

**POLITICS OF POWER: A STUDY OF THE SELECT WORKS
OF ATIQ RAHIMI AND KHALED HOSSEINI**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**in
English**

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2022

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Abstract

The chosen writers are Khalid Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi for this doctoral thesis. These two writers have steadily gained recognition as innovatively talented contemporary writers from Afghanistan. Their novels have widened their readership and broadened their literary canvas to include historical and relational narratives, violence and trauma, religious fundamentalists, injustice, and demand for human rights. This study establishes a substantial thematic coherence in all the selected novels through the intertwined study of power and politics under the discourse of conflict theory. Apparently, the study examines the social, political, and economic scenario of Afghanistan. The present study entitled "Politics of Power: A Study of the Select Works of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini" focuses on the socio-political, socio-economic, socio-religious, and socio-cultural situation of Afghanistan since last four decades. It shows that how Afghanistan has been the victim of power politics from 1970s onward. The study primarily focuses on power politics in Afghanistan from the perspective of the conflict theory. The attempt has been made to have the textual analysis of the select works, the major political developments in Afghanistan's history and their effects on the socio-political life of Afghans. The chosen literary works which are the part of the study mainly reflect the period of social, economic and political crisis in Afghanistan from the 1970s to the early 2000s. The chosen writers by incorporating all the major socio-political events in their writings depict that the internal and external level of power politics is mainly responsible for the political turmoil in Afghanistan. The research explores through the textual analysis about the ideological, ethnic, cultural, and the gender differences among the people of Afghanistan. The study shows that such social, political and religious differences ultimately become the causes of internal socio-political conflicts. Moreover, the study focuses on the changing paradigms of power in Afghanistan from the 1970s onward. The country has been the center of attraction for many great powers because of its central geographical location and its large deposits of rare earth minerals.

So, the present study mainly explores the central idea of the study which is the politics of power through the textual analysis of the works of two contemporary Afghan origin writers named Atiq Rahimi (b. 1962) and Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965). In their writings, they have narrated the reality of their country. With the help of various major and minor characters they have highlighted the social, cultural, political, and religious issues of Afghanistan. The present study also focuses on that how the geopolitical tensions between the two world superpowers i.e. USSR and America in the wake of Cold War (1947-1991) escalated

conflicts and violence in Afghanistan. The rising rivalry between the two superpowers during the cold war resulted political insurgencies and instability in Afghanistan. The social, political and cultural impacts of the cold war on Afghanistan are highlighted through the study of target writers' texts. Thus, this study is based on the select works of two Afghan origin writers; Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi. The selected Khaled Hosseini's works are: *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013) and the chosen works of Atiq Rahimi's are: *Earth and Ashes* (2003), *The Patience Stone* (2008), *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2011). With the help of deep and thorough analysis in the light of conflict theory, these works will help the research to cover all the proposed objectives of the study.

The present thesis begins with the "Introduction" which deals with the relevance and meaning of the research title. It also explains that the power politics which has been done in Afghanistan by the USSR and the USA spawned many socio-political conflicts especially after 1970s. The first chapter of the thesis titled "Brief Candle" attempts to examine the select works penned by the two Afghan-origin writers; Atiq Rahimi (b.1962) and Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965) in the light of conflict theory. The chapter brings to fore Michel Foucault's notion that where there is power there is resistance. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the views of Marxist and postmodern thinkers to understand the dynamics of power and conflict. The chapter also explores the concept of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis to understand that how the conflict has been an unending process in Afghanistan. This chapter explores the ideas of major conflict theorists such as Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, Randall Collins and Ralph Dahrendorf to understand the nature and causes of conflicts in general and Afghanistan in particular. This study establishes that the power and conflict are interrelated to each other. It further explores the concept of politics of power by taking various instances from the history, particularly from the Cold War period (1947-1991), and by moving forward to the history of Afghanistan. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the history of Afghanistan in detail to depict how Afghanistan has been the victim of power politics.

The second chapter titled, "Changing Paradigms of Power: Conflict, Negotiation, and Growth", explores the socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan by analyzing Khaled Hosseini's (b. 1965) first and foremost novel, *The Kite Runner* (2003). Through the textual analyzes the chapter discusses the each political development in the history of Afghanistan from 1970s to 2001 and the causes and effects of each political development. On the basis of the rigorous analysis of the characters and the historical events the chapter depicts the effects of each political development on the people of Afghanistan. The chapter reflects that how

Afghanistan has passed through the various political stages from monarchy to a republican and then the Taliban's government during 1996-2001.

The third chapter titled "Searching Utopia for Women: A Study of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Patience Stone*" is based on the exploitation women and the gender inequality in Afghanistan. The chapter mainly depicts that how gender conflicts in Afghanistan has been the one of the causes of internal socio-political conflicts. The chapter also studies the history of Afghan women to depict the oppressions against them and their struggle for freedom and justice. Moreover, the chapter shows the unending and tireless Afghan women's struggle to liberate themselves from the patriarchal structure of society. Purposefully, the chapter rigorously analysis the major characters such as; Nana, Mariam, Laila from Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and an unnamed woman protagonist of Atiq Rahimi's novel *A Patience Stone* (2008).

The fourth chapter of the thesis titled "Afghanistan and its Culture: A Study of the Selected Novels" explores the cultural history and its diversity in Afghanistan. The present chapter primarily deals with the culture of Afghanistan. The chapter studies the views of T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), regarding the formation of culture. In Eliot's views culture is the amalgamation of religion, politics, class, sects, and education. For this purpose, chapter discusses his seminal work *Notes Towards the Definitions of Culture* (1949). The chapter explores how Afghanistan's culture has changed and evolved. The chapter focuses on the gender studies, ethnicities, politics, religion, education to understand the national, transnational and sub-culture of Afghanistan through the textual analysis of chosen works. The chosen works for the chapter are: *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013), *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006), and *A Patience Stone* (2008).

The chapter fifth of the thesis titled "Afghanistan Then and Now: A Study of the Rahimi and Hosseini's Works" depicts that how Afghanistan has been the conflict zone and the victim of geopolitics from the early 1970s to the present time. The chapter discusses the causes and effects of all the socio-political conflicts from the perspective of Karl Marx's theory of dialectical materialism. In the light of the theory dialectical materialism, the present chapter reflects that how the contradictions and limitations in each political development have given birth to the new conflicts in Afghanistan. By exploring Karl Marx concept of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis the chapter shows that the conflict is an unending process of the society.

The conclusion of the thesis, based on the analysis of the selected texts, comes at the

end of all the chapters of the thesis. The study entitled “Politics of Power: A Study of the Select Works of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini” advocates that the conflict has been the integral part in the history of Afghanistan. The study depicts that the power politics of America and Soviets has given birth to the many socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan. Through the analysis of chosen works of two contemporary Afghan origin writers; Atiq Rahimi (b. 1962) and Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965), the study comparatively reflects the peaceful Afghanistan of pre 1970s and Afghanistan of chaos and conflicts of post 1970s. The selected writers have spent early years of their life in the peaceful Afghanistan. Only after the Soviet’s political intervention their families left Afghanistan as many other Afghans did. So, they have reflected their experiences with the help of fictional characters but they have depicted the reality of Afghanistan in their works. Therefore, it is apt to propose that the selected texts are realistic in tone and fictitious in nature. Through the chosen works study explores the ways Afghanistan has witnessed long years of political turmoil and turbulence after the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989) to the withdrawal of America and the takeover of Taliban in the year 2021. It has been revealed in the present study that how the power politics of America and Soviet led to the long years of chaos and conflicts in Afghanistan. It shows that how long years of continuous socio-political conflicts have disturbed and destabilized the socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-religious life of Afghanistan through the analysis of chosen works of the selected writers. The study also shows that how Afghanistan has been the victim of power politics. Moreover, instead of external conflicts, Afghanistan has also faced internal conflicts because of its internal social, political, and religious issues. The research exhibits that the ethnic and gender conflicts arise due to the religious and ideological differences are the main causes of internal conflicts in Afghanistan. The study reflects through the characters analysis that the feeling of injustice, inequality, sense of revenge, moral rightness etc. have been the main causes of internal conflicts that is to say, the conflicts within the boundaries of Afghanistan as internal or home affairs in politics.

The study has social relevance as in today’s conflictual world in which conflicts have become an integral part of every society. The study shows that these conflicts do not play a negative role every time. As the research shows that the Afghan society passes through the various stages. At every stage of development, there are contradictions and limitations. Some sections of society may have the feelings of injustice and inequality due to those contradictions and limitations in the social system. Similarly, this notion of injustice and inequality also applies to the territory or society of Afghanistan. It is only through non-

violent conflicts and negotiations the socio-political system of any society could be improved. Moreover, the study also reveals that the government should not take any kind of initiatives in the process of development which give birth to the violent and intense conflicts in the Afghan society.

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Introduction

The present study analyses the chosen works of the two contemporary Afghan writers Atiq Rahimi (b. 1962) and Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965) from the perspective of the conflict theory. The selected works of the chosen writers are based on the socio-political life of Afghanistan and reflect the internal and external conflicts in Afghanistan. Through the textual analysis the study depicts that the sense of deprivation, injustice and inequality among some sections of society give birth to the internal conflicts in Afghanistan. The study mainly deals with the ethnic conflicts, gender based conflicts, conflicts between traditionalism vs. modernism, mujahedeen vs. communists. The study also shows the power conflicts among the different Mujahedeen factions during the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996), and the conflicts between Taliban vs. anti- Taliban groups. The study analyses the social, political and religious causes and effects of all the conflicts on Afghanistan through the textual analysis. For that purpose the study explores the ideas of conflict theorists such as, Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, Ralph Dahrendorf, and Rendell Collins. Moreover, the study reflects the ways through which the politics of power has played its role to bring forth socio-political conflicts in the history of Afghanistan particularly after 1970s.

So, the present study circumscribes around the power and conflicts from the perspective of conflict theory. The study depicts that the politics which is used to acquire power or to become more powerful creates conflicts in the society. Power and politics both work together and the ultimate purpose of politics is to gain or retain the power. The power is exercised by a state either in persuasive or coercive manner with the help of social, political and religious institutions. In politics of power a deterrence theory, establishing military units, buck passing, pre-emptive strikes, development of nuclear weapons, proxy warfare etc., are the main political tools. These are some of the techniques which are used by the powerful states over the other to maintain their power or to become more powerful. Using such tools in the process of becoming more powerful give birth to the resistance forces. So, one can say that power and conflict are intertwined and inseparable. Defining the inseparable relationship of power and conflict, a French philosopher Michael Foucault (1926-1994) says that “where there is power there is resistance” (324) and another philosopher Paul Randolph says that, “power is the currency of conflict” (394). So, the power and resistance are closely associated with each other. In the same way all conflict theorists consider power as the driving force behind all human actions and it always creates conflict in the society.

Defining conflict, Otomar J. Bartos (b. 1945) and Paul Ernest Wehr (b. 1951) in their book *Using Conflict Theory* (2002) write conflict as “a situation in which actors use conflict

behavior against each other to attain incompatible goals and/or express their hostility”(174). Conflict theory seeks to explain political and economic events in terms of an ongoing struggle over limited resources. It views that the social and economic institutions as tools of the struggle between groups or classes. They are used to maintain inequality and the dominance of the ruling class. All social conflicts work as a force to bring change in the socio-political system of the society. According to Karl Marx (1818-1883), the change in the power structure is the result of the clash between thesis and anti-thesis which results synthesis. Furthermore, building on the key terms thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis, Paul Randolph (b. 1965) in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2013) states, “where thesis represents the unity or the status quo; antithesis is the challenge to the status quo, and synthesis is the new product resulting from the conflict between the two”(33). So, the conflict theory studies scientifically about the causes, effects and the reasons of variations in conflicts. There are many reasons given by conflict theorists about the causes of conflict. The primary causes of each conflict are; the uneven distribution of limited resources, sense of deprivation, shift from absolute deprivation to relative deprivation, feeling of injustice and inequality and the feeling of revenge. According to the conflict theory there could be four assumptions of conflict; the competition, revolution, structural inequality, and war. Competition is constant and by default in the society, which exists as a result of the scarcity of resources. These resources could be material ones such as money, property, commodities etc., and the intangible resources which are power, social status, class, and so on. Second assumption of conflict theory is revolution, which is one of the outcomes of competition or conflict. It changes the power structure abruptly at a large scale rather than gradual and evolutionary. Then, the third assumption of conflict is structural inequality, which is maintained in socio-political structure through social, religious, and political institutions. War is the last and ultimate result of growing conflict between the two groups, especially those who are involved in the conflict. In the context of the war, a society may become unified in some ways but conflict still remains among multiple groups. Let’s have a brief overview of the main proponents of the conflict theory:

Lewis Coser (1913-2003) in his PhD thesis titled the “The Function of Social Conflict” as a theorist talks about both positive and negative outcomes of conflict. Before Coser’s idea on conflict, conflict had earned a harsh repute. Gradually, considered conflict as a natural and necessary part of society and it gained impetus. According to him conflict is always goal-related and it is the goal which decides the intensity of the conflict and the level of its violence. Coser argues that if the goal is transcendent, the conflict would be more

intense and violent. So, according to him the nature of conflict decides the level of violence and intensity of conflict. He also talks about internal and external forms of conflict. Randall Collins (b. 1941) in his book *Conflict Sociology* (1975) scientifically studies and explains all the causes of conflict. He focuses on the four main points, which are the primary causes of all the conflicts: 1. The unequal distribution of each scarce resources produce potential conflict between those who control it and those who don't. 2. Potential conflicts become actual conflicts to the degree that opposing groups become mobilized. He talks about the two areas of mobilization; emotional and moral mobilization, and the other is the material mobilization. For instance, Mujahedeen in Afghanistan fought against the strong Soviets because they were mobilized both emotionally and financially by the anti-communist forces. 3. In the third points, he says conflict engenders subsequent conflict. Here, Collins talks about the sense of moral rightness of the rivals who are involved in conflict. For example, people who attacked on the World Trade Centre on 9/11/2001 felt morally justified in doing so. 4. Conflict diminishes as resources for mobilization are used up. Both material and emotional resources play an important role in the conflict but according to Collins, the end of emotional and material resources means the end of conflict's intensity. For example, the withdrawal of Soviets from Afghanistan is the result of ending up of emotional and material resources. Randall Collins also studies macro-level issues of conflict and gave the theory of geopolitics.

Ralph Dahrendorf (1929-2009) is primarily influenced by the philosophy of Karl Marx. According to him the conflict is universally present in all human relations. He states that the conflict is not a part of human nature. It is the society and socio-political structure that creates conflict in the society. The social order is the result of constraint rather than some consensus around social beliefs. Dahrendorf focuses on the internal class conflict. According to him primarily three sets of conditions that must be met for a group to become active in conflict which are; technical, political, and social conditions. According to Dahrendorf conflicts vary by their level of intensity and violence. The conflict intensity means the amount of cost such as money, life, material and other infrastructure lost in the conflict. On the other hand the involvement is defined by the level of people's importance for the conflictual group and its issues. Conflict violence means how the conflict is manifested and the conflict violence can be measured by the kinds of weapons, which are used in the conflict. Dahrendorf says that peaceful demonstrations could also be conflictual but they have a low level of violence.

Politics of Power and the Socio-Political Conflicts in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a landlocked country, rich in mineral resources such as copper, gold, natural

gas, uranium, coal, lithium, zinc, gypsum and many others. It is geographically located in between central and south Asia and thus, accounts at being a victim of geopolitics. In 1919 after a short period of the Third Anglo-Afghan war, Afghanistan was declared as an independent nation on 8 August 1919 after signing Treaty of Rawalpindi between Afghanistan and the British India. Since its political independence, Afghanistan lived peacefully until the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. After 1947 with the emergence of Pakistan, the issue of Pashtunistan was raised by the Pashtun population of both Pakistan and Afghanistan which was based on the Durand line. The Pashtun population demanded to have a separate nation called Pashtunistan. The issue became the cause of enmity between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan didn't support the issue of Pashtunistan but Afghanistan did. Afghanistan was not that much powerful to fight against Pakistan. So, gradually the dependence of Afghanistan on European countries increased especially, on two superpowers; America and Russia. Both superpowers were ready to support Afghanistan for their own political interests. They started supporting Afghanistan militarily and economically. In 1955 anti-communist Baghdad Pact played a major role in the history of Afghanistan. The pact was a military alliance of the Cold War to halt the communist incursions in Middle East. Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and the UK became its members but Afghanistan refused to become its member. After the pact America supported Pakistan, while the Soviet Union supported Afghanistan. With the increasing Soviet's influence in Afghanistan Mohammed Daoud Khan (1909-1978), one of the ministers of King Zahir Shah's regime abolished monarchy by ousting king Zahir Shah in 1973. He constituted a new constitution, declared Afghanistan as a republic nation with himself as its president. But his new policies to make Afghanistan a modern state increased the worries of Afghanistan's conservative classes. They considered his policies as against their religion.

Gradually, the political unrests against Daoud Khan's government increased and finally, Daoud Khan was assassinated in 1978. The new Soviet backed government was formed. Later on, the rebirth of old rivalry between the Khalq and Parcham within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) over the power sharing brought more chaos and conflicts in the country. Seeing all these political unrests and conflicts increased the worries of the Soviets. So, to pacify the conflicts and to bring peace and development in Afghanistan, they airlifted thousands of troops into Kabul on 24th December 1979. On the other hand, the anti-communist countries mainly America, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan increased anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan by supporting with huge money and arms to the Mujahedeen. So, the Afghan- Soviet War (1979-1989) began between the Mujahedeen

fighters and the Soviet forces. The US provided massive military and economic support to the Mujahedeen via Pakistan. Both the Soviet and Afghan forces faced huge loss. On seeing the loss of money and the army, the Soviet decided to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1989. After their departure, the different Mujahedeen factions who were fighting collectively against the Soviet started fighting with each other and the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996) began in Afghanistan. In 1996 Taliban made their government with the strong support of Pakistan and some other Muslim countries. Then, in 2001, 9/11 attack took place and America declared war on terror. Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden. America attacked on Taliban and their government got defeated. American backed government of Northern Alliance was installed in Afghanistan short after the 9/11 attack in 2001 on World Trade Centre of America. The select works of both Afghan writers, Atiq Rahimi (b.1962) and Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965) present the long years of war and political conflicts in Afghanistan. Both writers belong to the same time and reflect the reality of contemporary Afghanistan through their works. They have textualized all the political developments in Afghanistan from the early 1970s to the early 2000s. Before moving forward it is important to have an overview of the chosen works one by one:

Earth and Ashes (1999), it is a novella set during the period when Afghanistan was under the control of Soviet Union. It tells the story of an old man named Dastiguir and his grandson named Yassin. Yassin has become deaf by the sound of the bomb which was exploded in their village. They both are going to meet Yassin's father Murad who is the son of Dastiguir. Murad works in a mine somewhere far away from the village. They are going to inform Murad that their village has been destroyed by Russians. The people those who were there in the village they all had lost their lives. So, this short novel is based on the tragic incident during the Afghan-Soviet war and its effects. It describes the sufferings of Afghans and their feelings after losing their close ones during the Afghan-Soviet war (1979-1989).

A Thousand Rooms of Dreams and Fear (2002), is the story of the college going student named Farhad. The novel is set during the Soviets rule in Afghanistan. Through the characters of the novel the story tells about the atrocities of Russian forces against the Afghan civilians. Moreover, through the novel Atiq Rahimi shows that how religious, political and ideological differences have been the causes of violence and conflicts in Afghanistan. Farhad is a main character in the novel. One curfew night, when he was returning to his home after partying he was beaten up badly by some Russian soldiers because he didn't know the curfew password. He was left on the road to die but secretly an unknown woman came and dragged him to her home to nurse him. After getting his health back, his mother manages to send him

to Pakistan to save his life.

The Patience Stone (2008) is the story of an anonymous woman character who breaks the silence after long years of sufferings in the patriarchal set up of the society. She gets the courage to express all her dreams, desires, and secrets to her comatose husband. So, through this woman character the novel not only shows the sufferings of Afghan women but also depicts their desire to liberate themselves from the patriarchal set up of Afghan society.

The Kite Runner (2003) is the story of a young Pashtun boy Amir from Kabul. The story is set against a backdrop of tumultuous events; from the fall of the Afghan monarchy through the Soviet military intervention, the exodus of refugees to Pakistan and the United States, and the rise of Taliban regime. The story begins in 2001 in flashback; narrated by the main protagonist Amir who is presently living in America with his family. One day he receives a phone call from his father's friend Rahim Khan, who wanted to meet him. In reminiscent mode, the story shifts to Afghanistan in 1965. In reminiscent mode Amir narrates all the historical events which took place from 1960s to 2001. With the help of various other characters and the historical events the novel depicts the social, political, cultural and religious influences of all the political developments.

A Thousand Splendid Suns (2007) is also the next important and relevant text, in which writer Khaled Hosseini discusses the story of Mariam and Laila. Mariam's mother Nana works in the house of Jalil before Mariam's birth. Jalil is a businessman in Herat with three wives and nine legitimate children. He has an affair with Nana. To save his reputation he has to disown her from his house once she gets pregnant with him. He sends her to an isolated place to live where she gives birth to a girl named Mariam. Jalil visits on every Thursday to meet Mariam at *kolba*, where mother and daughter live alone. On his every visit he tells many stories to Mariam about his city Herat, his own cinema and about the latest movies. Although, Nana criticizes him and says to Mariam that he is a liar he wouldn't accept her as daughter. She tells Mariam that he disowned her here and left her alone even at the time of her birth. But Mariam is so fascinated with Jalil and doesn't believe on Nana's sayings against Jalil. Without telling anything to Nana, one day on her fifteenth birthday, Mariam secretly goes to Herat to see Jalil and theatre to watch the movie about which Jalil told him on his last visit to her. Somehow, she reaches at the house of Jalil. She is very excited to meet Jalil and fascinated by the city's beauty which she had never seen before in her life. When she reaches at the Jalil's gate, someone comes there at the gate and tells her that Jalil is not at home. She waits outside for whole night but nobody comes there to meet her or to take her inside the house. She has now realized that her mother is true. Next

morning, Jalil's driver comes and takes her in the car to *kolba*. When she reaches there, she finds that her mother Nana has hanged herself with a rope out of fear that her daughter has left her. After this tragedy Mariam's marriage is arranged by Jalil's wives against her will with a man named Rasheed. Rasheed is of forty years age widower from Kabul and works as cobbler. After marriage during some months Rasheed behaves with her politely. Later on, when Mariam is unable to give birth to a child, he starts behaving rudely. Now, he always finds fault in her. Afghanistan enters into the war and the Kabul is bombarded by rocket attacks. Many families were shifting to the other countries. In the neighboring house a bomb was blasted in which whole family is killed; only the daughter named Laila survived in an unconscious state. Rasheed brings her to his home and cares for her till she is recovered. Later, Rasheed marries her. She gives birth to a girl named Aziza. Rasheed wants boy and later Laila gives birth to a boy named Zalami. One day in Rasheed's absence Tariq after many years visits Laila and surprised her but Zalami sees them and tells about the man to Rasheed in the evening. Rasheed in anger attempts to strangle Laila, but Mariam kills him with a shovel. Mariam sends Laila, Tariq and their kids to Pakistan and Mariam surrenders herself to the police. After a short imprisonment Mariam is hanged for her crime of killing Rasheed. After the fall of the Taliban, Laila and Tariq return to Afghanistan and named their third girl Mariam.

The next selected text is *And the Mountain Echoed* (2003), a novel which is comprised of nine chapters. The story begins where Saboor is telling the story of Baba Ayub to his children, Abdullah and Pari before going to sleep. Ayub is a farmer and works hard to nourish his family. One day a giant named Div comes in the village and takes his favorite child named Qais. Baba Ayub is grief stricken with the loss and resolves to find Div. Finally, after many days of struggle, he finds Div in some palace and sees his child enjoying with other children in a beautiful garden. Now, Baba Ayub is confused whether to take the child with him to poverty or leave him there for his better future. Reluctantly, he leaves the child there. Then, the subsequent events revolve around the story of Abdullah and Pari, and Abdullah's deep love for his sister Pari. One day their father Saboor takes Pari to the city of Kabul. He has planned with his brother-in-law Nabi to sell her to a very rich childless Whadati family, where Nabi works as a servant from long time. Pari is adopted by Whadati family. Abdullah in deep sorrow leaves his home soon after that tragic incident. He first goes to Pakistan and then to America and opens Afghani restaurant there. Being a small child, Pari forgets everything about her village and the people those who have been close to her. Mrs. Whadati and Pari spend their long hours in playing with each other and both are very happy.

But the relation between Mr. and Mrs. Whadati was not like husband and wife. They didn't love each other and she always criticizes him and finds faults in him. When Mr. Whadati suffers with a stroke and paralyzed, she leaves the house to Paris with Pari. She doesn't show any concern about his health and never returned to Kabul again. Nabi takes care of Mr. Whadati till his death like a good and loyal servant. Mrs. Whadati lives in Paris and writes poetry and gives interviews where she criticizes Kabul, her husband and later Pari too. She has an affair with a boy Julies who also secretly meets Pari. Later on, when Miss Whadati comes to know about this in anger she commits suicide. Finally, Pari gets married and begets three children. After some years of marriage her husband also dies with a stroke. On the other hand, Mr. Whadati dies and leaves his property for Nabi who is in old age now. Through a doctor Nabi is able to contact Pari. He sends mails to her first and then they talk over phone. Nabi leaves a message for Pari before his death. Doctor tells her everything which Nabi has told before his death. She is shocked to know about her real and biological family about which she was unaware throughout her life. She goes to Abdullah who has now gone mad and after seeing her he recitates the nursery poem which he used to recitates when Pari was a kid. Pari also gets letter from his daughter whose name is also Pari which was written by Abdullah when he was in normal state. The letter was for Pari and after reading it Pari starts crying and realized that how much pain Abdullah has gone through in his life because of her.

Research Objectives

The next sub-section proposes the research objectives which are to be fulfilled in the following chapters of the research thesis. The research objectives follow as:

1. To trace the dynamics of power politics in the history of Afghanistan
2. To analyze the power politics in Afghanistan in the select works of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini
3. To understand the culture of Afghanistan through the works of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini
4. To study the socio-political dimensions and its impacts

Research Methodology

The next section deals with the research methodology. The current study falls in the category of qualitative research and descriptive research. To achieve the objectives of the research, the selected texts content analysis would be the most appropriate methodology. The methods like textual analysis, examination, critical analysis and elucidation of the primary and secondary sources have been used for the successful completion of the research work. The texts under the study have been analyzed under the light of the conflict theory. Furthermore, the study

helps to understand the ways through which power politics has played its role to make Afghanistan a conflict zone since the recent four decades. The primary texts have been deeply analyzed and secondary texts have been consulted during the research process. Also the research papers, e-books, articles, videos and audios have been regularly accessed to explore the research topic. Moreover, the various important theorists related to conflict theory such as Lewis Coser, Ralph Dahrendorf, and Randell Collins have been taken into account for an intense scrutiny of these works. Furthermore, the useful information has been collected from various data bases such as JSTOR, SJR, RESEARCH GATE, Shodhganga and various other e-sources. Besides this, the libraries of various national universities have been visited from time to time such as the University of Jammu, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University Katra, Central University of Jammu etc. The guidelines of the latest 8th edition of MLA style sheet have been strictly followed in formatting, citing and referencing of the present thesis.

Research Gap

Ultimately, the last sub-section titled research gap is discussed as a part of the introduction to the thesis under discussion. The research gap follows as:

No extensive research has been conducted on works of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini from the power politics perspective using conflict theory. Hence, no full-length and comprehensive study is available in the research papers and critical books to explore the power politics of Afghanistan through the analysis of the select works of the two contemporary Afghan origin writers; Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini. The review of literature vividly shows this research gap. The study will fill the literary gap through the analysis of all the major novels of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini in the light of the conflict theory of Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, Ralph Dahrendorf, and Randell Collins.

Chapter-1

Brief Candle

We must stand on our own feet and fight as best as we can for our rights. So, carry on your agitation and organize your forces. Power and prestige will come to you through struggle.

B. R. Ambedkar (n.pag.)

In national and international politics, power plays a pivotal role. Whatever the state does, power remains its core focus. Different political scientists, theorists and sociologists have defined power in various ways. The word power is used in different contexts with different interpretations. The *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines power as “an ability to act or produce an effect through possession of control” (“Politics” n. pag.). Power is always used to suppress others or to dominate others by using various institutions like politics, religion, education etc. Power is apparently devastating and inherently negative in nature. It is used to obtain control on someone’s behaviour or to gain power over the limited resources of society. All the efforts to obtain or expand power ultimately give birth to the resistive elements in the society. So, both conflict and power work together in every human society. Since time immemorial, all the conflicts both at a small or large scale have been fought to acquire power thus, wanting to become more powerful. Politics which is used to obtain power helps to understand national and international relations. In the relation making process at a national or international level every country prioritizes its own interests and disregards the interests of others to become more powerful. Ostensibly, politics is used for gaining political, military, and economic power. Once the power is gained, it is used for threatening others or to make influence over those who are the less powerful. There are multiple techniques which are used at national or international level to become more powerful. The main political tools which are used to gain or retain power are; deterrence theory, establishing military units, buck passing, pre-emptive strikes, development of nuclear weapons, the imposition of tariffs and economic sanctions, pre-emptive strikes, proxy warfare, espionage, asymmetric warfare etc. In this nuclear age, powerful states instead of involving physical fight and attacking directly, they make psychological pressure on the other states. They build that pressure so that the other states do not get the courage to take any action against them. This political approach is known as a deterrence theory. It is a political approach used by one state to prevent the other state to take any course of action. Here, one state feels that the course of action which is being taken by the other state is against its interests. The state uses military or economic powers to build psychological pressure on that state which is planning to take some action. The

psychological pressure is built through threatening the other by military attack or using the nuclear weapons. After the Second World War, most of the nuclear weapon states threaten others to prevent them to take some political action against them. So, in the deterrence policy the military and nuclear weapons play a vital role. Sometimes alliances between the nations are also the part of deterrence policy. Margaret Thatcher states that “a world without nuclear weapons would be less stable and more dangerous for all of us” (n.pag.). This deterrence policy has been applied to the Cold War (1947-1989) by both the USSR and the US. This is the primary reason that it remains different from other two previous world wars.

Power and conflict are interrelated and work simultaneously. One can say that power is the offshoot of conflict or conflict is the offshoot of power. Thus, concluding that both power and conflict are closely interlinked and are hence, the integral part of every society. Kenneth D. Allan (b. 1963), an American sociologist in his book *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory* (2007) uses the reference of the political scientist and sociologist, Ralf Dahrendorf (1929-2009), who calls power as “Factual” (223), because of its universal characteristics. Power is exercised either in a coercive or persuasive manner. A *you-tube* lecture on the concept of power by “Saar Concept”, comprehensively states, that “The word power has been derived from the two Latin words; *potestas* and *potentia*. The word *Potestas* means command, and the domination or using the power through coercion, which presents the negative view of the power. The word *potentia* means capacity or an ability to produce or achieve something, so it gives us the positive view of power” (00:00:30-00:04:20). From the meaning of these two root words of power it is evident that the power can be used in both positive and negative ways. So, the power is the ability or mechanism to influence or outright control the behaviour of less powerful. The chosen study circumscribes around power from the perspective of Marxist and Postmodernist philosophers and how the politics which is used to gain power creates conflict in the society. If one looks at the conventional views of power, according to Hobbesian, it is the state which exercises the power and power lies with the state itself. But in Marxist perspective, power lies with the propertied class means economically dominant class.

Karl Marx (1818- 1883) is a German philosopher who argues that the relations between master and slave, lord and serf, capitalist and the worker etc., are power relations and examples of the social power. Max Weber (1864-1920) criticizes Marxian view that the state is a class institution, exercises coercive power on its people on behalf of the rich class. According to Max Weber (1864- 1920) the state has the authority to exercise power in a

particular territory. Thomas Hobbes (1588- 1679) believes that state has a monopoly to exercise power. Jack Barbalet, an Australian sociologist who in his research paper titled “Power and Resistance” argues that there are three basic tenets of power, which are as follows: control, dependence, and inequality. He supports his argument by quoting Marx Weber’s definition of power that is “Probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his or her will even against resistance” (qtd. in Barbalet 532). Jack Barbalet argues that Marx Weber’s definition of power is compatible with all the three basic tenets of power. Barbalet shows through his study that how power is involved in all social relations and institutions. Robert Dahl (1915- 2014) an American political theorist restates the definition of Weber and defines power as a “relationship among actors in which one actor induces other actor in a way that they would otherwise not act” (n.pag.). Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), the German born American political theorist rejects the classical definition of power by endorsing that the power is an ability of human beings to act together. When people gathered and act collectively to achieve something and that collective act to do something or to achieve something is power. So, she defines power as the “human ability to act in concert. . . It belongs to a group and remains in existence as long as the group keeps together” (n.pag.). She further proposes that power is not equal to violence and violence only appears when power is in jeopardy.

