

A Study of Culture with Reference to *And The Mountains Echoed*



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A

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Complete
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Declaration

I declare that this Dissertation is an original piece of work, that is entitled *A Study of Culture with Reference to 'And the Mountains Echoed'* and it commenced on 15th January 2016, and it has been completed and submitted on 28th November 2017, under guidance of Ms.Sukhvinderjit Kaur Chopra, Assistant Professor of Department of Verbal Ability . This piece of work does not consist of any material copied from the work of other scholars, the matter taken for referencing has been duly cited.

Place: Lovely Professional University

Signature of the Candidate

Date:

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation “*A Study of Culture with Reference to ‘And the Mountains Echoed’*” has been carried out by **Sukhvinderjit Kaur Chopra** under my supervision and my guidance, for the degree of **Master of Arts**. This dissertation is original and has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other university. This dissertation is fit to be considered for the award of the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Human beings are unique among all other creatures in this world, they have the highest ability to promote and perform their responsibility regarding their family and society in different affairs of daily life according to their religion and culture. Therefore, religion and culture are the most prominent elements from which they get the inspiration. This research is a study of culture with reference to 'And the Mountains Echoed'. The aim of this research is to understand and analyze the cultural environment of Afghanistan where exists a cultural hegemony, as the rich dominate the poor, one religious sect overpowers the other. Also to understand the reason of cultural hegemony by studying the social and political set up. As well as the people of Afghanistan, who constitute different race and ethnic. Therefore, there are many conflicts and contradiction within the family, relationships, and politics in the society of Afghanistan. Consequently, Khalid Hosseini beautifully portrayed the present situation Afghanistan in his novel in the 'And the Mountains Echoed'. Also in the novel there are many characters from different countries.

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Introduction

Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan- American novelist was born on 4th March, 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan. His father Nasser was an Afghan diplomat and his mother was a teacher at a girls school. Both of them hailed from the Herat province of Afghanistan. He studied up to eighth class in Wazir Akbar Khan School in Kabul. In 1976 his father was appointed in Paris, France and moved with there with his family. Due to the Saur Revolution(1978) in which the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regained power the family was unable to return to Afghanistan. In 1980 after the Soviet war in Afghanistan, they sought political asylum in the United States and dwelled in San Jose, California. Hosseini completed his secondary education from Independence High School in San Jose and graduated in 1984. In 1988, he received a Bachelor's degree in Biology. The following year he went to the, School of Medicine, at University of California, San Diego where he got his MD in 1993. He practiced medicine for over ten years until a year and half after the release of 'The Kite Runner'.

Hosseini is a Goodwill Envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He has provided humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan via Khaled Hosseini Foundation. He presently lives in Northern California with his wife, Roya and he has two children, Haris and Farah. During his childhood Hosseini read the poems of famous Persian poets like Sufis such as Hafez, Bedil, Omar Khayyam and others. His favorite book was Divan –e- Hafez , he also cites Persian translation of Jack London's White Fang and it influenced on his youthful imagination, as well as Alice In Wonderland to Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer series . He has quoted Afghan singer Ahmad Zahir as a key musical influence.

Hosseini released his first novel, *The Kite Runner* in 2003, the novel is a story of a young boy, Amir, coping to establish a closer rapport with his father and memories of childhood. One of the theme is ethnic tension between the two tribes: Hazara and Pashtun in Afghanistan. The novel became one of the best sellers in 2005, later, a film was made based on it with the same name and released in 2007. Another of his novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is set in Afghanistan and published in 2007, the story is written with a woman's perspective and elucidates Soviet occupation, the Taliban regime and post Taliban era. The novel was released in 2007. *And the Mountains Echoed* is a collection of nine short stories. The characters, the settings and the plot; links across the wide time and geographical gap. It reveals the strength of human relationship and in the process unites the chapters into one coherent book. The novel also depicts how the decision of one individual affects others across the space and time. Saboor's decision to give up his daughter, Pari not only affects Wahdati, Pari and Abdullah but goes on to affect the lives of second generations, their lovers and their relations too.

A number of times the characters seem to get caught "between the devil and the deep sea", in making decisions, unaware of the magnitude of the significance and the consequences. Interwoven in the story is the power of good intention that gets magnified, how one good intention leads to another like in the relation between Nabi and his employer Wahdati, which eventually leads to their house turning into a hospital benefiting thousands of children. There is a hidden moral in the story that, everyone must strive to do good, however insignificant it may seem. Theme of memory and forgetfulness is also touched upon frequently in the novel. It begins with a story within a story, in which Baba Ayub drinks a potion that makes him to forget about his son, Qais. Here there is an undercurrent of forgetfulness as kind of blessing which is preferable to pining or longtime resentment, and yet as in the context of Baba Ayub,

forgetfulness is never complete and something always remains as a reminder. Then we have 'Pari' forgetting her blood relations especially that of her brother Abdullah, who even names his daughter 'Pari' in her memory. Like Ayub in the story she remembers Abdullah faintly and after a long interval. Thalia, whose face is horribly scarred by a dog during her childhood is able to forget and forgive her adolescent tormenters, and move on to happier life as adult without any resentment. While Roshana intentionally 'forgets' to mention the false promise of I dris in her book. The feather that nostalgic Abdullah saves for his sister Pari alludes to the fact that when someone holds on to a memory, it doesn't take into account how the subject might have changed due to affect of time and interaction with people and new places.

Ironically it is Abdullah who suffers memory loss due to Alzheimer's disease and forgets Pari in the end. In *'And the Mountains Echoed'* stark reality of harshness of life is juxtaposed with the inherent goodness of human being. Boundary between selfishness and selflessness blur when people resort to be of assistance to others in order to mitigate their own guilty conscience or to gain individual happiness. As it is true in many situations, the novel reflects the fact that, one finds it tougher to practice good manners on the family members than on the strangers. Dr. Markos fails to find compassion for his own mother but has no reservation in dedicating his life to unfortunate collateral damages inflicted on the people of Kabul, Afghanistan. In stark contrast to accepted culture , the action of apparently selfish and arrogant Timur in offering to save Roshana reflect that feeling of compassion alone is not enough, it has to be accompanied by action to be effective. The novel challenges the traditional concept of what constitutes a 'family'. Here the bond of blood and marriage doesn't seem to be the all powerful foundation on which the family is built. Pari, Abdullah, Saboor and Nabi are family by blood but Pari, Nali and Mr Wahadati becomes a family by arrangement.

Yet Hosseini's portrayal of enduring love and affection between the siblings and non-functioning family set up of Nila and Markos Abdullah goes on to confirm the old adage that 'blood is after all thicker than water'. Power and Wealth: In various instances in the novel we come across how the powers of the wealthy people shape the destiny of the poor ones. From the beginning of the novel we come across the instance where Baba Ayub decides to leave his son, Qais, so that he is able to enjoy higher standard of living. In a parallel event Saboor leaves Pari with the Wahdatis. Mrs. Wahdati says, "It is for the best" that familial bond between the trio is broken. It is also evident that power of wealth changes perception of the other people as well as the one who is endowed with it. Pari seemingly forgets her father and brother when she becomes adult and considers her maternal uncle 'Nabi' as a servant. Power of the wealth acts the barrier between relations but it can also act as the bridge between the people. Timur arranges the fees for Roshana's surgery. When Roshana writes her book, she holds the power over Idris, who seem to be scared about how he is portrayed in the novel. Power of the knowledge also comes into play when Dr Markos uses his knowledge in medicine to help the poor, providing his service free of charges. Other power relation can be seen between paralyzed Masooma and Parwana, Mr Wahdati and Nabi, and the love triangle of Julien, Nila and Pari.

Proposed Objectives

The culture of Afghanistan has never been considered as one which was strongly unified. The culture in the rural areas is different to those of the urban areas as their thinking differs. In the urban, people have more rights than those of rural areas; it is very much evident in the novel. The rich dominant the poor people in many areas, the rich are given jobs first despite of the latter having the better qualification. The majority of the people share the same religion, so there is no religious conflict between them. Men men dominate the women and all the important decisions are taken by them. Within the study of cultural hegemony of the novel, it would be possible to provide the basic

reasons as reference to the social and political hegemony. It will also provide some solutions for the betterment of the social evil in the society.

Thus, this paper aims:

a) To understand and analyze the cultural milieu of Afghanistan where in exists a cultural hegemony, as the rich dominate the poor, one religious sect over the other, a man over woman or vice-versa.

b) To understand and present the reasons for cultural hegemony by studying the social and political set up.

c) To propose some solutions to this social evil.

