila. It contains a letter of apology, cash, and a copy of Pinocchio on Video.

In *the Kite Runner*, Hassan (Hazara) is made subaltern, first by the Amir, not to help him by the atrocity of the Assef and company, and then Amir is made subaltern by Assef and the war. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam is made subaltern by Rasheed and then by the wives of Jalil (p.3). Hosseini discovers the subaltern male voices of the suppressed who are made subaltern first by the war and then by the locals. His second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is about the dilapidated condition of the females, polygamy, and the gradual rising of the females against the patriarchy. Both the works target a specific community. He discovers the oppressed “female subaltern voices.” According to Spivak, the subaltern cannot speak, if spoken, It does not remain subaltern. The subaltern speaks and expresses through gesture, action and finally resists and revolts. Is there anyone? Who pays attention to the voices of the subaltern?

Afghanistan is a country with multiethnic groups and each group has its convictions and culture. Pushtun is the main group whose role in politics is imperative and dominant whereas the Hazara is the oppressed group. The Hazara is treated as servant, cook and they are the marginalized community. Hassan and Ali belong to the Hazara tribe, so they are treated ethnically. Baba and Amir are Pushtuns and they belong to the Elite class. Ali and Hassan are doubly marginalized due to low rank and they are members of the Shia Muslim sect. They are portrayed as non-human beings and simlized as inanimate objects. The ethnic attitude of the writer is clear when he describes the features of Hassan who symbolically stands for the Hazara community, His face is circular; it is looked as a Chinese doll etched from The strong wood: His pressed wide nose and slender, small eyes are like bamboos leaves, eyes (Hosseini 2003).

Hassan’s outlook is described as he is a puppet who has no will. The doll is a manmade and lifeless creature whose strings are in the hands of someone else and he is under the will of the others. The metaphor of hardwood stands for the separation and the object which has faced unending hardships. The bamboo leaves are uneven and cleaved with the course of time and these leaves are on the merci of the wind-slaps and they change their direction with the pressure of the wind. These leaves give shadow to the tired and keep the other people cool. Hassan has no will. He is oppressed and subaltern. He is under the will of Amir, the choreographer, whatever Amir said, Hassan obeys him.

Assef, the antagonist was born with the collaboration of a German mother and Afghan father, is an insane guy. His stainless brass knuckles symbolically stand for dictatorship and tyranny. He always yells at Hassan and desires ethnic cleansing. His favorite personality is Hitler. He gives the present to Amir *The Hitler’s Biography* both Assef and Hitler are in the support of the “genocide.”

Afghanistan and Pushtuns are permanently stuck together. They are the real natives of Afghanistan. the Hazara people contaminate our motherland they unclean our blood (Hosseini 2003).

There are differences between the physical feature of Hazaras and the Pushtuns (Imran and Gull 2017). The Hazaras were the offspring of the Moguls, who had originated from Mongolia and there are similarities between the Chinese and the Hazaras. The writer is fanning the racism. The other ethnic communities commit atrocities against one another like the glass covering kite string cutting different strings. Ashcroft describes “those humans are categorized on the bases of the color and the prominent physical features” (199). The ideology of hierarchy is constructed whereas all human beings are the chips of the same block.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the novel is the journey to Fremont, California in the 1980s. The elite classes, the oppressors, are transformed into the oppressed and the subaltern. They were oppressed by western culture. The idea of the American dream prevails in this part and there is a clash of dreams and reality. Both Amir and Baba take asylum in America. Baba keeps up his appearance in American society. It is affected by the American circumstances. His integrity is at the stake in the shopping center when the shopkeeper demands his ID card.

This man wishes to check my license. We have been buying the foodstuffs from his shop for two years and this cur requires my license. . What a strange country it is? The individual does not trust anyone (Hosseini 2003).

Baba lost his social status in America. He was rich and respected in Kabul. The drift of time is now shifted. He is disturbed and he has no identity in the new country. He is made subaltern and his rank is now “low.” Baba protests severely because he is placed and experienced in such a way that he is compelled to “speak.”

Afghanistan is socially, physically, politically, and educationally made subaltern by war than by the ethical group- militia. Amir moved to Afghanistan to find Sohrab and took him to a safe place. They passed through Kabul and there were the War remains and the rubbles. Beggars were everywhere, they were in ragamuffins. Burqa clad women with their children chanting Bakhshesh, Bakhshish. Fathers were an invaluable commodity in Afghanistan. Amir met a beggar who was once a professor in the university and taught there Hafiz, Rumi, Beydel, Jami, now, he is the subaltern of the Taliban. Amir talked about his mother who taught Farsi and History. In his memories, the beggar revealed those golden days. Women were allowed to move ahead. They were considered the future of the country. He realized Amir, it was better you were away from Afghanistan until you and your family would be the victim of war and the Taliban might make you subaltern. Zahir Shah tried to modernize Afghanistan, now under the supremacy of the Taliban, there were atrocities, anarchy, hunger, and deaths everywhere. The Taliban exploits the children, especially the girls, and they are sexually abused. What kind of Islam they are practicing and preaching. It is inconceivable.