Means of production which is the base in Marxist view and according to Marx, base decides the superstructure of the society. It means the one who gains the power of economy can get its control on all the state institutions. Defining the concept of ideological class domination, Bob Jessop in his research paper “Marxist Approaches to Power” supports his arguments by taking the definition from Marx and Engel’s work *The German Ideology* (1845-46) in which they argued convincingly that “the ruling ideas of any age are the ideas of the ruling class” (qtd. in Jessop n.pag.). Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) who also like Karl Marx views that the base decides the superstructure but he expands his views on superstructure and divides it into two parts; state and the civil society. According to him, the state is the structure of coercion like police, army, and court etc. The civil society is the structure of legitimation which consists of religion, school, media, culture, and so on. The combination of these two maintains the domination or hegemony. Thus, hegemony is the combination of force and legitimation. The superstructure plays an important role in maintaining the status quo of the existing social structure by ruling over people through consent. For example, right from the childhood various institutions such as family, school, and religion teach a person that the existing social structure is for his own benefit and as per his own interest. Such kinds of

narratives are created in the society so the people may not revolt against the existing socio-political structure. Bob Jessop in his research paper titled “Marxist Approaches to Power” defines the state as “the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win active consent of those over whom it rules” (Jessop n. pag.). It means that the base of the state is coercion and consent or in other words force and hegemony. By using these two, a state establishes its power. This process of domination by using different political strategies and institutions is the central feature in Marxism.

The present thesis titled “Politics of Power: A Study of the Select Works of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini” reflects the socio-political history of Afghanistan. The present research focuses mainly on the last fifty years of Afghanistan’s history. Through the textual analysis of the select works of two contemporary Afghan writers, the study shows that how the politics of power has made Afghanistan a country of social, political, ethnic and religious conflicts. The study shows that how the social, political, and religious structure of the Afghan society spawned myriad conflicts since 1970s. So, through the analysis of the chosen works of the two contemporary Afghan writers named; Atiq Rahimi (b. 1963), and Khaled Hosseini (b.1965) in the light of conflict theory, the study shows the causes and effects of all the socio-political developments in Afghanistan since 1970s.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is a post-structuralist, defines power in a new way. He does the sociological analysis of the power explaining how society exercises power in various forms even sometimes people are not aware. Instead of the macro view of power, the power which is enforced through social institutions, he shifts to micro view of power. According to him, power isn’t just limited to certain institutions but it flows through the society in the form of discourses. Power is everywhere and present throughout the society in form of the social relations. It operated at micro-level in day-to-day life and individuals are the vehicles of power. It dwells on discourse on power; “a multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization” (“Foucault on Power and Knowledge” n.pag.). In the work *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Michel Foucault defines power by offering five prepositions, they are: “1. Power cannot be acquired or shared; it is exercised from innumerable points; 2. Relations of power are not exterior, but immanent in them; 3. Power comes from below- domination is a hegemonic effect; 4. Power relations are both intentional and non-subjective; 5. Where there is power there is resistance” (394). Foucault thus, defines power with a much broader perspective which can be exercised in a multiple ways.

In its broadest sense, power is the force which is used physically and by consent or by using both, to achieve what the powerful wants to achieve. Jack Barbalet in his research paper titled "Power and Resistance" takes various references of political theorists to define power. One of such theorists is Edward Lehman (b. 1936) who defines power as "A chance of obtaining desired outcomes" (qtd. in Barbalet 539). To understand the true nature of power, a political scientist Joseph Nye (b. 1937) in his book *Understanding International Conflicts* (2008) divided the power into two categories: *hard power* and *soft power*. He developed this particular idea in the context of the Cold War. According to him, there are two means of power which are used by the powerful country to achieve the desired outcomes, which are; hard power and soft power. Both are used by the powerful state over the other to convince for its own benefits. Hard power is the most tangible form of power and it can be easily experienced and noted as compared to other forms of power. It relies mainly on two resources; military and the economy of the ruling authority. One can say that it is the direct and observable use of force or coercion. Joseph Nye (b. 1937) defines "hard power as the ability to do things and control others, to get others to do what they otherwise would not" (n.pag.). These two ways are used by the developed countries to exercise their power and convince the developing or the less powerful countries. For instance, during the Cold War the USSR and the America both were influencing other countries by using their hard powers. The country may use soft power to ensure that it will get what it wants without resorting to coercion. Soft power in the words of Joseph Nye (b. 1937) is "the ability to affect others through the cooperative means of framing the agenda, persuading and eliciting positive attraction to obtain preferred outcome" (n. pag.). This form of power is the source of heated debate among scholars especially, between the liberals and the realists. The realists do not consider soft power as a form of power, but the liberals consider it as one of the forms of power and tend to bring it on board. Their idea has been firmly supported by mainstream scholars. They have divided the international power into three categories which are military, economic and the power over opinion. In this way, many other scholars like a British historian E. H. Carr (1892-1982), and many others accept soft power as the form of power. Though, the realists still consider it as a form of power, they believe that soft power is just the relinquishment of the power. Other like Joseph Nye who challenges the hard power and advocates by demonstrating that "it is sometimes possible for actors to attain desired outcomes from subjects without deploying threats or payment" (n. pag.).

If one looks from the perspective of international relations one can see that one state can attract and pursue the other states with its values, culture, and by many other ways to get

its benefits. Like people of developing or under developing countries follow blindly to the Europeans and their lifestyles. So, it is clear that soft power is the ability or power of one state to attract and influence the other. But the hard power is indeed the source of soft power. People consider only to those countries as successful ones which have well organized and a strong military and economic power. Only such countries have the more power to attract and convince the other countries for the intended outcome. Scholars also believe that the country which loses the hard power also loses its soft power. But Joseph Nye (b. 1937) doesn't agree with the view and argues in his book *Understanding International Conflicts* (2008) that there is no connection between these two forms of power. To explain it Nye uses the example of Soviet Union and says that, "The Soviet Union had a good soft power before it invades Hungary and Czechoslovakia, after the invasion of the two states, Soviet Union soft power declined drastically while its hard power (economic, and military resources) was increased tremendously" (5).

Since time immemorial, people have been living in separate states in different geographical locations around the globe. At present, the world is divided into more than 190 odd states which follow different cultures, languages, religions, and different lifestyles. Joseph Nye lucidly states in his book *Understanding International Conflicts* (1997) that "the territorial state has not always existed in the past, so it needs not to exist in the future. Fragmented units and the state system have existed since the days of Thucydides, but the large territorial state as the prime basis of international politics developed only after the Renaissance" (181). A number of political nations have been increased at considerable amount since some recent decades. Political scientists around the world believe that politics has played its main role to divide the large and big countries into the smaller ones based on their religions, ethnics, languages, cultures, etc. Such kind of politics of divide and rule has given birth to the many conflicts at considerable amount across the globe.

Conflict Theory and its Relation to Power

To understand the nature of power one needs to have a clear understanding of the dynamics of conflict in the society. The structure of the society is set up in such a way that people are divided on the basis of class, status, and power. To acquire these three, people struggle which subsequently gives birth to the competition and conflict in society. Such kind of social structure is the unavoidable phenomenon of the society and its formation. Kenneth D. Allan (b. 1963) an American sociologist who defines status and power in his book *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory* (2007). He argues that "status is defined as the extent to which one is respected and admired by others, and the power is defined as

control over socially valued resources" (216). It means that in social hierarchy status and power are two key dimensions which define the class of the particular individual.

Conflict theory studies scientifically to the causes and effects of the socio-political conflicts in the society. The theory focuses primarily on how the conflict starts, how it varies, and what are the effects of different types of socio-political conflicts in the society. All these questions are the main focus of the conflict theory. Theorists in defining the conflict generally believe that power always remains to be the driving force behind all sorts of conflicts. Conflict theory further defines the fact that all the political, religious, ethnic, and racial conflicts augment through the desire of gaining or retaining the power. Apparently, the tendency to gain power means to gain control over someone or something. So, the control provides power and the power provides control. To support this argument Paul Randolph (b. 1968) in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016), takes the reference from Bernard S. Mayer's (b. 1946) definition about the inseparable relation of power and conflict in his book *The Dynamics of Conflict* (2012) in which he defines power as "the currency of conflict" (qtd. in Randolph 72). The structure of the society is developed in such a way that some people enjoy more privileges and remain on higher positions with more powers. Some remain less powerful, while the rest are in between. Such kind of social structure gives birth to the competition in the society, such that, each section claims its superiority, hence calling out for the revolution.

The word Revolution has been derived from the Latin word 'revolver' that means to roll back or turn, the term 'revolution' was first used in the thirteenth century to elucidate matters of celestial concern. From the revolutions of the earth, the turn of the calendar concomitantly introduced a fresh dimension to the term; signifying defiance and rebellion of the masses. Wherein, the stand against the unjust monarchs, aristocrats or the colonial masters, revolution, comprehensively, was then referred to as the fire which soldered together states and countries into the creations of the people rather than that of the masters. David Motadel in his article "Waves of Revolution" published in *History Today* magazine notes that the earliest wave of revolution began with the American Revolution of 1776 (n.pag.). However, John M. Gates in his paper titled "Toward a History of Revolution" states, "revolution has no coherent chronological history . . . Despite volumes written on the subject of revolution by historians, political scientists, sociologists, and others, one searches in vain for a comprehensive history" (535). Building on the contemporary connotation of revolution, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines 'revolution' as being "a sudden, radical, or complete change" and also "a fundamental change in political organization" (n. pag.). While both the

definitions stand true, the essence of revolution is lost in the schematics of language. Confined within the chains of definitions, the words fail to illuminate the years of passion, frustration, struggle and conflict that the term 'revolution' encompasses. It is not merely a change but the struggle of the present to overcome the past and ultimately creates the envisioned future. It is, hence, a struggle between the future and the past, the thesis and the antithesis, the oppressor and the oppressed. Apparently, hooking on to the various contours of revolution enmeshed in the conflict theory, the study intends to explore the socio-political scenario of Afghanistan. Such that, Afghanistan is explored as a locale of consistent conflict over limited resources, hence, the perpetual clash of thesis versus antithesis. To understand the nature of conflict and how it is the unending feature of any society one needs to have the complete understanding of concept of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, which is explicitly realized in the present study.

Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis: The Unending Process of Social Conflicts

To understand the true nature of the power which is closely associated with conflict, it is essential to have an understanding that how thesis, antithesis, and synthesis work in a cyclic process. Karl Marx (1818-1883) studies the causes of conflicts in the society in his conflict theory. His idea is mainly focused on the economic inequality which becomes the cause of the conflict in the society. The theory posits that the long period of inequality between haves and have nots leads to the sufferings and exploitations of the have nots, which results the class consciousness. The class consciousness further stages unrest or the revolution against the established socio-political structure of the society. Majority of the people in the society are deviated and denied from their certain social and political rights. They find that the established system is only for the benefits of the rich class. Such feelings of disparity and deviation further give birth to unrests, agitation, riots, revolutions and resentments against the social and political system. The disparity may be in between rich versus poor, higher class versus lower class, higher caste versus low caste, men versus women, white versus black, etc. The disparity fueled the revolutions and unrests which are done to bring the change in the established system of society. The established social and political structure of the society is the thesis. But the long years of oppression and suffering gives rise to class consciousness in which the exploiting class comes to know about its social and political importance, here the antithesis is established. Antithesis strengths and sets the stage for revolution against the thesis. For instance, it is the generally believed in the non-European countries that the white people are more superior to black people. On the basis of this thesis when blacks are exploited and denied from their basic socio-political rights, the potential conflict is developed

among the black for white people. For instance, in the work *Oroonoko: The Royal Slave* (1688) by Aphra Behn (1640-1689) in which black people are treated as they are only made to work for the white people. They are used in plantation, sold, abused sexually, physically and mentally just because they are black. They create an antithesis that they all are human and should be considered as human being. They should not be judged on the basis of their skin's color which is natural and genetic feature. There are so many textual examples where the blacks' revolt against the whites for racial discrimination. Like the black movements of Africans in the 1970s then the movements by Afro- Americans. So, these movements and revolutions were staged to change the thesis after creating antithesis that they should also be considered as human being. They question why they are treated as sub-human being on the basis of their color. Like William Blake's (1757- 1827) poem the "The Little Black Boy" (1789) in which the black boy tells the causes of his blackness. Actually, the poem has been written against the slavery. The poem opens with an antithesis which is created by the black boy, he says that:

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! My soul is white:

White as an angel is the English child:

But I am black as if bereaved of light (1- 4).

So, antithesis is created, that they are also human beings with feelings and emotions. They question why they are discriminated. So, such kind of antithesis finally sets the stage for revolutions, movements, unrests against the whites. It subsequently, forces the state government to make laws in their favor. So, that further they are not racially discriminated, and here the synthesis comes to pacify them by giving them equal political status.

Society is always built on the basis of thesis. Other kinds of thesis in the society such as men are superior and women are inferior, high castes people are superior and low castes are inferior, people live in urban and posh areas are superior to the people living in rural areas, and so on. But with the passage of time, the antithesis is created that all such kinds of thesis are ideological based and socially and politically constructed. For example, Simon de Beauvoir (1908- 1986) firmly argues about the cause of gender discrimination that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (n.pag.), which means that the social identity of women is made by the society. It is society which makes them believe that they are women by imposing certain social norms and values upon them. Same is the case with the black people who feel inferior because society makes them feel that they are black and black color is not good and loving one. So, antithesis here is that these entire concepts are socially and politically

constructed and constituted by some section of the society. With the rise of antithesis, the two ideas clash with each other and new thesis is created in the society after doing synthesis.

The conflict theory studies the conflict between thesis and antithesis, rich versus poor, man vs. woman, high castes vs. low castes, white vs. black, rural vs. urban etc. The common belief which the people have in the society is thesis. In some cases thesis is formed through social and cultural beliefs. For instance, in the past there were such notions that lower castes, poor people, low classes, black people would work for the people those who belonged to high class, high castes, white colored and women would work for men. And it was generally believed that it could not be changed because it was natural. But with the passage of time, the marginalized people get to know the reality and the antithesis is made against the thesis. Opposing groups reject the thesis that it is not natural but it has been naturalized by the people of high castes and rich class to dominate and suppress them. At this moment people of working class are united and revolt against the thesis. Here, the synthesis is made to pacify the people of all classes. The new thesis would come that all human beings are equal. Moreover, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of class, caste, race, gender and on regional or communal basis. After creating of new thesis, exploited and marginalized people demand equality in everything which is quite difficult to realize. It again creates antithesis and again revolts then synthesis takes place. So, the process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is unending.

Let's understand this process in Indian context, how the conflict is an unending process because of the ever existing clash between the thesis and antithesis. In India, Britishers came with the purpose of doing business. They made Indians believe that through their business Indian people would also be benefitted. Later, they changed the thesis by saying that they found Indians are too backward and illiterate so they wanted them to educate to make them enlightened people. So, for that, they opened new schools with English education and culture. In these schools, they promoted their own ideology and culture among Indians by presenting themselves superior and Indians as inferior. Gradually, they became the part of Indian administration and constitution. The time came when Indians were regulated and controlled by the Britishers only. Slowly and smartly they were able to get their control on most of the parts of India. So, their thesis worked until the Indian people were unknown about their true intention. Indian people started raising their voices against Britishers and their rule. Finally, the antithesis came that the Britishers had not come in India for Indians benefits but to loot and plunder their rich resources. On the basis of this antithesis people of India got united and started protesting against the British rule prior the independence of India.

Subsequently, lots of agitations, unrests, riots, revolutions and movements took place against British rule by Indians to gain political Independence. Britishers didn't want India's independence; they wanted to be in power to control Indians. So, to maintain their status quo, they used both coercion and sanctions to dominate Indians but they failed. They could not stop Indians to raise their voice with intense forms of demonstrations and agitations for Independence. Finally, Britishers were not left with any choice and they had to leave India in the hands of its real owners. Finally, the synthesis was made that Britishers would have to leave India and India was declared as an independent nation with its own political constitution. So, here the existence of new state with the new thesis that in the independent India, everyone would have equal rights and no discrimination would be done on the basis of class, caste, religion, racial and so on. Here the question comes, was it the final solution to resolve all conflicts? No, because after India's independence thousands of movements, unrests, agitations, riots took place based on religion, communalism, and regionalism and so on, which were not against some external enemy but all these took place in the independent India, within its territory and among the Indian people. For instance, if one looks at the history of post independent India, lots of political movements and agitations have taken place so far like Sikh Riots of 1980s, Separatists Movements in 1990s, Dalit agitation in Maharashtra in 2006, Anti- reservation protests in 2006, Anti-corruption movements like Ana Hazare's fight against corruption in 2011, Nirbhaya Protest 2012, Telangana Protests for different state, Gorkhaland agitation, Gujjar agitation in Rajasthan and thousand others took place in independent India. Even today the India is not free from such kinds of internal conflicts. The purpose of the present study is to show that how conflict is an integral part of the society. It shows that how the thesis, antithesis and synthesis work in a cyclic way and how it is the unending process in the society.

Every new thesis gives birth to the antithesis and finally synthesis, which also gives birth to another new thesis and the process, goes on. So, the conflict theory argues that society cannot work with consensus and harmonious way because conflict is its integral part. Usually, it happens because people in society always compete for limited resources. Social struggle is the part of society and problems in the society are natural and inevitable outcome of social struggle. The people those who are in power they oppress and exploit the less powerful. When those who are oppressed, they react which create more problems in the society. The powerful exploit and dominate the less powerful and using their power they try to maintain the status quo. They make laws and rules to legitimize their authority, which is actually done by them to naturalize or legitimize their subordination.

As the time changes, certain section of people start raising the question against high castes people. So, it is an attempt to question their status quo which result low castes people start agitations and unrests to challenge the established social system. So, it is fight between high castes versus low castes or between thesis versus antithesis. Finally, the synthesis' comes out with the promise of giving equal rights and opportunities to the people of all the castes. When the people of lower castes further divide the people of low castes in sub castes and start discriminating on the basis of that, the conflict comes into play again. Because people of sub castes who come under the category of low castes feel that their demands have not been addressed by the representative of low castes results into agitations lead by them. Paul Randolph (b. 1968) argues in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016), that "many disputes are triggered or prolonged as a result of parties' feelings that they have not been listened to properly or at all" (94).

The structure of the society is developed in such a way that some people get higher positions and some lower ones and the rest may have nothing. Such kind of structure gives birth to the competition in the society. The competition of gaining the social and political position which other enjoy in the society. Because everyone cannot be equal in the society and unequal distribution of scarce resources takes the shape of potential conflict between those who are on higher positions and those who are at lower profiles. In defining conflict theory, Anthony Oberschall takes the reference of Lewis Coser (1913- 2003) definition of conflict theory in his article "The Theories of Social Conflict" that "Social conflict is a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflict groups are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals" (qtd. in Oberschall 291). The Conflict theory believes that in society everyone struggles for power and those who hold the power they make laws and rules which govern the society and somewhere help the powerful to retain their power. When the less powerful understand that the powerful are in power because of their exploitations and their long years of oppressions. Their consciousness leads them to go for revolt against the power structure in the society and ultimately creates conflict in the society. Adam Hayes in his article "What is Conflict Theory" argues that "conflict theory views social and economic institutions as tools of the struggle between groups or classes used to maintain inequality and the dominance of the ruling class" (n.pag.). Karl Marx is considered as the propounder of conflict theory proposes the idea of 'Class Consciousness' which according to him leads to the conflict between haves and have nots in the society. But today the conflict theory is used to study the conflicts with broader perspective. It is used to study the wide range of social

phenomena including wars, revolutions, poverty, discriminations and domestic violence. Adam Hayes in his article “What is Conflict Theory” convincingly states that “latest versions of conflict theory look at other dimensions of conflict among capitalist factions and between various social, religious and other types of groups” (n.pag.). No doubt, that since the dawn of human civilization, man has made enormous progress in the field of science, technology, and engineering. He has achieved many milestones in the history of mankind but he has failed utterly to get control on conflicts. Because by default all human beings possess common characteristics’ such as; pride, greed, envy, anger, a sense of superiority, desire to become more powerful to make others feel low etc. All such features of mankind eventually become the causes of conflicts and disputes among the people in the society. The most intensified conflicts take place in the society when people struggle for power. Simply, when one party gains power while the other loses that becomes the cause of potential conflict between the two. Initially, every form of group or a social organization comes into existence because of the common interests of its people. But it only stays united for a short period of time and gradually people from inside the group start dispersing into various factions which may have various reasons. For instance, in the political parties usually, when the people who are working for the party and their expectations do not meet, they plan to quit and join another party or form a new one. But even that new party or organization does not stand united for a longer period of time and eventually breaks again into different groups. So, the process of making and remaking parties, groups, or organizations is an unending. Karl Marx (1818-1883) called to this cyclic process as thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Paul Randolph (b. 1968) defines these terms while dealing with the conflicts in society in his book titled *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016) as, "Where thesis represents the unity or status quo; antithesis is the challenge to the status quo, and synthesis is the new product resulting from the conflict between the two" (33). Most of the times dispute springs out when some people feel that the injustice has been done to them and their feelings get hurt. Randolph further argues in the same text that "most conflicts have one common thread; a request or demand followed by a refusal and the demand will also contain an emotional element, driven by feelings of anger, hurt, betrayal of perceived injustice" (72). Emotions always play an important role in the cause of any conflict. Most of the times, people are driven in conflict after getting emotional without using logic. Emotions are ever-present in all human conflicts and for conflict to be more violent, there must be emotional involvement of the people. Every society is operated by following certain values and beliefs which have sedimented in their daily routine and appear immovable. Even these people are not aware of such sediment values and beliefs. But when one party comes into the power, it generally ignores the interests the interests of the

others.

It is commonly believed that the unequal distribution of the limited resources in the society is the main cause of social and political conflicts. It creates the conflict between those who possess these resources and those who work to generate these resources, but don't have anything except their laboring bodies. After long years of exploitation, the working class mobilizes itself from an absolute deprivation (in which an individual or some sections of society struggle for the basic things like food, cloth, shelter to survive) to relative deprivation (in which individual is already met with basic needs and starts comparing his life with others those who are on higher positions than him or her). This is the stage where the exploited class starts comparing itself with others who are more powerful and with high social status. In this stage of relative deprivation, the individual starts questioning about the causes of his current situation. When he starts questioning the status quo here the antithesis develops which leads to the conflict between thesis and antithesis.

Conflict Theory and its Main Proponents

Various thinkers and sociologists have explained the conflict theory by explaining the different reasons for conflict in society. Beginning with Karl Marx (1818-1883), who has explained that economic disparity is the base of all kinds of conflicts in the society. He talks about the capitalist society which is divided into two classes; the capitalist, and the working class. The capitalist class exploits the working class by taking surplus work and in return gives very low wages to the workers. The idea of class consciousness and failing economy comes into existence that creates class conflict and finally takes the form of revolution to change the existing social structure of the society. A sociologist C. N. Shankar Rao takes the reference from the opening lines of Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) to build his own argument in his book titled *Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social Thought* (2012) to define the history of humankind as the history of class struggle:

The history of the hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried an uninterrupted, now hidden and now open fight, a fight that each time ended in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (qtd. in Rao 734)

Although, Marx never called himself the founder of conflict theory but he was the first major social thinker who gave the conflict perspective through his theory of dialectical materialistic conception of history. Originally, he took the idea of dialectical materialism from German

philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) from his theory called the theory of dialectic. For Hegel, society changes because of the changing of ideas. He says that in every society there are different kinds of ideas. He tells us that how new ideas are formed. In every society, there is an established idea and then the birth of the new idea because of the contradictions and limitations in the established idea. So, the conflict creates when person B possess the idea which is opposite from the idea of person A. So, their ideas clash and by combining the two ideas of person A and B to sort out their conflict, the new idea is developed and that idea is called the synthesis. So, thesis is the idea of one party, antithesis is the idea of another party, means the opposite idea. The new idea that comes by combining the two is synthesis. This means every society has two ideas and because of the opposite ideas, people come into conflict, and then the new idea comes out, that is the synthesis. Marx was very much influenced by Hegel but his focus was not on the idea but on matter. He tries to find out that whose ideas society accepts. Because Marx says ultimately society accepts the ideas of rich class. So, Marx's methodology was dialectical materialism.

According to Marx, in every age there has been two classes i.e. haves and have not and they keep fighting with each other. One struggles to mobilize oneself and the other tries to maintain its status quo. Those who own the means of production own everything, and by having the economic power, they also acquire political power. The legal and political system of the state also reflects the interests and ideologies of the ruling class. C. N. Shankar Rao adding further about Marx's idea in his book *Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social Thought* (2012) by quoting Karl Marx that "the existing relations of productions between individuals must necessarily express themselves also as political and legal relations" (qtd. in Rao 735). In the same way, another thinker and sociologist Raymond Aron in the same book that "political power, properly so-called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another" (qtd. in Rao 735). The other two earliest conflict theorists are Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838-1909) and Lester F. Ward (1841-1903), they both study conflict through an anthropological perspective. They see that society is divided on the basis of wars and conquests. Those who are winner they become the rulers and losers become slaves. So, the society is always in conflict for gaining and retaining power. Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) a neo-Marxist thinker argues that power is not only exercised through force but consensus. He gave the idea of *cultural hegemony*. According to Gramsci, the ruling class uses state and civil societies to naturalize all its powers by inculcating certain ideas and ideologies among the masses, which creates a kind of situation where the masses wrongly feel that they are doing things independently and freely. State uses political, economic, religious,

and cultural forces to impose ideologies among the masses. To get rid of the state and its ideologies Gramsci says one requires having the destruction of the state and its institutions which work to spread its ideologies and ideas. C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) is considered the founder of modern conflict theory uses the term 'The Power Elite' for the ruling class. He argues that to maintain the status quo power elite uses policies, politics, economy, and military to rule over the others. Max Weber (1864-1920) in expanding to the views of Karl Marx argues that not only the economy but the state is also involved in conflict by setting up a stage to oppress the poor and marginalized people by legitimizing the power. To Max Weber, power is one's ability to exercise over others despite the resistance. Inequality exists in society because some people have more advantages because of their circumstances, status, and economic power. This gives access to them for good health, education, and other things which help them to achieve higher skills set in the marketplace than others. Weber called this inequality the 'market situation' of the individuals. Weber saw the class as more complex than Marx initially supposed. There are many other factors notably status and party [power] which contribute to the social inequality. Karl Marx (1818- 1883) mainly argues that one who owns the means of production owns everything such as power, status, and authority because; it is the money which decides the superstructure of the society. Weber expands Marx's views and argues that it is not always true that one who owns the power of the economy will have access to all the resources. For example, a drug dealer who earns a huge amount of money but he may not have good social status. At the same time, a scientist may have good status but may not be sound in terms of money. So, the different theorists have described the causes and effects of social conflicts with different perspectives. Many elements in the society like the concepts of class, economy, power, status, and the involvement of the state to legitimize the social norms. Those social norms govern the society which helps the one to understand the causes of social conflict. But the basic and primary cause of all the conflicts is the uneven distribution of limited resources. These resources are different for each theorist of the school. Max Weber saw these resources as a class, status, and power and most of the theorists' ideas revolve around these resources. They believe that when the working class or the people who are marginalized from these resources for a longer period, the legitimacy of the system is questioned because people feel that their social mobility is hampered.

Kenneth Douglas Allan (b. 1963) in his book *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory* (2007) gives a detailed analysis of conflict theory and the interpretations given by conflict theorists. To have a deep and clear understanding of the conflict theory it is very essential for the one to understand the ideas of the important

theorists mentioned in the book. Firstly, Kenneth Douglas Allan talks about the famous sociologist Lewis Coser (1913-2003) and his views about conflict. Coser was primarily influenced by the ideas of German sociologist George Simmel (1858-1918). Coser like Simmel considers the functional consequences of the conflict, that conflict is a natural and necessary part of society so, it is everywhere in the society. In the human society, the conflict is always goal-related. As the societies are heterogeneous and every society encompasses different problems and issues. On the basis of their issues they set their goal to resolve the problems. So, on the basis of their problems their goals vary. So, based on goals, the existence of the possibility of different paths opens up the opportunities for negotiation and different types and levels of conflict. Coser is the one who talks about the variations in conflict, level of violence in the conflict, and functional consequences of the conflict. According to Coser, for conflict to be more violent there must be emotional involvement and the goal should be transcendent. If people make their efforts which are related to their everyday concern, the level of violence is low because people are not emotionally involved. When people go for something, which is greater than their daily concerns with greater emotional involvement, the level of violence in conflict is likely to be very high. In such cases, there may be the involvement of the government itself. Conflicts always take place to achieve certain goals means conflicts are goal-oriented. Coser sees conflict as a normal and functional part of human life and it exists everywhere and in every social relation. He further discusses the two kinds of functional consequences of conflict. The first one, that occurs inside the group which is called internal conflict. The other that occurs outside the group which Coser calls external conflict. In internal conflict, tension exists between indigenous populations or first nations, or national governments. It always exists within the same social system like Mujahedeen in Afghanistan during the Civil War (1992-1996) were fighting with each other for power. In comparison to internal conflict, the external conflict is more violent and requires a greater level of emotional involvement because it is likely to be in between two countries. For example, Afghanistan's war against the Soviet during its rule in Afghanistan in which all the factions of Afghanistan fight collectively against the Soviet.

Ralph Dahrendorf (b. 1941) another prominent conflict theorist whose views have been included by Kenneth D. Allan (b. 1963) in his book, *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory* (2007), also talks about the functional perspective of the conflict. His views are similar to Coser, like Coser, Dahrendorf believes that conflict is present in all human social relations. Allan writes that "Dahrendorf doesn't see the inevitability of conflict as part of human nature; he sees it, rather as a normal part of how we

structure society and creates social order" (220). He argues that power is the central feature of society so he calls it "Factual" (223). Dahrendorf presents a new understanding of social conflict by blending the views of Marx, Weber, and Coser about conflict.

Ralph Dahrendorf (b. 1941) defines power by quoting Weber as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (qtd. in Allan 223). But like Weber, Dahrendorf is more interested in authority than power. He claims that authority legitimizes power and it is power that is always associated with social positions or roles. To be the part of the society one has to follow all the social norms and rules which govern the society. Dahrendorf used the term 'Imperatively Coordinated Associations' (ICAs), which means that all social relations are governed and managed in a legitimized way. Adding further he says that:

Social order is the result of constraint rather than some consensus. Dahrendorf argues that all social norms and values are imposed on people through authoritative power. He agrees with Parsons and Durkheim that society is created through roles, norms, and values but he partially disagrees that they work through power rather than the collective consensus. (qtd. in Allan 225)

According to functionalists like Parson and Durkheim, every society comprises of norms and values. On the basis of those norms and values, society functions with collective consensus. Here, Dahrendorf argues that no doubt the society is created through norms and values but it doesn't work through consensus but through power. Therefore, that is the basic difference between the conflict theorists and functionalists. Conflict theorists consider power as the driving force behind all human actions and responsible for creating conflicts in the society. But functionalists believe that society functions through collective consensus. They do not see power as the central force behind all human actions, because they see that everything is done in the society with collective consensus.

Ralph Dahrendorf (b. 1941) argues that "the substance of social roles, norms, status positions, values, and so forth may well be explained in terms of the interests of the powerful" (qtd. in Allan 225). The social relationships are coordinated through authority and power over society like Marx argues that the culture of any society reflects the interest of the powerful elite and not the political interests of the middle or lower class. But he also believes that class is more related to power than to money or occupation. Dahrendorf's ideas about conflict theory are primarily based on Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Max Weber (1864-1920) and he also takes some elements from Coser to present a new understanding of conflict in the

society. He argues that power is the one unavoidable feature of society and presents everywhere in social relations. Like Marx, he also believes that the socio-cultural and political setup of the society reflects the interests of the powerful or the rich class not of the middle or the poor class.

Dahrendorf (b. 1941) defines that the variations in conflicts on the basis of their level of intensity and violence. The one who wants to know about the intensity of the conflict, he can observe it on the basis of the money, involvement, life and other material loss in the conflict. More material loss in the conflict means more intensity in the conflict. Involvement means that the number of people emotionally involved in the conflict, and how much importance they give to the group and their issues. The conflict's violence primarily depends on the weapons which are used in the conflict. People adopt both violent and non-violent ways to fight and resolve their issues which mainly depends on the goal for which they are fighting. So, the level of violence defines the level of intensity in the conflict. And only on the basis of the level of violence, the intensity of the conflicts varies.