Research Methodology

Cultural studies tend to employ more flexible or free-form methodologies. In most cases, researchers in cultural studies will use a **qualitative research** method, which means that they are interested in understanding why things happen or answering questions, rather than collecting large amounts of data. For example, rather than simply wanting to know how many people experienced a certain event, which could be expressed in numbers, qualitative methods are more interested in why the event happened and what it meant to those who experienced it. With the regard to this work “Cultural hegemony” is taken as the main theory for cultural study.

Approach to this research work is qualitative. Subjective review of existing literature on the topic of culture and the cultural hegemony will be taken as the main source of information. So the data collection will entail library browsing, supplemented with information from the net. The method which is required for this paper is based on the theory of Cultural hegemony.

Cultural study is an academic field of study. It is built on certain theories and concepts that guide scholars in their work. The most important is the concept of **cultural construction among the**

others, in this theory; many influential social and cultural characteristics are not inherent but are constructed by people. For example, from the cultural studies perspective, things like race, gender, or disability don't really exist but are instead concepts or beliefs that people have created in order to organize their cultures or societies.

Hegemony is another main theory of cultural studies, this term is used to describe the dominance or authority that one group or culture has over others. For example, in the United States, the hegemonic culture is one that is controlled largely by white people and caters to, or represents, the majority rather than incorporating diversity that would more accurately represent the nation's population. These two theories are critically important in the field, but there are many theories and concepts that guide cultural studies.

Applied Theories in the Research Paper

Culture Study Cultural study is 'an interdisciplinary' field of studies, including sociology, anthropology, political science, and history. Although it is sometimes misunderstood as being the study of popular culture, a cultural study is, in fact, the study of the ways in which culture is constructed and organized and the ways in which it evolves and changes over time". (David White, n. page). Culture studies includes various disciplines and fields bringing together the social sciences and the humanities that investigates the ways in which "culture" creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power. For the first time cultural studies term was used by Richard Hoggart in 1964 in founding The Birmingham School at the University of Birmingham. In the US, previous to the emergence of British Cultural Studies, some versions of cultural analysis had emerged from pragmatic and liberal-pluralist philosophical traditions. However, when British Cultural Studies began to spread internationally in the late 1970s, and to engage with feminism, post structuralism, postmodernism and race in the late 70s and 1980s, critical cultural

studies (i.e., Marxist, feminist, poststructuralist, etc.) expanded greatly in US universities in fields such as communication studies, education, sociology and literature. *Cultural Studies*, the flagship journal of the field, has been based in the US since its founding editor, John Fiske, brought it there from Australia in 1987. In the book, *And The Mountains Echoed* we can see how Saboor decisions have made the greatest effect on many lives. Particularly that of Pari and Abudullah, who had difficulty living their lives without each other. He made a decision being the head of the family, so one decided to go against it. We can also see the culture effect through the character in the novel called Nila Wahdati, who was a gifted, stylish, condemned French- Afghan housewife who writes impassioned poetry about love, sex, desire, and loss in 1950's Kabul which was not liked by the society.

Being a woman she was expected to behaved in a graceful manner and be modest but instead she wrote openly about everything in her book which was considered as Taboo in the society. The women in the society according to the culture of Afghanistan were expected to abide by the rules that were laid on them. They were asked to live in a religious manner and not to go against them. People did not honor Nila because of the way she conducted herself in the society because it was the opposite of how people wanted women to behave. Afghanistan society can be considered as a patriarchal society, all the important decisions are taken by the male in the family. Decisions including the household, child education and everything that involves the family matter. The male plays an important role in the family and everyone in the family was expected to obey the decisions that was made by him without any complain. Women were not given enough rights as that of man in the society and they were expected to remain according to how the society or the culture expected them to be.

Scope of the Research

The proposed study will explore the culture of Afghanistan where the rich dominate the poor, one religious sect over the other and a man over woman or vice-versa. Also how the culture played a major role in each of the characters depicted in the novel. This dissertation will analyze the culture of different ethnic and relationships, domination, families, political and also the class differences of rich and the poor people. It will also explain the reasons behind the cultural hegemony and analyse and propose some solutions to it.

Review of Literature

Shaheen Tarentum's review on the '*A Thousand Splendid Suns*':

Tarentum argues that the novel is overloaded with political implications. It is obvious that Afghanistan is a small country, the Super-powers make it a playground and they compete as to who would be winner of the game. He explained that the people who have Power flax and wield it over the 'lesser ones'. Saraswat Niraja 's Review on '*The Kite Runner*''': Saraswat viewed that '*The Kite Runner*' is a popular novel which describes the truthful of the identification, disloyalty and expiation that its destructs. He mentioned that the novel shows the journey of a boy who he is very remorseful because of some haunting memories of his childhood. The most important point which plays is the concept of identity and redemption that makes the relationship of characters stronger. Also he says that in '*The Kite Runner*' on a journey towards a more attractive and prosperousness life. Likewise, it also mentions the terrible disloyalty exhibited by some of the characters and some others who could not avail better opportunities for themselves.

Alexis Burling review on '*And the Mountains Echoed*': Alexis Burling elaborated that in *And the Mountains Echoed* the author presents the different perspectives of characters in different stories. He believes that remorse is an emotion that runs deep throughout in the novel. He added that Khalid Hosseini's novel gives a sense not only of the interconnectedness of individuals but also of a country fighting for its honor and struggling to come into its own.

Sruthi. P explains, that Khalid Hossieni in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has described the deplorable status of women who living in Afghanistan. He also depicted the present scenario which has ruled Afghanistan. So, when the reader reads this novel they would completely comprehend the policy and complicated ideology of Talliban which has ruled Afghanistan. During the regime of Talilban the women do not have the right to go outside

without Mahram, this mahram have to be from close member of their family. On the other hand, Taliban force them to cover their face when they want to go out of private home. According to the novel of Hossieni, all women characters are overwhelmed and repressed their feelings. This novel became very popular around the world especially with those who have read the book and have become aware of the patriarchal ruled in Afghan society, and the novel has created an impact on the world's notion. In his novel Hossieni explains from the third person's view and obviously the real face of Afghan society.

Nina Farlina elaborates, this novel is more focused on prejudice honesty and personality of Afghan people. And also emphasized about their behavior, treatment, realism and identification of Afghan people and their society. She says that Khalid Hossieni in his novel, clarified the position and personality of two ethnic of Pashtun and Hazara. The Pashtuns have high social position, positive personality, celebrities, high position in the hierarchy of society. On the contrary the Hazara have a low position in the hierarchy of Afghan community. They are the impoverished members of Afghan society. They have menial duties in the hierarchy of government. Mostly, they work as a footman, maid and even beggar. On the other hand these two different ethnic they have also different culture identities. So both ethnics are extremely serious for saving their culture and identities, if they go out of Afghanistan.

Ayesha Ashraf Point out that, when Khalid Hossieni begins to write his novel “*And The Mountains Echoed*” he gives importance to the geographical, cultural, social and national boundaries and he has introduced from Afghanistan than to Kabul, Paris and California. He shows in his novel that Even though Afghanistan is a war-torn country and approximately three decades have been passed and still battle has surrounded provinces, people are threatened

physically, nationally, regionally and culturally, they are insecure and unstable, yet they have maintained hope and dream of a bright future. Ayesha Ashraf says that, Khalid Hossieni in the *And The Mountains Echoed* elaborates the voice of Afghans, on what they think, feel and need in the present condition of Afghanistan. Besides, he also condemns the idea of war from those people who have suffered because of it. Consequently he presents with great ability, his wisdom and eloquence of discourse to his reader who exists around the world that Afghans are not always terrorists; and he portrays the friendly relationship and humanity of English men who collaborate with native of Afghanistan. And he tries to ignore cognation of people from division of the world by name of eastern and western (i.e. Afghanistan and America).

Chapter One: Ideologies in the Text

This is the third novel which is written by Khaled Hosseini and published in May 21, 2013. The novel has nine chapters, spanning over half of a century (1940-2010) and involve the memoirs of four generations. Since it is narrated by different characters in the novel, it adds multiple perspectives to it. In this family drama, an unfortunate and poor family sells their small and innocent daughter to a rich and childless couple in Kabul (capital of Afghanistan). The issues echo from one chapter to another, from one generation to another. The chapters are written in the present tense rather than in past tense as is common. The first chapter narrates the perspective of Saboor, father of Abdullah and Pari. Their mother has died giving birth to daughter Pari. Every night Saboor tells a story to his children before going to sleep. One night he tells a story of a poor farmer named Baba Ayub, who had a good wife and five brilliant children. He had special affection and tenderness for his youngest son, Qais. Baba Ayub is forced to sacrifice his favorite son, Qais, to an evil called Div, but Ayub is angry with himself for not standing up against the Div.