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* are about the day-to-day social and domestic life of females who are marginalized at various levels. There are rural and urban conflicts and the prevailing tension that was imposed by the war whose Pandora’s box is responsible for the era of violence and unending upheaval. Each wave of war made Afghan people the subaltern. The novel is written in memoir form. In the 1<sup>st</sup> part, Miriam is the narrator who tells the tale of her mother, Nana, an excommunicated woman, married to Jalil, a cinema owner who has already three wives and eleven children. He is a coward and subaltern in the hands of three wives. *If The Kite runner* revolves around the patriarchy and traditions of Afghanistan, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* encompasses the matriarchy and the internal strategies of the youth and age. Miriam fifteen years girl whose mother Nana commits suicide and her father took her to his house. His three wives do not condole to Miriam and realize that she is a burden and blot on the family. Their matriarch- -cal attitude forces her to get marriage Rasheed who is forty-five years old and a disabled man from Kabul. He is Pushtun and shoe-maker by profession. Females have no regard for females. The powerful males make the powerless female the subaltern. Matriarchy is crystal clear in the characters of Jalil’s wives. Jalil himself does not speak. He is a speechless and dumb creature before the wills of his wives. Miriam protests against forced marriage through the gesture. Her voice and requests fall flat on the batter halves of Jalil. For centuries, histories and folklore are rich with the dominating of females. The victorious warriors were under the spell of females. The victor females were equipped with intelligence and shrewd craftiness befooled the males. The male was the 1<sup>st</sup> creature who was made the subaltern by the females. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, females are powerful in the first part of the novel. Brienna Margesson explores that women have the power over men and they subalterns the men. They have art to tame the wilds and left the weak and abandoned them. From the epic of Gilgamesh till today, the male warriors and the females use tricks to use power against others, even in jealousy, females exploit power against the other females. The female of the species is more deadly powerful than the male (12).

The urban woman realized Miriam that she is subaltern. She visited Kabul’s posh area with Rasheed. She was amazed to see the woman without a burqa. She observes the big difference between

These ladies charmed her and made her realize her isolation, her inferiority, her low work, and the shallowness in her knowledge (Hosseini 2007). Laura Boothy investigates that women are against the women and they are the dominant sex. The dominant woman exercises her power over the powerless women. They made the people subaltern and there is no distinction whether they are making the male or female the subaltern. There is the decline of patriarchy which leads to a progression of matriarchy (Hosseini 2007).

Women are made subaltern ethnically. They are the vulnerable section of society, though Islam forbids the difference and the distinction. It believes in the equality of man and woman. By dint of the characters of Miriam and Laila, the inner life of Afghan women is depicted. Rasheed first

victimized Miriam who suffered in his hand for twenty-seven years. He is Pushtun who has his ideology about ethnicity. He subalternised her by saying,

They communicated to me directly, the women wore skirts and flaunt their knees...their husbands are unable to control their wives; they consider themselves modern, well liberated, and intellectuals. They do not care about their pride and honor, their respect and status (Hosseini 2007).

In Afghanistan, not only the cycles of time are made subaltern but the art that belonged to the pre-Christian era is also made subaltern. The Buddha religion was the pre-Christian religion. There was the statue of the Buddha. They represent the old civilization and they were torn into pieces as the bomb planted there. It was done in the name of religion as described,

The (drawing) of Buddha was considered unsacred and was broken into smithereens. These idols like graffiti were assumed the idolatry and sin. (Hosseini 2007).

Subaltern joins hands and there is daughter and motherhood between the ladies. First, the subaltern remains the rival and then there is the transformation of rivalry into the warm and unconditional friendship between Miriam and Laila. The subaltern unites against the violent and wild Rasheed, the shared husband, co-wives blend the fast kinship.

She took the decision and adopted the new way of life, the shovel came down “this time she returns what she had earned from him (Hosseini 2007).

One subaltern sacrificed for another. The first time the subaltern chooses the way of action through the action is horrible and life-taking. A terrible period of twenty-seven years is over. The subaltern has to pay the price for freedom. The period of hardships and adversity was not destructive and negative. They speak through the gesture and perform it using action. If the subaltern is not heard and recognized, s/he will express through the murderous action.

## CONCLUSION

Every start has its ending. Everyone is subaltern in the war-torn country. Females and the community of the low rank are more subalterns. It is astonishing that not only those characters are the subaltern but the atmosphere is also the subaltern. This penetrating surrounding, directly and indirectly, influences the people.