Randall Collins (b. 1941) another and last major conflict theorist whose views have been presented by Kenneth D. Allan in his book *The Social Lens: An Introduction to Social and Sociological Theory* (2007) to give the clear understanding of the conflict theory to the readers. Collins is more influenced by the two sociologists; Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), and Erving Goffman (1922-1982). He brought his ideas about social conflict mainly in his book titled *Conflict Sociology* (1975). His book deals with the causes of all kinds of conflicts and explains them scientifically. He has also studied the conflict theory by analyzing the ideas of other conflict theorists. He cuts short the number of causes of all the conflicts by combining his own ideas with some main ideas of other sociologists about conflict. He concluded into four main points, which according to him cover all the causes of social conflicts in society. The first is the unequal distribution of each scarce resource produces potential conflict between those who control it and those who don't. The second is that the potential conflict becomes actual conflicts to the degree that opposing groups become mobilized. Here, Collin mainly talks about the two main areas of resource mobilization, first is the emotional, moral and symbolic mobilization. Because according to Collin to wage a battle one not only requires material goods but emotional and symbolic goods are also required. Which means a greater level of emotional solidarity must be involved in the conflict. For instance, in comparison to Afghanistan, Soviet was very strong in term of military and economically in 1980s. But during the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989), the Soviet was not able to defeat Mujahedeen, because the Mujahedeen were supported military,

economically and emotionally by the US and other Muslim countries to defeat the strong Soviet. Secondly, Collins talks about the material mobilization which includes the material resources. In material resources he includes money, arms, communication, and transportation technologies, etc., in the conflict. The third cause is conflict engenders subsequent conflict. Here, he talks about the sense of moral rightness of the actors who are involved in the conflict. There is always a force behind the curtain that motivates one to fight, which gives to one the reason to go for fighting. For instance, in Afghanistan's context the fight between the Soviet and the Mujahedeen, in which all Afghanistan's political groups are united to fight against Soviets by pouring political and religious flavor. In the fourth point, Collins talks about the two ways through which resources are demobilized. Because emotional resources do not work in a long run, but the material resources work for a longer period and play a major role. But the outcome of many wars is determined by the balance between these two.

Collins draws on the works of Weber, Durkheim, and Goffman to argue that symbolic goods and emotional solidarity are among the main weapons used in conflict. He is different in his views from other conflict theorists. Collins shifted from the macro-level perspective of conflict to the micro-level and talks about the micro-centric social relationship. He believes that groups who are involved in conflicts don't simply need material goods to wage a battle; there are also emotional and symbolic goods which are used in conflicts. Collins gives two corollaries: the first is that milder or sporadic forms of conflict tend to go on for longer periods than more intense ones. Fewer resources are used which can be renewed in a much easier way. This is the one reason that terrorism and guerilla warfare tend to go on almost indefinitely. Civil rights and relatively peaceful political movements can be carried out for extended periods as well. He talks about the global level of geopolitics where political conflicts are analyzed within the context of history and geography. The territory of any state plays an important role while taking decisions for any nation and making its foreign policy. According to Randall Collins there are two factors which decide the future of any nation i.e. heartland advantage and marchland advantage.

The heartland advantage defines the size of the political territory, natural resources in the territory, its population size are the factors categorized by Collins as heartland advantage for any country. Because larger the territory would have large population and strong army can be created which can defeat the smaller nations easily. In marchland advantage the country should have minimum or no enemy on its borders. Randall Collin argues that a nation's borders decide its future. Suppose a nation having heartland advantages but it has the enmity with countries which are adjoining to its borders is much weaker than the nation

which has fewer enemies on its borders and even doesn't have heartland advantages. For example, India has heartland advantages but doesn't have marchland advantages which always create problems for it on several occasions. Suppose, the country has both heartland and marchland advantages, it will be more progressive, prosperous and more powerful. The country has heartland advantages but it shares borders with many nations and it may have to face internal or external conflicts. Further, any kind of conflict on national or international level would hamper the growth of any nation. In long run it could also break the unity of any nation.

Man is a social animal, and he cannot live in isolation because of his physical, psychological, and emotional needs. But it is also true that whenever a man makes his relationships with other persons there would be the more chances of conflict between them. The same is the case among nations which build relationships with each other to meet their needs and through such way they also tend to make the balance of power. Countries are interdependent to each other for many reasons. It is the age where one needs to have all the resources to grow and to make the balance of power. No nation can grow and create all the resources within its own territory. The economic interdependence among countries has increased rapidly. But with the increasing interdependence among the countries the political, ideological and physical conflicts have also increased. Joseph Nye (b. 1937) in his book *Understanding International Conflict* (1997) argues that "conflicts in the twentieth century involve both guns and butter" (161).

Nye in his book titled *Understanding International Conflict* (1997) explains the features of interdependence by using the terms zero sum and non-zero sum to define the situations of interdependence. In a zero-sum situation, one country gains other losses, for instance, A and B are interdependent in terms of the economy, from their interdependence if A's benefit depends on the loss of B and vice versa. When both A and B get benefit from the interdependence of each other, and Nye calls it positive-sum. And in the third type of interdependence is a negative-sum situation in which no one would get benefit, neither A nor B means both are in loss. In terms of economic interdependence, some liberal economists consider interdependence as a joint benefit and take it as the positive-sum situation in which the interdependent countries get benefit and better off their situation by helping each other. But in practice, there are very few chances that both interdependent countries will equally progress with equal benefits at the same time. For instance, in trade between the two countries because of their inequality in resources and power, one country will grow more than the other but not in the same way. Though both the countries better off but one country

will not be better off and the other only a little better off or vice versa. So, such kind of situation is the zero-sum situation in which one's loss increases the other's benefit. Nye further argues that "even if interdependent countries enjoy a joint gain, there may be conflict over who gets more or less of the joint gain" (163). So, the inequality in their progress and benefits lead conflict between the two.

It is true that initially, countries join hands to make friendly relations with peace and cooperation to bring a positive-sum situation. They make the thesis that they are joining hands for each other's progress. Gradually, when the progress starts with their joint actions and cooperation, the race of competition starts and the cooperation turns into a competition. It is pertinent to mention that when two countries start competing with each other, it creates a gap between the two which secretly makes the ways for the potential conflicts. Every country wants to strengthen its economy by making strong foreign policy. For that purpose, the one country joins other to enrich its resources. About economic interdependence, in the words Joseph Nye "the new politics of economic interdependence has competitive zero-sum aspects as well as cooperative positive-sum aspects" (164). It is true that if two countries are interdependent the one country may be less dependent than the other. Its less dependency hardly effects by other country's decisions for it. On the other hand the less dependent country's decisions effect the growth and future of the country which is more dependent. So, some political analysts also believe that for smooth functioning and conflict-free states there should be the balance of power. The interdependent countries should equally depend on each other to prevent any conflict between the two. Meanwhile, it depends on the country's intention actually.

Cold War and the Emergence of America as a Single Superpower

Since, Thucydides all the historians and political observers consider power transition as one of the main reasons of power conflict. Every nation or individual wants to have the power to dominate the other one. In Marxian thought, shift in power from one class to another brings a drastic change in the society. But at the same time transition of power from one class to another becomes the cause of potential conflict. It is a general consensus among the political scientists that the post-cold war period is the period of rapid power transitions. It is quite obvious that rapid power transitions would bring more power conflicts among the powerful nations and the nations who are trying to acquire power. After the violent first half of the twentieth century and the increasing constraint relation between two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the US, it was very much predictable to have the world war three. But it never took place due to many reasons. During the Cold War period from 1947 to 1989, there was

intense hostility between the two superpowers; the US and the Soviet. Finally, in 1989 the hegemony of the Soviet Union ended from the Eastern Europe with its collapse and America became the unipolar power around the world.

America has made progress in all fields including science and technology. During the recent years, the nature of power is changing with the advent of new technologies. Joseph Nye pointed out that "the country that is best placed to lead the information revolution will be more powerful than any other nation and for the foreseeable future, that country is the United States" (191). Joseph Nye in his book *Understanding International Conflicts* (1997) describes the drastic and unpredictable change after the Cold War:

Russia has declined faster and further since 1990 than almost anyone expected, though it retains an immense nuclear arsenal. China has risen faster than most anticipated, with a long period of double-digit economic growth. Japan and Germany have not become the full-fledged superpowers that some wrongly predict in 1990. The United States is the only true superpower, with global assets in all dimensions of power. (189)

The question of how or what caused the Cold War is the most debatable question among the scholars and different policymakers. But to understand its causes are very important to understand the true nature of national and international power politics. There are various schools of opinion, which have given their interpretations about the causes of the Cold War (1947-1989). Among them, the main three are traditionalists, revisionists, and post revisionists. These three schools of thoughts came into existence after the Cold War and offered their views about the reasons which gave birth to the Cold War. Traditionalists believe that the USSR is responsible for the Cold War. Revisionists consider America responsible for cold war. Post-revisionists are another school of opinion which views that neither America nor the USSR is responsible for the Cold War, but the war was inevitable after the WWII. So, some schools of thought considered America was the reason of Cold War while some other think that USSR was the initiator of the Cold War and some remain neutral. To have the more understanding of each school's opinion, it is important to discuss each in separate sub-heading:

Traditionalists

The traditionalists believe that the Soviet Union is responsible for the Cold War. America was not in a position to attack or to be in an aggressive mood after WWII. It was the Soviet Union's policies and disagreement in certain meetings between the two superpowers that made America suspicious against the Soviets' future course of action. After the two world

wars America by setting up the United Nations in 1945 and wanted to have universal world order and collective security. But the Soviet Union did not show any interest in the United Nations and even refused to remove its troops from Eastern Europe. Then, America wanted to do free elections in Poland in 1948 with the help of Stalin but he didn't allow, which added more fuel to the fire. America's idea of Soviets policies of expansionism got clearer when the Soviet Union did not show much interest to withdraw its troops from Iran after the war. However, eventually under pressure the USSR had to be removed it's military. In traditionalists' opinion, there were certainly more important events that strengthened the Cold War between the two powers. In Czechoslovakia communists took control in 1948, then the Berlin blockade in 1948 and 1949. They tried to force the western government out, and then the North Korean army attack on South Korea in 1950. All these events revealed the Soviet's intention of expansionism and gradually, awakened the United States and later became the cause of the Cold War. So according to traditionalists, the Cold War was caused by the Soviet's intention of expansionism.

Revisionists

It is the second school of thought which puts its opinion about the reasons of the Cold War. They consider it that America is responsible for the Cold War, not the Soviets. They further argue that after the Second World War, America was stronger than the Soviets because of the nuclear weapons. The USSR had also had much stronger army to bite the dust to any state. The Soviets had faced greater loss in the war. According to one estimate, the Soviets had lost about 30 million people during the war and even had a greater loss to its industries. So, according to revisionists, Soviets were not in a position to fight any stronger nation like America. Stalin in October 1945 told Averell Harriman, an American ambassador that “The Soviets would turn inward to repair their domestic damage” (qtd. in Nye 100). So revisionists believe that before 1945 the situation was normal. After the death of Roosevelt and the coming up of new president Harry S. Truman, the situation became more critical because of his harsh policies against the Soviets. For evidence, revisionists quote the incident of 1948, when Henry Wallace, Truman's secretary was fired by Truman because he urged Truman to have better relations with the Soviets. Later, Truman appointed James Forrestal as the new secretary of defense who was a strong anti-communist.

Post- revisionists

Then in the 1970s and 1980s, another school of thought came which was post- revisionists. Post-revisionists opposed the other two schools and presented the different views which gave birth to the Cold War (1947-1989). They believed that neither America nor the Soviet Union

was responsible for starting the Cold War. In 1939 there were seven major powers and the multipolar world. But during the Second World War, lot of destruction took place and only the Soviet and Americans emerged as superpowers. So, they both wanted to expand themselves which was very much natural because the rest of the countries needed them. So, it is pointless to blame on any particular power to give birth to the Cold War. They tried to make the balance of power by expanding themselves to the other countries with their ideologies. Their competition for expansionism created the conflict between the two and led to the Cold War which was very much inevitable. They didn't want any other state to dominate Europe or to the other countries of the world.

Understanding the Politics of Power from the Perspective of the Cold War Period (1947-1989)

America faced economic crises in the 1930s because of its tending demands of isolationism. So Franklin Roosevelt established a powerful Security Council in the form of the United Nations. The US made many other policies to become stronger, which were misinterpreted by Stalin and his followers. Stalin didn't support to the UN and never relied on its policies. He thought that it was only America's tactic to make its control on the other countries. Stalin united Russians by infusing the spirit of nationalism to fight against its neighboring countries. He had understood that only the ideology of communism was not sufficient to motivate his people. So, he wanted to unite his country's people and at the same time tried to maintain the gains which his country had in Eastern Europe to expand further. Neither Soviets nor Americans were indeed looking for the Cold War. They both were trying to maintain what they had after the end of the Second World War (1939-1945). Based on those advantages they both wanted to become more powerful. So, they both started to make new policies but their policies made them suspicious to each other and they started suspecting each other. American diplomats started giving their interpretations regarding the true nature and policies of Stalin. America claimed that they were with every free man of the world and it was their prior responsibility to protect him everywhere. It was strongly condemned Stalin and he even criticized the Marshal Plan of June 1947. This was an American plan to give financial aid to Europe for that they even invited the Soviet Union to join. But Stalin refused and even put strong pressure on Eastern Europe not to take any aid because "Stalin saw the Marshal plan not as American generosity but as an economic battering ram to destroy his security barrier in Eastern Europe" (Nye 107). When Czechoslovakia was ready to take the US aid but by the pressure of Stalin, America could not get success. Later, with the help of Eastern Europe communists took control over Czechoslovakia in Feb. 1948.

All these events increased the US worries and Truman believed that Stalin would become another Hitler. So, both superpowers started making plans and policies to control each other. Joseph Nye his book titled *Understanding International Conflict* (1997) states that “the United States advanced plans for a west Germany’s currency reform. Stalin replied with the Berlin Blockade. The United States announced with an airlift and began the plan for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) hostility began to escalate in tit-for-tat fashion” (107). There were the two events which shocked America in 1949. One was the explosion of the atomic bomb by the Soviet Union which America had never expected so early. The second event was in China where the Chinese communist party took control on China. These two events alarmed and brought more worries for Washington. Now, National Security Council Document 68 (NSC-68), a secret document which forecasts Soviet attack in four to five years as part of a plan for global domination increased the United States worries and forced it to increase its defense budget. Beset by budget problems, President Truman resisted NSC- 68 until June 1950. But when North Korea attacked on South Korea, he realized the reality. The Korean War revealed all in itself about Stalin's policies of expansionism which were so far just the predictions by the analysts and Americans. Now America started taking the Soviets seriously and increased its defense budget because as Joseph Nye says “before WWII they could avoid each other, but after 1945 they were face to face, and Europe was divided and deep conflict began after 1947” (110). After Second World War there were only four major powers; the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe, and Japan. But Europe and Japan had allied with the United States against the Soviets. There was now the bipolar world.

The ideological conflict between the two powers had already begun after the Bolshevik revolution and even some of its glimpses could be seen during the First World War (1914-1918). During the First World War, America accused the Bolsheviks of regicide, expropriation, and cooperation with Germany. Because America didn't want Russians to support Germany so, they intervened with troops to keep Russia away in the war against Germany. So, the animosity between the two already had begun before long years of the Cold War. But despite the ideological differences they allied in Second World War and when all other major powers collapsed in the Second World War. They were the only two major powers on the globe. The competition between the two to become more powerful than others became the cause of worries and conflicts. There were lots of differences in the political culture of the two countries. Americans were more interested in liberal democracy and wanted to expand their economy while the Soviet Union had a different ideology. They wanted to have territorial expansion and emphasized absolutism rather than democracy.

Soviets were following the policy of defensive expression of imperialism like Britain did in the 19th century. So, it was not something new which the Soviet Union was doing. As Joseph Nye gives an example of Britain's policy of expansionism in his book *Understanding International Conflicts* (1997) that “Britain originally went into Egypt to protect sea routes to India. After it took Egypt it felt it had to take Uganda to protect Sudan. After it took Uganda, Britain felt it had to take Kenya to build a railway to protect Uganda. And the appetite grows with eating as the security dilemma is used to justify further and further expansion” (113). To legitimate and justify its expansion, Soviet Union was following the policy of freeing the working class everywhere in the world. The US wanted to contain the Soviet Union and its communism. For that, they started giving military and financial aids to the countries to contain Soviets communism and weakening its powers. But the US was defeated badly in its policies to contain the Soviets especially after the defeat in Vietnam War (1955- 75). America faced serious loss to its army and people which brought a great threat for America. The predictions of NSC-68 further justified the Soviet’s philosophy of expansionism. Much of the attention of the US was diverted by Vietnam War (1955- 75) to Chinese communism, which the US considered as a great threat in the future. Soviet was taking advantage of decolonization which occurring in the Third World after the Second World War. The efforts were being made by the Americans to détente or relaxation of tensions. But the Soviets did not fulfill their agreement and in the 1970's they increased four percent of their defense budget. In December 1979, Soviet’s invasion of Afghanistan escalates the US tensions further and brought some more worries for its defense planners. President Roland Reagan called the Soviet Union an ‘Evil Empire’. The cold war period of the 1980s was completely different than the period of the 1950s.

Since, the beginning of the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet were dividing the Europe and rest of the countries based on their ideologies. The end of the Cold War only took place after the end of the division in 1989. Now, the Soviet Union stopped using its forces to support East Germany and even Berlin which was pierced in November 1989, and here the Cold War was said to be over. The one main reason for the Soviet collapse was its over-expansionism. And with the coming of the new secretary of the Soviet Union named Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931), who wanted to focus on the development of his own country rather, than strengthening communism in other states. He wanted to work to overcome the economic stagnation in his country. He realized that the public of his country was not happy with the existing system. By December 1991, the Soviet Union had collapsed completely. Gorbachev was the man with a new foreign policy which he called new thinking,

wanted to have cooperation. He believed that expansionism is more costly with fewer benefits. Soviets had learned the lesson from the Eastern Europe and then from the defeat in Afghanistan; both defeats had been very costly and with little benefits. So, after 1989 the countries were bound to particular ideologies or systems and free to choose independently. Because of the war, many aspects of Soviet society were affected. During the period of the cold war soviet had increased its annual budget on defense which declined its economy badly. The end of the cold war was not like other previous wars but it affected badly to the structure of international politics. Nuclear deterrence is one of the main reasons that the cold war didn't turn hot, because both superpowers had nuclear weapons, Joseph Nye portrays in his book *Understanding International Conflicts* (1997) that the situation was like "if you attack me, I may not be able to prevent your attack, but I can retaliate so powerfully that you will not want to attack in the first place" (124). So, no side wanted to take risk of using nuclear weapons for others in fear of facing more loss. Because the world had learnt the lesson from the previous two wars. It is true that in the 1950s Americans had more nuclear weapons but they didn't want to use them at any cost.

If one wants to look behind, the balance of power was considered as the main cause of First World War (1914-1918). The Woodrow Wilson, the then American president during First World War believed that the balance of power policies could not bring peace and a true form of democracy. Wilson believed that there must be some international security to control and govern the states. Because it had become clear in the WW1 that paper agreements are not enough. There must be some organizations and rules to implement those agreements at the ground level. So, here came the League of Nations for the purpose, which was set up in 1920 to reorder the world politics.

After the Cold War (1947-1989), the world was facing rapid transformation in everything because of the advancement in technology, communication, and transportation. These are the tools that have made the world smaller. Because of the rapid change and advancement in technology a Canadian thinker Marshall McLuhan used the term 'Global Village'. Many international institutions are working like multinational corporations without any territorial barrier. Such changes have made the states to change their global strategies according to the time to meet their needs. But still, some states are not ready to adopt the culture of globalization and reacting against it to increase the amount of nationalistic flavor. In the global village, people are competing with each other to win in different races of power such as the race of defense, the race of economy, technology, and many more. Competition always gives birth to the many conflicts in the society. Before 1991 there was the craze

among the countries for amassing arms to make their defense system strong. Then there were only eight countries which had nuclear weapons. Five of these had formally declared as nuclear weapon states. They were the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France. These states were declared as nuclear-weapon states in the 1968 Non- Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Other states who covertly developed nuclear weapons were India, Israel, and Pakistan. During the time, all countries considered nuclear weapons as the ultimate form of self-defense. But it was surprising that why there were only eight states with nuclear weapons. Why other states didn't go for nuclear weapons. There were many reasons, but the main reason was alliances between the nations. After the Cold War, no country was bound to stay with any side but it was free for what to choose and what not. This means that every country was free to take decisions independently. Every country wanted to work in collaboration for its own benefits. So, the countries started forming alliances with other powerful countries to have security guarantees. Such as Japan and Germany had no nuclear weapons so they made alliance with America. America promised them to provide security assistance in any unwanted and difficult situation in the future. Powerful states with nuclear weapons like America, Soviet Union, and other such states forbade other states to develop nuclear weapons with the promise of supporting them. Some scholars take it as one of the political tactics by powerful states to keep the less powerful states dependent on them. So, those nuclear states could use them in their way and ideologically rule over them; because as Joseph Nye says that "more than 170 states have signed the Non-proliferation Treaty, in which they agreed not to develop or to transfer nuclear weapons" (187). But it is interesting to know that some states like India, Israel, and Pakistan were not part of that treaty. But if one sees the other side of the coin, the Treaty of Non- Proliferation made the countries more interdependent and prevented the chances of higher- level wars until the nuclear powers themselves were involved.

On an international level after the Cold War, there has been the establishment of international laws and forces but even they couldn't stop the wars between different nations. Though for this purpose various international laws and organizations have been established to overcome conflicts and set a new world order. So far, such efforts didn't get that much success. Joseph Nye quotes to a British historian named Arnold Toynbee in his book *Understanding International Conflicts* (1997), Toynbee said at the beginning of the Cold War that "the nation-state and the split atom cannot co-exist on the same planet. In the world of sovereign states where war is the ultimate form of defense and nuclear bombs are the ultimate weapons, he believed something had to go" (qtd. in Nye 181). According to Randal Collins

(b. 1941) over expansionism is one of the main causes of the demise of any nation. Expansionism in terms of materialistic benefits or cultural dominance, it may cause conflicts and inviting more enemies which proves to be very costly. Like the official collapse of the USSR in 1991 was predicted in five years before by Collins in his book *The Future Decline of the Russian Empire* (1986). He predicted on the bases of his geopolitical theory, in which he argues that the country should have heartland and marchland advantages to grow and remain powerful for longer time. But in the process of over expansionism the state loses both and also loses its power.

Originally, Russia began its expansion in 14th century with marchland advantages and by 1700 AD it had become strongest military power in the Europe. It took advantage by the certain events of history like fall of the Ottoman Empire, Napoleons' Wars, and Civil Wars in China. Taking the reference of Collins, Kenneth D. Allan in his book *The Social Lens: An Individual to Social and Sociological Theory* (2007) writes that:

In the end, the USSR was the largest country on the globe, consisting of 15 Soviet Socialist Republics whose territories reached from the Baltic and Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean, an Area of 8,649,512 square miles, 11 time zones, and most importantly, that shared common boundaries with six European and six Asian Countries. (qtd. in Allan 240)

So, the reason of USSR's collapse was over expansionism and losing both heartland and marchland advantages.

Role of Power Politics to Bring Forth Socio-Political Conflicts in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a landlocked country, located in the middle of the central Asian countries and the Indian subcontinents which have been the hubs of trade and other commercial activities. Afghanistan is a country that has been exploited and ruled by various rulers of the world from Alexander the Great (356-323) to the Russian rule (1979-1989), and then by various Islamic extremist groups. Despite, being least powerful, tough geographical conditions, poor in infrastructure, the country is rich in mineral resources. Because of its rich mineral resources and its central geographical location, it has caught the attention of various powerful forces like British, USSR and the US. The race between the British and the Russian Empire began in the early 19th century for supremacy over central Asia which is known as 'The Great Game'. Both powers wanted to have control over the Emirate of Afghanistan for their vested interests. This great game was formally ended with 'Anglo- Russian Convention' of 1907. With it, there was the end of the long standing rivalry in Central Asia. Russia promised to stay out of the Tibet and Afghanistan. The territory of Afghanistan was decided during the

Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880) by demarcation of Durand line. During that time Afghanistan was declared as a buffer zone. It was decided that no one will interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan after that. But the British Government wanted to have its control on Afghanistan. For that purpose, they fought three wars to the Emirate unsuccessfully which are called three Anglo-Afghan Wars. In 1919 after a short period of the Third Anglo-Afghan war, Afghanistan was declared as an independent nation on 8 August 1919 after signing Treaty of Rawalpindi between Afghanistan and the British India.

In 1933 Zahir Shah came into power after the assassination of his father King Nadir Shah. Afghanistan didn't want any kind of dependence on the Soviet Union or the Great Britain. Even during the time of Second World War (1939-1945), Afghanistan didn't support any side. After the partition of India and Pakistan, there was the rise of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan over the issue of Pashtunistan. Afghanistan being the least powerful needed some foreign support. America took the advantage of that and both the countries exchanged their ambassadors for the first time. To strengthen the relations, Afghanistan government also permitted America to develop hydroelectric and irrigation projects in its Helmand River Valley. Gradually, Afghanistan's dependence on western countries increased both economically and politically. On the other hand, when Pakistan came into existence, large Pashtun population became the part of its territory by the demarcation of the Durand line by India's foreign secretary Sir Henry Mortimer Durand. After the partition of India and Pakistan, this Pashtun population was demanding to have a separate nation called 'Pashtunistan'. Afghanistan was supporting them but Pakistan didn't want that at any cost. To make its military stronger, Afghanistan approached America to buy arms and for other economic assistance in the early 1950s. But America refused to give any sort of assistance to Afghanistan when Afghanistan refused to become a member of the anti-communist Baghdad Pact of 1955. This pact was the military alliance of the Cold War to halt the incursions of the communist in the Middle East. Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and the UK were the members of the pact. After the refusal of Afghanistan to become its member, the Soviet Union took the advantage and promised to provide all sorts of assistance to Afghanistan. Soviet supplied huge arms, tanks, airplanes, and the other technical aids to Afghanistan. Because of the Pashtunistan issue and uprisings, the relation between Pakistan and Afghanistan deteriorated. It also became later the cause of the Cold War rivalry. Taking the advantage of the tense political relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, America started using Pakistan for its supremacy and to prevent the Russian influence over Afghanistan. Now, America was supporting Pakistan and the Soviet Union was supporting Afghanistan. Human Rights Watch

asserts that “After World War II, both the US and the Soviet Union used economic assistance to compete for influence. After that America established military ties with Pakistan in 1954 and Afghanistan increasingly turned to Soviet Union support” (n.pag.).

In Afghanistan King Zahir Shah was ousted by his cousin Daoud Khan in 1973. Daoud allied himself with the Marxist-Leninist party of Parcham faction which was known as People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which was formed in 1965. Later, this party was split in two factions Parcham and Khalq. Former had the support of the educated and urban Pashtuns and some other ethnic groups, while later was supported by rural educated Afghans. Mohammad Daoud Khan in 1973 abolished the monarchy. He declared Afghanistan a republic nation with himself as its president by constituting a new constitution. The new constitution in Afghanistan brought more political instability later in the country. Hence, the new government in Afghanistan was formed. The new government embarked on a campaign of radical land reforms, women empowerment and the other unprecedented developments. It was done through the targeting killings of political figures, religious leaders, the leaders of the Islamic organizations and of the members of minority ethnic groups especially of Hazaras. All these new and unprecedented political developments led to the widespread uprisings and killings in Afghanistan. Afghan’s traditional elite which believed that most of the policies of the government were anti-Islamic. So, the war started between them and in clashes lots of killings took place. In 1977 the two factions of PDPA reunited and Daoud Khan was killed in a coup in 1978. Thereafter, the formation of new communist government and Afghanistan was declared as 'Democratic Republic'. Common people were happy with the communist government. They feel that now there would be equality in every field and hoping that there would be a classless society. Such kind of thesis was made by the new government among the people of Afghanistan by the direction of the Soviet Union. But later on, the rebirth of the old rivalry between Khalq and Parcham brought more instability and insurgencies in the country. Alarmed by the terrible situation in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union airlifted thousands of troops into Kabul on Dec. 24, 1979.

Another coup took place in which Hafizullah Amin, a strong man of the Soviets toppled Daoud Khan regime. Nur-Mohammed Tariki, mentor of Hafizullah Amin became the party leader, the president and the prime minister of The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Amin became as his deputy prime minister, who was not happy and wanted to have more powers in the new government, which caused many exacerbating political unrests. Soviet Union didn’t want to see Amin in power so they advised Tariki to do something and an attempt was made to assassinate Amin. But Amin cleverly saved himself and later Tariki

was killed in the violence on 14 Sep. 1979. Amin tried to make relations with Pakistan and America, which Soviet Union never wanted at any cost. So, on 24 December 1979 Soviet forces themselves reached in Afghanistan. After their entry, they formed new government headed by Babrak Karmal, a Parchami leader who was made as president of the new government. But his government in Afghanistan failed to fulfill the expectations of the rural Afghanistan. Lots of uprisings took place and to suppress them, Karmal government arrested, tortured and executed the dissents in the countryside. But these measures couldn't help to prevent the insurgency. Many peace-loving people left the country to the other neighboring countries. It is estimated that out of sixteen million population, five million had left the country during this period. Soon, the Soviets took control all over the cities with the help of its strong military. But due to the tough geographical conditions, it was not easy to control hilly and rural areas where there were no roads but only big mountains. So, they couldn't capture the rural areas and these areas were still under the control of different warlords and their ideologies. Afghans didn't want to live under the control of the Soviets. Meanwhile, Pakistan and America were also encouraging anti-Soviet activities in Afghanistan. When the Soviet Union invaded the country lots of people had to leave their native places to save their lives in the other countries. There was the war between the Soviets and Afghan forces. They were fighting to defeat each other for their own political purpose but the conflict increased the sufferings of common Afghans. Many people were leaving their land for refugee camp Peshawar and other neighboring countries to save their lives.

The war continued between the Russian soldiers and the Islamist organizations collectively known as the *jihad* fighters or Mujahedeen. During the period, there was the emergence of Arabs in Afghanistan. They were from different countries, and seeing the killings and sufferings of the Afghan people, Arabs came to fight against the Soviet. They motivated all Afghani people of different factions to fight collectively against the Soviet. Condemning that the Soviet were atheist and they didn't have any religion. The Mujahedeen leaders made a narrative to unite the people of Afghanistan. They made the Afghan people believe that Afghanistan might come under their influence. To save their religion, some warlords gathered and motivated people of all sections to fight against the Soviet by raising the slogan '*dharmik yodh*' which means holy war (*Jihad*). The fighters who were involved in this war against the Soviet came to be known as Mujahedeen. So, all those people who were fighters or those who were taking part in this holy war to save Islam against the Soviet, they came to be known as Mujahedeen. They were supported by all the major Muslim countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, etc. Seeing the conflict as battleground, the United

States in particular, provided massive support for the resistance to the Mujahedeen, nearly all of it funneled through Pakistan. America was supplying huge money and arms to Afghanistan through Pakistan to make these Islamic movements stronger and to demolish the Soviet Union. Mujahedeen started *guerrilla* warfare against the strong Soviet. This was called '*shapamar yodh*' means firing secretly from the mountains on the convoy or the group of people.

Many people had lost their lives during this fight between the Soviets and Mujahedeen. Neither Soviet was able to get their control over Afghanistan's mountainous areas nor could Mujahedeen get its control in urban areas which were under the control of the Soviets. A young Saudi lad named Osama bin Laden and some other leaders also reached there to support Mujahedeen. In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became the general secretary of Soviet Union and brought some reforms, who decided to pull back his army. Soviet gradually started taking back its army. The Soviet backed government was formed in Afghanistan led by Mohammad Najibullah. Najibullah changed the tactics by presenting himself as a devoted Muslim and intended to work for the welfare of the people of Afghanistan. Many times, he tried to settle the issue with rebellious mujahedeen but they balked knowing the reality of Najibullah and his followers. Finally, he had to surrender in April 1992, just after one year following the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan. America stopped its funding to mujahedeen because now America knew that the Soviets had become powerless. So, America didn't want to spend its money on anti-Soviet activities particularly in Afghanistan. Now, America has shifted its attention from Cold War to the Gulf War in the 1990s. America had fear that if Iraq took its control over Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Iraq could become the greater power by taking control on oil production. So again, America fought to maintain its supremacy.