So, he decides to follow Div and take revenge of his son's death. After many weeks, Baba Ayub finds the monster in a beautiful place, but surprisingly he finds Qais is playing with his friends, the monster explains that he has provided Qais a beautiful home and good education. The Div proposes two options: take his son home else allows him to stay. Finally Baba Ayub decides to let Qais stay. In the recursion the div gives him a bottle of liquor to make him forget his son, Qais. Although he has now forgotten his son, he still hears his voice- that makes him wonder. The second chapter narrates the perspective of Abdullah. Abdullah and Pari travel with their father Saboor to Kabul city, the children were told their father has been invited to

do some construction work on a building, where his brother-in-law Nabi works as house servant and chauffeur. One day Saboor and his children went to Kabul from his small village Shadbagh as they arrived in Kabul; Nabi escorted him to the building. Saboor with his children (Pari and Abdullah) are introduced by Nabi to Mr. Sulaiman Wahdati and Mrs. Nilia Wahdati the owner of the building. Mrs. Wahdati separates Pari from Abdullah and she tells Abdullah, that is how Pari was adopted to Wahdati's family. Abdullah and his father have returned to their village. Abdullah thought he will never see his sister again. Afterwards Abdullah continues to love Pari more than anyone else. One day, he finds a yellow feather, one of the kind that Pari was once fond of collecting. Instead of throwing the feather away, he keeps it for himself, promising to give it to Pari himself one day.

The third chapter is the story of Parwana, who is the second wife of Saboor, and Abdulla and Pari's stepmother. Parwana at the beginning of the chapter takes care of her beautiful twin sister, Masooma, who has recently had a horrible accident and is unable to walk. Masooma is more intelligent and prettier than Parwana, so Parwana is jealous of Masooma. Because Parwana was shy and cautious, Masooma was able to "swoop in" and claim Saboor for herself and convince Saboor to marry her. Masooma and Saboor become beloveds to each other. After some time, both announced their engagement. Parwana was so jealous that she caused Masooma to fall from the tree causing the injury that left her a paraplegic. After a few years Parwana is filled with guilt therefore took care of her sister at all times. By that time Saboor got married to some other woman, who died while giving birth to Pari. As the chapter comes "full circle," Parwana learns that Saboor is interested in remarrying. Initially, Parwana is reluctant to abandon her sister. Eventually, however, she decides to marry Saboor. She leaves Masooma, and never sees her again.

In the fourth chapter, a letter, which is written by Nabi, brother of Masooma and Parwana, describes his career working for the Wahdati family. Nabi works as a cook and chauffeur for Mr. Suleiman Wahdati. Soon after, Mr. Wahdati marries Nila a pretty and mysterious lady. Nila and Suleiman decide to adopt Pari as their own child. While Saboor consents at the beginning, but he comes to hate Nabi for his role in splitting Saboor's family.

Because Mr. Wahdati has an inclination towards Nabi, Nila, in the meantime, becomes more estranged from her husband. Finally Nila leaves her husband and takes Pari to live in Paris. Mr. Wahdati is stricken by a stroke that makes him paraplegic and leaves him powerless of walking, since there is no one except Nabi to take care of him, Nabi spends more time taking care of his employer. Nabi and Wahdati grow old together.

One day, Mr. Wahdati reveals that he's always been in love with Nabi. But Nabi is shy and doesn't know how to respond to him, but he continues to work as Wahdati's faithful servant. Wahdati dies, leaving all his wealth and property to Nabi. During the Taliban attack Kabul, the city is filled with anarchy. Nabi asks a team of European doctors to stay in his home free of charge. One of their colleagues, named Dr. Markos Varvaris, and Nabi submit a letter to him and request him to find out Pari and submit the letter to her and tell her that she has a brother named Abdullah. In Chapter Five, two cousins Timur Bashiri and Idris Bashiri arrive in Afghanistan from the United States. They've come to investigate about their family's property in Kabul. During their stay in Kabul, they develop a friendship with a Bosnian doctor, Dr. Amra Ademovic. Amra introduces Idris to a beautiful young girl named Roshana, who was nearly murdered by the Taliban. Idris promises Roshana to find a way to pay for the surgeries she needs to make a full recovery. But unfortunately when Idris goes back to the United States he forgets his promise due to responsibilities at work and home.

Finally he forgets about the Roshan's case after few years, Roshana has made a full amelioration and recovery by the help of Timur. Roshana, now has written a book about her life. The book is dedicated to Timur and Amra. Idris is shocked that Roshana has written about his negligence and pitilessness in her book. But Roshana writes and assures him that "Don't worry. You're not in the book." Chapter Six focuses on Pari's relationship with Nila Wahdati,. In the beginning of the chapter, Nila has a poor relationship with Pari . She's been a careless parent, despite building up a successful career as a poet., Nila began visiting a man named Julien When Pari was a teenager, . Julien and Nila's relationship lasted only a few months. When Pari worked up the courage to tell Nila about the affair, Nila laughed and told Pari that they were no biological mother and daughter and she is an adopted child

Later we find, Nila gives an interview for a poetry magazine and in one part of interview she reveals about her personal life and says that she had never had a romantic and loving relationship with Mr. Wahadati because he was a homosexual gay and was in love with Nabi..” She also talks about her father, that he was a cruel man and often beat her. Shortly after giving the interview, Nila attempts suicide by cutting her wrists and she dies . Pari is shocked by Nila's suicide, and feels herself responsible for not spending more time with Nila. On the other hand, she focuses on her studies and eventually earns a Ph.D. She marries a man named Eric Lacombe, and has three children from him . She recognizes how difficult it can be to be a parent. Years later, when Pari is an elderly woman and hardly able to walk, she receives a call from Dr. Marko Varvaris, who tells her that she has a brother named Abdullah. As she realizes this news, she feels a strange sense of connection with her sibling Abdullah . The seventh chapter outlines an influenced military commander and his son named Adel who live in Shadbagh. Commander Sahib, is a powerful military leader. Adel meets a boy named Gholam.

They develop a friendship with each other. One day Gholam reveals that he's the son of Iqbal—Saboor and Parwana's child. Following the invasion of the Taliban Gholam and his family were forced to live in a refugee camp in Pakistan. Now Gholam and Iqbal have returned to Afghanistan, to find that their land has been confiscated by Adel's father. Initially, Adel doesn't believe that Gholam is telling the truth. But some days later, Iqbal throws a rock through a window. Commander Sahib orders Adel to go upstairs while he "deals with" the man. Adel wonders and imagines that the man might even be shot. The next day, Adel sees a story in the newspaper about how Commander Sahib survived an "murder attempt." As he reads the story—which never says what became of the old man—Adel knows the real nature of his father and senses that he'll never be able to love or trust his father again.

Chapter Eight, focuses on Dr. Markos Varvaris. He passed his babyhood on the Greek island of Tinos and has a conflicted relationship with his unsympathetic mother, Odelia, who takes good care of him but doesn't show him any affection. One day, Markos and his mother visit Madaline, his mother's old friend and her daughter Thalia. When Markos meets Thalia, he sees a dreadful wound on Thalia's face—which is caused by a dog bite, and which has taken away most of her lower jaw. As time goes on, Markos starts up a friendship with Thalia. He learns that she's intelligent and quick-witted. She also encourages him to take up photography as a hobby. Eventually, Madaline abandons Thalia, to live with Odelia and Markos—Madaline accepted work as an actress in a film, and no longer has any attention in Thalia. The chapter cuts ahead to Markos's early adulthood. He travels all around the world, using the money that Thalia has inherited from her father. Markos, keeping up his close friendship with Thalia. He decides to become a doctor, although he goes on to become a plastic surgeon, and often offers Thalia the chance to treat her face. When Markos is a middle-aged man and his mother is old and sick, he

goes to visit her in Tinos. She tells him that she's proud of him. Markos is overjoyed to hear these words. In chapter nine, Abdullah's daughter, Pari , explains how her father reunited with Pari, her aunt and namesake. When Pari and Abdullah reunite, the latter is at first doubtful that Pari is who she claims to be. Pari (daughter of Abdullah) comes across a small box that belongs to her father while she is packing and gets ready to go to Paris with her aunt Pari . Inside, she finds the yellow feather he kept decades ago. Next to the feather, she finds a note, dated shortly after Abdullah learned he was losing his memory, explaining that he's spent his entire life waiting to see Pari again.