*The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are written in the backlash of Afghan culture. There were the dark clouds of political instability, the milieu of social discrimination, the prevailing menace of ethnic conflict, and the deep-rooted religious disparity. The characters and the environment in these novels face hellish torments and adversaries mostly created by the elite. The ethnic warlords, the men, the war, and in its result the horrible social order was established. since long ago and with no tangible change in this status quo/ modus operandi.

In this study, the researcher tried to find out the subaltern characters and their voices. These two novels are based on imagination but with the real look of nostalgia and there is a beam of hope at the end of the tunnel. The subaltern first tolerates the train of hardships and the miseries imposed by the foreigners and then by the locals. The war ends but the sword of subalternity is still hanging on the heads of the victims. The oppressed tried to escape from the extremism, war, and the drought-stricken atmosphere but they do not escape from the clutch of fate. In *The Kite Runner*, the males are the victim of subalternity whereas in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* the females are the main prey of it. In the first novel, the subalternity shifts from one generation to the next new generation whereas in the latter book subalternity is challenged by the blending of youth and age.

In both the novels the subaltern(s) react, speak, resist, and ultimately revolt against the matriarchy, patriarchy, extremism, and war imposing forces. The female-subaltern are bolder, more initiative, and are quick to take joint action because whenever and where ever bad things occur the first victims are the females and then the children whereas the male-subaltern are the coward, passive and inactive beings. From the passive and the isolated atmosphere, there appears the silver lining under the clouds and the subaltern(s) sacrifice to save their new generation. S/he speaks in a low tone and then in high volume but no one pays attention toward them ultimately the subaltern tried to



commit suicide and to kill others. They do not feel shame and disgrace over the action but they feel dignity and grace though they have to face the dire consequences.

The two works revolve around the stories about the subaltern who are condemned, oppressed, and silenced by the oppressors. Throughout the novels, the hard and the discouraging circumstances force them to put their hands into their hands and to unite them to identify themselves and to have self-awareness. Subalternity is not their revealed fate. Miriam and Hassan resist silently and live a reclusive life. Amir and Laila openly fight against the established orders. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, there is an open outcry against the oppressive male hegemony and the so-called religious authorities. The low caste bastard creature achieves dignity and proves her generosity through cooperation and sacrifice but cannot be appreciated. The false consciousness is perpetrated and instilled into the mind of the oppressed and they are reminded that they are the subaltern. Hassan and Miriam are an example of this. The murder of Rasheed and the castration of Sohrab cannot be appreciated. The courage of Laila, bravery of Miriam, and initiation of Amir are unbelievable and it is their dream to get rid of the chain of slavery and the subalterns. They are made subaltern and they created the voice and fight against the oppression. Miriam, the symbol of traditional woman, Laila and Amir are the symbols of the modern generation, they survive and they cannot achieve this status without the courage and sacrifice of Miriam and Amir. They are the first who awake from the deep slumber and are determined to establish their world. They reject the so-called social order, foreign intervening, and the domestic enforcing management.

The novels express the stories of every man and woman if they are seen through the lens of subalternity. The people cannot be kept under the subaltern-umbrella for so long. There will be the end of discrimination, hypocrisy, and class stratification. In a nutshell, the novels challenge the elite and invigorate the people of low rank, low class, low status, Low ethnic group, low language, and low culture to awake and to live with a raised head. The subalterns are granted the opportunities to speak and to listen carefully and whole heartedly. The subaltern consciousness is highlighted through the characters. The subaltern conscious is constructed through cultural forces. At the outset of the novels, the subaltern-conscious is fixed in the blood of the subaltern. Over time, the conscious is pricked and punctured and a new conscious develops which motivates the subaltern to take action against the hegemonic forces. Gramsci's desire is fulfilled when the subaltern people realize the oppression against them, they join hands, develop understanding, form a state where there was the eye for an eye, blow for the blow, and life for life.

Spivak and the follower- theorists are the powerful agency for the subaltern. They speak for them and they are their voice. The oppressed are not only heard but also grapple and react against the forces in the same coin. The subaltern theory is itself a counter-attack against colonialism. Though written- Language is the major channel to express oneself through the discourse and the texts but gestures, actions, facial expressions, and body language also convey the feelings and the messages of the subaltern. Spivak claims "subaltern does not remain, subaltern, when s/he speak" (p, 90). Across the globe, only the subalterns speak, protest, and finally express their anger using killings. Hosseini is himself a subaltern who represents and speaks for the oppressed of the Afghan people, their culture, and their land. The researcher challenges the subaltern theory and the theorists who claim that subalterns do not speak and when the subaltern is female, she remains mute and dumb. The researcher claims that the subaltern speaks through gesture and action and the action may be horrible. Can subaltern be heard and recognized? I heard, then s/he must be handled carefully and optimistically.

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