After the departure of the USSR all different warlords who were fighting collectively against the Soviets now started fighting with each other for power. Even some leaders of Mujahedeen who were fighting for their religion against the Soviet, they were also involved in this race of power gaining. That was not the Mujahedeen's actual purpose in the initial stage of the movement against the Soviet. So, now within the country different warlords of various sects started fighting for the power. Now, the civil war began in Afghanistan known as the Afghan Civil War (1989-1996). On the other hand, the USSR kept supplying lots of money to the Najibullah government. But after its complete collapse in 1991, the Najibullah government also collapsed in 1992. Leaders of different ethnic groups were trying to capture different areas, resulted lots of killings and bloodshed took place during the period of the

Afghan Civil War (1992-1996). Because of the fighting among the Mujahedeen factions, people were leaving their country to other neighboring countries like Tehran, Pakistan, Iran, etc., to save themselves and their families. Human Rights Watch labeled the situation in Kandahar "particularly precarious"(n.pag.) and noted that "civilians had little security from murder, rape, looting, or extortion; humanitarian agencies frequently their offices stripped of all equipment, and their vehicles hijacked, and their staff threatened" (n.pag.). Millions of people lost their lives and many left the country to save their lives to other countries. After the collapse of the Najibullah government with the support of Pakistan, Mujahedeen decided to make a coalition government but some of the warlords didn't support and they kept on fighting for power till 1996.

The one sect called Taliban, which emerged from the south (base- Kandhar) in 1996 as the largest and most powerful group under the leadership of Mullah Omar. Taliban came into existence for the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan with an extreme form of Islamic ideology by imposing the Sharia law. It was in the backdrop to the long years of fighting that Taliban arose, not only in Afghanistan but also among Afghan refugees and former Mujahedeen studying in *madarisas* (religious colleges) of Pakistan. They were supported and backed by Pakistan mainly because of the Pashtunian issue and by the setback of losing Bangladesh in 1971. Now Pakistan didn't want any national security threat at least not from Afghanistan. Soon they took control over most of the areas of Afghanistan by defeating the different warlords except the northern alliance led by Ahmed Sha Masoud and Dostum. Some ethnic groups were considering Taliban as a danger for their community. By 2001, Taliban got their control over northern part by the assassination of northern alliance leader Masoud on Sep. 9, 2001 before two days of the 9/11 attack. During their rule of five years, they imposed strict *Sharia* law. Under this law, there was the worst condition of Afghan people. They banned on all kinds of entertainment sources like sports, music, dance, movie etc. Women had no education right or free movement without male companion under this sharia law. Taliban destroyed all the monuments in the name of Islam.

In Afghanistan, during the rule of Taliban they gave shelter to Al-Qaeda which was another international network of terrorist group. They, like the Taliban didn't want to restrict themselves to a particular territory. They wanted to spread the extremist form of Islamic ideology around the world. Their leaders were Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri. Al-Qaida was different from the Taliban in certain ways. The Taliban came into existence with Islamic ideology and by making rules to get their control on Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda didn't want to restrict itself within a single territory. On 9/11/2001 four planes were hijacked by Al-

Qaeda terrorists and two of them flew into the twin towers, one of the tallest buildings of the world. The planes were crashed into the buildings, which killed around 3000 people. This was one of the biggest attacks on the American land. The president George Bush declared war on terror in his speech he said, "either you are with us or against us" (n.pag.). After 9/11 Taliban refused to hand over Bin Laden and even didn't tell anything about Laden to the USA. America attacked Afghanistan and within two months America took its control in Afghanistan. There was the end of Taliban's government in December 2001. The UN Security Council formed an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Many developed countries provided support to fight against terrorism. The purpose of ISAF was to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai was appointed the head of the interim government, who also won the two-time election subsequently in 2004 and 2009. But after 2006 gradually, Taliban started guerrilla attacks from hiding mountains on ISAF and NATO forces. Taliban had got their control on many rural areas and with the passing of each day they were expanding more and more. In May 2011 Osama Bin Laden killed in Pakistan right nearer to Pakistan military academy. But still in Afghanistan, around 20% of its area is under the control of the Taliban.

In October 2014 Ashraf Ghani came into the power as the president of Afghanistan. And in December 2014 ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) transferred all the security duties to Afghanistan. Thereafter, officially the security of the country was not in America's hands but in the hands of Afghanistan's forces. Only few number of their army personnels were there to guide and train Afghanistan's forces. After the departure of foreign forces, a great number of Taliban had become more powerful and their attacks on the Afghan forces increased. Moreover, they were also able to get their control on more areas of Afghanistan, which caused worries for the Afghan government. So, on 29 February 2020 Taliban and the USA signed an agreement for peace in Afghanistan. It was decided that within the next 14 months all army of America and the NATO would be withdrawn from Afghanistan. Afghanistan's army itself would take care of its nation. It was decided that Taliban would not further involve in terror activities and won't give any support to terrorist groups like Al-Qaida. But even after an agreement Taliban was still involved in attacks on Afghanistan's forces and on American and the NATO forces. Such escalation of violence by Taliban in Afghanistan has been widely criticized. Keeping in view all these things, the new American president Joe Biden's administration revisited the Doha deal with the Taliban mainly of withdrawing the US troops from Afghanistan. America decided to withdraw completely in 2021 and soon after their withdrawal Taliban got its control on Afghanistan.

Taliban entered in Kabul on 15 August 2021 caused great fear, anxiety and uncertainty across the country especially among women and non-Pashtun population. Taliban declared Afghanistan as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan by replacing the former name the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Taliban's spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid, announced the first list of 33 members who were included in the Taliban's new government. In the cabinet, Taliban's leader Haibatullah Akhundzada has been declared as Amir (head of the state) and he is the acting prime minister of the Afghanistan and Abdul Ghani Baradar is the acting deputy prime minister. Akhundzada was the governor of Kandhar and the minister in the 1990s government of Taliban. All the members who are in Taliban's caretaker cabinet are the great loyalists of Taliban and working with them for the last twenty years. Decades of war has turned the country into one of world's poorest and least developed one. Many organizations and developed countries funding to assist Afghanistan but heavy corruption in the government sector increased illiteracy and poverty in the country.

Brief overview of Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi

Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965) was born in Kabul, Afghanistan. He passed his childhood days in the middle-class Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood in Kabul. His parents were basically from Herat, Afghanistan. His father had a job as a diplomat for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his mother was a teacher of the Persian language. Hosseini had a great passion for reading books. Since his childhood days, he used to read a large number of Persian Poems. He used to read the poems of Sufis such as Rumi, Omar Khayyam, Abdul Qadir Bedil, Hafez, and Persian translation of Jack London's *White Fang* which influenced his youthful imagination. His phenomenal interest in reading Persian poets has also been depicted by him in his novels. When Khaled was a small child his family left the country because of the turmoil conditions in Afghanistan and applied for political asylum in the United States when he was fifteen. After getting his graduate degree he worked as a doctor in California. He practiced medicine for ten years but he left this profession after the publication of his first novel *The Kite Runner* in 2003. Despite the distance from the country's chaos and conflicts, the family was very much familiar with the miserable conditions of their country's people in the hands' various cruel rulers. The picture of tyrannical rulers has been portrayed by Khaled in his writing. Hosseini with his wife Roya Hosseini and two children Haris and Farah lives in Northern California. His other famous works are *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013).

Atiq Rahimi is another Afghan-French writer and filmmaker born in Kabul in 1962. He did his schooling in Afghanistan but during the Soviet invasion he left Afghanistan. He

stayed in Pakistan for a year and then shifted to France in 1985. Thereafter the completion of his studies he joined a Paris based production company and he produced seven documentaries for French television. He produced his first book in 2000 named *Earth and the Ashes* originally written in Dari, and became the best seller in Europe and South America. Later, he himself directed a movie on this book. He has a great passion for photography after 17 years of exile when he came back to his country after the Taliban's fall in 2002 and took many pictures of Kabul with 150 year old box camera. In 2008 his first book in French language named *Syngue Sabour*, translated into English as *The Patience Stone* won France most prestigious literary prize, Prix Goncourt. His other famous works are *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2002) and *A Curse on Dostoevsky* (2013).

The novels of both these writers are based on Afghanistan and the main events in these novels are also present the socio- political conditions of Afghanistan during the period of 1970s to the early 2000s. The chosen texts cover all the major and minor social-political developments in history of Afghanistan. The major political developments which have been textualized by the chosen writers in their works are: beginning with the fall of monarchy in 1973, internal conflicts between Khalq and Percham (two political wings of the same political party PDPA), Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, beginning of the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989), withdrawal of Soviets from Afghanistan in 1989, Afghan Civil War (1992-1996), formation of the Taliban's government in 1996, emergence of ethnic conflicts especially between Pashtuns and Hazaras, gender conflicts, increasing of violence against women, Al-Qaida's attack on World Trade Centre of America on 9/11/2001 and America's declaring war on terror, the fall of the Taliban's government and America's political entry in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attack.

Conclusion

This chapter seamlessly explores Michel Foucault's concept that where there is power there is resistance by discussing the views of Marxist and postmodern thinkers to understand the dynamics of power and conflict. The study also explores the concept of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis to depict that the conflict is an unending process in general and Afghanistan in particular. It studies that how the power and conflict are interrelated to each other. It further explores the concept of politics of power by taking various instances from the history, particularly from the Cold War Period (1947-1989) period and then moving forward to the socio-political history of Afghanistan. Various historical events and their causes and effects have been discussed in detail from the beginning of the Cold War (1947- 1989) to the present time to have a clear understanding of the dynamics of power and conflict. Subsequently, the

present chapter discusses the history of Afghanistan in detail, and how it has been the hub of power politics since 1970s. The chapter also examines the role of politics of power to give rise to the social, political, religious and cultural conflicts in Afghanistan. It depicts that both power and conflict are interrelated and work together.

The chapter discusses the role of the power politics to escalate both external and internal conflicts in Afghanistan. The present chapter focuses on the recent four decades of social and political history of Afghanistan to depict how the power politics has made Afghanistan the country of power conflicts. Moreover, the chapter explores the causes of internal conflicts in Afghanistan. The chapter shows the prime cause of internal conflict is socially and political marginalization of the non-Pashtun population. Afghanistan's population is mainly divided into fourteen main ethnic groups on the basis of their social, religious, and ideological differences. Among such ethnic groups only Pashtuns have dominated the country both politically and culturally. So, only Pashtuns remain in power and the others feel deviated and denied socially and politically. The non-Pashtun population always resists the policies of government which are made by few and for the few.

The chapter further explores the conflict theorists' ideas to fulfill the research objectives. The chapter examines that it is the social order and socio-political structure which create conflicts in the society. The chapter depicts that the Afghanistan of before 1970s was relatively more peaceful than the Afghanistan of post-1970s. Before 1970s, it was the time of monarchy in Afghanistan and few people were the part of the mainstream politics. After the intervention of the Soviets, Afghanistan's political system changed completely. Many new political parties came into existence. After the coming new constitution of 1964 the interest of common masses increased in politics. Before that they were absolutely deprived of their socio-political rights because of the monarchy in Afghanistan. After the ending of monarchy in 1973 Daoud Khan's People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came into power which gave political rights to the minorities and women of Afghanistan by establishing new policies. So, such kinds of new constitutional steps helped the common masses to shift from absolute deprivation to the relative deprivation. Now, the marginalized people started comparing themselves with the elite class of Afghanistan and started raising the questions on the established social and political structure of the country. They were demanding the equal rights and opportunities which brought more conflicts in Afghanistan. So, in this way the chapter explores the idea of Karl Marx's theory of Dialectical Materialism in which he explores the concept of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis to explain the causes of conflict. The present chapter applies the views of Karl Marx to explain the causes and effects

of various socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan. The chapter depicts that the contradictions and limitations in each new political development have given birth to the antithesis which not only become the cause of conflicts but also bring the major change in the socio-political structure of Afghanistan.

The chapter primarily explores the ideas of major conflict theorists, which are as follows; Karl Marx (1818-1883), Lewis Coser (1913- 2003), Randall Collins (b. 1941) and Ralph Dahrendorf (1929- 2009). Hence, the chapter further explores the nature and causes of all kinds of socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan specifically from 1970s onward. The study explores the idea of Lewis Coser that conflict is always goal oriented and it is the goal which decides the intensity of conflict and the level of violence. In Afghanistan all the conflicts either at small scale or at large scale have been fought with a goal. No conflict has taken place in vacuum. The study analyzes the causes and effects of all the socio-political conflicts from 1970s to 2001 by critically analyzing the chosen works of selected contemporary Afghan writers named Atiq Rahimi (b. 1962) and Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965). The chosen texts cover all the major and minor social-political developments in the history of Afghanistan. The major socio-political developments which have been the part of the study are as follows: the fall of monarchy in 1973, internal conflicts between Khalq and Parcham (two political wings of the political party PDPA), Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, beginning of the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989), withdrawal of Soviets from Afghanistan, Afghan Civil War (1992-1996), Taliban's government in 1996, emergence of ethnic conflicts especially between Pashtuns and Hazaras, gender conflicts, increasing of violence against women, Al-Qaida's attack on World Trade Centre of America on 9/11/2001 and America's declaring war on terror followed by the fall of the Taliban's government and America's entry in Afghanistan. Moreover, by studying and analyzing all these Afghanistan's socio-political developments and conflicts the study also explores the idea of Randall Collins (b. 1941) that to intensify the conflict and run it for a longer period of time the groups which are involved in conflict need to have the balance of both emotional and material resources. Ending up of the material and emotional resources means the intensity of conflict would be reduced. The chapter also depicts that the sense of moral rightness is also the main tool behind the motivation of any conflict. So, in this way the study proves that how the conflict is an integral part of the society and every conflict has both positive and negative outcomes and to avoid high intensified internal conflicts religion should not mix with politics. So, the conclusion of the first chapter ends here.

Chapter 2

Changing Paradigms of Power: Conflicts, Negotiation and Growth

Kabul woke the next morning to find that monarchy was the thing of past. The king, Zahir Shah, was away in Italy. In his absence, his cousin Daoud Khan had ended the king's forty-year reign with a bloodless coup.

Khaled Hosseini (34)

Paradigm of the power means how does the power work or how it is established. The paradigm means a model or an example that shows how something works or is produced. It can also be defined as a very clear or typical example of something. The present chapter deals at length with all those political developments and historical events which depict how the power has been produced and how it has worked in Afghanistan from 1970s to 2001. The present chapter depicts the paradigms of the power in Afghanistan's context through the analysis of Khaled Hosseini's (b. 1965) novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). Through the critical analysis of the novel the chapter shows that since 1970s the political power has been kept shifting from one group to another. In Afghanistan the results have been both positive and negative of this power shifting process. The chapter discusses all those positive and negative outcomes of all the social and political developments and their effects on Afghanistan. The *Cambridge English Dictionary*, defines paradigm as "a set of theories that explain the way a particular subject is understood at a particular movement" ("Paradigm" n.pag.). An American philosopher, Thomas Kuhn (1922- 1996), defines paradigm "as a way of viewing the world (or analytic lens akin to a set of glasses) and a framework from which to understand the human experience" (n.pag.). Every society or political organization functions on the basis of certain ideas, beliefs, and assumptions which ultimately give shape to the people's thinking and their belief system. With the passage of time, the assumptions may change for the given social phenomena. The changing assumptions or discourses are usually called the paradigm shift. With the advancement in other things, the nature of power has also changed. The power has always been used to suppress others or to dominate others by using various means of power. These means of power could be used in the form of physical strength: or to be realized by military, economic power, political power, arms power, and the power of natural resources. Then, the alliances are also made to become diplomatically strong and powerful. Since the dawn of human civilization, human being has made enormous progress in science and technology, but there has been no change in the nature of human being. Throughout the

history of mankind, people have always struggled for power and to become more powerful. It is the struggle for power which has spawned to the myriad forms of conflicts in the human history. Conflict is defined by The *Cambridge English Dictionary*, as “an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles” (“Conflict” n.pag.). The disagreement among the different factions of society is a common phenomenon. The structure of the society is formed in such a way that all people don’t get equal resources or powers at one time. At the same time, majority of the people in the society feel deviated and denied from the certain social and political rights. The feeling of disparity and deviation among the less powerful or socially oppressed further give birth to unrests, agitation, riots, revolutions and resentments against the established social and political system. The disparity may be in between rich vs. poor, higher vs. lower class, higher vs. lower caste; man vs. women and white vs. black, major ethnic group vs. minor ethnic one, and so on. The disparity fueled revolutions and unrests which are done to bring the change in the established socio-political structure of the society.

Every country has a population size with multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-tribes, and with the people of multi-ethnic backgrounds. The social, political, and economic diversity is formed on the basis of different ideologies, beliefs, myths, and social norms. No ruler or government can satisfy to all the sections of the population, because of the variations in people’s interests. Moreover, the political parties which don’t have political power provoke people by politicizing various social issues to raise them against the ruling government. Their purpose is not always to solve the problems of marginalized people but to gain power by staging protests and revolutions against the ruling government. The structure of the society is set up in such a way that people are divided on the basis of class, status, and power. To acquire these three people struggle which subsequently give birth to the competition and then conflict in the society. So, it is evident that power is the offshoot of conflict or conflict is the offshoot of power. Thus, concluding that both the power and conflict are closely interlinked and are integral part of every society. Power is exercised either in a coercive way or by persuasion. Conflict theorist Paul Randolph (b. 1968) in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016), takes the reference of Bernard S. Mayer’s (b. 1946), to explain the inseparable relation of power and conflict in his book *The Dynamics of Conflict* (2012). Mayer defines power as “the currency of conflict” (qtd. in Randolph 72). Such kind of social structure is th eunavoidable part of the society and plays important role in the formation of society. The other basic and principal rule of any government or ruler is to satisfy its people by fulfilling their demands through negotiation or to avoid any major conflict. The *Cambridge*

English Dictionary defines negotiation as “the process of discussing something with someone in order to reach an agreement with them, or discussions themselves” (“Negotiation” n.pag.). Acquiring power to retain it for a longer period of time is the ultimate aim of any government or ruler to prevent the conflict to get more violent. So, this sort of government negotiates with opposition groups to fulfill their demands. It is justified to say that all the successful governments find ways to solve things through negotiations and dialogues. Governments which are able to address the social problems of the oppressed and marginalized people through negotiations usually stay in power for a longer duration. Successful dialogues and negotiations to solve socio-political issues of its fellow citizens are the main ways for the growth and development of any nation.

The chapter deals with the changing paradigms of power resulting in social and political conflicts in Afghanistan. Different governments and external powerful forces have played with the emotions of Afghanistan for their own benefits. The chapter further discusses at length explaining how all the world powers failed to normalize the social and political situation in Afghanistan since 1970s to till date. Afghanistan has been the hub for the world powers because of its geographical location. It is a landlocked country, sharing its borders with three central Asian countries namely Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan while concomitantly sharing its borders also with Iran, Pakistan, and China. All the central Asian countries are located mainly to its north, Iran is located to its West, and China is situated to its northeast. Most of its east and south territory has a border of Pakistan. The political scientists and scholars believe that its geographical location has always been the main cause of chaos and conflict in the country. Thomas Barfield (b. 1935) writes in his book *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (2010) that:

During its premodern history of today’s Afghanistan was conquered and ruled by foreign invaders. Indeed, it had a positively magnetic attraction for conquerors, not because they coveted the wealth of Afghanistan, but rather because of Afghan territory gave them access to more prosperous places like India, Central Asia, or because it gave them control of regional trade routes . . . (66)

Because of Afghanistan’s important geographical location, it has been the battleground for some external powers. The social and political situation within the country has been majorly affected and dominated by the political policies of external forces. The major political shift in the social, political and cultural life of Afghanistan took place in 1973 and since then it has been a politically conflict zone. King Zahir Shah was ousted by his cousin Daoud Khan in 1973, and allied himself with the Marxist-Leninist party of Parcham faction known as

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) which was formed in 1965. Later, this party was split into two factions Parcham and Khalq. The former had the support of educated and urban Pashtuns and some other ethnic groups, and the later got the support of rural educated Afghans. The political system of Afghanistan changed completely after the bloodless coup of 1973 when Daoud Khan came into power. Daoud Khan (1909-1978) was born in Musahiban royal family, but renounced the royal title. When Daoud Khan came into power, he declared himself as the president of the country not shah or king like the previous rulers did. It was the major political shift in the history of Afghanistan, because it was the major step to end the dynastic politics in Afghanistan. He wanted to have more decentralized form of government. He exhorted that he would work for all the people and for the all ethnic groups. So, he was the one who wanted to channelize the power in a more positive way. In the beginning of his regime, people accepted him whole- heartedly. He made his government by forming a thesis that he would work for the nation irrespective of any ethnicity or provincialism. That was one of the reasons he renounced the royal title to make people feel that he didn't want to work for his clan or family. It was the first time in Afghan history that at every corner of the country, politics had become the major subject of daily discussions. He brought major social reforms in the country's development. Later, he faced resistance because the antithesis was created against him that he wanted to make Afghanistan like other western countries. People in the countryside who were following *mullahs* (religious leaders) believed that through such initiatives by Daoud Khan, Islam could be in danger. So, they started protesting against him and his government. Gradually, massive demonstrations took place not only in Kabul, but in all other major cities of Afghanistan. The increasing enmity between the two cold war rivals also considered as one of the reasons of such political chaos and confusion in Afghanistan. Human Rights Watch asserts that "After World War II, both the US and the Soviet Union used economic assistance to compete for influence. After, the US established military ties with Pakistan in 1954, Afghanistan increasingly turned to Soviet Union support" (n.pag.). It was believed that Daoud Khan was diplomatically a strong leader. When he tried to make good relations with America, the USSR considered it as a danger to its existence in Afghanistan, and to its policy of expansionism in the Central Asia. So, the Soviet started supporting to the insurgent groups in Afghanistan financially and with arms as well. Finally, during the Saur Revolution in 1978, Daoud was assassinated. Now, again when Afghanistan had no government in power the conflict started between the two factions of PDPA for power. Hafizullah Amin (1929-1979) became the head of the government but Parcham leaders did not get higher ranks in government, which again gave birth to political conflict. Increasing protests and conflicts in Afghanistan became the source of worries for the

Soviet. The Soviet was indirectly supporting to the PDPA, but conflicts among the leaders of PDPA alarmed the Soviet. So, to pacify the situation Soviet arrived in Afghanistan with its own army in December, 1979. They believed that Hafizullah Amin had contacts with America and he was the root cause of all the unrests in the country. So, he was executed shortly after the Soviets entry in Afghanistan. Following his execution, a meeting was held between the leaderships of both Khalq and Parcham factions. Here the major decisions were taken in the meeting. Karmal was made the head of the Soviet backed government in Afghanistan. All these major events in Afghanistan have been textualized by Khaled Hosseini in his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). The major political developments and historical events such as the increasing of Soviet's political and cultural influence in Afghanistan, ten years of Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989), Afghan Civil War (1992-1996). Then, the emergence of the Taliban in 1996 and the fall of Taliban's government soon after the 9/11 attack on America's world trade centre. All these socio-political developments are the part of the discussion in the present chapter through the textual analysis. Moreover, through the analysis of the selected text, the present chapter explores the social, political, and cultural effects of all these political developments.

So, the major developments in the political system of the country have been textualized by Hosseini in his first novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). The setting of the story takes place in between early 1970s to early 2000s. It was the period in the Afghan history when everything got changed unexpectedly and suddenly. It was not the first time when Afghanistan was being ruled by foreigners. Even the great conquerors like Alexander the Great or Mughals ruled on the land of Afghanistan. But they didn't face resistance from inhabitants as the Britishers, Soviets and now Americans faced. They were only attacked by the rival states. During the Cold War (1947-1989), the situation changed completely especially, after the coming of Daoud Khan in power in 1973, and with the emergence of many political parties. During the Soviet's period different social and political organizations came into existence which resulted in the number of conflicts. The socio-political conflicts began between governments vs. non- government, the powerful vs. less powerful, Sunni vs. Shia, modern vs. traditional, and so on. So, in this way Afghanistan became the land of chaos and conflicts. All these major social events and political developments in Afghanistan have been textualized in the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). Increasing of Soviet's influence in Afghanistan, Afghan- Soviet War (1979-1989), the Civil War of Afghanistan (1992-1996), the emergence of Taliban in 1996, 9/11 attack in 2001 and America's invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of Taliban's government in 2001 have been the major political

developments in the history of Afghanistan. Through the analysis of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) the chapter explores the social, political, economic and cultural effects of all these political developments in Afghanistan. The setting of the novel is mainly in Afghanistan then shifts to America and Pakistan regularly. The period in which the setting of the novel takes place is between early 1970s to the early 2000s. During this period the country faced lots of chaos, conflicts, and confusion. The main reason of the turmoil and turbulence was the political intervention of foreign forces especially the US and the Soviet in the internal socio-political affairs of the Afghanistan. The chapter further discusses that the political ways through which power was used by the different governments and rulers in both positive and negative ways.

Undoubtedly, Afghanistan suffered because of the long time fighting between two rivals (the USSR and the US) of the Cold War. But at the same time Afghanistan was also benefited by the political presence of the Soviets and America. That is also true and acceptable that Afghanistan between the World War II to the early 1970s was relatively more stable and free from any major political conflicts. During this time the development and education level was very low in the country. The protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) is Amir, a young lad from Wazir Akbar Khan district of Kabul. He narrates the whole story in reminiscence mood. He narrates all the events of Afghan history during the specific period in which the setting of the novel has taken place. He discusses all those events and their positive and negative consequences on Afghanistan. Edward Hower, an editor from *The New York Times* analyzed *The Kite Runner* as “the Portrayal of Afghanistan before and after the Taliban” (n.pag.). The story begins in a reminiscent mood in 2001. Amir is in America, where he receives a phone call from his old childhood friend, mentor and fatherly figure Rahim Khan, who was also a close friend of Amir’s father Baba. He used to be the regular visitor at the house of Amir when he lived in Afghanistan during his early childhood days. Amir remembers that how Rahim Khan used to motivate him for his writing.

Now, Rahim Khan is on his deathbed and tells Amir that “there is a way to be good again” (2). He requests him to come to Peshawar to save Hassan’s son Sohrab from Taliban. On phone call, Rahim Khan tells him all about which he and his people have faced in Afghanistan during these last twenty years. Then the story shifts in the past. Rahim Khan tells that Hassan and his wife have been killed by Taliban when they refused to leave Baba’s house. Hassan’s father was killed in a land mine. Rahim Khan discloses the secret to Amir that Hassan was Baba’s illegitimate son with Ali’s wife, which means he was a half-brother of Amir. So, it’s now the duty of Amir to go to Peshawar refugee camp and save Hassan form

Taliban. After this phone call, Amir presently living in America remembers each and everything of his childhood days, and the story shifts to the past, to the early 1970s Afghanistan. By shifting the setting of the story the writer tries to present the pre-war and post-war Afghanistan. Amir recalls his childhood days in Kabul with his friends and his family. Amir in the opening chapter of the book states that “I thought of the life I had lived until the winter of 1975 came along and changed everything. And made me what I am today” (2). Through his character and his communication with other characters the writer develops the plot of the story. Author of the novel has portrayed the reality through fictitious characters and by describing the real events. The novel helps the readers to know the Afghan people’s life within the country or outside of the country.

Amir cherishes the memories of his childhood days in peaceful Kabul. He remembers those joyful days in Afghanistan with Hassan in the kite fighting tournament and other local games. No doubt, the Kabul of his childhood days was relatively very peaceful. Illustrating the situation of 1960s, when Amir was in his early years of life. He remembers the days of picnic, and such days never came after that in his life. He remembers that “we sat at a picnic table on the banks of the lake. . . . On Fridays, the lake was bustling with families out for a day in the sun . . .” (14). So, those were the worth-living days in Afghanistan according to Amir. Amir remembers the poetic culture of Afghanistan; even the layman knew the famous poetic lines without knowing the poets names. Wherever, people gathered they used to recite poetry. Even in school he remembers that “we used to play a game called *Sherjangi*, or battle of poems” (18). His team always won that competition in the school. Because, at the age of eleven he had read everything from Rumi, Hafez, Khayyam and other famous poets which was taught in his school. Amir’s father Baba was a rich businessman and who spent some money on charity like aiding poor people, giving employments to them, and so on. He had also constructed orphanage for the poor and orphan children of Afghanistan. In terms of economy and development, Afghanistan was not too sound during that time, but people were happy and enjoying with their families. They lived close to nature and more than ninety percent people were dependent on Agriculture. In the year 1970, after taking break from construction of the orphanage “Baba flew to Tehran for a month to watch the world cup games on television, since at the time Afghanistan didn’t have TVs yet” (19). In the year 1975 when Hassan and Amir were playing with snow in the winter, Amir listened on radio that Daoud Khan was talking about the foreign investment. He told Hassan that the President is saying that “someday we will have television in Kabul” (53). So, through it writer Khaled Hosseini tries to present the low level of development that took place in Afghanistan. The

writer reflects that even in the early nineteen seventies Afghanistan was without TV and electricity. Amir says that the most precious thing which Afghan people had, that were peace and freedom. They had the freedom to visit any part of Afghanistan, freedom to work according to their will, freedom to follow their culture, religion and social life without any external disturbance. The common Afghan was hardly worried about getting education and about the development of the nation. Majority of the people lived nomadic life and after long day's herding of their sheep and animals, they enjoyed their family life. They used to celebrate different religious and cultural festivals with great zeal and enthusiasm. Amir illustrates it with an example of New Year's celebrations "I remember one time Baba took me to the yearly *Buzkashi* tournament that took place on the first day of spring, New Year's Day. *Buzkashi* was, and still is, Afghanistan national passion . . ." (20).

Before Daoud Khan's regime even during the Musahiban rule (1929-1978), which was begin with king Nadir Shah in the year 1931, who was assassinated by his son Zahir Shah. Amir says "in 1933, the year Baba was born and the year Zahir Shah began his forty-year reign of Afghanistan . . ." (23). On the same day the father and mother of Ali were killed by a drunk driver through his car. Ali was just five-year-old left alone and brought at home by Amir's grandfather who had close ties with king Nadir Shah. In his house in one of the living rooms in Kabul, among many family pictures there was the picture of King Nadir Shah with his (Amir) grandfather. The picture was taken in 1931, just two years before king's assassination. During the period, King Zahir Shah's kingship, he appointed the members of his own family like his son, cousins, and his brother-in-law etc., on all important political positions. It was the culture of dynastic politics and rulers' rules were ended either with the natural death or by the conspiracy against the ruler by one of his own family members to dethrone him. In such system, the main powers were vested with the king only. He had some confidential ministers who helped him to take all important decisions. So, there was no scope of common man in politics or to get power. So, the people didn't take much interest in politics. They kept themselves busy with their own things. Even the kings of Afghanistan were familiar only in major cities. People in the countryside had nothing to ask for from the king. If one goes to the past during the Turko-Parsian rule in Afghanistan, people didn't go against their Muslim rulers. The consequences of going against any ruler meant to create *fitna* (sedition, disorder or civil war). In the words of Thomas Barfield, who writes in his book *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (2010) about that time that "In the Islamic legal tradition, rebellion against an established Muslim ruler by his subjects was illegitimate because it created *fitna*." (74). But, in the twenty first century such Islamic legal tradition had

no value. Hosseini in the novel *The Kite Runner* has presented this political shift in Afghanistan through his novel. Now, even Muslims have divided into various factions and they are fighting with each other for political power. Moreover, in the past there was no sense of nationalism among the people for their country. There was no concept of nationalism and which helped the rulers to stay in power for longer period of time to fulfill their own political interests. There was the complete absence of such notions as patriotism, resistance, or consent in those days' politics. But, during the cold war these notions were used as the political tools for waging wars against the enemy by major powers. Now, even religion has also become a strong force to unite the people for gaining some political purpose. Thomas Barfield goes back to the history of Afghanistan and talks about the first Anglo- Afghan War (1839), he writes in his book *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (2010), that "until 1840 religion had played a minor role in internal Afghan politics because fighting had always been Muslim on Muslim . . ." (122). But with the coming of Britishers, the religion was made as a weapon to fight against Britishers and then the politics of Afghanistan started changing, because Thomas Barfield says:

The interaction with the British had ended up strengthening the *Durrani* state and the elite who ran it, but at the same time it changed the nature of the relationship between the population and the central government. Part of this change can be explained in terms of the military technology available to both central government and the rural population. It made rebellions far more dangerous than they had been in the past. The other change was the growing participation in politics by no elite groups in the face of foreign intervention, which forced existing governments to make new calculations about what types of politics they should pursue. (130)

Before that, only the elite class and its certain people had the right to rule in the country and it was supposed that only they could compete for power. This is one of the reasons as in the history one can see that in the past fights for power always took place between the prince vs. prince or the king vs. king. The victory was their ultimate aim to be successful in politics and sometimes political alliances were made for victory. One's victory made his power legitimate. A twelfth-century ruler of Seljuk Iran explained the ordinary people of his time in this way, "they (ordinary people) do not know the language of kings, and any idea either of agreeing with their rulers or of revolting against them is beyond them; all their efforts are devoted to one aim, to acquire the means of existence and maintain wife and children . . ." (qtd in Barfield 75). But, with the passage of time the paradigms of power changed. In the nineteenth century by reaching to the advanced level weapons like cheap muskets and rifle

s in the hands people living in marginal areas have played a vital role to bring a major shift in the political system of Afghanistan. The first Anglo-Afghan war (1838-1842) had played a major role in bringing new political system of the country. It was the first time in the history of Afghanistan that a common and socially and politically marginalized people participated in the war against the foreign forces.