Chapter Two- The Culture of Afghanistan

Afghanistan's intersectional location is in the Central Asia and it harnessed three decades of invasion and conquest overall the ravage that Afghanistan was encountered and it's registered in the history. The history of Afghanistan is a history of war and conflict; the civil war and lack of security continues up to the present day. These conflicts have its impact on the culture of Afghanistan since the coming of people to Afghanistan in order to win the war against evil brought many other countries to our country, so there is the impact of other countries culture in our own culture; such situation has been seen when in the 7th century Arabs introduced Islam throughout the country. In the 11th century Turks briefly constructed Afghanistan the center of Islamic power and civilization .In the 1747 the Pashtun, the dominate ethnic group in Afghanistan, settled their dynasty in the southern and the eastern sections of Afghanistan. Thus, they had got the power all over Afghanistan in the early 1900's.(Donald Paxson,2,3).

On the other hand , Linda Merrill has cited in his paper that , there were many countries over the years had endeavored to capture Afghanistan, mainly Great Britain, Russia and Taliban from 2001 up to present day, none of them were ever successful; therefore, Afghans nations have pride themselves on their country's independent heritage. According to the demographics , the population of Afghanistan in 2017 that 35,530,081 people live inside and more than 3,700,000 people displaced in the different countries outside Afghanistan. These population divided into three categories such as Major, Minor and religious Ethnic Group. The major ethnic group consists of Pashtun, 38%, Persian or Dari 25% ,Hazara 19% Uzbek 6%. The minor ethnic Groups are Gugeors, Aimaqs, Turkmen, and Baloch(12%). The religious ethnic group is also consists of Sunni Muslim 80, %, Shi'a Muslim 19%, others (Hindu, Jewish, Christians) 1%. Though all of these groups share the same religion, the cultural aspects of these groups are

somehow different from one another (5). According to Linda Merrill, Donald Paxson, Thomas Tobey, Afghanistan has many different ethnic groups, also have different cultures, but all cultures have lived in Afghanistan and they are called Afghans. They are proud of their unity. The culture of Afghanistan stems from the ancient times and are inspiration because of their rich and tradition. The people of Afghanistan give spiritual value to their own culture and tradition, and this respectability of their own culture and tradition which continues with the changing times, will transform to their future generation. Afghans demonstrate pride in their religion, country, ancestry and all above their freedom. Like other highlanders, Afghans are considered and respected with both terror and humbleness, for protecting their high regard of their own personal honor, for being loyal to their own Clan, they demonstrate their readiness to carry and use arms to settle debits.

However Afghans are aware of the fundamental propose of the clan warfare and murderous plans which have been carried out by foreigners in collaboration with Afghans who work with them. Afghanistan has complicated history that has out lived one or the other in its current culture or in the form of multiple language and monuments. Despite that most of the historic monuments of Afghan's country has been destroyed in the recent time, the two famous statues of Buddha in the Bamyan Province who they respected a lot, was damaged by Taliban. Other famous sites are in the cities of Kandahar, Herat, Ghazni and Balkh. The Minaret of Jam, in the Hari River valley, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The cloak worn by the late Hazrat Muhammad is placed inside the famous Khalka Sharifa in Kandahar City. According to the culture of Afghan people there are some festivals which are celebrated every year. People celebrate their picnics on Friday, because Friday is the official holiday. Another famous festival in Afghanistan is New year (Nowroz or new day). Two dishes are commonly prepared by

Afghan people during these days. These special dishes are Samanak(food prepared from wheat and flour) and Haft-maewah,(consists to seven fruits and nuts) and they symbolize the new coming year. The other significant festival and the holidays of Muslim people are Eid al Fitr and Eid al Qurban. And both of them are celebrated for three days. Popular game Buzkakashi is played during the new year holidays. It is an ancient game and celebrated by Uzbek race. A number of horse riders rush on dead goat and finally one would be successful in picking it up and carry it to the target circle. Pahlwani is a kind of wrestling match held during the holidays and popular among Afghan people.

Another main problem is the outcome of three decades of war and its outcomes that have deeply impacted to the present situation of rural and urban regions of Afghanistan: the insecurity, instability, lack of facilities and prosperity for enhancement of education and literacy among the male and female of Afghans society. Some people pay less attention to the cultural and social values in this country. Cultural studies is a forgotten term after these three decades of adversity and war, though there are some institutions that support them in Afghan culture. These institutions try to cultivate the culture of reading in the society through exhibition of various kinds of books along the roadside of the crowded streets. The culture of studying was encouraged among the people who lived in urban community and had better facilities of living than those who are in the suburb area.

Culture of poverty in rural and urban in Afghanistan

The progress of the countries in the world has been through urbanization. Majority of population of countries live in the rural areas, still. Therefore, for sustainable development and growth, a country needs a predominately city-based economy. These situation of urban – rural

immigration in Afghanistan has frequently been a way of turmoil and turbulence. When the rural men settled in the town, they would not return to their village by own desire. These people are displaced because of war, they intend to return to their homes and native places if peace is restored. The urban people with their privileged living have access to employment and services, electricity and health facilities, transportation facilities and new technology, theater, wedding-hotels with the best ornaments and education facilities as compared to the rural areas. Urban people have better educational institutions. These institutions are both governmental and nongovernmental who employ skill professionals both male and female, for their schools, universities and administrations. They have supported both their daughters and sons for the enhancement of their knowledge and they are the best open-minded people. However, in Afghanistan in the present situation, people who live in the cities are hopeless since when they get out of their homes they don't have hope of coming back home in the evening because of lack of security. Thus, in the cities people are threatened by the explosion and bloody suicide attacks in their daily life; each incident incurs murder and injury in civilians, mainly women, children, and labourers.

Sune Engel, in the pages of *The Rockefeller Foundation* mentions the situation of rustic people in Afghanistan. He says that, the life of rural Afghanistan is the poorest among other class of Afghan people. The people who live in the rustic areas have less access to the basic requirements such as water, electricity, professional schools, universities for developing their knowledge and improving their lives. They have less access to medical clinics with specialist doctors to cure them in the emergency times. There is no proper conveyance for their transportation. When the habitats of the rural areas are stuck with some illness, their families have to transport them to the city hospital, but most of them die before arriving to the hospital

due to bad condition of roads. The another thing that that rural people are suffering from is insecurity of their areas, and they are witnessing hundreds of murders and conflict between government and Taliban. Most of the villages have become a battle ground for military troops, and the rural people are the first victims of terrorist violence in the Afghanistan. Majority of people who live in the rural areas are ordinary laborers or farmers. They really work hard for living, and these people try had to support their families. They have worked the whole day in the hot days of summer and the cold days of winter, still their income is not enough to support them and their family. Hence the brutal cold winter never show its compassion to the poor or rich . The wealthy classes are able to protect their lives by providing the electricity heaters or wood heater, but the poor are the victims of winter season. The socio economic factors of the country have more impact to the personal life of the families.. The present situation of Afghanistan reflects the character of Saboor in the novel of “*And The Mountains Echoed* ”. In the unendurable harsh winter, when the brutal cold took away the life of Saboor’s new born baby, he was dreadful to lose other member of his family. He takes decision to give away Pari , who was only three years old daughter for the Wahdati’s wealthy family. This wealthy family were a couple who had been living in Kabul.

Mr. and Ms. Wahdati had no child .Saboor had thought, the wealthy family would support him financially, and they will give him suitable job and he could find enough food to fed the rest of his family. The poverty compelled Saboor to sell his child and only daughter .The ambiguous future encourages him for a better and bright life which will be coming soon. This incident placed a consecutive movement of many different events in the novel. When Saboor sold his daughter, this event influenced all her relationships, especially to the devotion of Abdullah, the only brother of Pari. Abdullah’s affection and faithfulness made him to

sacrifice his shoe for picking up the feathers of birds which were very dear to Pari, and she was the only company for Abdullah, and he feels with himself that the bond with Pari is stronger rather than bonding with his father. Since Abdullah was surrounded by the impoverished circumstances. Because Saboor's family was very poor and he was incapable to provide support to the rest of his family. Consequently, the condition of Saboor's life and his destitute made him obliged to be dominated by the power of Wahdati's family. This domination of Saboor's family by hegemonic of Wahdati's social statuses and wealth made a tremendous separation between Pari and her whole beloved family members .