In the history of Afghanistan, the most difficult thing for any ruler in the country was to bring socio-political change in the life of those people who live in the countryside with conservative mindset. If one tries to do that, the people start revolting against the existing king or the government in the name of religion. So, looking back to the history of Afghanistan, one would find out that only those kings have been able to rule for a longer period of time who have not tried to interfere the normal life of conservatives. In Afghanistan about ninety-nine percent population belongs to the Muslim religion. Presently, the population of Afghanistan is divided mainly into two factions; the one which follows the western culture and welcomes the new and modern reforms. The other faction is consisted of those people who are fundamentalists. They follow an extreme form of Islam religion with strict Islamic practices under the framework of Sharia. It is also pertinent to mention that the percentage of liberal people in Afghanistan is very low.

The major shift in Afghan politics took place during the rule of Musahiban rulers; Nadir Shah, Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan. It was the first time when Afghanistan started exporting fruits and lambskins to boost the economy, gradually attracting the foreign investors. Till then, Afghans didn't have much foreign support. Most of the population depended on agriculture and animal husbandry. Only people who were living in Kabul had education and modern standard of living. About eighty to ninety percent population was illiterate and had nothing to take from politics and other modern developments. King Nadir Shah was the one who intelligently used the people of Afghanistan and remained in power for forty years (1933-1973). During this time, there was peace and stability in the country. To maintain peace and stability in the country means to stay in power for longer period of time. King Zahir Shah worked smartly by keeping himself away from traditional thinking people of the countryside. He didn't try to impose modern policies and laws in the rural areas. The picture changed completely soon after the beginning of Daoud Khan's regime in 1973. People of all sections developed their interests in politics. Moreover, it was the period when the colonial countries were getting political independence around the world. Political powers were shifting from elite classes to the common masses. Thomas Barfield rightly remarks in his book *"Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History"* (2010), that "the anti-colonial

movements of the twentieth century in Asia and Africa all asserted the right of resident peoples (or at least their elite) to rule themselves, and declared foreign rule and occupation fundamentally illegitimate . . . (72).

During the last years of Musahiban rulers' rule in the early 1970s, and with the intervention of foreign forces, the political structure of Afghanistan had started changing. The changing in the political structure brought a great shift in the power structure of the country. Due to the Cold War, America and the USSR were fighting without coming face to face with each other. America was providing military and economic aid through Pakistan to fight against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Because, of its geographical location and rich mineral resources Afghanistan had become the battleground between the two cold war rivalries. Both superpowers were trying to win the hearts and minds of the people of Afghanistan by imposing their own ideologies with massive economic and military aids. Before 1960s the percentage of foreign aid was very low. But the amount increased significantly when Afghanistan became the battleground for America and the USSR. According to one estimate, from 1955 to 1978 the USSR provided \$2.50 billion to Afghanistan as economic and military aid. At the same time, America aided \$553 million to Afghanistan. But after the 1978 this amount was increased for Afghanistan more than ten times by both superpowers. Through this massive foreign military and economic support gave birth to the many political organizations and resistance forces in Afghanistan. At the same time, that also increased the level of development in Afghanistan. Then, the USSR felt that the situation was going out of control in Afghanistan because of those unrests and political turbulences, the USSR itself entered in Afghanistan with its own army. Drawing the picture of the time, Amir the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) says that it was the end of Afghanistan's all freedom, and its people's happy life, he says:

The end, the official end, would come first in April 1978 with the communist coup d'état, and then in December 1979, when Russian tanks would roll into the very same streets where Hassan and I played, bringing the death of Afghanistan I knew and marking the start of a still ongoing era of bloodletting. (34)

Amir recalls it was the first time he saw something which he had never seen. In the early morning Baba appeared on the door with the worries, fear was on his face which Amir had never seen before. "Amir! Hassan!" he exclaimed as he ran to us, opening his arms wide. They have blocked all the roads and the telephone didn't work. I was so worried!" (34).

As, after the WW2, America and the Soviet Union came out as superpowers with a huge number of nuclear weapons and strong military powers. They tried to expand their

influence to central Asia and the Middle East, while doing so Afghanistan being in between Central Asia and South Asia became the victim. Comprehensively, wanting to unfurl their power-led-ideologies, Afghanistan reduced to a mere battleground. The Soviet's entry in the country brought more instability and chaos in Afghanistan. After the entry of Soviet forces, they formed a new government. They made Babrak Karmal, (leader of Parchami faction), as president of Afghanistan. Lots of uprisings took place and to suppress them Karmal government arrested, tortured, and executed the dissents in the countryside. But these measures couldn't help to control the insurgency and violence resulted many Afghans left the country to save their lives. It is estimated that out of sixteen million, five million people left the country during this period (Human Rights Watch). Soon, the Soviet took control over the cities and other communication systems too. But because of tough geographical conditions, it was not easy for the Soviet to get control on hilly and rural areas where there were no roads. So, they couldn't capture the rural areas and these areas were still under the control of different Afghan warlords. They didn't want to live under the control of the Soviets. Meanwhile, Pakistan and America were also encouraging and supporting these warlords and encouraging for anti-Soviet activities in Afghanistan for their own interests. Due to insurgencies many people were leaving their land for the refugee camp in Peshawar and some to the other countries.

The war began between the Russian soldiers and Mujahedeen. The narrative was made by the Mujahedeen's leaders that the Soviets were atheist and they didn't have any religion. They made the people of Afghanistan believe that people of Afghanistan might come under the Soviet's influence. To save their religion, some warlords gathered and instigated people of all sections to fight against the Soviets by the raising the slogan "*dharmik yodh*" which means holy war (*Jihad*). All those fighters came to be known as "Mujahedeen" which meant fighters in a holy war (*jihad*). They were supported by all major Muslim countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, etc. Taking an advantage of the situation, the United States provided massive support to the resistance forces, through Pakistan. Mujahedeen started guerrilla warfare against the strong Soviets. This was called "*shapamar yodh*" which means firing secretly from the mountains on the convoy or the group of people. The war continued for ten years. Thousands of people lost their lives during this fight between the Soviets and Mujahedeen during the war of ten years (1979-89). But there were also some positive sides of that chaotic period. During this period adequate work was done for the development of roads, communication, education, health and other infrastructure of the country by the Soviet. Illustrating the condition of Afghanistan before

1978 Kaushik Roy in his book *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2015) commented that:

Before 1978, about 80 percent of the Afghans lived in the villages. Agriculture remained the primary economic activity followed by animal husbandry. In the 1970s, life expectancy was less than 40 years. Only half of the children survived beyond their fifth birthday. The state elite became westernized and established a patrimonial patronage network which radiated from Kabul. The elites' ties to society were based on the largess (acquired from foreign donors) distributed by them. (158)

So, it was the beginning of new political era with new political beliefs and ideologies in the history of Afghanistan. Not only during the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan but even in the past history of Afghanistan, it was quite difficult for the rulers to rule in Afghanistan for longer duration. They had to make their kingship limited to Kabul only. When they would try to expand themselves to countryside in the process of changing the thinking of conservatives, they had to face the resistance. Even many of the times, they had to lose their kingships. So, the smart rulers kept themselves away from the people of countryside to stay in power for maximum duration. The people of countryside were ruled and directed by *mullahs*. These *mullahs* didn't want any kind of new and modern reforms in their areas. Any step towards the modernity perceived by them as it were against Islam. They kept themselves alienated from the urban population in their living standard and daily life. If any ruler forcefully tried to enforce any reform or impose the new ideology, he had to face the strong resistance from the people of countryside. In Afghanistan, more than eighty percent of the population lived in the rural areas. No ruler wanted to take risk of losing his kingship by disturbing their conservative and orthodox lifestyle. The civilized people of Kabul and other posh areas were aware about the ideologies of these *mullahs* and didn't like them. They considered them ignorant and manipulate the rural, ignorant, and illiterate people living in countryside in the name of Islam. Illustrating it, Khaled Hosseini depicts it through the conversation of Amir and his father Baba. Baba tells Amir that "you will never learn anything valuable from those bearded idiots" adding further he says that "God help us all if Afghanistan ever falls into their hands" (16). So, it shows that people who wanted to see Afghanistan as modern and prosperous nation, they didn't like their ideologies. They considered them the obstacle in the path of country's development.

When the Soviet started taking interest in the socio-political affairs of Afghanistan by providing economic and military aids, gradually the political scenario of the country began to change. On January 1965, the communist party came into existence by the name of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The party had two factions; one was Khalq and the

other was Parcham. It was the first time in the history of Afghanistan the people of both rural and urban areas were associated with the politics of the country. The more interesting thing was that people of both the rural and urban areas started developing their interest in politics of the country. The leader of the Parcham faction was Babrak Karmal (1929-96), who was ethnically a Pashtun, who had studied law from Kabul University and by profession he was a lawyer. In his party the most of the people from urban areas and belonged to an intellectual class. They were lesser in percentage because according to one report that in 1978 there were only 11.7% people in Afghanistan who lived in urban areas. Meanwhile, in Khalq faction the people from rural areas were associated and they were more radical. In terms of education, they were least educated in comparison to the people of Parcham factions. The leaders of Khalq faction were Nur Muhammad Taraki (1917-1979) and Hafizullah Amin (1929-1979). Both the leaders were well educated and university degree holders. So, not only the political system of the country was changing but educated people were leading the country from the front, with the intention to change the picture of the nation in a more positive way. There were also other political parties in Afghanistan. Prior 1960s few people were involved in the politics. The period of 1970s was the period of much chaos and conflicts in Afghanistan due to political turmoil, because of the rising of different political parties by following different political ideologies. Now, the culture of dynastic rule had come to an end where only one family would rule for a longer period of time without facing much resistance. For instance, from 1933 to 1973 there was the rule of Musahiban rulers.

It is the fact that when there were few political parties in the political system of the country, the chances of political resistances were very low. But the political picture changed completely when common people start taking interest in the politics and power shifted to the common people from the elite class. Similarly, in 1970s when many parties came into existence in Afghanistan and the resistive forces increased considerably. Leaders of all political parties were trying to attract the people to join their sides by influencing them through their ideologies and criticizing others. They started politicizing issues to fulfill their own interests mainly to gain power. So, the period of nineteen seventies was very crucial in the history of Afghanistan. There was the great shift in the political system of the country. In 1973, there was the end of monarchy following the rising feuds within the ruling elite. The relation between Daoud Khan and the king became more tensed after the wake of the severe draught in the early 1970s in Afghanistan. Many people died and some left the country. Daoud Khan believed that king has betrayed his people by signing a treaty with Iran by giving access to Iran to take water from the river Helmand in such a difficult time of draught

in the country. Moreover, the Pashtun population of Afghanistan was unhappy with the policies of king in their favor, especially his failure to retaliate against Pakistan in dealing with the issue of Pashtunistan. Being a true nationalist Daoud Khan didn't like such neutral policies of the king, so he himself decided to lead the nation. So, it was the first time in Afghanistan's history that Daoud Khan declared himself as the president of the country by denouncing the royal title. Khaled Hosseini has quoted the event in his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) that "Kabul woke the next morning to find that monarchy was the thing of past. The king, Zahir Shah, was away in Italy. In his absence, his cousin Doud Khan had ended the king's forty-year reign with a bloodless coup" (34). Doud Khan was working under king Zahir Shah's kingship but he was disappointed with the policies of the king Zahir Shah. Doud wanted to work for the development of Afghanistan without thinking about himself. So, he brought many social and political reforms during the initial years of his regime. Amir says "For the next couple of years, the word economic development and reform danced on a lot of lips in Kabul . . . For a while, a sense of rejuvenation and purpose swept across the land. People spoke of women's rights and modern technology" (40). It was the time when the life in Kabul seemed more colorful and busier than ever before. People on weekend went for picnics in parks on the banks of Ghargha Lake, in Paghman gardens. They celebrated all their religious and cultural festivals including *Eid*. Amir thought of the day of 1974 when they celebrated the birthday of Hassan, and Baba was very happy on his birthday and gave him surprise gift.

Things in Afghanistan got changed drastically during the early years of Daoud Khan's rule. He significantly inclined to the western countries for the military and financial support which spawned to the resistive forces against him. Amir remembers that in 1976 "I turned thirteen that summer (of 1976), Afghanistan's next to last summer of peace and anonymity . . ." (87). It was the year which brought lots of conflicts and instability in Afghanistan. Chaos and confusion had become the part of life in Afghanistan. People felt insecure everywhere, "The *rafiqs*, the comrades, were everywhere and they'd split Kabul into two groups: those who eavesdropped and those who didn't. The tricky part was that no one knew who belonged to which . . ." (104). All it was happening after the coming of various new political factions in Afghanistan. Nobody knew who was a supporter of which party. It was the time when people of Afghanistan instigated by political leaders of different factions to protest against Daoud Khan's regime and his policies. When protests took violent shape against the ideologies and policies of any government means the fall of the established government was understood and exactly the same happened later in 1978. All these reforms and developments which were

initiated for country's welfare became the cause of the destruction for Daoud's government and his power. Thomas Barfield writes in his book *"Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History" (2010)*, that "anyone proposing to change tradition could therefore be accused of attacking Islam itself . . ." (159). For making development in the country, it is important for any ruler to change the existing structure of the nation. But in the history of Afghanistan, it has been very unfortunate that majority of the people didn't like to move away from their traditional system. The country has been divided more on the basis of ethnicity with different ideologies and political interests. Every ethnic group wants to have more powers in the government and if the one group becomes more powerful than other conspires to dethrone that group. So, the chaos and conflict has continued in Afghanistan and which is still there. The ethnic division has always created problems in the unity of Afghanistan. Every ethnic group lives its life by following different languages, and culture. The politics of the country has been based on ethnicity. Every ethnic group is known for its distinguished traits and physical features as Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan commented on the nature of Pashtun that "Pukhtun with love will accompany you to hell, but with force not even to heaven" (qtd in Najib & Nazes Afroz 20). All these tribal and ethnic divisions are based on religious beliefs which are dissimilar from one ethnic group to the other.

To function, every society or political organization has a thesis on the basis which works to fulfill its desired goals. General thesis in Afghan society before Daoud Khan's regime was that only Pashtuns have the right to rule in the country. The common assumption about them was that they were more superior to other ethnic groups. It was generally believed that Afghanistan was actually the land of Pashtuns. The novel titled *The Kite Runner* (2003) also portrayed such kinds of prejudiced ideas among Pashtuns. For instance, seeing a Hazara boy Hassan, Assef a man who belongs to the Pashtun community says to Amir that "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, no this Flat- Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood" (38). In Afghanistan Hazaras have been exploited badly by the other ethnic groups. Before Daoud Khan's government they even took part equally with other Afghans in all Anglo-Afghan wars or the wars against the other foreign invaders. Despite all their efforts in other socio-political affairs of the country they have never got the equal status and their existence has never been welcomed. Hazaras and other small ethnic groups always demanded to have the equal socio-political status. They always desired to be the part of mainstream politics of the country. These ethnic groups have been denied their social and political rights which are supposed to be one of the causes of internal political conflicts in

Afghanistan. All these ethnic groups have been divided by politically motivated people for their own interests. But gradually these ethnic groups started feeling that they should have equal rights as they were also equally contributing for the nation as Pashtun or Tajik did. So, the clash between thesis and antithesis has always created conflict in Afghanistan. Different rulers have tried to pacify the conflicts through synthesis but even that didn't work for the longer period of time. Paul Randolph (b. 1968) defines these terms while dealing with the conflicts in society in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016) as, "where thesis represents the unity or status quo; antithesis is the challenge to the status quo, and synthesis is the new product resulting from the conflict between the two" (33).

In Afghanistan every ruler is dethroned with the same hope that the next ruler would be better. But whoever came in power, after some time people revolted against him. For instance, when Daoud Khan came to power, people in Afghanistan were very happy with lots of hopes from the new government. The main reason of people's excitement was that Daoud gave them hope that he would treat them equally. But soon people started revolting against him because of his new initiatives to make Afghanistan a modern state. People protested against him and finally he was killed in the Saur Revolution (1978). People didn't accept his policies and considered his policies as against their religion. Then, Hafizullah Amin ascended the throne but later he was also executed by the pro-communist people because they considered him anti-communist. Then the Soviet backed government came in Afghanistan, which was headed by the President Karmal after Daoud Khan. The anti-Soviet group came into existence against Soviet known as Mujahedeen.

Mujahedeen came with an antithesis that the Soviet backed government was anti-Islamic. Finally, Soviet had to leave Afghanistan in 1989. Then, after two years of their departure the Civil War (1992-96) began in Afghanistan which made the condition more horrible. Taliban came into limelight and people of Afghanistan considered them as the solution of the Afghanistan's all problems, but the world had witnessed what they did in Afghanistan. Finally, America came to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan but couldn't succeed and finally left in 2021. Now, again there is conflict between Taliban and anti-Taliban groups. So, this is the way how thesis, antithesis and synthesis worked in Afghanistan and at the same time proving that how the conflict is an unending process not only in Afghanistan but in every society around the world. It is only the nature of every conflict that varies. Same is the conflict theory that argues that society cannot work with consensus and in a harmonious way because conflict is its integral part. It exists because people in the society always compete for limited resources of power. Social struggle is the

part of society and problems in the society are natural and inevitable outcome of this struggle. The people who are in power oppress and exploit the less powerful people. Those who are oppressed, they developed the antithesis which creates more problem in the society.

In Afghanistan the political structure is largely affected by its ethnicity. It is estimated that there are about forty-seven ethnic groups in Afghanistan with their own ways of living and culture. These forty-seven groups are mainly divided into two Islamic sects; Sunni, and Shia. They always fight with each other because of their variations in following Islam. And if the one faction gains political power, he exploits the other by using the power of constitution and military. So, to avoid this the other faction tries to replace the government by staging protests, attacking on government officials, damaging the government's property, destabilizing the peace, by not following government's rules and policies etc. Paul Randolph (b. 1968) argues in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016), that "many disputes are triggered or prolonged as a result of parties' feelings that they have not been listened to properly or at all" (94). Since time immemorial, Pashtuns have been the most dominating ethnic group in Afghanistan in all the fields of social and political life. Even today, they consider themselves as the most superior from other ethnic groups. They believe that they are the true rulers of the country and are born to rule. The major ethnic groups in Afghanistan are Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimaqs, Turkmen, and Baluchi. All these ethnic groups are further subdivided into many other sub groups. As their culture, language and way of living vary, which give birth to the social and political conflicts among them. Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz write in their book *Culture Smart! Afghanistan* (2013) about the ethnic and the cultural diversity of Afghanistan that, "society is organized mainly along ethnic and tribal lines. Most Afghans can recognize what part of the country someone hails from based on his tribe, and identify more with those who share their local language and culture" (18). The tense relationship between the ethnic groups has been illustrated by Khaled Hosseini in his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) through the main characters of the novel like Amir, Hassan, and the antagonist of the novel Assef. Hazaras are the most exploited ethnic group in Afghanistan. Hassan is a Hazara boy who lives with his father as servant in the separate little mud hut in the south side of the house of Amir and Baba. Hazaras are dominated by other ethnic groups in every sector of social and political life. They have no written history as Khaled Hosseini tells it through the character Amir. Amir, one day tries to find the history of Hazaras in his mother's history books. He finds an old book in which a chapter has been dedicated to Hazaras, the Hassan's community. Amir narrates what is written in the book:

I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It is

said the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had quelled them with unspeakable violence. The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes, and sold their women. The book said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a. (9)

Except all these, Hazara people are humiliated by calling with bad names like flat-nosed, mice-eating and with many other names by the other ethnic people of the country. Hassan's father Ali is called by the village children by all such names. Hassan is a Hazara boy and Amir is a Pashtun, they grow up together and were of the same age. They spent their first twelve years of life together. They both play together and but still they were aware about their ethnicity, Amir clearly says that "Hassan and I fed from the same breasts. We took our first steps on the same lawn in the same yard, and under the same roof, we spoke our first words" (10). Amir still considers him only as Hazara nothing else, as Amir says in the novel that "never mind any of those things, because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end I was Pashtun and he was a Hazara. I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that, nothing" (24). Khaled Hosseini further helps the readers to explore the social and political condition of the Hazaras through the character of Assef, who harshly and openly criticizes the Hazaras. Throughout the novel, he keeps torturing and criticizing Hazaras which is also a way of excessing power by the Pashtuns over the other ethnic groups which are in minority. Assef says about the Hazaras while flicking to Hassan that "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan, they dirty our blood" (38). Through Assef, Khaled has tried to illustrate the hatred relationship between other ethnic groups with Hazaras. In the last part of the novel, when Amir comes back from America to Kabul in search of Hassan's son Sohrab, he meets Assef. Assef has joined Taliban and fondly narrates the heart wrenching story about the Hazara massacre of 1998 in Mazar-i-Sharif, "we left the bodies in the streets, and if their families tried to sneak out to drag them back into their homes, we'd shoot them for dogs. Dogmeat for dogs" (225). Hazaras are not liked by other ethnic groups. Like Assef, there are many others who want to make their country free from Hazaras. So, Hazaras are denied from all their basic social and political rights. Just, because they are Hazaras. Instead of becoming the victim of external politics people of Afghanistan have suffered by their multi-ethnicities, illiteracy, ideological gap, gender discrimination, language and cultural issues which have been the causes of unending conflicts in Afghanistan.

In 1970s Afghanistan was shifting from monarchy to more politically flexible state. Daoud Khan was the first who did this after forming his government. It was the great shift in the political system of the country. Amir remembers that Baba and Rahim Khan listened the news on radio about the coup in the morning. Hassan asked Amir about the meaning of the word republic, which he listened on radio. He listened, this word first time. He asked Amir that “Does ‘republic’ mean father and I will have to move away?” (35). People in Afghanistan were not only listening the word *republic* for the first time but they were also in doubt and uncertain about their future. It was not only Hassan who listened the word *republic* for the first time but there were majority of the Afghans who didn’t know what the word *republic* meant. The word republic derived from the Latin word *res publica*, which means public affair. In political context the word republic is used for the government in which the country is considered as the public property not a private. Everyone has equal rights and opportunities. It was the first time in Afghanistan that any government in Kabul was giving opportunities to the people from all the sections to join politics and playing their role to form new government, and to take decisions for the nation’s benefits. Although, when Daoud Khan began his regime, people of opposition alleged on him that he had included more ministers from Parcham faction. But later he had also included ministers from other factions without favoring any of the clans or tribes. Before his government there was a different political culture, that head of the government or king gave priority to the people of his own clan or tribe. When people got fed up or they were unhappy from one king’s policies, with the help of another awaiting king they dethroned the former ruling one. There was no party system before Daoud Khan in Afghanistan. During his rule or after his rules many political parties came into existence. After the rule of Daoud Khan, many political parties were established under the Soviet’s influence. Some were made to favor Soviet and some came into existence against them. Many political parties were made by different ethnic groups to protect their interests respectively. Parties like Hizb-i-Islami Khalis (HIK), part of old mullahs, Jamat-i-Islami (JIA), party based on ethnic groups comprised of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Turks, and Uzbeks, Afghanistan National Liberation Front (ANLF) founded in Pakistan and its purpose was to establish strict Islamic Sharia law. Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahedeen (IUAM), and many other parties came into existence with different aims and goals. Some were also emerged from Pakistan, and other neighboring countries. Most of the party leaders were fighting not for the country's development but for their personal benefits. Daoud Khan started making good relations with Western countries. He was the one who didn’t like any kind of interference from other countries in Afghanistan’s internal affairs. But extensive financial support from both Soviet and other countries to the other political organizations raised them

against Daoud. So, in the early 1970s communists were not only making political organizations, but they had also started their infiltrations in Afghan army secretly. One example of this was Colonel Abdul Kadir who in Afghan army made a secret United Front of Afghan Communist. Daoud government was completely unaware about such secret political plot against his government. The same Colonel Abdul Kadir was the member of Khalq faction and his secret communist army played a significant role in 1973 bloodless coup in which the king was replaced with new Daoud's government. Both PDPA factions had some ideological difference, but under constant pressure of Soviet they were united. In 1977, all political leaders of both the parties united to set the future course of action in Afghanistan. In the meeting a committee was framed. Taraki was made general secretary and Karmal was appointed as deputy secretary. But, here Amin the main leader of Khalq got disappointed over the committee's decisions. He wanted to have some higher position in PDPA which he was hardly afford. After few months, in 1978, Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, a small leftist group was founded which seized control on the government. This leftist group of officers belonged to the PDPA which was responsible for the Saur Revolution. It was believed that a group was instigated by the USSR to raise the insurgency against the anti-communist government in Afghanistan and to bring the communist government in power. Daoud's increasing relations with America becoming the main cause of worries for the USSR. The other reason of Saur revolution was the assassination of the prominent Parcham faction leader Mir Akbar Khyber, followed by mounted demonstration by the two Marxist factions Parcham and Khalq. Kaushik Roy writes in his book *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013) that "the number of demonstrators exceeded 10,000 people. The government responded by arresting more Marxist leaders. Taraki was arrested in the night after 25-26 April and on 26 April, Amin was also arrested" (161). So, when the main leaders were arrested, it resulted into more violent demonstration and protests against the government. Gradually, rebels from all parts of the country started joining protests against the Daoud government. Rebels took control on transport, communication, military and other government units of the country. It was now not in the hands of Daoud to save his government, "because the presidential guards, who were fighting courageously against the rebels, found that the bombs and rockets strikes were too much for them" (Roy 161). Kaushik Roy further describes in his book *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013) about the political unrests which had taken violent shape on 27 April, 1978 that "in late afternoon, the tanks broke into the presidential palace and the presidential guards fled and it is not clear whether Doud died in a gun battle or committed suicide" (162).

Here, the new regime started which lasted till December 1979. It has been the culture in Afghanistan history that when people fight against government they fight collectively with greater unity. But after attaining their goals of demolishing the government which is their ultimate target, they started fighting with each other for power. The power politics began which brought lots of bloodshed and instability in the country. When PDPA came into power, Khalq faction gave all the important positions in new government to its members only and excluded Parcham great leaders like Karmal and many others. So, here the opposition started taking violent shape against the government. The resistance against the government increased from the countryside for initiating several reforms. This was the time when USSR realized that its future in Afghanistan might go in dark. So, on 27 December 1979 they entered in Afghanistan along with around 80,000 defense personnels. Their purpose was to normalize the situation in Afghanistan and to bring communist's government in power. The main leader of Khalq, Amin was executed by the Soviets Special Force. Soviets believed that Amin was plotting against them with the help of the USA and Pakistan by establishing anti-Soviet government in Afghanistan. The new Soviet backed government was installed under the leadership of the president Karmal. Kaushik Roy in his book, *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013) notes that:

Besides the objective of putting a puppet government in Kabul, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan probably was also driven by the desire to get closer to a warm water port and within a striking distance of the Persian Gulf. The Soviet expanded and fortified the airbase at Shindaband in south-west Afghanistan which put the Soviet bombers within close range of the Persian Gulf. Further the aim was to encircle China and to prevent a hostile equidistant from align itself with China and the USA in order to encircle the USSR completely. (162)

Afghanistan is the country with huge nomadic population. In 1979 out of total 13.05 million populations 800000 were nomads. Khaled Hosseini has also mentioned about the nomadic life, their culture and how during the summers they migrate to the mountains in his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). Revisiting his childhood days, Amir recalls that how he and Hassan had a lot of fun with moving nomads when they passed through their areas. He says that:

We chased the *Kochi*, the nomads who passed through Kabul on their way to the mountains of the north. We would hear their caravans approaching our neighborhood, the mewling of their sheep, the baaing of their goats . . . men with dusty, weather-beaten faces and women dressed in long, colorful shawls, beads, and silver bracelets around their wrists and ankles . . ." (24-25)

These nomadic people belong to all the ethnic groups. Nomads in Afghanistan have nothing to take from politics, education, and developments of the country. With the changing of season, they move from one place to another. But, during the Soviet- Afghan War (1979-1989) they also played a very crucial role for Afghanistan, and since then they have also become the part of mainstream politics. The nomadic people don't belong to one particular ethnic group but they are from all ethnic groups of Afghanistan. According to Kaushik Roy who writes in his book, *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013) that "In the 1980s there were fifty-five ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Pashtuns comprised the largest ethnic group followed by the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and the Hazaras" (164). Roy quotes the secret CIA report of 23 September 1980 that has noted that:

The insurgency was strongest in the most traditionally minded Pashtuns of province of Paktia and in Nuristan, and also among the Tajiks further north. They resisted the Afghan Marxists and the Soviets in order to preserve their old ways rather than fight Communism. Some of the reforms which had incensed the tribes are education of women, and so on. Such reforms were opposed to the worldview of the Afghans. Many tribes assisted the insurgents because gun smuggling boosted their income. (qtd in Roy 165)

Every ethnic group in Afghanistan follows different social, religious, and cultural practices. For instance, Pashtuns follow *Pashtunwali* codes of living in their daily routine. Such socially and politically constructed theories and norms are used as a weapon to achieve all the social and political goals in Afghanistan. Roy takes a quote to define *Pashtunwali* from the autobiography of Masood Farivar (b. 1969) a Mujahideen leader who writes in his autobiography that:

People lived their lives according to the guiding principles of *Pashtunwali*; the way of the Pashtun. Its main tenets required showing hospitality to all, providing shelter for those in need, and retaliating against those who have wronged you. *Pashtunwali* made no distinction between rich and poor, landlord and peasants. (qtd in Roy 166)

The concept of *Pashtunwali* is also reflected in *The Kite Runner* when Amir and Baba discuss the marriage and about the girl for Amir. Baba while praising the family of girl and says about the girl's father that "the man is a Pashtun to the root. He has *nang* and *namoos*. *Nang* *Namoos*. Honor and pride, the tenets of Pashtun men. Especially, when it comes to the chastity of wife, or a daughter" (134). Baba praises about the Pashtun community that they always help others in the need of hour. They consider themselves the true Afghan. Amir remembers what Baba said about Pashtuns that, "we may be hardheaded and I know we're far

too proud, but, in the hour of need, believe me that there's no one you'd rather have at your side than a Pashtun" (147). Through the character of Baba, Khaled tries to show how the ethnic groups in Afghanistan have been constituted on the basis of different philosophies, which are politically motivated. All social and religious functions are connected with the culture of ethnic group for achieving some political goals. Masood Farivara a Mujahedeen later joined *jihad*, writes in his autobiography that:

Jihad was being waged first and foremost in defense of our namoos; our woman, our honour. Nammos is what defines every male Afghan. The worst insult he can suffer is benamoos; a man whose womenfolk have been violated. Back in Sheberghan, shortly after the Soviet invasion, I would overhear my father recite to a relative the famous Afghan motto about three most important things to every Afghan man's honour: women, land, and gold (in Farsi, they all start with the letter z- zan, zameen, and zar). The easiest way to provoke an Afghan is to violate one of the z's, he said, and the Russians had violated all three. (qtd. in Roy 166)

In the early 1970s it was made Afghans feel to fight against Soviets as their moral duty. They have violated all the three z's (zan, zameen, and zar) of Afghans. Creating such politically motivated discourses among Afghans increased the amount of hatred between Soviets and Afghans. The level of hatred had grown that much that when Amir's father got serious ill because of cancer; Amir took him to some American hospital. In the hospital Baba found that the doctor was Russian and he didn't want to let him to touch his body. When Amir tried to convince Baba that he was not Russian, he was born here in America. On this Baba said that "I don't care where he was born, he is Roussi, Baba said, grimacing like it was a dirty word. His parents were Roussi, his grandparents were Roussi. I swear on your mothers face I'll break his arm if he tries to touch me" (143). In the early 1970s there were very few political parties in Afghanistan which increased considerably in 1980s. Huge number of weapons were provided by the USA, China, and other rich Muslim countries to Mujahedeen to fight against Soviets. Without foreign support Afghanistan was nowhere to fight against Soviet. USA provided them huge number of advanced level weapons including missile like stinger, which forced Soviet to leave Afghanistan. But the situation in Afghanistan during Soviet's' time was beyond control. When, Amir got a phone call from his old Afghani friend Rahim Khan. He told him about the Soviet time. Rahim Khan told him that in 1986 he went to Hazarajat to find Hassan. He described why he went to meet Hassan:

The biggest one (reason), Allah forgive me, was that I was lonely. By then, most of my friends and relatives had either been killed or had escaped the country to Pakistan

or Iran. I barely knew anyone in Kabul anymore, the city where I had lived my entire life. Everybody had fled . . . No one to greet (in the markets), no one to sit down with for *chai*, no one to share stories with, just Roussi soldiers patrolling the streets. So eventually, I stopped going out to the city. (188)

Roy talks about the loss in Afghanistan from 1980 to 1985 in his book *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013), mentions that:

From 1980 to 1985, the Soviet attempted to eliminate Mujahideen support the countryside, the rural population provided food and shelter to Mujahideen, and the soviets bombed the rural villages and destroyed the granaries, irrigation systems, and crops. Further the Soviet sweeps in the countryside resulted in the conscription of the young males and destruction of their herds. The result was 7 million Afghan refugees who fled to Pakistan and Iran. According to another estimate, 5.5 million Afghans (one-third of Afghanistan's pre-war population) became refugees, 2 million Afghans were forced to migrate from one in part of the country to another, and 1.3 million died. (171)

Meanwhile, the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner*, Amir himself migrated with his father to America in the wake of rising insurgencies in Afghanistan. In America he noticed that many migrated Afghan families were working in flea market of San Jose. Most of the time, collectively they celebrated each happy movements like birth of their children, their birthdays with Afghani music etc. But when they listened the news of Afghanistan and the loss of lives, they shook their heads mournfully. Amir says that "tea, politics and scandal, the ingredients of an Afghan Sunday at flea market" (128). The Afghan people living in America were hoping to have better future of young and talented people once Afghanistan would get free from foreign forces. Amir in America married to General Iqbal Taheri's daughter Soraya who was well educated and earned A grades in high school. Her father used to motivate her about her better future in Afghanistan. He used to say her that "Inshallah, when Afghanistan is free, you could help to write the new constitution. There would be a need for young talented Afghans like you. They might even offer you a ministry position, given your family name" (167). Finally, the Soviet left Afghanistan in 1989 when they found that it was not possible for them to have victory in Afghanistan. It was believed that Mujahideen were influenced by this Basmachi movement. Basmachis were the resistance fighters against Bolshevik's regime in 1920s in central Asia. Like Mujahideen, they were famous for hit-and-run raids and attacking on red army from behind the bushes and mountains. During the Soviets stay in Afghanistan, Afghanistan faced much loss during the period of around ten

years. But at the same time, they also got many benefits. Kaushik Roy in his book *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013), mentions those benefits which Afghans got from Soviets from late 1970s to the early 1990s, he says that “not all was negative with the Soviets. The Communist regime’s reforms aided the landless labourers who got land, and the women acquired education and better health care . . .” (174). About the Soviet’s withdrawal from Afghanistan in the year 1989, Amir says that “it was the year that *Shorawi* completed their withdrawal from Afghanistan. It should have been a time of glory for Afghans. Instead, the war raged on, this time between the Mujahedin, against the Soviet puppet government of Najibullah. And, Afghan refugees kept flocking to Pakistan” (169). Focusing on the year 1989 Amir says that the year has a greater significance in the history of Afghanistan. It was the year when Soviets left Afghanistan. People, who were living in other countries or in Afghanistan, were expecting to have peace in the country after the Soviets’ withdrawal. But Mujahedeen proved wrong to everyone. So, here the Civil War took its birth in Afghanistan which lasted till 1996. Commenting on the year 1989 Amir says:

That was the year that the cold war ended, the year the Berlin Wall came down. It was the year of Tiananmen Square. In the midst of it all, Afghanistan was forgotten. And General Taheri, whose hopes had stirred awake after the Soviets pulled out, went back to winding his pocket watch. That was also the year that Soraya and I began trying to have child. (169)

Amir uses all these events symbolically here. It is true that after the Soviets exit from Afghanistan, America and other supporters of Mujahedeen divert their attention to the other affairs leaving Afghanistan in the mire of the Civil War (1992-1996). It was the same year in which Berlin Wall fell which symbolically means the end of the Soviet’s influence in Eastern and Central Europe. That was the year, which killed all hopes of Afghanistan’s people for peace. The year also broke the heart of those who were hoping for the better future of young and educated people in Afghanistan after the Soviets regime. It was the same year when Amir tried to have his child with his wife Soraya but he never could have in his life. All these events symbolically mean that the thing which Afghanistan and its people have been dreaming, that never happened in reality. They were expecting peace after Soviet’s withdrawal but even today they are dreaming the same thing. Even the situation got more horrible after the Soviets’ withdrawal. After the withdrawal of the Soviet, they continued their financial aid to the Soviet backed government of Najibullah in Afghanistan. It is estimated that around 1.5 billion dollars were given to the client regime in Afghanistan. The amount was enough to fight against the resistive forces of Mujahideen. The problem was that,

the Mujahedeen were completely dependent on external aids. The financial aid continued to Soviet backed government of Najibullah from Soviets. The aid from Soviet helped the government to face the resistance for some period of time. That was one of the reasons they failed to defeat the Najibullah regime so easily. But he couldn't survive for longer period of time in front of Mujahedeen. On 18th March, 1992 he declared publicly that he would resign soon after the formation of the new government. Describing the loss in Afghanistan during Russian invasions and its fight with anti-communist resistive forces, Amir who was staying in America was missing his homeland stated sadly about the loss, "Long before the Russian army marched into Afghanistan, long before villages were burned and schools destroyed, long before mines were planted like seed of death and children buried in rock-piled graves, Kabul had become a city of ghosts for me. A city of harelipped ghosts"(126).

When Najibullah began his rule under the Soviets backed government in Afghanistan after the Soviet's departure, anti-communist countries realized that how important it was to remove Najib from the power. Countries like the USA, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan were Mujahedeen's financial backers. They did not want any kind of Communist participation in the post-Soviet Afghanistan. So, they dethroned Najib in 1992. Now, instead of bringing peace in Afghanistan the different warlords who were representing different ethnic groups started fighting with each other for power. All these warlords belonged to different ethnic groups. They were divided in various groups on the basis of their ethnicity which brought more instability and resulted the Civil War in Afghanistan from 1992 to 1996. Describing the situation of Afghanistan during the Civil War when different factions claimed different parts of Kabul, Rahim Khan tells Amir that the situation was so worse that:

If you went from the Shar-e-Nau section to Kerteh-Parwan to buy carpet, you risked getting shot by a sniper or getting blown up by a rocket, if you got past all the checkpoints that was. You practically needed a visa to go from one neighborhood to the other. So, people just stayed put, prayed the next rocket wouldn't hit their home.
(184)

Afghanistan mainly shares its boundaries with South Asian countries, Pakistan and Iran, and all these ethnic groups had their relations with one or the other country on the basis of their ethnicity. During the first Gulf War, the Mujahedeen's main financial supporter the USA had shifted its attention to the Gulf War. These Mujahideen groups were backed provoked by some sects from the neighboring countries of Afghanistan for their own political interests. They were fighting with each other by using the same American and Russian arms followed too much loss to the Afghan people. Robert Gates CIA Deputy Director for Intelligence

notes:

Years later these fundamentalist fighters trained by the Mujahideen in Afghanistan would begin to show up around the world, from the Middle East to New York City fighting their Holy War; only now including the United States among their enemies. Our Mission was to push the soviets out of Afghanistan. We expected post-Soviet Afghanistan to be ugly, but never considered that it would become a haven for terrorists operating worldwide. (qtd. in Roy 184)

Illustrating the situation of before 1995, Rahim Khan tells Amir in the novel *The Kite Runner*:
Shorawi were defeated and long gone and Kabul belonged to Masoud, Rabbani, and the Mujahedin. The infighting between the factions was fierce and no one knew if they would live to see the end of the day. Our ears became accustomed to the whistle of falling shells, to the rumble of gun fires, our eyes familiar with the sight of men digging bodies out of piles of rubble. Kabul in those days, Amir Jan, was as close as you could get to that proverbial hell on earth. (108)

When the Civil War ended in Afghanistan here the Taliban entered in Afghanistan in 1996. Kaushik Roy defines in his book *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013), about the meaning and origin of the word Taliban he writes “*Talib* is an Arabic word, and its literal meaning is ‘one who is seeking something for himself.’ This word is derived from the word *talab* meaning ‘desire’. In Urdu, Taliban is the plural of Talib. In Pushto, the word Taliban denotes the students studying in *deeni madaris* (religious institutions)” (193). The students who were studying in *deeni madaris* or religious institutions they got religious education in *deeni madaris* from *Alims* (religious scholars). Those who studied for some years in these schools they were given the title of *Mullah*. These *Mullahs* later was known as *Imam*, *Qazi* or *Mufti* after some years of religious services. Pakistan’s president General Zia-ul-Haq during the period 1977 to 1988 established many *deeni madaris* in Pakistan and also along the border of Afghan-Pakistan. The young children were motivated to take admission in these schools. They got religious education and alums prepared them to fight against Soviets. Gradually the numbers of these *deeni madaris* were increased in Pakistan, Punjab, Sind, and Baluchistan. General Zia-ul-Haq was Sunni Muslim so in these schools the religious education was given based on Sunni lines. It is estimated that by 1984 there were 2,273 such *deeni madaris* with 111050 students. The mujahedeen or the insurgents in Afghanistan had no knowledge about the functioning of these *deeni madaris* and their purposes. Because, most of these institutions were established outside Afghanistan and Mujahideen were busy first against soviets and then fighting with each other. Kaushik Roy in his book *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013)

says:

When the Taliban found that the Mujahideen violated their own religious principles by not unifying to build an Islamic state after the collapse of Najibullah regime in February 1992 but fragmented and competed for power, they established their own ultra-orthodox movement. Many Mujahideen commanders had stopped fighting after the collapse of Najibullah regime and went back to their madrasas for study. With the establishment of the Taliban, these ex-Mujahideen commanders became principal Taliban leaders. (195)

When Taliban entered in Afghanistan, people were very happy that now the peace would be established in the country. They thought there were no more rockets and killings in Afghanistan. So, people warmly welcome them with many hopes. Rahim Khan describes the moment to Amir that “When the Taliban rolled in and kicked the Alliance out of Kabul, I actually danced on that street. And, believe me, I wasn’t alone. People were celebrating at *Chaman*, at Deh-Mazang, greeting the Taliban in the streets, climbing their tanks and posing for pictures with them (184). But at the same time people of some ethnic groups like Hazaras were not happy with the Taliban’s government. Taliban entrance created fear among some ethnic groups. Rahim Khan tells Amir that many of the Afghans were happy and dancing in the streets but Hassan being Hazara shook his head and said that “God help the Hazaras now, Rahim Khan Sahib,” but Rahim Khan assured him “the war is over. There’s going to be peace, *Inshallah*, and happiness and calm. No more rockets, no more killings, no more funerals!” (197). And Hassan was right, his fear proved true when a few months later after imposing strict Sharia law in Afghanistan in 1998, and thousands of Hazaras were massacred in Mazar-i-Sharif. There was the only reason that they were *Shia* and Taliban were mostly *Sunni* Muslims. They considered Hazaras were not the true Muslims. People now were expecting peace in Afghanistan from Taliban. They got fed up from the Civil War and Rahim Khan tells Amir about the Mujahedeen fighting with each other brought too much loss for Afghanistan, “people were so tired of the constant fighting, tired of the rockets, the gunfire, the explosions, tired of watching Gulbuddin and his cohorts firing on anything that moved. The Alliance did more damage to Kabul than the *Shorawi* . . .” (185). People in Afghanistan welcomed them as heroes and exclaimed with joy and happiness that Taliban would bring peace in the country. But the things happened totally opposite and Afghanistan remained the same as it was during the Soviet era, and civil war. Soviets, Mujahedeen, and Taliban, they all gave hopes to Afghanistan for the better future. In reality they gave nothing except bloodshed to Afghan people for the sake of their power, Rahim Khan says ‘Collateral damage’ (185).

All these rulers gave nothing to Afghanistan, Rahim Khan tells Amir that “We are a melancholic people, we Afghans, aren’t we? Often, we wallow too much in *ghamkhori* and self-pity. We give in to loss, to suffering, accept it as a fact of life, and even see it as necessary. *Zendagi migzara*, we say, life goes on” (186). Taliban were supported by Pashtun leaders like Rabbani and Masood initially. Taliban leader Mullah Omar refused to ally with these leaders in Afghanistan. When he refused to ally, Rabbani and Masood declared a war against Taliban. Taliban was stronger than these leaders. So, it was difficult for these leaders to compete with Taliban. They opposed initially, but with the time either some left the country or some were killed by Taliban in attacks. Taliban took control over the entire Afghanistan. Taliban only purpose was to make Afghanistan radical *Sunni* line in which people from many Muslim countries joined this movement including Osama Bin Laden. Taliban banned on all recreation activities in Afghanistan including the kite fighting. In conversation with Rahim Khan, Amir asks him about Taliban that “Is it as bad as I hear?” Rahim Khan replied, “Nay, it’s worse, much worse. They don’t let you be human” (183). They made rules for all people to live according to Islamic Sharia law which was based on Deobandi School of thought. Amir got letter, which Hassan had addressed to him just before some days from Hassan’s death by Taliban. In the letter he had written that, “Alas the Afghanistan of our youth is long dead. Kindness is gone from the land and you cannot escape the killings. Always the killings. In Kabul, fear is everywhere, in the streets, in the stadium, in the markets; it is a part of our lives here, Amir Agha” (200). Very soon, they captured maximum parts of the Afghanistan except some northern provinces. In Northern provinces however, they failed to defeat Northern Alliance which was comprised of Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara. They had control on the Panjshir Valley, north of Kabul. Dostum, Ahmad Shah Masoud (the lion of Panjshir) and the people of Hazara community made northern alliance. They had financial support from Iran, Russia, and France. It was estimated that till 2001, out of 31 provinces Taliban had got control over 29 provinces.

They destroyed the heritage of Afghanistan, Rahim Khan tells Amir that, "the Taliban have destroyed what heritage Afghans had. You saw what they did to the giant Buddha in Bamiyan"(309). Here the political tactic was played by Pakistan by creating a political discourse to the world that Taliban was there to bring stability and peace in the country and very soon they would be succeeding in their mission. This was one of the reasons that the US remained indifferent even after some minor attacks by Taliban and Al-Qaida outside Afghanistan. Besides it, Pakistan also told America that once the peace is established by Taliban in Afghanistan, America would be able to exploit the energy resources easily in the

Central Asia. Therefore, America didn't interfere initially, but thing changed drastically after the coming of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. America didn't interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs before 9/11. After 9/11 America realized about the actual face of the Taliban. Amir the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* describes that:

“Soon after the attacks, America bombed Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance moved in, and the Taliban scurried like rats into the caves. Suddenly people were standing in grocery store lines and talking about the cities of my childhood, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif . . . That December, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras gathered in Bonn and, under the watchful eye of the UN, began the process that might someday end over twenty years of unhappiness in their watan. Hamid Karzai's caracul hat and green *chapan* became famous. (332)

Immediately after the attack, the USA ordered to hand over Osama Bin Laden. But Mullah Omar refused and here the USA entered in Afghanistan with the purpose of ending terrorism by pulling down Taliban regime and destroying Al Qaeda terrorists' and training camps. Cofer Black director of the CIA counterterrorism Centre ordered to his team after the 9/11 that “I want Bin Laden's head shipped back in a box filled with dry ice. I want to be able to show Bin Laden's head to the president. I promised him I would do that . . . Have I made myself clear?” (qtd in Roy 198). America declared war against Afghanistan based terrorist groups. And, before doing all these anti-terror activities, America had to be involved in many diplomatic activities. “Afghanistan is landlocked country the US had to gain over flight rights as well as control over the air bases in the neighboring countries in order to station its Troops and aircraft” (199).

After the fall of Taliban regime, Amir returns to his homeland Afghanistan after more than twenty years of living in America and he says that “I feel like a tourist in my own country” (214). He finds there no one who is acquainted to him, everything has changed completely. While passing through streets he finds the young children and old age people in ragged clothes are begging, and some police officials of Taliban. Amir gives some money to an old beggar, who tells Amir that from 1958 to 1996 he has been a lecturer in Tehran. He also tells Amir about his mother Sofia Akrami who was also a university teacher. Amir asks many things about his mother to this old beggar who has been the colleague of Amir's mother in the university. Amir's mother died while giving birth to Amir. So, he is very curious to ask many things about his mother to this old beggar. The old beggar tells Amir about his mother's love for music, ice cream, she loved to eat almond cake with honey and hot tea, and many other things. He tells Amir that when he met her last time, she was pregnant and very

happy. Amir tries to know more about his mother but then the old man says that he has forgotten many things. He promises to tell Amir the second time once he would be able to recall. Symbolically, the condition of old beggar, who was once a university professor, reflects the condition of Afghanistan. Like an old beggar, once professor before war torn Afghanistan, same way Afghanistan was more beautiful and peaceful before 1970s. On the road, it was the first time Amir saw Taliban from his eyes. He had seen them only on TV, newspapers, and in magazines. The driver Farid tells him not to make eye contact with the *Talibs* when they are near to him. Amir says “Returning to Kabul was like running into an old, forgotten friend and seeing that life hadn’t been good to him, that he’d become homeless and destitute” (227).

Amir comes back after getting a call from Rahim Khan who tells him everything including his relation with Hassan which he doesn’t know before. Amir comes to know that Hassan and his wife have been killed by Taliban and their son Sohrab has been taken away by some Talib official. All these things drive Amir to come to Afghanistan to save Sohrab and take him to America with him as Rahim Khan told him to do as his moral duty. With driver Farid, he goes to the orphanage in Peshawar. Amir also witnesses the sufferings and pathetic condition of Afghan refugees in Peshawar camp, he says that “People living under scraps of cardboard, TB, dysentery, famine, crime. And that’s before winter . . . people turning to icicles. Those camps became frozen graveyards . . .” (209). In search of Sohrab he meets Zaman who is the director of that orphanage. Zaman tells them about the conditions of the orphanage in which about 250 children live. He further tells him that: “But, they’re not all *yateem*. Many of them have lost their fathers in the war, and their mothers can’t feed them because the Taliban don’t allow them to work. So, they bring their children here” (233). The condition of the orphanage was miserable. The children who are living there have no clothes to wear, many times they have to sleep without food and water. Zaman further says that:

This place is better than the street, but not much better. This building was never meant to be lived in; it used to be a storage warehouse for carpet manufacturer. So, there’s no water heater and they have let the well go dry. I’ve asked the Taliban for money to dig a new well more times than I remember and they just twirl their rosaries and tell me there is no money. No money. (233)

When Amir asks about Sohrab, Zaman first refuses to tell anything. Later on, he tells Amir that about a Talib official who visits every month with some cash which Zaman uses for children food. Zaman tells Amir that usually he takes girls but this time he took boy with him, and that boy was Sohrab. Amir shouts at Zaman and asks him why he allowed him to

take children from the orphanage. Zaman says that “if I deny him one child, he takes ten. So, I let him take one and leave the judging to Allah. I swallow my pride and take his goddamn filthy . . . dirty money. Then I go to the bazaar and buy food for the children” (237). Soon Amir understands the reality, he asks Zaman about the man and his address which he tells him. They start their journey as they have been told to follow, by Zaman to meet Sohrab. They go to Ghazi Stadium where they see the huge crowd of people stoning a woman to death. They see that a cleric addressing to the audience about how to follow *Sharia* properly. The cleric tells that it is the message of Allah and the word of the Prophet Muhammad, which everyone has to follow being the people of Afghanistan. While throwing stones on woman, and a cleric repeating the line that “every sinner must be punished in a manner befitting his sin!” (248). Cleric says these are not my words; these are the words of Allah. Amir and Farid recognize the Taliban official who has taken Sohrab from orphanage. They see the man with dark John Lennon glasses and by following him they reach at his house. Talib uses Sohrab for entertainment purpose and abuses him sexually. Talib official name is Assef, who recognizes Amir and tells him why he has joined Taliban. He explains that:

I spent some time in jail, at Poleh-Charkhi, just after Babrak Karmal took over in 1980. I ended up there one night, when a group of Parchami soldiers marched into our house and ordered my father and me at gunpoint to follow them. The bastards didn't give a reason, and they wouldn't answer my mother's questions. Not that it was a mystery; everyone knew the communists had no class. They came from poor families with no name. The same dogs who weren't fit to lick my shoes before the Shorawi came were now ordering me at gunpoint . . . (260)

Assef also tells Amir that in jail a commander who was half-Hazara, half- Uzbek used to beat all prisoners one by one every day. And, I had kidney stone, so my health was not good, but he beat me badly. He dragged me, and kept kicking me for a long time. And what happened after that Assef tells Amir:

You know, I ran into that commandant on the battlefield a few years later funny how God works. I found him in a trench just outside Meymanah; bleeding from a piece of shrapnel in his chest . . . I asked him if he remembered me. He said no. I told him the same thing I just told you, that I never forget a face. Then I shot him in the balls. I've been on a mission since. (261)

So, here Paul Randolph (b. 1968) rightly argues in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016) that "most conflicts have one common thread; a request or demand followed by a refusal and the demand will also contain an emotional element, driven by feelings of anger,

hurt, betrayal of perceived injustice” (72). Condemning his thinking, in rage Amir questions him about his mission, “Stoning adulterers? Raping children? Flogging women for wearing high heels? Massacring Hazara? All in the name of Islam?” (261). He reveals all those things which the Taliban is doing in Afghanistan. Amir reveals him his mission of taking Sohrab with him. But Assef refuses and they have altercation followed by scuffle. Finally, Amir and Farid succeeded in taking Sohrab away with them. With the help of Farid, they escaped to Islamabad in Pakistan, because they were having the fear that Taliban may be looking for them. Where, Amir applies for visa to take Sohrab to America. To complete the legal formalities, they have to wait for long time to have visa. Amir is told that to have visa that he must have death certificate of Sohrab’s parents which Amir doesn’t have. An official tells him that American citizens are not allowed to take Afghan orphans without having solid proof of the relationship. Meanwhile, one day on phone call he also tells everything about his relationship with Hassan to his wife. Living in Pakistan, Amir compares the development of cities of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Amir says, “If Peshawar was the city that reminded me of what Kabul used to be, then Islamabad was the city Kabul could become someday . . .” (285). Finally, somehow Amir takes Sohrab to America after completing some legal formalities, and adopts him as his son. After arriving in America, Amir reminds the game of kite fighting which has been an old winter tradition of Afghanistan before the overtaking of Taliban’s government. But at the end of *The Kite Runner*, it seems that Amir and Afghan community want to keep this tradition alive not only in Afghanistan but among Afghan people who are living in America. Amir flies the kite to make Sohrab happy and seeing the flying kite Sohrab smiles, and “she (Soraya) was pointing to the sky. A half dozen kites were flying high, speckles of bright yellow, red, and green against the gray sky” (338). The scene depicts that Afghan people living in other countries love to practice Afghan tradition in their daily lives to keep themselves happy. But at the same time flying kites and bringing smile on Sohrab’s face after long time symbolized that Afghanistan is hoping again to have peace in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

This chapter deals with the changing paradigms of power in Afghanistan’s context from premodern to the twenty first century through the textual analysis of Khaled Hosseini’s first novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). The novel being autobiographical covers the most critical period of Afghan history, from the last years of the Musahiban rule (1929-1978) to the fall of Taliban in 2001 and America’s entry in Afghanistan shortly after 9/11 attack in 2001. Most of the novel is based on the real-life experiences. About the novel in its forward, Khaled Hosseini compares himself with the protagonist of the novel Amir, and says, “My childhood

and Amir's mirrored each other in many ways. . . (n.pag.), clearly indicating that the novel is based on the real life experiences. Moreover, all the social and political events as the parts of the novel are true and related to the history of Afghanistan. The novel through its characters, and historical events pictured that how Afghanistan shifted from monarchy to a republic state by the USSR's intervention in the wake of the Cold War (1947-1989). Amir says that, "Kabul awoke the next morning to find that the monarchy was a thing of past. . . (34), and with the major shift in the political system helped the common and marginalized people to participate in the political system of the country. But at the same time, Afghanistan got affected badly by the long time chaos and conflicts in the country. Hassan in a letter writes to Amir just before his death "Alas the Afghanistan of our youth is long dead" (200). So, the chapter portrays that the foreign forces helped in Afghanistan's material development but failed to bring peace and stability in the country. The chapter also depicts that in the history of Afghanistan, every ruler brought the false hopes of peace for Afghan people. Rahim Khan in *The Kite Runner* celebrates the victory of Taliban and hopes that "the war is over. There's going to be peace, Inshallah, and happiness and calm. No more rockets, no more killings, no more funerals!" (197) but that peace never came since last forty years in Afghanistan. The novel by depicting the history of Afghanistan from early nineteen seventies to the fall of Taliban reflects that all national and international powers have failed to bring peace in Afghanistan. Every time they have betrayed the people of Afghanistan. For instance, when Daoud Khan came into power in 1973, people in Afghanistan were very happy with lots of expectations from him. After few months of his regime, some people didn't accept his policies and found his policies against their religion. Then, Amin came in power who was executed by the Soviets because they considered him anti-communist means he didn't agree with their ideology. Then, the Soviet backed government came in Afghanistan headed by Karmal. But Mujahedeen came with the antithesis that the Soviet backed government was anti- Islamic. Then, the Civil War (1992-96) in Afghanistan made the condition more horrible. Taliban came into the power and people of Afghanistan considered them as the solution of the Afghanistan's all problems, but the world saw what they did in Afghanistan. And finally, America came to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan but couldn't succeed and finally left in 2021 and Taliban took over again. Now, again there is the conflict between Taliban and the Northern Alliance which is anti-Taliban group in Afghanistan, and the question is raised, who will be the next?

Chapter 3

Searching Utopia for Women: A Study of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Patience Stone*

The *Mariam Webster Dictionary* defines Utopia as “a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social condition” (n. pag.). The word Utopia gets its popularity after the publication of Thomas More’s (1478-1535) work *Utopia* (1516), originally published in Latin. This work describes the features of the Utopian society. More’s Utopia begins with the conversation of three main characters including the author, Thomas More himself. In the work titled *Utopia*, Thomas More is introduced to a philosopher and a world traveler Raphael Haythloday by Peter Giles. Giles tells More about the features of the Utopian society. Then, they discuss many problems which people of England are facing mainly due to the lack of the good governance. Haythloday tells More and Peter Giles about the Utopians ideal way of living a satisfactory life. Haythloday tells them that the social and political system of Utopia is far better and superior to England. He is very much fascinated by the system of Utopia. He says that the Utopian society is a perfect society for living. Utopians live a rational and a practical life. There is no concept of private property, everything belongs to everyone. So, no one desires to accumulate gold or wealth for personal sake. He describes that “Under such system, there’s bound to be plenty of everything, and as everything is divided equally among the entire population, there obviously can’t be any poor people or beggars . . .” (65). So, the Utopian society is the egalitarian society in which there is no discrimination on the basis of class, gender, and religion. Everyone respects each other’s religion. Utopian society is the crime free society. In Utopia people are competent to fight against the enemy but they absolutely loathe to the wars and conflicts. Haythloday further describes that in Utopia all people work not for themselves but for their country. He explains:

You see how it is wherever you are, you always have to work. There’s never any excuse for idleness. There are also no wine-taverns, no ale-houses, no brothels, no opportunities for seduction, and no secret meeting-places. Everyone has his eye on you, so you’re practically forced to get on with your job, and make proper use of your spare time. (65)

So, the word Utopia got popularity only after More’s text with the meaning that a society which is perfect in every sense or an ideal form of the society. In the end of the text, after listening Haythloday, Thomas More likes the Utopians ways but he strongly believes that “I certainly hope we shall, some day. In the meantime, I cannot agree with everything that he said, for all his undoubted learning and experience. But I freely admit that there are many

features of Utopian Republic which I should like though I hardly expect to see adopted in Europe” (113). So, it is clear from the More’s remark that it is not possible to establish the Utopian society in real sense. Subsequently, under the influence of Thomas More many Utopian works have been written by many writers. With the advancement of science and technology the human ways of living have changed. Every society has been divided into various classes like rich, upper middle, middle, poor class and so on. Every class has its own ways of living and the level of their sufferings also vary. The writers who have presented the problems of society and desiring to have an ideal society, they have used the concept of Utopia. In the history of English literature, the word Utopia has been used in different contexts. But the meaning of it has remained the same that is to desire for better and an ideal society. In all Utopian writings, writers intend to have the society which is completely opposite from the present. The writers of such works desire to have an ideal form of society. The writers in such literary works suggest the society which is based on equality and crime free which in reality is difficult to establish. Although Plato envisages an ideal form of society in his work *Republic* written around 357 BC but the term gets popularity only after More’s *Utopia*. The literary work *The City of the Sun* (1602) by Italian writer Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) influenced by Plato’s *Republic*. The work talks about the theocratic society in which everyone including women and children are treated with equality and hold an equal position. *New Atlantis* (1626) by Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1926) is a Utopian work in which he envisages the scientific society which is an ideal form of the society. *Erewhon* (1872) by Samuel Butler (1835-1902) talks about the fictional Erewhon, the country explored by the protagonist of the novel. The anagram for erewhon is nowhere. In the Erewhonian society, it is crime to be sick and no importance is given to the machines because they are considered as dangerous competitors for the human beings. The novel is basically written as satire on the utopian society so it is considered as a satirical Utopia. William Morris (1834- 1996) is a writer from pre-Raphaelite brotherhood writes a utopian work titled *News from Nowhere* (1890) in Thomas More’s fashion. Here, the narrator in the novel named William Guest sleeps and when he wakes up, he finds himself in the completely different society. The society, where everyone is equal, no class system, no private property, no marriages, and people are completely attached with nature and enjoy the beauty of nature. There is no concept of materialistic life so they all are happy. So, the concept of Utopia is to define the society which is of ideal form. Plausibly, in this way many other modern writers have explored the Utopian concept in different contexts to have the kind of society which they have desired to have. With the emergence of women writers and feminist writings in the nineteenth century women problems in the patriarchal form of society became the main subject of the

writings. Through their writing they brought radical change where women started demanding their own space where they could feel free. Feminist writers started depicting that how the women have been the part of sufferings and exploitations because of the gender-based discrimination. Such kind of issues gave birth to the many Utopian works in which feminist writers have desired to have the society which should be free from all kinds of social restrictions, gender discrimination and free from male dominance. But still the problem of gender based discrimination is continued and still the subject of feminist writings. These kinds of works in literature come under the category of utopian feminism.

The present chapter is based on the chosen works of Khaled Hosseini (b.1965) and Atiq Rahimi (b.1962). The chapter titled “Searching Utopia for Women: A Study of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Patience Stone*” is based on the condition of women in Afghanistan during the period of 1970s to 2000s. The chosen writers are the two most famous contemporary Afghan origin writers. They have raised the Afghan women’s issues in their writings. In their writings Hosseini and Rahimi not only discuss the present condition of women in Afghanistan but through their characters they have also pictured about the society which Afghan women have desired to have. They reflect that how Afghanistan could become a better place for women. Through fictional characters, these two Afghan writers present the gender discrimination in Afghanistan and criticize the darker side of the Afghan society. Through the textual analysis of the chosen works titled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and *The Patience Stone* (2008) of Hosseini and Rahimi the chapter depicts the condition of women during the different time periods from 1970s to 2000s. Through the textual analysis the chapter reflects the women conditions during the early 1970s, during the Daoud Khans government (1973-1978), during the Soviets rule (1979-1989), during the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996) and during the rule of Taliban (1996-2001). The present chapter studies in detail to all these political developments in the history of Afghanistan and how women have been treated during the different time periods. Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi are the two most prominent contemporary Afghan writers who have highlighted the contemporary issues of Afghanistan. They have used their writing as an instrument to bring change in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan’s context these two writers talk about the better world for women, where they could be the part of the nation’s progress. They want to see the society where women should have the equal opportunities. By juxtaposing the real and the imaginary Afghanistan with better opportunities for women, these writers help the readers to know the ways to have better Afghanistan for women.