This is the standard norm of the society that the poor have to be the victims when something bad happens. Khalid Hosseini states in one of his interviews, as cited in Jasgeet Kaur, "In Afghanistan, you don't understand yourself solely as an individual. You understand yourself as a son, a brother, a cousin to somebody, an uncle to somebody. You are part of something bigger than yourself." According to the Hosseini, the culture of poverty governs all part of clan warfare which is mostly located in the rural area of Afghanistan. The poor and rural people are always the victims of the harshness of the society. They are unable to rescue their lives and the life of their family members. Even they are incapable to protect the relationships among their families and society, their close families and friends accuse them for being sluggish and idle". Hosseini's novel has been commonly arranged and it introduced the culture of poverty, relationships and family . The setting of this novel particularly beings in Afghanistan. He pursues the history of Afghanistan which displays the present culture and situation of Afghanistan.

Culture of Afghan's Families

Cultural values, beliefs, and traditions significantly affect family life. Family is also very important in a person's development because even within a specific society, a family forms its own unique culture, that is, its family culture. According Linda Merrill, Donald Paxson, and Thomas Tobey, in Afghanistan, beliefs and following the rule of family is based on the Islamic culture and is the most significant element which surrounded Afghan family. Obedience of tradition and culture of family matching the rule of their religion is one of the fundamental aims and expectations of their forefather from their new generation. The arrangement and regulation of all affairs of their household, socioeconomic, tradition, custom, educational, cultural and political are regulated based on the rules of their religion. Afghan families give respect to their elder as well as relevance for motherhood and also their elder members of family who support the rest of the family economically and socially. The elder members of their family not only encourage them economically but also they pay more attention to socialization.

In most of the Afghan families the members of the family who live in one courtyard would contain of three or four generations including the male the head and chief of family and his wife, many children, (4 up to 10) his grandparents, his brothers, his cousin with their family , unmarried and widowed sisters. All these generations support and cooperate economically in order to run their daily costs of food, dress, education and other their needs .The structure of Afghan families is based on different tribes and ethnicity. This nation is formed around various traditions , custom and culture with religion as a uniting factor. Therefore, the structure of Afghan families constitut into three categories: first, some families who are liberals.

In other words, they are open- minded, and well- educated people. They have observed and followed all principle and spiritual culture of their family. There is no gender differences among their children, no domination between their male and female, no rule of any patriarchal across their household. They are intellectuals. The second types of families are literate and aware of all conditions of life from various fields of society and their culture. On the contrary, they have some limitations and rules of restriction upon their family. According to their adopted culture, the male members dominate the family. They prefer sons over their daughters in providing good education. They give education opportunity to their females only in the area where it is covered by the women staffer. Also, they allow their women to go outside by covering their face with burqa (chadori).

In a similar way, the elder brothers in the families are the decision makers; whatever the women demand, they can get with the permission of their male class, because it is an accepted culture and rule which has been governed from many period of time in the past. Some families are rigid, religious and give less value to the social and culture changes that occur due to modernization . They think that the present culture and tradition which is prevalent in the society of Afghanistan is due to the policies drawn from western countries. They think that all their norms and policies under the name of human and women rights by which they are convinced and also spread all over the Islamic countries and approximately throughout the world. These three categories of Afghans that depicted in the above paragraphs, shows the culture of Afghan family. In all Afghans families ,senior male member has the authority to make decisions that control their female members behavior in order to preserve the honor of their family .

This is not only the duty of males to protect their family honor, likewise women have their own responsibility regarding this issue, and they go along with the role of their religion and culture which has been followed by their mentors and ancestors. Most of the intelligent women who have contributed to the social, political, cultural and economic affairs, also dispense their duties according to their Islamic culture. They fulfill their responsibility inside and outside their homes, in their occupations by obeying and by following Islamic culture, tradition and customs. Although, the male has control over the female, it does not mean that the Afghan women are marginalized and reclusive class of Afghanistan community and society. On the contrary, Afghan women have more respect to their culture and male members of their family because they are supportive in all works of their life. Correspondingly, there are a number of Afghan women who are partially educated and are really keen on gaining knowledge and so have permission to study, unless they are careless about the honor of their family, culture and religion. In the latter case they are controlled by the male members of their family. In Afghanistan, among all ethnics and tribes, one thing is very significant and that is taking care of their family and friends. This trend is common in government, business, marriage, personal relationship and educational institutions. They are very cautious in preserving their relationship for long period of time. When we look at the novel of “*And The Mountains Echoed*” through the characters of Saboor and his children, Abdullah and his little sister Pari sent to Kabul, for adoption to a wealthy family of Wahdatis’ Suleman and Nila Wahdati. However both were separated from their father for many years but this long separation couldn’t break off their strong relation, Saboor thought that the wealthy family would save the rest of them. “Folds appear on Baba’s forehead. For a transitory moment, I think I detected a tiny crack of light in his eyes. But then it winks out, and his face is placid once

more. He shakes his head.” No, No, I don’t think that ‘s how it goes at all.” “Oh, Abdullah” Pari says Smiling, her eyes teared over, Pari reaches for Baba’s hands and takes them in to her own. She kisses the back of each and presses his palms to her cheeks. Baba grins, moisture now pooling his eyes as well. Pari looks up at me, blinking back happy tears, and I see she thinks she has broken through, that she has summoned her lost brother with this magic like a genie in a fairy tale. (Hosseini,372, 373). Pari was only beloved sister of Abdullah. Undoubtly, Abdullah thought that he will never be able to see his sister again. When Abdullah came back from Kabul to their own village Shadbagh , he opened a small box where there were many feathers of different birds which were collected by Pari, among them, the yellow one was Pari’s favorite. Abdullah kept that yellow feather and kept it for many years with himself as a memory of his sister .

Here it shows Abdullah’s strong feelings and emotions for his sister, their relationship and their family. Abdullah had continued showering his affection towards his younger sister till his last breath. When Abdullah went to America, he got married and he raised his own family. After that, he kept the name of his new born daughter after his sister. This affection and loyalty of Abdullah had continued till his old age. Another perspective of their life which is very common among all Afghans , is, the importance they give to family honor. Family honor is very sacred for them, as it characterizes their social position and their validation in the society.

Family matters are extremely personal and confidential and they would not like to share it with an outsider.Indeed , in the home where the eldest is a female, all members of their family both male and female have great respect for the elder woman. All Afghans endeavor to protect female and family honor. If the males perceive any lack of valuation of women and their disregard about honor of her family (brother, father and husband), their respect and esteem in

the society gets tarnished and they will be considered disreputable in their society. For example if we go through the character of Nila Wahdati in the novel of “*And The Mountains Echoed*” she was a poet and a fashionable lady. Her behavior and attitude was unconventional. She had never thought about her role in family, culture and society. Moreover her father was part of Pashtun aristocracy in Kabul. Her father was fanatic and zealot and he was the enemy of those who had unconventional behavior. His daughter who was half Afghan and half French had never worn a suitable dress like other Afghan women. According to the book of *And the Mountains Echoed*, the author says, “the front gates opened and black-haired young women emerged. She wore a sunglasses and a short-sleeved tangerine –colored dress that fell short of the knees. Her legs were bare, and so were her feet. I did not know whether had noticed me sitting in the car, and, if she had, she offered no indication.

She rested the heel of one foot against the wall behind her and when she said, the hem of the dress pulled up slightly and thus revealed a bit of the thigh beneath. I felt a burning spread down from my cheeks to my neck” (Hossieni, 79,80). Even though Nila’s father was ascetic and emotionally austere, she never thought of his honor and loved freedom. She used to wear dresses with short sleeves and her legs used to be bare. She disliked to wear pajamas. People in the conventional society talked ill about her and went to the extent of calling her a prostitute. Nila’s father often said “You humiliate me. Why you humiliate me so,? what will do about you?” (Hossini, 208). Furthermore, the father jailed Nila. She was inside the house whole day there were no one to protect her from this irritating condition. Because there is no any solution in culture of Islam for being careless about the honor and dignity of their family. Nowadays there are so many families abroad in the western countries like Nila (half afghan and half French) who returned to and have brought western culture to Afghanistan. As, Nila was not a pure

Afghan and also it was so difficult for her to accept the culture and tradition of Afghan's people she preferred to tolerate such cruel situation rather than adhere to her father's idea ,Hence , It is very disturbing and painful that some people of Afghanistan are bearing this phenomena and western culture is dominating their pure and Afghani culture , but there is no one to control or prevent this trend of culture domination and current condition.