Utopian Feminism

Feminist Utopia can be defined as “narrative about a society that is free from the patriarchal subordination of women” (“Feminist Utopia” n.pag.). In the history of mankind women have been dominated, marginalized, oppressed, subjugated, and discriminated by men. They are always considered in the society as the weaker form of human being by default. The feminist work of art exposes all these cruelties and oppressions against women in the patriarchal society. Such works depict the revolt of women against the unjust social order of the society. In such literary works the author imagined a better form of society in which women should be treated equally. They aspire to have a better society which is free from all sorts of gender-based discrimination. Gender equality is the key feature of the Utopian feminism. It is generally believed by the feminist writers that all the traditional system and knowledge which society follows is androcentric. Plausibly, feminists challenge everything which has traditional roots and based on patriarchal norms. Religion and the androcentric culture are closely associated with each other. In all religion, men have been depicted as brave, generous, more powerful, bolder, and superior to women. All the literature or history presents the same. These things according to feminism create the gap between men and women in the society which badly hampers the growth of the society. The famous American critic and feminist writer Elaine Showalter (b.1941) focuses on women writings, and ultimately gave the concept of gynocriticism. The term gynocriticism has been given by Elain Showalter in her essay *Towards a Feminist Poetics* (1979). The term has been coined against the term androcentricism. Showalter classifies the history of women writings into three phases which are; Feminine, Feminist and Female Phase. In Feminine Phase (1840-1880) she argues that in this phase women writers have mostly imitated male writers’ style and they have been unable to raise their own voice through their writings. In the second phase which is known as the Feminist Phase and it lasted from 1880 to 1920s. Showalter calls this phase as protest phase. In this phase women authors have shown rebel against the patriarchal attitude through their writings. The third phase, which is the Female Phase and it is the most important phase in the history of women’s writings. According to Showalter, here women start reflecting their own voice. Showalter asked for the rejection of imitation and protest phase to bring in what she terms as gynocriticism. She focuses on that instead of adopting imitation and protests women should imitate their own experiences and talk about themselves through their writings. Additionally, they believe that women are supposed to be free from all sorts of social restrictions which are imposed on them for the sake of society’s progress. Women should not confine themselves only to the household activities. They, like men should play active role in

all the spheres of human life. For example, the famous feminist Utopian writer whose works are very famous for this genre is Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880- 1932). She is a Bengali feminist writer commonly known as Begum Rokeya. She is famous utopian feminist writer. She is mainly known for her Utopian feminist novel *Sultana's Dream* (1905). In the novel there is an imaginary place called "Ladyland" where only women live. They fulfill all their needs through machines and by using modern technology. In this place men are not allowed. Rokeya asserts in this work that, "a sort of gender-based planet of Apes where the roles are reversed and the men are locked in a technologically advanced future" (n.pag.). In this Utopian society all kinds of gender-based stereotypes are rejected by women. There is no man in the society so crimes are not the part of the society, which means that men are responsible for all kinds of crimes. So, according to the writer, if there were no men in the society, there would be no crimes. Another important and famous utopian writer is an American writer named Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935). She is known for her utopian trilogy: *Moving the Mountain* (1911), *Herland* (1915), and *With Her in Ourland* (1916). Gilman's famous feminist Utopian novel is *Herland* (1915), like *Sultan's Dream* by Begum Rokaya, in *Herland* (1915) novel women have a different society to live without men. All their needs are met by the modern technology. Even children are produced via parthenogenesis.

The amount of the feminist utopian works increased considerably after 19th century with the emergence of the feminist movement. Many feminist writers started writing utopian works to present the women issues and demands. Through their writings they reflected not only women issues but also gave them voice and space to discuss and raise their demands. The main cause which led to explore women writings was primarily the feminist movements around the world. The issues and demands of women changed with the passage of time and which was also reflected in the feminist writings. To understand the changing paradigms of feminist writings, it is important to understand the feminist movements briefly in different periods:

Brief History of Feminism

In 1837, French philosopher and utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) coined the word feminism. It entered in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in the year 1895, according to the OED feminism is "the belief and aim that woman should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim" (n.pag.). Feminism as a movement came into existence to challenge the traditional and conservative notion of gender-based inequality. Feminists believe that all the traditional notions promote gender inequality and are against women. These notions are socially constructed so feminists challenge such

stereotypical ideas. Simon de Beauvoir (1908-1986) a French feminist writer wrote a famous work *The Second Sex* (1949) in which she defines clearly that “One is not born but becomes a woman” (“Feminism” n.pag.). It is believed that the feminist movement was influenced by the Quaker theology, which was a spiritual movement in the mid-17th century against the rules of the church. The movement demanded the spiritual equality. It was based on the idea that all human beings have been created by God. So, they should all be treated with equality. Feminists argue that the human society has always been androcentric, means male dominated and women have been the subject of suppression and subjugation. The feminism began officially in the late 19th century in the UK and the US. On the basis of their demands, historians divided the feminist movements into four waves. To understand the nature and sufferings of women and their demands, it is essential to have an idea about each wave of feminism briefly.

The first wave feminism began in the UK and the US in the late 19th century. It was the time when women had no political rights like they didn't have voting rights. They couldn't even contest elections like the men. Feminists of the time believed that for the establishment of gender free society women must have political rights, to empower women by framing laws in their favor. So, they protested against the political system in the UK and the US and demanded to give them such rights. In Britain, the right to vote was given to women in 1918 with the coming of Representation of the People Act of 1918. Political and property rights are the basic tenets of the first wave feminism. The second wave feminism was the reaction against the gender-based stereotype concepts. After getting the political rights and other basic demands for which women were protesting, now women started raising the issues of gender discrimination. To bring gender equality they started challenging the power structure of the society which was earlier andro-centric. These issues of women became the base for the third and fourth wave feminism. Carol Hanish coined the slogan “personal is Political” (“Feminism” n.pag.), which became the base of second wave feminism. The women of the time argued that whatever the situations they had, it was all because of men. In addition to the revolting against the power structure of the society, feminism also revolted against the rapes, incest and prostitutions in the second and third wave feminism. In the fourth wave feminism began after 2012, which is associated with the movements by using the social media like the campaign “Me Too” against the sexual harassment of women around the world by men. Women revolted through social media by creating various facebook pages, twitter accounts, and by using other means of the social media to raise women issues like their domestic violence, rapes, sexual harassment at their

workplaces and so on. Now, it is pertinent to discuss the women writings in Afghanistan.

Feminist Writings in Afghanistan

Afghan women writers came out during the tumultuous period of Afghanistan after 1970s to the fall of Taliban. During this period many Afghan people left the country to dwell in the other countries. The Contemporary Afghan women writers and poets who became prominent during this period are Lida Abdullah, Zohra Saed, Fatana Jahangir Ahrary, Sahar Muradi, Sara Hakeen, Zaheda Ghani Yasaman, Shakila Naseer, Fevzie Rahgozar Barlas, Donia Gobar, Shekaiba Wakili, and Donna Saimander. Most of these writers have depicted the social and political conditions of Afghanistan. Only few of them got the courage to write poetry about the women issues and gender discrimination. Even after the fall of Taliban in 2001, the condition of women in most of the areas which are controlled by religious leaders and tribal leaders have not much ameliorated. In an article “Afghan Women writing for their Rights” Ramin Mazhar writes “In late 2016, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) investigated 5,575 cases of violent crimes against women, noting that most of the cases go unreported due to traditional practices, stigmatization and fear of the consequences for the victims” (Mazhar n.pag.).

The objective of the present chapter is to depict that in the history of Afghanistan sporadic attempts have been made for gender equality. Those who attempted to empower women they wanted to see Afghanistan a well-developed and prosperous state. Every time they had to face the resistance by the irrational religious leaders in the name of Islam. It is pertinent to mention that if they had not been interrupted in their course of actions, Afghanistan would have been a completely different state with a different image around the globe. It has never been easy to change the ideology of these conservatives for women. These irrational people torture women in the name of Islam. To them, freedom of women is against Islam. In an article “Afghan Women Writing for their Rights” Ramin Mazhar writes, “AUNAMA 2009 report states that women participating in public life face threats, harassment and attack. In extreme cases, some have been killed for holding jobs that are seen to disrespect traditional practices or are considered un-Islamic” (Mazhar n.pag.). Fevziye Rahgozar Barlas (b.1955), an Afghan origin women feminist writer depicts the Afghan women’s sufferings in her poems. Likewise in one of her poems “My world” she delineates that how the women voice and feelings are unheard and ignored, which lead them to live a most troublesome life in Afghanistan:

Where is the ear
to hear my cries?

Where is the eye
to see my tears?
I am the ashes of a hopeless fire
Where is the wind
to refresh my flames?
I am a silent Darvish
sitting in the cell of my grief
Where is the flute
to sing my sorrows? (n.pag.).

Fevziye Rahgozar Barlas shows how hard it is for women to live in Afghanistan where they go unheard with every passing day. They have no rights to raise their voice in the patriarchal society. Roya Saberzadeh, another contemporary bold Afghan woman writer from Mazar-e-Sharif. She believes women should have all those social, political and educational rights which Afghan men have. For all these things, Saberzadeh emphasizes that women must be aware about their rights because “The more women are aware of their rights, the less violence they will face” (Mazhar n.pag.). Another Afghan Feminist writer Shakila Naseer (b.1949) expresses her hopeless and desolate life under the patriarchal and traditional setup of Afghan society. In her poems she expresses the miseries and hopeless life of the Afghan women. Likewise, in one of her short poems she writes:

I am a fallen fish
On a faraway, empty shore, without hope, without wish.
If you don't come to my salvation
Oh roaring wave!
I'll die of the thirst (n.pag.).

Malalai Joya (b.1978), is an Afghan politician, social activist, and a writer to whom BBC called that “the bravest women in Afghanistan” (n.pag.). In writing, she is popularly known for her autobiography titled *Raising My Voice: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice* (2009). She wrote it in collaboration with famous Canadian writer Derrick O'Keefe.

Khaled Hosseini (b.1965) and Atiq Rahimi (b.1962) are the two most famous contemporary Afghan origin writers. They have raised the Afghan women's issues in their writings. These two are the part of the discussion in the present chapter. In their writings Hosseini and Rahimi not only discuss the present condition of women in Afghanistan but through their characters they also tell about the society which Afghan women desire to have.

They further reflect that how Afghanistan could become a better place for women. Through fictional characters, these two Afghan origin writers present the gender discrimination in Afghanistan and criticize the darker side of the Afghan society. Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi are the two most prominent contemporary Afghan writers who have highlighted the contemporary issues of Afghanistan. They have used their writing as an instrument to bring change in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan's context these two writers talk about the better world for women, where they could be the part of the nation's progress. They want to see the society where women should have the equal opportunities. By juxtaposing the real and the imaginary Afghanistan with better opportunities for women, these writers help the readers to know the ways to have better Afghanistan for women. Before moving forward to the textual analysis of the selected works of the chosen writers it is important to have an idea about the brief history of Afghan women.

Searching Utopia for Women: Afghanistan's Sporadic Attempts to Bring Gender Equality

It is not appropriate to say that only during the time of Taliban rule (1996-2001) women were ignored and marginalized from the mainstream socio-political system of the country. Since the existence of Afghanistan, the women have been the subject of subjugation and exploitation. Even after the long years of foreign rule in Afghanistan, the women condition has not been improved much except Kabul. They have not been treated there as the human being. Most of the population of Afghanistan lives in rural areas, where the education and other facilities are inadequate. In these areas different ethnic groups are directed and guided by the religious leaders known as mullahs. They consider themselves as messengers of God. So, whatever they would teach the people to follow, people have to follow. Since the time immemorial, these religious leaders residing in rural areas manipulate and control to the innocent and ignorant people in the name of religion. Some sporadic efforts have been made in the history of Afghanistan to empower women by various monarchs but every time they have faced resistance.

Contribution of Various Afghan Kings and Governments after 20th Century to Empower Afghan Women

Abdur Rahman Khan was the first king of Afghanistan who initiated several reforms and welfare schemes to empower women. He ruled in Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901, and worked on to abolish several tribal laws which were against women's freedom. He abolished the system of child marriages and raised the marriage age for girls. During his time it had been the culture in Afghanistan that after husband's death wife had to marry with one of his

close relatives like deceased husband's younger brother or to one of his cousins. But, King Rahman abolished such kinds of social practices. A historian Nancy Hatch Dupree argues that Amir's wife Bobo Jan influenced the king to take such decisions in favor of women because, "she was the first Afghan queen to appear in public in European dress without a veil. She rode horses and trained her maidservants in military exercises. She had a keen interest in politics and went on numerous delegate missions to discuss politics between contesting parties" (qtd. in Gosh 3). Whatever the reasons were, but during Amir Rahman's rule, attempts were made to empower the women. After Abdur Rahman's death his son Amir Habibullah took the charge, who reigned over Afghanistan for the next ten years. He followed the imprints of his father and worked on the same socio-political issues for which his father struggled in Afghanistan. Following the path of progress, he established the first college in 1903. The foreign teachers were appointed to provide quality education to the young Afghani students. He was the one who set up new hospital, factories, hydroelectric plants etc. He also tried to build good relationships with India, Russia and other Central Asian countries.

Mahmud Beg Tarazi, one of Afghan exiles returned to Afghanistan with many others who were exiled from their country during the reign of Amir Habibullah. Tarazi was one of the intellectuals having the liberals' ideas. He wanted to change the country by executing his ideas. He had already visited to the other developing Muslim countries like Turkey, Syria and Egypt and got influenced by their modern initiatives. He thought that no country could progress without the development of women. He began a newspaper "Seraj-ul-Akhbar" in which he had given a place to the special section for women titled "Celebrating Women of the World". This section of his newspaper was edited by his wife. The section was based on the stories of world-renowned women, their life and role in the world. The purpose of the section was to motivate Afghan women to step forward towards modernity. So, it was the first time that women were motivated publically to follow the path of modernity like other Muslim and European countries were. It was the time when the word liberty was dancing on the lips, especially among Afghan women. Under the influence of Trazi's liberal ideas, Habibullah opened a separate school for girls with English curriculum. This was the step which spawned unrests among tribal leaders against Habibullah. Tribal leaders and other conservatives considered such steps were against Islam. Finally, the situation got out of control and Amir was assassinated in 1919.

After his assassination, his son Amanullah was placed on the throne. He played a great role to free his country from the Britishers by defeating them in the third Anglo-Afghan war in 1919 and Afghanistan was declared as politically independent. So, in 1919 after a short

period of the Third Anglo-Afghan war, Afghanistan was declared as an independent nation on 8 August 1919 after signing Treaty of Rawalpindi between Afghanistan and the British India. Amanullah was also the great supporter of women's progress. He wanted to liberate women from tribal cultural norms which he believed the great hurdle in the path of Afghanistan's development and creating problem to make the country a modern state. He personally visited to the European countries to know the ways to make Afghanistan a modern state. During some months visit, he was very much influenced by the modern ways which European countries had adopted. He planned to implement the same system in Afghanistan after his return. He publically campaigned across the Afghanistan for educating and liberating women. With his wife he not only campaigned but openly condemn to the tribal laws which according to him were not only irrational and illogical but also against the liberty of the women.

In 1923 he established the formal structure of the new constitution. He was also much influenced by Mahmud Trazi's endeavors for empowering women. Because of the similar kind of thinking they developed close connections with each other. Later the king also married with Tarazi's sister. He believed that to bring the change, first change yourself. His family was too liberal. His sister Kobra established an organization for women to unite women to protest against the conservative and oppressive institutions. His wife also started a magazine called *Ershad-E-Niswan* for women. This was the time when women education was highly encouraged. In 1928 some young women were sent to Turkey for getting higher education. In an article "A History of Women in Afghanistan" a speech of 1926 at the 7th anniversary of Independence by king's wife has been quoted by author Huma Ahmed Gosh, the speech was:

It [Independence] belongs to all of us and that is why we celebrate it. Do you think, however, that our nation from the outset needs only men to serve it? Women should also take their part as women did in the early years of our nation and Islam. From their examples we must all learn that we must all contribute toward the development of our nation and this cannot be done without being equipped with knowledge. So, we should all attempt to acquire as much knowledge as possible, in order that we may render our services in the manner of the women of early Islam. (qtd. in Ghosh 5)

The situation in Afghanistan changed completely when the king and his wife visited Europe in 1927-28 for their long-time visit. During their visit, they also received honorary degrees from the Oxford University. In addition to some European countries, they also visited to the Muslim countries such as, Turkey and Egypt. These countries were progressing rapidly in an impressive way by following the path of modernity on the European line. They wanted to

implement such projects in their own country to bring socio-cultural changes in Afghanistan. But during their visit tribal leaders and other conservatives instigated the Afghan people by creating false narratives that the king and his queen had deceived people in the name of modernity. They provoked people to revolt against the king to dethrone him. So, all the policies and social reforms which king and his people had initiated or planning to initiate in favor of women were boycotted by the people of Afghanistan. When those unrests mounted in the country king left the country and all those policies and rules were implemented according to the interests of the tribal leaders.

Then Amir Habibullah II came in power only for a shorter period of nine months who abrogated all those gender-based laws made by his predecessors. He was ousted by King Nadir Shaw and here the rule of Musahiban rulers began which lasted for around next fifty years until the assassination of the president Daoud Khan in 1978. King Nadir Shaw came in power and drafted another constitution for Afghanistan. He didn't believe in the sudden social change. He came with neutral policy, and left everything in the hands of people. He didn't want to impose new policies and rules forcibly which helped him to avoid resistance. His rule was for the short term. He was assassinated by his son Zahir Shaw who became the king of Afghanistan after his death in 1933. King Zahir Shaw ruled in Afghanistan for next forty years. During his rule, Afghanistan remained a peaceful and stable nation. During his period Afghanistan slowly shifted towards modernity. He brought changes in the constitution to empower women and for the development of the nation. He didn't try to bring changes hastily like Amanullah did. That was one of the reasons he ruled over Afghanistan for four decades without any strong resistance. He didn't enforce anything on people during his rule. He made everything voluntary option, means completely left on the choice of the people. Even women were following what they felt right to follow. King Zahir Shaw opened schools for women but didn't make education compulsory for women. So, the people of Afghanistan were happy with the king's policies. The tensions started in Afghanistan in the wake of the Cold War between the USSR and America. Before the external intervention, Afghanistan was a more peaceful country. During the Cold War especially after the Soviet's intervention, the country divided into two groups, the one which followed the communist ideology and the other to the traditional Islamic ideology. Between these two groups the much hatred relationship spawned the tumultuous situation in Afghanistan.

The third constitution of the state was framed in the year 1964, which gave space to women in politics. Women took part in elections and some women were elected as the parliamentarians. Gradually, the fate of women was changing. It was the time when the Cold

War was at its peak and gradually the influence of communism was mounting in Afghanistan. Ideologically, people were divided into two categories before the intervention of the Soviets led communism in Afghanistan. The one faction was liberal and the other more conservative. The Soviet's influence and the issue of Pashtunistan spawned many political parties in Afghanistan. In 1965 Soviet backed political party named People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came into existence in Afghanistan in which people of rural and urban regions were associated. In 1965 the new Afghan women group called Democratic Organization of Afghanistan Women (DOAW) came into existence. The purpose of this was to educate women and to eliminate all other social norms which were against the liberty of women.

The period of early 1970s was the golden one in the history of Afghan women. Women participation in all fields mounted rapidly. But, it has been very unfortunate in the history of Afghanistan that whenever women get the right track towards their progress, the resistive elements come to oppose their liberty in the name of religion. Tribal leaders' feel women progress means to threaten their patriarchal authorities. The increasing women participations in all the social and political fields increased the worries of tribal leaders residing in the rural areas. They protested against the laws like monogamy, compulsory education for women, and their participation in the mainstream politics of the country and so on. Mullahs and tribal chiefs objected such decision of the government, which according to them was against the traditional laws of Islam. Gradually, the target killings in the countryside increased on those people who were supporting to empower the Afghan women. The rate of killings in the countryside significantly increased. The increasing insurgencies in the countryside gave birth to the widespread protests across the country. It is believed that the president Daoud Khan's increasing inclinations towards America mounted the pressure on Soviets and they started using those rebels as political tactics to remove Daoud Khan from the power. Finally in the Saur Revolution (1978), Daoud Khan was killed.

In the year 1979 Soviet entered in Afghanistan with its huge military and arms to pacify the situation in Afghanistan. They invaded Afghanistan for not only to pacify the people of Afghanistan, but also to prevent America's influence in Afghanistan. They were succeeded to establish their favorable government under the leadership of Babrak Karmal who became the president of the new Soviet backed government of Afghanistan. Now, America plotted against Soviet by creating a false narrative to remove Soviet form Afghanistan, because America didn't want Soviet to stay in power in Afghanistan for the longer period of time. With other Muslim countries, it was propagated that Soviet wanted to

annihilate the traditional culture and religion of Afghanistan. So, in the name of the religion gradually majority of the people united to fight against the Soviet. These people were backed financially by America and the other rich Muslim countries. America provided advanced level weapons to Mujahedeen to fight against Soviet. Huma Ahmed Gosh writes in his article “History of Women in Afghanistan” that “interestingly, or ironically, during this turbulent democratic Soviet-supported regime women’s issues moved center stage and implementations of reforms was enforced, up to a point. During this era women were employed in a significant numbers in universities, private corporations, the airlines and as doctors and nurses. But for the nation as a whole, it was a period of anarchy and destruction . . .” (7). Despite their entire developmental efforts’ Soviet could not become the victorious and failed completely. Finally, when Soviet realized that it was not possible for them to win in Afghanistan; they left the country with their army in the year 1989. Their departure spawned the Civil War in Afghanistan in 1992.

After the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996), Taliban came into power by defeating all the warlords of the different areas of Afghanistan. To bring peace in the country, the neighboring countries started supporting to the Taliban. Initially, people were happy with the Taliban but once they got control in the country their cruelties started mounting. They brought the extreme form of Islamism by imposing the Sharia law. Under this law, so many restrictions were imposed on all Afghans. Such policies were unbearable especially for those who were dreaming to see Afghanistan as a modern state. They made new laws to govern and control the people of Afghanistan under the Sharia law. Women had no freedom. Taliban had set up Wa Nahi An al-Munkar [Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice] to monitor and control women’s behavior. Women were not allowed to go outside without male partner. They were not allowed to do make up on their face and wear fancy dresses. They couldn’t walk without covering their bodies from head-to-toe in public. They couldn’t go to the male doctor for medical treatment. Moreover, they were not allowed to get formal education. Taliban destroyed all the women schools which had been opened by the previous rulers of Afghanistan especially during the rule of Soviet. They banned on women to do any kind of government or private job. Taliban ruled over Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. They were badly defeated by American and other NATO forces after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. In 2001 new democratic government was formed in Afghanistan. America controlled Afghanistan, and stayed in Afghanistan for next twenty years but in 2021 they decided to withdraw all its forces. Now, Afghanistan is again under the control of Taliban.

Taliban has got complete control over Afghanistan after America’s complete

departure on 31st August 2021. Taliban believed on the Islamic law Sharia and to impose it properly is their priority. If it is again imposed in the same fashion as it was imposed on Afghan citizens during their first regime from 1996-2001 then the women condition would be more vulnerable. So, the condition of women even today is unstable, they have to face harassment at both domestic and on public places. The norms which are based on patriarchy don't give much freedom to women in their social and political life. They are still considered as an object to fascinate men and are not allowed to live their life according to their own choice. They must have freedom to choose their life and religious practices in their own way. They should not be forced to follow any kind of social or religious practices in the name of religion. Women should be given open choice and leave on them and what to follow and what not should be purely based on their decision. Moreover, international community should also play its role to tackle the issues of the Afghan women.

A Thousand Splendid Suns as a Feminist Utopia: Nana, Mariam and Laila's Struggle against Patriarchy

Feminist utopia can be defined as “narrative about a society that is free from the patriarchal subordination” (“Feminist Utopia” n.pag.). *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khaled Hosseini (b.1965) reflects the Afghan women's sufferings and their desire for the gender free society in which they must be treated with equality. They always reflect a desire for liberating themselves from patriarchal notions of the society to have a better life. This novel talks about Afghan women's life through the three main female characters; Nana, Mariam and Laila. These women characters belong to different social backgrounds and always dream to have better and respectable life. But the social and political system and circumstances make their life more deplorable and devastating. Some unexpected events make the characters life more tragic. The events of the story and life of women characters based on reality make the novel phenomenal work of art. The writer by depicting the sufferings of these three women characters under patriarchal nature of society actually reflects the life of all sections of Afghan women. They all belong to the different family backgrounds born in different cultures and they are unexpected about their miserable future.

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is about the life of Afghan women during the period of 1970s to the early 2000s. The women characters reflect the reality of Afghan women. The story begins as a new born baby girl comes in the world. She is totally unaware about her family status, her gender, her social image and every other thing which is related to her. But as she grows, the social system helps her to understand everything. Her name is Mariam. Mariam is a main character in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. She is

born as an illegitimate daughter to a rich man Jalil with his maid Nana. For her illegitimate birth she is called *harami*. She first hears this word from her mother named Nana when Mariam breaks the tea set which Nana got from her mother. In anger Nana shouts at Mariam by saying “you are a clumsy little harami . . .” (4). Mariam doesn’t know the meaning of the word then, but when she gets to know its meaning she gets hurt. So, the writer Khaled Hosseini tries to reflect that in male dominated culture of Afghanistan many abusive and offensive words are used for women because they are considered as inferior to men. Writer through this novel reflects the life and the culture of Afghanistan which is completely androcentric. The poor and helpless women are used like a child’s toy by rich and male dominated families. Before Mariam’s birth, Nana works as a maid at the Jalil’s house. Jalil is one of the wealthiest men at Harat in Afghanistan. To keep the things secret to save his own reputation Jalil cast off her from his big fancy house. When she is kicked out from the Jalil’s house, all her dreams of living a happy and respectable life are shattered. Nana gives birth to Mariam at the *kolba* in a horrible condition. Nobody stays there to take care of her. No one knows about the real story behind the sufferings of Nana and everyone believes that it is her fault. Khaled Hosseini in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) has depicted that how the traditional notions which are against women contribute to their sufferings. Later on, one day when Nana tells Mariam about Jalil’s behavior and his cowardice nature after making her pregnant. He doesn’t have the courage to tell the truth to his family, to his wives, to his in-laws. Instead of taking the responsibility and accepting his mistake, he puts all the blame on her and sends her off to kolba to die. Nana tells Mariam that when she gets pregnant, instead of caring her, he throws her out of the house and in defending himself he doesn’t tell the reality to his other two wives. Nana tells Mariam that “You know what he told his wives by way of defense? That I forced myself on him. That it was my fault. Did I? You, see? This is what it means to be a woman in this world” (7). She is considered as the culprit for everything which she is facing in her life. She has no place to live among the people because people insult her with bad comments while passing by her. Jalil doesn’t show any kindness or concern for her. Instead of feeling sorry for her and doing something good for her he wants her to leave him and his house. Nana tells Mariam that “It was a relief to your father having me out of sight. It suited him just fine” (9). Jalil also wants that Nana should stay far away from the public life so he built a kolba in an isolated location for her stay. Later, she gives birth to Jalil’s daughter Mariam.

Mariam and Nana spend fifteen years together at a kolba. Little Mariam doesn’t believe on Nana’s sayings against Jalil. When Nana blames Jalil for her miserable life,

Mariam gives ears to her mother dutifully but actually she dislikes her mother for criticizing Jalil. She believes that her mother tells lie because Mariam deeply loves Jalil. Jalil visits on every Thursday to Mariam. Jalil tells many stories to her about Afghanistan, especially about Herat and its great people. On one fine Thursday day, he tells her about the writings of great fifteenth century Persian poet Queen Gauhar Shad. Jalil also tells her that “Herat, the city where Mariam was born, in 1959 had once been the cradle of Persian culture, the home of writers, painters and Sufis” (4). As usual Mariam feels happy after listening to him.

Nana is completely disappointed with the social system in which women are voiceless. Only men are given the priority and women are ignored. Women are used by men only to fulfill their own interests. For any woman giving birth to a child is the most difficult task and it is the time when she needs a psychological and physical support from her family or partner. But pregnant Nana was thrown out of the house by Jalil. At the kolba when Nana gave birth to Mariam in an unusual and horrible way she was all alone. Nana describes the story to Mariam that when she gives birth to her, there was no one around her to take care of her. She was all alone in a small mud house struggling with severe pain. Remembering that time, she tells her that “she lay all alone on the kolba’s floor, a knife by her side, sweat drenching from her body . . . And you Mariam Jo, you were in no rush. Almost two days you made me lay on that cold, hard floor. I didn’t eat or sleep; all I did was push and pray that you would come out” (11). Now, they both live together at kolba. When Nana was cast off from the Jalil’s house her life became more unpleasant and miserable. She had no one to support her and now her only hope is her daughter. Jalil visits every week to Nana and Mariam.

Mariam loves Jalil intensely and passionately who visits there at kolba with sweets and toys for Mariam. Mariam loves to spend her time with Jalil who used to tell her the stories on every week about the history, of his theatre and the stories from films. He also tells her about his other children from his other two wives. Gradually, Mariam grows and she starts dreaming to live at Jalil’s big house with a better and respectable life. She wants to have everything which other children of Jalil have. She urges to play with children of her age, she wants to read and write. She wants to travel in all big cities of Kabul with Jalil. She wants to watch movies at Jalil’s theatre. She imagines that her life at the house of Jalil would be more pleasant. No doubt if she were allowed to live there by Jalil she would have had far better life. She wants to go with Jalil to live there but Nana tries to make her understand about the reality and warns her not to go anywhere she says to Mariam that:

What a stupid girl you are! You think you matter to him, that you’re wanted in his

house? You think you are a daughter to him? That he is going to take you in? Let me tell you something. A man's heart is wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed; it won't stretch to make room for you. I'm the only one who loves you. I'm all you have in this world, Marriam, and when I'm gone you all have nothing. You'll have nothing. You are nothing. (27)

Like Mariam, Nana in her young age had also dreamt to live a better and respectful life like Mariam is dreaming now. Nana tells Mariam about her experiences in the male dominated society in which women have no respect at all. But Mariam is an inexperienced and too young to understand it all, so she doesn't follow her ideas. Mullah Faizullah was the regular visitor at the kolba. He used to teach her about reading, writing, religion and Koran recitations. Mariam loves to pass her time with him because he is good natured old man. One day Mariam makes her wish of going to school like Jalil's other children. He suggests the idea of Mariam's schooling to Nana but she rejects his idea by saying that women like us are not supposed to have formal education like the girls of rich parents get. She says that "And you, akhund sahib, with all due respect, you should know better than to encourage these foolish ideas of hers. If you really care about her, then you make her see that she belongs here at home with her mother. There is nothing out there for her. Nothing but rejection and heartache . . ." (19). So, Nana's statement clears that an average woman who is living in Afghanistan should not have big dreams like the women of rich and modern societies have. Because having big dreams always cause worries for them in Afghanistan and increase the amount of their sufferings. Looking at Mariam and her dreams Nana says to Mariam with anger "It is our lot in life Mariam. Women like us. We endure. It's all we have. Do you understand? . . ." (18). She wants Mariam to follow her advice and it would be better for her to work at home and train herself to live like her mother Nana. Mariam is disappointed on Nana's sayings and she gets hurt that her dreams like going to school will remain unfulfilled in her life. Albeit, in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* writer has not told much about Nana's past life. It is told in the novel by the writer about Nana that she works at the Jalil's house as one of his housekeepers before getting pregnant. Jalil develops an affair with her and she gets pregnant. But when she gets pregnant, she is kicked out from Jalil's house. Her mother had already dead when Nana was just two years old. Knowing this shameful act her father who was a poor man and a lowly stone carver also disowned her from his house. No one was there to support her because everyone considered her as a lady of loose character. Finally, she was sent to a kolba where she gave birth to Mariam in a mysterious circumstance. So, now all her dreams of living a happy life have been shattered. They both

lived at kolba now with some goats and hens.

At kolba sometimes pondering over her miserable life she feels disheartened by her life. Sometimes she feels that it is of no use to live for a woman like her on this earth where women like her have no respect. While cursing herself, she says that “I wish my father had had the stomach to sharpen one of his knives and do the honorable thing. It might have been better for me” (6) and then looking at Mariam she says “better for you too, maybe . . .” (6). She is not happy with the patriarchal mode of society which has made her life more troublesome. For every any bad thing in the family women are considered as responsible. She tells Mariam that “learn this now and learn it well, my daughter; like a compass needle that points north, a man’s accusing finger always finds a woman. Always you remember that Mariam” (7).

Khaled Hosseini has also reflected the role of fate to reflect the plight of women. When Nana was fifteen, she had a suitor, a boy from Shindand a young parakeet seller. All the preparations for marriage had been done. Nana was very happy about the marriage but then the week before the wedding date, *jinn* had entered Nana’s body and her whole body clenched up. Her eyes were rolling back, the incoherent mumbling and when the news reached Shindand the family of boy called off the wedding. Had it not been happened both Nana and Mariam’s life would have been different.

On the other hand, because of Nana, Mariam’s life has also become troublesome. She is an illegitimate child and because of that she is called *harami*. At the age of five, for the first time she hears the word *harami* from Nana though, she doesn’t know about its meaning then. Much later, when she gets to know about some of the reality about the meaning of the word *harami* she feels dejected and isolated and she asks Nana, “But where do I belong? What I am going to do now? Nana replied I’m all you have in this world, Mariam and when I am gone you will have nothing. You are nothing” (40). Here, Nana could envision the miserable future of Mariam on the basis of her own life. She narrates her every single truth about Jalil and other things which have made her life deplorable. But still Mariam doesn’t believe on what Nana says about Jalil and about the nature of men in general in Afghanistan. She always loves him and waits eagerly on every Thursday. On every visit Jalil meets Mariam with smiling face and tells her many new stories to entertain her. He tells her about the recent and new developments in politics, film industry, about his ten children, about the historical facts of Afghanistan. On one fine day in the summer of 1973, the year when Mariam attains the age of fourteen Jalil tells her about the end of forty years rule of King Zahir Shah and about the ending of monarchy in Afghanistan. He tells her that Afghanistan had now become a

republic nation, and Daoud Khan has become the president of Afghanistan. He also tells her that there are rumors that Soviets have helped him to become the president. Plausibly, along with other things writer also talks about the changing political scenario of Afghanistan in the book.