Culture of Relationships among Afghans

Culture of relationships is a great part of our life, relationships give people the chance and aspiration to share their experience and enjoy their life. According to the observation of The University of West Florida and Regional Expertise and Culture, United States Department of the Navy regarding the norm and culture of relationship in Afghanistan , they say that ; despite the horrible and harsh environment in the society of Afghanistan, their people are very strict about preserving their relationships with their family and friends. They have a close dependency on each other in all aspects of their life: they have friendly relation with their relatives and friends who are in government, in education institutions, in business, in marriage and in their personal life. Generally, all people of Afghanistan are hospitable though, they may be stern and hard due to war experiences.

Despite their separate race and tradition there is no contrast in their culture and religion, they knew themselves as an Afghan. Furthermore, most of Afghans claimed that having a relationship with own family would not be sufficient because our own family without any suspicion is our own blood and no one or anything would not be able to break off or eradicate our blood relation. Indeed, the most significant point is that Afghan people want to preserve their relationship with those people who don't have a family bond, those who are from other tribes and different counties. If we go through the novel of “ *And The Mountains Echoed*” the main focus of Khalid Hussein's book is on certain characters in the novel that are from different foreign countries.

Besides, that all characters of East and West countries are interconnected to each other, also they have a close friendly relationship together. For instance Dr, Arma Ademovic has a friendly relationship with Dr, Idris, and Timir. Idris is Timur's cousin and both cousins had competition over the same women, Dr, Amra. Another character is Dr, John Schaetter who was the master of Dr, Idris in America. Dr, John Schaetter was the best friend of Dr, Idris in America. When Dr, Idris returned from Afghanistan to America he counsel about the illness of Roshana, who was injured in the fight between Roshana's father with her uncle over their property and land, and her uncle found an axe and he murdered whole Roshana's family except Roshanan who was alive with severe injury .

Even though Roshana is a minor character in the novel. She admitted as a patient in the hospital where Dr, Arma, Dr, Idris, and Timur become familiar with one another. Therefore, Roshana's fate and family relationship seem to be so terrible that one member of her family destroys the all others destination . Another character of a foreign person is Mr, Markos who had close and friendly relationship with Nabi who is the landlord of the house which Markos rented .In Afghanistan, the culture of hegemony has a great role among the majority of tribes and races. Like one tribe over another tribe, one race over other race, some family upon the other family, even certain member of the family over other members of the family, but most of this superiority appear among those families and races which are overbearing due to their wealth and high position in the hierarchy of state. Furthermore, the tribes who have governmental occupation and authority, are the creators of domination and discrimination among all tribes and they exploit their authority and only support the tribe who belong to their race. If these authorities announce some governmental job, the first candidate of success would be their relatives and the next one would be their race.

They show no interest in the employment of the people who don't belong to their race. For example, the Pashtun tribes hire the Pashtun people, the Tajik tribe employ their own race, and also the Uzbek ethnic is demanding to hire their own race and relatives compared to the other ethnic. Each tribe has the desire of dominating the other and each of them counts themselves superior to others. This contradictory and hegemonic attitude is prevalent among members of their tribe or maybe among member of their own family. Most of the time these contradictions, jealousy, and conflicts occur due to their poverty, unemployment, disobedience of their parents, lack of understanding between wife and husband, money and dispute of their property. Moreover, if we go through the novel of "*And The Mountains Echoed*" most of characters seemed to be opposite of each other even they have close relation with their family bond, besides, they also appear very jealous and had competition within family. For example through the characters of Parwana and Massoma twin sisters, both belong to same parent. Parwana feels jealous of Massoma.

In the novel Masooma is beautiful and attractive than Parwana. When both of them had gone to market or some any other place Masooma's beauty attracted the attention of teenagers people on the road, while they walking in the way of their footpath. Then Parwana become furious as to why these people never look to her, and all of young people seem to be interest in beauty of Masooma. According Hossieni who had mentioned that in the novel of "*And The Mountains Echoed*",

"In every corridor Parwana would see men's eyes snapping to attention then Masooma passed by. She saw their efforts to behave matter of factly, but their gaze's lingered, hapless to tear away" (Hossieni, 63).

Thereupon, Parwana's jealousy compelled her to smear Masooma's buttock and thighs and she had married the boy whom Masooma loved. Even though Parwana had gotten her desire but she does not seem to be cheerful, she suffers jealousy while looking at Masooma's situation. The contradiction and competition began among Nila with her only adopted daughter Pari. Nila was jealous of her daughter while she saw that her adopted daughter seems to be more charming and fetching rather than herself. Pari's beauty attracts the attention of Nila's boy friend and Nila had many friends among all one of them was favour of Pari who he was Juliet. Pari used to talk and walk with him. By the time Nila who she is Pari's stepmother, skillfully changed the mind and attitude of her boy friend Juliet. Hossieni in the novel of "*And The Mountains Echoed*" mentioned;

"Pari doesn't want to go out in the hallway and face Juliet. She doesn't want to go Courbevoie and face her mother either. what she would rather do is lie down, listen to the wind hurl pellets of rain at the glass until she falls asleep" (Hossieni, 179).

The other characters that determine the domination and jealousy of their family bond and their relationship are Timur and Idrise. Both are cousins. They came from America in order to take their legacy (heritage house) from their forefather. Both of them have shown their honesty, generosity and benevolence to their relatives and friends. Idris assumed his self superior over Timur being a Doctor and dominates Adris. Substantially, Idris's is concerned t how Timur had attracted the attention of Dr, Amra. Moreover, they had conflict on a small and petty issue which was not acceptable in an argument. Hossieni points out in the novel of "*And The Mountains Echoed*". "Idris both resents and envies his cousin for this ability. He always found coarse, lacking, in imagination and nuance. he knows that Timure cheats on both his wife and his taxes.

Back in the States, Timur owns estate mortgage company, and Idris is all but certain that he is waist deep in some kind of mortgage fraud. But Timur is wildly sociable, his faults forever absolved by good humor, determined friendliness, and beguiling air of innocence that endears him people he meets” (Hossieni, 134). “*And The Mountains Echoed*” is a novel that gracefully placed fidelity, infidelity, morality and corruption, affection and oppression, wish and disappointment. Moreover, he elaborates so fluently and painfully all dimensions of human life both their suffering and conquest through the majority of characters in the novel. He is a master storyteller, and he knows skillfully how to mix the fiction and reality and attract the attention of his reader and create sympathy among each of them.

Domination of Women in Afghanistan

Women undoubtedly are the backbone of a community in a country. The fundamental factors of against women discrimination are not eradicated properly in Afghanistan. The main reason for this problem is insecurity and instability of present situation of Afghanistan. This insecure situation caused that majority of them to become marginalized, and they are really shocked of inequality, oppression, financial dependability and other social problems. Despite all insecurity, they bravely fight against the impediments that prevent their activities in the fields of political, social, economic, and they have played a key role in all internal and external affairs of their country. According to Hazrat Mirza Mansoor Ahmad, some people assume that the main factors of women backwardness is their strict norms, culture and Islam religion. Actually, they have misunderstood the values and religious culture of Afghan society. If there are some obstacles in their duties, it does not mean that women are incapable to perform such jobs .

According to the religion of Islam, Mannsoor Ahmad claims that, women have rights of liberty, inheritance, education, rights of doing duty in all fields of works such as political, cultural, social, economy etc. Nowadays, the acceptance of laws depend upon the people, on how they can use it for their daily life. Among the family of well educated people there is no domination and restriction between their male and female. But unfortunately, the family who has lack of sufficient level of knowledge both for men and women, the rule of domination and patriarchal trend still exist there especially in the rural areas of Afghanistan. Majority of these women are not aware of their rights, liability and values which are given by religion of Islam. The illiterate men in the village do not know the value of knowledge and they think that their women do not have capability of learning and teaching or other duty.

Moreover, they follow the strict norms and culture of their village. They think that the responsibility of their women is only to being as a queen of kitchen as a cooker and to take care of eight or nine children. The sisters and daughters have to get married at teenage and their children go to only elementary school by force of government that it is announced compulsory and very few of them have access to go to high school and university. In the rural area, the males are considered superior to female. The next group of women who seem to dominate the power and authority of their male class are the women of competent authority. Though the male class has the high authority in the hierarchy of government structure, their women (wives, sisters and daughters) do not have any key role to play. Even their children are not seen at governmental or nongovernmental schools inside the country. If we study the novel of Hosseni “*And The Mountains’ Echoed*” where he beautifully elaborates the behavior, targets, hypocrisy, selfishness of all classes of people with precision. For example, if we look through the character of commander and his wives and his son Adle, how Adle and his mother scared of his father’s

power . While Commander had married with his second wife (Adel's mother) she was small and innocent girl didn't know anything . In her father's house she was dominated by insecurity of the society and her father's domination. When she became mother, she had no idea on raising a child, because still she herself was a child. Both Adel and his mother were like prisoners in the skyscraper of Commander Saheb which was surrounded by high walls. No one was able to meet them and also both of them did not have permission to go outside without bodyguard and Kalashnikov . So , the power and authority of Commander Saheb dominated both his child and his wife. As Hosseini says ,

“He lived in a mansion , but shrunken world. Some days he was so bored ,he wanted to chew the wood. He knew that his mother too was terribly lonely here. She tried to fill her days with routines, exercise in the morning, shower , then breakfast, then reading, gardening ,then Indian soaps on TV in the afternoon.”(Husseini, 251).

According to the observation of Afghanistan's Justice Sector ,that described, the women who belonged to middle class or lower class, in spite of numerous challenges in the community of Afghanistan, majority of them graduate from different faculties such as law, medical, sciences, economy, engineering, pharmacy and other educational and professional institutions . Most of these women have worked reputably by consideration of their norms, values, culture and principle according to the role of their religion, and Afghani culture. These women work as General director , director, minister , people 'representive in Parliament , police, Provincial Council, universities as professors, in school as teacher and headmaster, and other governmental and non governmental institutions bravely and freely. They have worked without any obstacles and restriction. There is no gender bias or domination among them and their family

Culture of Religion in Afghanistan

Islam is the official religion of Afghan people. In Afghanistan 99% of population, follow the mainstream of Islam religion. According Barbara Robson and Juliene Lipson with Farid Younos and Mariam Mehdi as they cited in their paper that:

“Islam was first brought into Afghanistan in the seventh century CE by Muslim Arabs who were remarkably successful in carrying their religion and cultural influence abroad. Within 100 years of the prophet Mohammed's death in 632, they had established a new Muslim empire that reached as far as Spain in the west and to central Asia and India in the east. Even the well-established Persians fell under the Muslim Arab influence, although the Arab Empire borrowed much from the Persians, in the same way that the Roman Empire was influenced by the conquered Greeks”.

Islam has two sects, the Sunni (or Sunnites) and the Shi'a (or Shiites). Those who follow the Sunni are called Sunnites and those who follow the Shi'a are known as Shiites. The split happened when Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, as the legitimate successor of Mohammed (PBUH) started a political movement. With passage of time this group developed into another sect of Islam called Shi'a. It has religious, legal and devotional differences from the majority Sunni. So, there is a Shi'a Muslim minority and majority of Afghans are Sunni Muslim, the follower of the Hanifi school. Sunni are the most liberal sect among four schools of thought. In Afghanistan the clergymen are important people and are well respected than anybody. They are rigid and serious regarding their Islamic issues. The local religious leaders have responsibility to instruct the children, and other people who need to know about their religious matter, besides they have to take the prayer five times in a day and night

and to instruct other important Islamic subjects. These religious leaders are hired by the people of each area separately in their nearby mosques. There are five pillars in Islam religion such as , the Shahada, the Salat, , the fast(Ramadan) , the Zakat and Hajj. The Shahada: A Muslim is required, at least once in his or her life, to affirm out loud and sincerely, "There is no god but God, and Mohammad is his prophet. The Salat is the second pillar of Islam, it is the most significant pillar that the Muslims have to pray five times in a day, either in a congregation or alone, at sunrise, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and night time. The Muslim can pray anywhere that be clean and even some religious people carry their prayer rugs with themselves to ensure cleanliness of place while they pray. The third pillar Sawn is compulsory fasting during the month of *Ramazan* , which falls on the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar. By religious tradition all healthy adults have to fast during Ramazan, and abstain from eating, drinking, and smoking from sunrise to sunset.

The fourth pillar of faith is Zakat. It is a traditional custom of paying tax in kind. It is obligatory to pay it at least once a year. This tradition has developed so that rich people can help those who are in need. The fifth pillar of Islam is which the pilgrimage to Mecca that every healthy and adolescent Muslim must make once in a lifetime, assuming that the individual have enough money and can leave his or her family. After having completed the pilgrimage, one achieves the title *Haji*. The Islamic culture of Afghanistan considered that there is no nation or race that seem to be opposing to the roles and values of Islam in afghans community and also there is no sect of religion in Afghanistan which demonstrates contradictory verses of Islam religion. Furthermore, most of the religious leaders and other Muslim people who have their own standpoint regarding the culture of Islam believe that Islamic values are compatible with liberal and democratic ideals. It is clarified to the majority of Muslim populations that the fact of

religion of Islam integrate norms and values that persist on justice, peace and equality among individuals and groups have much in common with democratic principles than many other faiths. There are certain group of people who are influenced by western thoughts, when they visit the foreign land. When they return to their homeland Afghanistan, then these people, bring the western values. This issue is debatable among the religious leaders and people of Afghanistan who only think about preserving the all principles and roles which were alluded in Holy Quran.

Political culture of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is an Islamic country with the republic regime consisting three branches of power executive, legislative and judiciary, the country has been governed by various system of government, including, a monarchy, republic, theocracy dictatorship and procommunist state. After collapse of Taliban regime in 2001, the country has made a new political structure and constitution, held presidential and parliament election, established cabinet, reformed judiciary and established various pictorial and vocal media. During the last decade and half Afghanistan by the help of international community and NATO led coalition particularly United states has made significant progress toward building its infrastructure, institutions and political system.

Furthermore in the post Taliban epoch political participation of elites especially women has increased, these all are the result of arduous work of patriot Afghans and their international partners. Since Afghanistan is a war-torn country and the nascent democracy is still not institutionalized there is still insurgency\corruption, injustice, land and properties grabbing, race and gender intolerance and discrimination in governmental and nongovernmental organizations and associations. It should be noted that the major reason behind the chaos in the state is due to too many attacks and wars plus the weak system of the government. On the other hand, executing reforms within Afghanistan political system while maintaining a high political

culture would direct to greater political success and inclusion that would be important for the country's future , also democratic development will help the establishment of long term peace and stability . As mentioned, one of the main challenge nowadays is land-grabbing by influenced people and militants which is reflected very clearly in *'And the Mountain Echoed'* by Khalid Hossini , as he narrates there is a commander by the name of Baba jan . He lives in the village which is known as Shadbagh. This village belongs to the Kabul province of Afghanistan.

This Commander had two wives. His elder wife lived with her children in Jalalabad province, where he had so much land in which he cultivated cotton. Baba jan got engaged second time, while he went to his fiancée's home and saw his sister in-law. Suddenly, Commander abandoned his fiancée and he wanted to marry the other small daughter who was promised to a cousin and he was studying engineering. His father in-law told to commander that she is engaged, and he couldn't break off their engagement. Therefore, it was the command of Commander and it must be obeyed, there were no one to refuse his demands.. Then Baba jan get married with his sister in-law. According to Khalid Hossini in the text;

“And then I came in, carrying a platter of tea and sweets. I fill their cups and put the food on the table , and your father sees me, and ,as I turn to go, your father, he says, “Maybe your are right, sir. It's not fair to break off an engagement. 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 ” then he laughs. And that was how we got married,(253).

Baba jan and his second family (Adel and his mother) had lived in an skyscraper in the village (Shadbagh) Kabul. Baba jan had built a school for the young Afghan girls in Shadbagh. When Baba jan opened the school in the village of Shadbagh, his boy Adel recognized himself

extraordinary fortunate to be the a son of such a great man. Adel admired generosity and cooperation of his father and he was proud of him. This Commander fought against the Russian regime during the war in Afghanistan. Gholam was grandson of Saboor and son of Iqbal. Iqbal was the refugee of Pakistan during last Soviet war in Afghanistan. Now he has come back with his family to Afghanistan in order to live the rest of his life because of living hopefully and peacefully in their homeland. This poor family only can find their homeland without any shelter and home. Their gardens with numerous productive and non-productive trees, and also they had only a yard which was their shelter. Unfortunately, All their capital and fortune was occupied by the grabber of lands. Most of poor who don't have the authority and power loose their agriculture lands, shops, houses and even all capital. Majority of them grabbed by the competent authorities and gunmen. On the other hand, half of them became refugees and left their own lovable country, where they would have money, building and car but still suffering because they are lost their identity and culture. They live in isolation and are dominated by their culture willingly and unwillingly. The rest of them waiting for their turn of death from daily bloody suicidal and explosion attacks .

Chapter Three: How can the Present Senario of Afghanistan

Improve

Family contradictions and conflicts:

Family is the first and significant institution of human society, most of the challenges and problems originate from this holy institution. Whatever the household environment be secure and calm howsoever it incurs positive effect on the family members and households . Consequently, this positive sense transmits to the community and society. In contrast, if the family conditions are unfavorable it leads family members to an unfortunate state and incurs negative impact on the society. The most vulnerable spectrum of a family is the children , since their personality develop in accordance with the family members, interrelation and confrontation which has direct impact on their future, moral and spiritual. Undoubtedly the majority of today's societies problems and challenges have a root in the family. This is an absolute fact that most of the right and prosperous men have been risen in well mannered and sane families. Nowadays all thinkers have realized that the good family relation is an optimistic restrain force which safeguards the integral community. Some of the family contradictions causes are outlined among the numerous factors as follows

Forced marriage : It is one of the major family contradiction and disagreement and is more prevalence among the conservative and traditional families , certainly such marriages don't have good end , as both spouses are not in tune with each other from the beginning and it is not based on love and agreement, but it should be noted that only love marriage and understanding is not sufficient for commencement of a blissful life and in addition other factors like age , culture ,moral and ethic, must be mutual and fit also , as cultural and financial discrepancies would be a matrix for insulting each other in the future and would make the sweet

life of a family bitter, also immense age gaps between spouses may cause mutual incomprehension, and lead to coldness of relation .

Interference of kin and relatives: Unnecessary interference of relatives especially family of bride and groom would be a serious problem in their life, again in the suburb and among conservative families this is a paramount problem and always has been the cause of suicide , murder and divorce. Another sort of interfering is the interference of tendentious individuals which build distrust among couples for attaining their wicked and immoral aims.

Inattention to morality and honesty: Another reason of family contradiction is lack of focus about moral values and honesty, which this issue causes selfishness , egocentric and carelessness about wedding obligations and privileges, in this case an individual just thinks about oneself interests and profits, and he/she doesn't do any action for welfare of his /her family and spouse .

Inappropriate expectations and ingratitude: Another factor that causes contradiction in families is high and inappropriate expectations and ingratitude that family members have to each other hence most of these expectations are not attainable and are impossible

Discrepancy of styles and viewpoint: This is a clear fact that we cannot find two persons with the same style and viewpoint and this discrepancy is natural and apparent phenomenon, sometimes style and viewpoint variation would case that each one of the spouses seek weak points in another partner , and blame him/ her for those points but these discrepancy of style and views shouldn't be a tool for assertion of superiority and humiliating others, especially spouses and family members and they should accept hence, all these differences, all the human source is one and alike from one race. Therefore instead of seeking weak points of each other , all family members should try to find positive points and enforce harmony.

Injustice in inheritances division : one of the most significant and worst factor for family contradiction is unrighteous division of inheritance and legacy, or deprivation of family members from legacy especially women and daughter of the families due to the patriarchal culture hegemony ,which in turn is very common in suburbs and rural part of the country, this issues has very bad effect on family even on descendents and in some case it cause bloodsheds and murders. Ethnic conflict occurs due to tension which occurs between two groups or several groups inside a country, hence ethnic groups strengthen their positions and demands. These conflicts may have roots in factors like economy, politics, or society. These conflicts often leads to civil wars that causes kill, injure, migrate and poverty will be its output . Afghanistan is one of the countries facing tensions and ethnic and racial conflicts, and so far these problems have continued.

On the one hand, weak governments and intervention of the neighboring countries have maintained these ethnic conflicts. Some political and influential leaders, by raising ethnic arguments, are struggling to gain political status and reputation. It should be noted that the strategic location of Afghanistan cause the countries of the region to continue the ethnic conflict. Afghanistan consists of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Turkmens, Arabs , Baluchis and other minorities, and its most densely inhabited population are Pashtuns and Tajiks. Consequently, the fragmentation of Afghanistan has led it to be the area of competition between neighboring and powerful international states. The ethnic conflict in Afghanistan should be studied, keeping in mind foreign and domestic factors.

Foreign factors are the interference from other countries. In domestic factors, we can say that politics, economics, and society are essential factors for creating tension between ethnics. So when the balance of these factors is unstable , harsh crises are created. Afghanistan is a country

which is encountered with ethical and tribal conflicts from long past ago till present and we can conclude and classify these problems as follow :

Economic factors

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world , based on surveys about 70% of its population are living in rural areas. Poverty has always been an issue for the people of Afghanistan, and this trend is still ongoing .According to experts, poverty is linked to the following factors.

Poor Literacy : According to United Nations statistics, 61% of people in Afghanistan are illiterate, which is higher among the women of the country. The low literacy rate is strongly influenced on poverty and underdevelopment in Afghanistan.

Drought and natural disasters : Natural disasters such as earthquake , flooding, diseases, avalanche and droughts, for a country like Afghanistan, which couldn't not provide much for dealing with such incidents and disasters, can spread poverty, because these factors destroy food resources and cause people to face shortage of food and other problems.

Lack of workplaces: Unemployment and lack of jobs is one of the major contributors to political quarreling, as unemployed people are a good soldier for political wars and tensions. According to statistics in Afghanistan, about 4 million individuals most of them are young people, are unemployed. This made it possible for terrorist groups to employ these mass younger generations.

Increased population : Non-controlling population is the cause of poverty in Afghanistan. The multiplicity of children in families which do not address the fields of education, health, food and other requirements is important in expanding the economic and social problems of the community.

Lack of a proper plan in government institutions : The government often faces unplanned and ineffective social affairs, which has led people to be more in poverty, while effective government policies can help reduce poverty and will gradually be effective.

Social and ethnic factors : Afghanistan is a country that has been in the political and social controversy since long period of time . If we put a glance at the social status of Afghanistan based on sociological principles, we will find out that Afghanistan has not reached the nation concept yet , it is mostly a tribal community of tribes in which political and cultural consent is not there on most issues. Consequently, these social and political spheres are often referred to as violent and quarrelsome .

If we review the history of the last four decades of Afghanistan , we can say that the tensions between Pashtun and Tajik, Hazara and Pashon, Uzbeks and Tajiks, and the same among these ethnicities, are due to social and social gaps that assume each other alien ,and they are in contradictions and conflict with each other. So a dire need is to have a broad vision where there is no hatred for other group or clan. The government and the people will have rise above their petty differences in order to improve the economic, political, and social conditions of their country. The different factors that hamper the growth of Afghanistan as a nation have been mentioned above. We need to develop strategic long term plans to work upon them.

Conclusion

Khalid Hosseni is one of the popular Afghan American author who wrote the novel *And the Mountains Echoed in* which he explained the situation of pain and anarchy in Afghanistan. In his book, he portrays the complex and domestic culture of social level of the characters that belong to Afghanistan and American society. Studies show that the conflict in Afghanistan has an external and internal origin hence the success of foreign governments are due to the factionalism and lack of tolerance in the political community of Afghanistan. Therefore, the people of Afghanistan, after years of bloody warfare, have come to believe that political and national agreement is vital for a democratic and national government, as long as the political climate is not mutually supportive and tolerant, the formation of a firm and nationalist political system will not be possible and achievable.

We can solve the domestic problems while we cultivate a national feeling and sense of tolerance among the people, and support the government to eradicate poverty and illiteracy. Hosseni has skillfully described in his novel the interconnection of different cultures, ethnics and countries, he mentioned how small actions have tremendous consequence. For example Sabore is a laborer and an impoverished father who works in the village of Shadbagh in Kabul. He takes the decision to sell his small daughter, Pari to a wealthy family whom known as Wahdatis that they had lived in Kabul. Therefore, this decision first effect their own member of family and the couple who adopt her. Hossini demonstrates, that how a small decision concludes by bringing so many change to the lives of future generations. Khalid Hossini 's book, compares present situation and culture of Afghanistan with that of past. The culture of Afghanistan is not strongly integrated. It consists of multiple cultures with different ethnic and languages. Also, the way of life of each group is different from each other and the way one group dominates and exploits the other. Majority of poor the people are dominated by rich people, and the former are the first victim of war and suicide attack, both in the rural areas and urban.

The main reason of domination is insecurity, war and instability situation of Afghanistan. In the rural areas people have lived hard a hard life with limited facilities. On the contrary, the people who have lived in urban places, have access to better facilities. Hence the solution lies in bringing peace and normal situations in the rural and urban Afghanistan. There should be no domination and interference from the neighbouring countries. Once peace is restored, the condition of women will improve too. Also, there has to be no gender discrimination between a man and a woman. Government and the people have to co-operate with each other in order to improve the political, economical, social and psychological conditions of the people.

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