Mariam always dreams to go with Jalil to play with his children, to watch cartoon at his cinema etc. She expresses all these desires to Jalil on her fifteenth birthday and insists him to take her but he doesn't take her and assures her to take some other day. When Jalil leaves, Nana scolds her and forbids her to visit Jalil because they don't matter for him. But still Mariam disagrees with her mother's views about Jalil and says "You're afraid that I might find the happiness you never had. And you don't want me to be happy. You don't want a good life for me. You're the one with the wretched heart" (28). On every Thursday Jalil visits at kolba but on one Thursday when he is unable to visit kolba because of some urgent business appointment. Mariam cannot control herself and she leaves kolba to visit Jalil's house without telling Nana. She crosses the stream and feels happy and imagines the new life in the city with her father, with her brothers and sisters. She imagines the beautiful life when she would be loved by everyone. Somehow, she reaches at Jalil's house because everybody knows him in Herat and it is easy for Mariam to reach at his house by asking people. But something very tragic, unwanted and unexpected happens with Mariam. She comes to know about the reality after visiting Jalil's house. She is not allowed to enter in the house of Jalil. She sleeps outside in the lawn for whole night waiting for Jalil to come and take her inside but he doesn't come. She keeps weeping and thinks about all those things which Nana has told her about Jalil, and about the nature of men. She spends her whole night there in the cold weather under the sky. In the morning, driver comes to take her in the car and sends her back to kolba. This is the day when she realizes that her mother is only true figure to her. But for Mariam the world ends when she finds that her mother Nana has committed suicide. Her all hopes have shattered into shards. Now, she has no one to love her. She remembers Nana's words that "I'll die if you go. I'll just die" (38). So, Mariam's dream to visit Jalil house and to live with him, watch cartoon at his cinema, travel across Kabul with Jalil, going to school like other Jalil's children, and so on are remained unfulfilled. Suddenly, her life like her mother and like millions of other Afghan women becomes the subject of sufferings and endurance.

Mariam's marriage is arranged reluctantly by Jalil and his wives with forty-year old shoe maker Rasheed soon after the death of her mother. This time she is only fifteen and not willing to marry. Moreover, she is too young to marry with such an aged widower. But it is true that girls' marriage at an early age have always been a common practice in Afghanistan.

One of the two wives of Jalil justified that how common it is in Afghanistan, when they talk about the age of Mariam. Jalil's wife says that "Yes. But I've seen nine-year-old girls given to men twenty years older than your suitor. Mariam. We all have. What are you, fifteen? That's a good, solid marrying age for a girl" (47). Marrying at this time for Mariam is a great mental torture and she looked at Jalil and said that "I don't want this. Don't make me . . ." (47). But nobody listens to her and forces her to marry with Rasheed. In the beginning, she is very sad because it is not the right time for her to marry. She is so disappointed over her mother's suicide and mentally she is not prepared for all these unexpected events. In the beginning, every time she resists their decision and shows her desire to go back at Nana's place to live a reclusive life. But it is assured by all to her that she would have a happy life if she gets married with Rasheed and stays with him. Reluctantly she marries with Rasheed by following all the Afghan customs and rituals. So, gradually she makes up her mind to live because she has no other choice. After few days of living alone with the past painful memories adopts herself as a wife in true sense with Rasheed just hoping to have better life. Her husband Rasheed takes care of her and takes her for travelling to the famous places of Kabul. Rasheed teaches her about cooking and about other household works. She stays at house and spends her time in missing Nana and feels herself guilty for her death. She stays at house and Rasheed goes to work to his shop to earn money in order to meet their daily needs. In the same way a week passes but she doesn't show her interest in doing household activities. Seeing her in such a way Rasheed gets irritated but he doesn't say anything to her but once he asks her politely that "I figured you might need some time. But this is absurd. A week's gone and . . . Well, then as on tomorrow morning I expect you to start behaving like a wife. *Fahmidi?* Is that understood" (63). So, here Rasheed shows his authority being a husband which clearly indicates that he wouldn't tolerate her in such a way anymore. He doesn't care about her past circumstances and depression through which she is passing due to her mother's unexpected death. But from the next day she starts working in the house as any Afghan wife is supposed to do after marriage. She prepares food, cleaning the house and washing the clothes in her daily routine. Rasheed tells her stories about his customers in the evening. He also teaches her about the culture and tradition of Afghanistan to follow. He also criticizes those Afghan women for not following the proper dress code. He wants Mariam to wear scarf all the time whenever she has to go outside because ". . . a woman's face is her husband's business only. I want you to remember that. . ." (69). Gradually, she manages to adjust herself according to the system and develops her friendship with Fariba; a married lady who lives next to her house. Through their initial meetings and conversations writer tries to reflect the gender-based ideology of the Afghan people. Mariam is pregnant and wishes to

have boy because according to Fariba “Boy is better, Mariam Jan, they carry the family name” (66). After some months of living with Rasheed she starts feeling comfortable with him. They both go for shopping and traveling around the Kabul city on every weekend. One day Rasheed tells her while passing to the crowded Chicken Street that “Around here is where foreign diplomats live, rich businessmen, members of the royal family that sort of people. Not like you and me” (73). While roaming there Mariam also sees women of the Kabul which are completely different in look, in terms of language etc. from the women of poor and rural areas. Rasheed calls them modern women of Afghanistan who don’t hesitate to walk among strangers and even talking to the strangers is not a bad thing for them. Rasheed tells his wife about them that “they are modern Afghan women married to modern Afghan men who did not mind that their wives walked among strangers with makeup on their faces and nothing on their heads . . .” (74). These women are wearing short dresses, dark sunglasses, busy on their telephone calls and some of them even smoke publicly. From their looks and their ways of talking, Mariam thinks that they all have university degrees. After seeing women roaming around the Kabul city, Mariam is shocked. She couldn’t imagine that women could live their life in such an independent way. Seeing them, Mariam feels so low because she doesn’t have anything like them. She remembers that she had also dream during her childhood to go to school with other Jalil’s children. She couldn’t fulfill her dream because Nana used to tell her that women like her had no use of schooling. But now she considers herself as completely ignorant and backward lady. The year 1974 comes, they celebrates Eid. It is the first time in Mariam’s life that she sees the ways through which people celebrate Eid after Ramadan. A great number of Eid visitors visit at their house. On the other side Mariam is happy over her pregnancy. She thinks that having her own child is the only way to forget all her past grief and to have a happy life. But unfortunately, she couldn’t give birth to any child. Sometimes she considers it as the punishment for what she has done to Nana. After it, Rasheed’s attitude for her starts changing. Now he doesn’t look that much friendly with Mariam as he has been before the miscarriage. Her sufferings as a wife only begin when she is unable to give birth to a child. Rasheed starts behaving with her very rudely every time and even abuses her and beats her sometimes. Rasheed finds faults in everything which she does. His changing behavior for her reminds what her mother Nana used to tell her that “learn this now and learn it well, my daughter; like a compass needle that points north, a man’s accusing finger always finds a woman. Always you remember that Mariam” (7).

The year 1978 came when Mariam turned nineteen. In the month of April, large number of demonstrations took place following the murder of prominent communist leader

Mir Akbar Khyber. The people who were demonstrating in support of Mir Akbar Khyber blamed the President Doud Khan for his murder. Mariam didn't hear any such words like communist, Marxist and so on, so she asked to Rasheed about their meanings who explained her angrily. Her worries increased every day and now according to the author for Mariam:

It was not easy tolerating him talking this way to her, to bear his scorn, his ridicule, his insults, his walking past her like she was nothing but a house cat. But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid. And Mariam was afraid. She lived in fear of his shifting moods, his volatile temperament . . . (97)

Now, Rasheed always tried to find pretext to beat her. She always tried to do things to make her husband happy but she couldn't. All Rasheed wanted to have boy from her but unfortunately seven times she failed. Her failure to give birth increases her problems. She had no value in the eyes of her husband. Her husband wanted a boy from her but she couldn't have that unfortunately. She felt that she had become a burden for her husband which could be seen through his rude behavior for her. She didn't feel good while working or cooking for Rasheed as she had in the first few months of marriage. Rasheed always found fault now in her cooking and other household works which she did. One day she got very disappointed on Rasheed's cruel behavior for her and she thought it "As a reminder of how women like us suffer. How quietly we endure all that falls upon us" (90). Here, the writer clears that the women in Afghanistan have no option except endurance. They are born to endure; they cannot speak against the system because the system never allows them to do that. They live a very unhappy, desolate and deplorable life. On the other hand, the political situation in the country was not safe. The President Doud Khan was assassinated and Rasheed was listening the news that "A revolutionary council of the armed forces has been established and our *watan* will now be known as the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan" (100). Abdul Qadir a political leader gave hopes to the people of Afghanistan. On radio he announced that "The era of aristocracy, nepotism, and inequality is over, fellow *hamwatans* (countrymen). We have ended decades of tyranny. Power is now in the hands of the masses and freedom loving people. A glorious new era in the history of our country is afoot. A new Afghanistan is born . . ." (100). Common man had lots of hopes from the new government.

The novel tells the story of another girl Laila who is introduced in the novel when she is of nine years age in the year 1987. It was the time when the war between the Soviet Union and Afghan forces was going on. Due to the massive foreign support to Afghan forces the Soviet was losing the fight. But it didn't affect much to the Laila's life so far who belonged

to a good and civilized family. Her father and mother were not only well educated but had also good social status. In their family on dinner table, they used to talk about the history and politics of Afghanistan. They discuss the history, linguistic and cultural differences among various ethnic groups of Afghanistan. Laila's father during one evening discusses the history of Tajiks and Pashtuns. Babi says that being in majority Pashtuns have politically dominated in the country and Tajiks and other non-Pashtuns are marginalized everywhere. Babi says that "Pashtun kings ruled this country for almost two hundred and fifty years, Laila and Tajiks for all of nine months, back in 1929" (128). Babi is not happy over the division of the country on the basis of ethnicity. According to him, that "we are all Afghans, and that's all that should matters. But when one group rules over the others for so long . . . There's contempt and rivalry. There is. There always has been" (128). Plausibly, through Babi's conversation with his daughter Laila, writer tries to focus on the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of Afghanistan and its effect on people. He also clears here that politics for power plays its main role in dividing the people which is very dangerous for the country.

Laila's father Babi wants to give her the best education. He helps her doing her homework every day after school. He also gives some of his own to make her ahead from other students. He gives more importance to her education than anything else, knowing about the importance of education and the caliber of his daughter, he says:

Marriage can wait, education cannot . . . You can be anything you want, Laila. I know this about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men may be even more. Because a society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila. No chance. (114)

In Afghanistan, it was the time when the Soviet's political influence was increasing in Afghanistan. People of Afghanistan especially women and other minorities were happy with the Soviet Union. Laila remembers the time when she was in her school days it was the time when Soviet was ruling in Afghanistan. Albeit, the conflict between Soviet forces and anti-Soviet ones which were politically motivated and supported by America, Pakistan and other anti-Soviet countries was going on. Soviet policies were more liberal and modern which gave Afghanistan's women more educational, political and social freedom. Laila's father was very happy with the communist's policies especially for women. He said to his daughter that "women have always had it hard in this country, Laila, but they're probably more free now, under the communists, and have more rights than they've ever had before . . ." (133). He said that before communist government the freedom of women remained limited only to Kabul. In Kabul, relatively people were more liberal and progressive and women living in Kabul have

more freedom in everything. But in tribal areas women could hardly leave their houses but if they went out then only in *burqas* and should be accompanied by men. Babi said that in those regions people followed traditional laws. They didn't like communists and their policies for women because "There, men saw it as an insult to their centuries old tradition . . . [but] to be told by the government and a godless one at that, that their daughters had to leave home, attend school, and work alongside men" (133). It was the time when women in the country felt safer and secure. They enjoyed all the political rights; they got good positions in the government's offices, and other social institutions. Separate schools were established for girls, where higher quality and advanced level of education was given to the girls of Afghanistan by the local and foreign teachers. Appreciating the time, Laila's father used to say her when she would go to the school that "it's a good time to be a woman in Afghanistan Laila" (253). Laila recalled that how her one of the school teachers used to encourage girls education and motivated her with other girls to get education for the nation's progress. Her teacher used to tell them in the class that:

The Soviet Union was the best nation in the world, along with Afghanistan. It was kind to its workers, and its people were all equal. Everyone in the Soviet Union was happy and friendly, unlike America, where crime made people afraid to leave their homes. And everyone in Afghanistan would be happy too, she said, once the anti-progressives, the backward bandits, were defeated. (111)

People from all over the country joined together against Soviet. In the fighting, millions were killed from both sides and some have left the country. The situation in the late 1970s was very dangerous to live in Afghanistan. Rising anti-Soviet forces with the help of strong foreign support forced Soviet to leave the country in the year 1989. Writer has textualized this historical event in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) when one of the main characters Babi comes with the news in April 1988 that "They signed a treaty! In Geneva. Its official! They are leaving. Within nine months, there won't be any more Soviets in Afghanistan!" (151). But at the same time Babi says that the war would not end because the Soviet's puppet Najibullah is still there as the President of Afghanistan. But after two years finally in April 1992 Najibullah surrendered. The people of Afghanistan who were fighting against Soviet celebrated their victory. But the complete departure of the Soviet spawned the Afghan Civil War (1992- 1996) in Afghanistan. The situation in Afghanistan became more tumultuous. Different Mujahedeen factions were fighting with each other for the power. The author of the Zoya's story pictured the situation right after the Soviet's defeat from Afghanistan:

For form rejoicing that the Russians had been defeated, Grandmother told me that a new worse Devil had come to my country. There was a popular saying around this time: “Rid us of these seven donkeys and give us back our cow. The donkeys were seven factions of the Mujahideen, and the cow was the puppet regime Najibullah who was installed by the Russians before they left. (qtd. in Gosh 7)

Millions of people left the country to other countries and many others were waiting in their own country to get the situation normal. Laila’s family was also planning to leave Afghanistan. But still they were staying there, predicting that the war was temporary and soon there would be peace in the country. Babi himself took the responsibility of teaching to Laila during this chaotic period. Now the system had changed completely and the opportunities which women had during the communist rule had no more. Almost all Laila’s neighbors had left and the people who were there in the streets were completely unknown to Laila and her family. The tribal leaders who were fighting against Soviet collectively now started fighting with each other for political power. Every leader wanted to have more powers in the government for his own people. Their fighting took violent shape and resulted into the Civil War which lasted from 1992-1996. Describing the situation of the time, Huma Ahmed-Ghosh writes in his research article titled “A History of Women in Afghanistan” that “In 1992 women were increasingly precluded from the public services. In the areas which were controlled by tribal leaders in 1994, those many women appeared in public only if dressed in complete head-to-toe garment with mesh covered opening for their eyes” (7). Afghanistan faced a huge loss to everything during anti- Soviet war and later in the Civil War. In the Civil War schools, universities, and libraries were destroyed. All the rights of women were abolished and they were disempowered completely. In addition to all this women were kidnapped, killed, raped and forced to marry. The life of common man had become more than a hell. All their fundamental rights were scraped and innocent killings were the part of everyday life. One day a tragic incident took place. The bomb was exploded at the house of Laila in which Laila’s parents were killed and Laila had severely injured. Rasheed took her to his home and started taking care of her to restore her health. When she recovered completely, he decided to marry with her. Laila didn’t want but she had no one in her family to live with and her family had died in the bomb attack. So, she had no choice and reluctantly she agreed. Mariam got disappointed and angry over it. She objected the decision of Rasheed to marry Laila. But using his authority being a male Rasheed didn’t listen to her, he told Mariam “Don’t be so dramatic. It’s a common thing and you know it. I have friends who have two, three or four wives. Your own father had three. Besides, what I am doing now most men I

know would have done long ago. You know it's true" (208). But after some months both ladies developed a good friendship.

Marriam was not able to give birth to any child so, Rasheed wanted to use Laila to give birth to his child. So, Rasheed was happy when Laila gave birth to her daughter Aziza. Now, the situation was normal in Rasheed's house and his behavior was also normal for her both wives. The trouble started again in the family when one day Laila's lover Tariq came back from Pakistan and started meeting Laila in the absence of Rasheed. One day when Rasheed came to know about Laila's meetings with Tariq, his behavior became more conflictual towards Laila and Mariam. Rasheed became ruder with his wives and always used to abuse them on minor issues.

On the other side, the Taliban came into power after the ending of the Civil War. The goodtime for women has become the thing of past now. Laila contemplated about her past, her school days and about her father's dream for her to become a great woman in Afghanistan. Author says in the novel that "the freedoms and opportunities that women had enjoyed between 1978 and 1992 were a thing of past now . . ." (253). People of Afghanistan were happy that they got rid from the power hunger Mujahedeen factions because people considered Taliban as pure and incorruptible. Taliban soon announced on loudspeaker and on radio about their new policies and laws in Farsi and Pashto separately for men and women. They announced that now Afghanistan would be known as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and its citizen were supposed to follow certain laws which were:

All citizens must pray five times a day. If it is prayer time and you are caught doing something other you will be beaten. All men will grow their beards . . . All boys will wear turbans . . . Singing is forbidden. Dancing is forbidden. Playing cards, playing chess, gambling and kite flying are forbidden. Writing books, watching films, and painting pictures are forbidden . . . If you are not Muslim, do not worship where you can be seen by Muslims. If you do, you will be beaten and imprisoned. If you are caught trying to convert a Muslim to your faith, you will be executed. (270)

These are the rules which they announced for men only. While Taliban made separate rules for women, which were also announced through loudspeaker. For women the new rules were:

You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a mahram, a male relative. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home. You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten. Cosmetics are

forbidden. Jewelry is forbidden. You will not wear charming clothes. You will not speak unless spoken to. You will not make eye contact with men. You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten . . . Girls are forbidden from attending school. All schools for girls will be closed immediately. Women are forbidden from working. If you are found guilty of adultery, you will be stoned to death. Listen. Listen well, Obey. Allah-u-Akbar. (271)

All these rules which Taliban had made for its citizens were mandatory and people had to follow. So, now all the freedom which women had during the Soviet's rule had become the thing of past. As comparison to men they had to follow more social restrictions. The new policies of Taliban's government gave more authority to men. Men had more rights to control the women in their families. The author of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) reflects such thing through the character of Rasheed whose torture increased during the Taliban rule for Mariam and Laila. Ladies could not leave their house without male companion and they had to stay at home. To avoid the cruelties of Rasheed, many times Mariam and Laila tried to run away secretly. Every time they were caught by police because they were without male companion. Once a police official told Laila when she was attempting to run away to Pakistan with Mariam "you do realize, *hamshira* that it is crime for a woman to run away . . . You can be imprisoned for running away, I assume you understand that, nay?" (259). Moreover, nobody was there to listen women's problems. Their husbands could do anything with them. They were not allowed to work outside of the house which made them completely dependent on their male partners. At the same time, it was very difficult for many families to earn their livings.

At the end of the novel, Khaled Hosseini has shown the courage of Mariam to retaliate against the system. One day after Tariq's visited to meet Laila, Rasheed came to know about him and he couldn't control himself, he started beating her badly. Seeing him, Mariam realized that he was going to kill Laila. So, she ran to take shovel and hit Rasheed across his temple. The blow knocked him off Laila, then she again raised the shovel and this time she gave it everything she had. Mariam sent Laila and her children and she went to police to surrender herself. She was surprised to know when the young Talib official asking her to present two witnesses and said that "God has made us differently, you women and us men. Our brains are different. You are not able to think like we can. Western doctors and their science have proven this. This is why we require only one male witness but two female ones" (355). After this incident, irrespective of worrying about her own future, she surrendered herself for punishment taking charge of murder only on herself. She sent Laila and her

children to Tariq by promising them that soon she would meet them. But she never met them again because later after a short imprisonment she was hanged to death for her crime by the police.

Through, this novel Khaled Hosseini has tried to present the suffering of Afghan women. The chapter shows through the textual analysis that the social and political system of the country is mainly responsible for women's endless sufferings. Majority of the people in Afghanistan follow traditional system in their daily life. In their traditional system women do not have any kind of freedom in their life. They are only supposed to do the works inside the four walls of the house. Moreover, the decades of wars and conflicts increased their worries and have made their life more than a hell. For it, the life and character of Laila has been employed as an example by Khaled Hosseini in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). Laila's childhood life was far better than Mariam, with well civilized, educated and liberal parents. Her father Babi was well educated and wanted to see Laila on very high social status at some day in Afghanistan. Her father used to devote lots of time to teach her when the schools were closed during the Civil War. In her school she had her lover named Tariq whom she loved passionately from her early age but the war parted them. He left the country with his family to Pakistan. When she was very young, her parents died in an explosion and she was left alive but severely injured. She was left all alone and knew nobody. Rasheed lived in her neighbor took her to his house. He and his wife Marriam took care of her and helped her to get her recuperated. Rasheed played a trick with her by sending a stranger who told Laila that he had come here to tell her about Tariq's mysterious deadly accident and he met him in hospital's emergency ward. The man assured Laila that Tariq would have been dead most probably now. Albeit, Laila was pregnant with Tariq's baby at the time about which earlier Rasheed was unknown. Later, even he knew but feigned not to know anything and she gave birth to a daughter Aziza. But she was surprised to see Tariq one day after long time and started meeting with him till one day Rasheed kept beating her almost to death. Then she was saved by Mariam by killing Rasheed and sacrificed her life for Laila and her children. After reuniting with Tariq Laila started living a happy life and became a teacher. So, in this way decades of internal and external conflicts in Afghanistan have increased women sufferings and their problems.

Writer has depicted in the story that women have to fight back to get themselves free from sufferings in the male dominated society. The story ends with the murder of Rasheed by Mariam. The murder of Rasheed freed Laila to live her life as she had dreamt once to live with her childhood boyfriend Tariq. Marriam takes the responsibility of Rasheed's murder

and surrenders herself to the police and because of her sacrifice Laila is able to live her life. So, the events which took place after the death of Rasheed symbolically means, that a woman needs to sacrifice themselves for their own sake and for the sake of other women. To liberate themselves they need to fight against the dominating system of the country.

A Voiceless Heroine Gets Voice: A Study of *The Patience Stone*

Since the time immemorial, in Afghanistan the life of women in Afghanistan has not been safe and free from traditional Islamic norms which are against the freedom of women. Their role in the society is decided by the tribal leaders and Mullahs according to the old and traditional religious line. But unfortunately, through their religion and in the name of the religion they are suppressed and exploited in all fields of the social life. As per the established tribal laws they do not have the right to retaliate or go against the male members of the family. So, they are absolutely dominated by the male dominated culture which doesn't provide them any sort of freedom. Their submissive roles are always associated with their religion. The association of their social roles with the religion has been the major hurdle to raise their social status.

Various Afghan feminist writers have given Utopian voice to the women through their writings, the voice which in reality has never been possible so far. Atiq Rahimi is one of those feminist writers of Afghanistan who talks about the Afghan women issues in his writings. In one of his famous novel *The Patience Stone* (2008) originally written in Dari language with the title *Sang-e-Saboor*, translated into English by Polly McLean. The introduction of the novel has been written by famous Afghanistan's contemporary writer Khaled Hosseini. The novel not only talks about the Afghan women issues but also give them voice to express their deeper feelings and desires through the main woman character of the novel. As women in Afghanistan have been the victim of the male dominated social system of the country. They were not given the voice to speak up against the social and political system of the country. Khaled Hosseini who has written the introduction of the novel argues that "For far too long, Afghan women have been faceless and voiceless" (5).

The setting of the novel *The Patience Stone* (2008) takes place in a room in which a woman is nursing to her comatose husband. Her husband is in traumatic condition after he got hit with a bullet while fighting in the war. In the beginning of the story the beautiful woman is sitting down next to her husband and taking care of her man without complaining for anything. Her one hand is on his chest and with other she is moving the long string of black prayer beads praying for her husband to gain his health back. On the other side, her two young girls are crying in the other room demanding for some eatable things. But the things

started changing with the passage of time. Her husband is lying in unconscious state without moving his body. His mouth is half opened and eyes are fixed gazing on the ceiling. She keeps praying for her husband's health for many days tirelessly. Despite her prayers and strong faith on God, his condition doesn't get better and remains the same it despairs her but still she sits continuously beside him to pray for his life. Now, she starts picturing her past which gives her more pain. She feels tired by her sufferings which she has faced throughout her life; first as a daughter, then as daughter-in-law, as wife and mother as well. At present, she is not only worried about the critical condition of her husband but she is more worried about her young daughter's' future. She moves herself close to her husband and helplessly says that "I'm tired. At breaking point. Don't abandon me; you're all I have left . . . Without you, I have nothing. Think of your daughters! What will I do with them? They're so young" (18). She gets more disappointed about her in-laws and her husband's brothers and relatives who have left her alone in such a difficult situation. Her only hope now is God, she keeps praying to God for her husband and to have better life. She feels alone which affects her mentally. In a state of madness, she starts narrating everything to her husband, about her past life. She keeps narrating each and everything which she has faced but never got the courage to reveal throughout her life. Though she is not sure whether her husband is listening to her or not. In anger she questions on everything in the male dominated society which is against the women's liberation. Now, her faith on people, on God and on everything starts declining and while crying she feels that she has gone mad, "I'm going . . . I'm going . . . I'm . . . mad" (19). She curses every one of her family members and in anger shouts at her husband "I can't do anything for you I think it's all over" (19).

Later part of the novel, she gets the courage to speak against the patriarchal system of society. She speaks up may be in madness or in frustration but she doesn't stop until she reveals every untold and deep secret of her life. She tells her husband that if he had dead the situation would have been different for her. She says that his brothers would not leave her here then because she says that "one of them would have had to marry me . . . perhaps they would have been happier if you have died" (39). She reveals the social system in which how women are exploited mentally, socially, physically and sexually. She tells to her husband that how his brothers sexually abused her when her husband was fighting in the war, "Your brothers have always wanted to fuck me! They . . . They spied on me . . . constantly, for the whole three years you were away . . . spied on me through the little window in the bathhouse while I was washing myself . . . and . . . jerked off. They spied on us too, at night" (39). She expresses all the bitter truths which she has kept secret so far. She expresses her feelings

of loneliness during her ten years of marriage in which they have lived together only for three years. She always believed that things would be better someday or the other but they never did, "At the time, I didn't even question your absence. It seemed so normal! You were at the front. You were fighting for freedom, for Allah! And that made everything okay. It gave me hope, made me proud. In some way, you were with us. Inside each of us." (40). Now, she complains her husband about his cruel behavior for her during these ten years of marriage. Neither he has shown love to her nor has he respected her feelings. She did not know anything about men, society and marriages. Being a young lady, it was natural to have her expectations from her husband and his family to have good life but her husband never cared about her feelings. Then the lady thinks about her life before marriage in her parental house and her father's attitude for her, for her sisters and for her mother. She even didn't care about anything only thing she needed was love and affection from family and from everybody. She didn't get that love from his father, she says that "All my dad cared about was his quails, his fighting quails! I often saw him kissing those quails, but never my mother, nor us, his children. There were seven of us. Seven girls starved of affection" (42). Her father dominated and controlled her family. He always did what he wanted not what his family wanted. He used to participate in betting and the results decided the day of the family. She says that "Every Friday, he used to take them to the fight in the Qaf gardens. He would place bets. Sometimes he won, sometimes he lost. When he lost he would get upset, and nasty. He would come home in a rage and find any pretext to beat us and also my mother" (42). For him the money was more important than his daughters. He could do anything for winning money. She remembers that how one day when he lost all the money and he sold his daughter to play. She says "As fate would have it, he lost. He had no money left to honor his bet, so he gave my sister instead. At twelve years old, my sister was sent to live with a man of forty!" (43). So, through her father's character the author shows the dominance of men over women in the patriarchal form of society. Writer acted as a mouthpiece to present every darker face of the male dominated society in Afghanistan. The lady's revelation of every reality reflects the women's retaliation against the established system of the society. Even for lady to reveal such reality is quite strange and against the system but she gets the courage to speak. She speaks about everything which the majority of the Afghan women face throughout their life just because of the men's orthodox and traditional kind of attitude for them. The lady not only faces trouble in her own family but she suffers more in her in-law's house. She narrates all her secrets to her traumatized husband from her early age to her present time. Revealing her secrets gives her relief "Yes, a strange relief. I couldn't understand how, as well as feeling upset and horribly guilty, I could also feel relieved, as if a burden had been lifted. I wasn't

sure if it was because of . . .” (48).

She calls her husband Sang-e- Saboor which is the name of the holy stone in Mecca. Pilgrims go there and get relieved from their sufferings after revealing their secrets in front of this holy stone. In the same way the lady also gets relieved after the revelation of each thought to her comatose husband. So, metaphorically she calls her husband Sang-e-Saboor. She expresses her feelings to touch her husband with love which he has never allowed her in their ten years of marriage. She does everything with her husband which she always dreamed of in her life and says “Now I can do anything which I want with you!” (48). Her remark here seems Utopian kind and expresses the deep feelings of women. They also want to have complete liberation from the patriarchal chains which doesn’t allow them to enjoy their life as men enjoy in Afghanistan. They cannot enjoy the social, cultural, political and sexual life in the way they want to live. Women are not given the chance to express themselves as the lady says that “things that have been stored up inside me for a while now. We’ve never had the chance to discuss them. Or let’s be honest you’ve never given me the chance” (57). The lady keeps revealing all her secrets and her desires which are endless and which she has kept in her hearts until now. While revealing her secrets she says “don’t worry there is no end of my secrets” (48). She keeps talking to him continuously while moving around him and sometimes with emotions getting closer to him.

Then, she talks about her aunt, her father’s only sister who was a very generous lady. For whom she had lots of reverence because she loved her. She loved her aunt more than her mother. She misses her because she was the one who taught her everything regarding the life. She feels sorry for her because her life changed completely after her marriage with a man who had nothing good except some dirty cash. When she was unable to give birth to a child, her husband sent her back to her parents’ house just after two years of marriage. She was raped many times by her father-in-law. When she came to her parents’ home her own father abandoned her. She had to leave her home and thereafter nobody knew about her. Further, reflecting women condition in Afghanistan, the lady talks about her early years of life with her parents. In her family they were seven daughters and no brother. Her father wanted boy but his desires remained unfulfilled. He neither loves to his daughters nor to his wife. He used to beat them on very minor issues.

The lady enjoys the liberty of expressing herself without interruption from her husband. So, uninterruptedly she keeps on saying many of her bitter secrets which her husband never expected. She candidly speaks to him that “I can talk to you about anything, without being interrupted, or blamed!” (48). She expresses her unsatisfied sexual life with

him and she also tells about her personal sexual affairs with various young men. In anger over her unsatisfied sexual life she openly confesses by pointing out those nights when he kicked her out from his room to sleep in the other room. In the other room secretly, her lovers entered in her room to have sex with her. She tells that even her daughters are not from her husband because her husband is infertile. They are from someone else and she reveals their true father and says “Yes, my Sang-e Saboor, those two girls are not yours!” (84). She reveals everything and expects that her husband now knows everything about her and would respect her secrets. She expects him to be better man once he would recover and get his health back. She doesn’t want to see him as he was during their last ten years of conjugal life. She convinces herself that she is sure that her husband would not treat her after it as he treated her earlier. In an optimistic way she says “I don’t think so. I convince myself that you will be changed by everything I’m telling you. You are hearing me, listening to me, and thinking. Pondering” (81). As she is revealing all her secrets, she moves and finds that someone holds her wrist tightly. She is shocked to see that it is her husband and with stammering voice she says “It’s It’s a miracle! It’s the Resurrection!” she says in a voice strangled by terror. “I knew my secrets would bring you back to life, back to me I knew it” (86). But the man in anger grabs her from her hair and pulls her. The woman doesn’t weep or cry, not even retaliate. She takes a sigh of relief and by embracing man’s feet she says “Thank you, Al-Sabur! I am finally released from my suffering” (86). But she is not aware that her man can go up to such extent that he wants to kill her. When he grabs her and tries to bash her head against the wall, her eyes falls on the hanging *khanjar* (sword) on the wall which she takes and penetrates it into his heart. But the man still pulls her and wrings her neck.

Conclusion

Stating explicitly, the chapter is based on the two novels, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and *A Patience Stone* (2007) which discuss Afghanistan’s women conditions. The chapter shows the unending Afghan women’s struggle to liberate themselves from the patriarchal structure of the society and their desire to have a better life. But their long years of struggle to get a good and respectable place in Afghan society have never been fulfilled so far. The present chapter reflects that both conflicts and sufferings of women are an integral part of the Afghan society. Establishment of the every new government gave some hope of peace and development to the Afghan citizens. Likewise every new development in every Afghan woman’s life gives her a false hope of better life. So, the study shows that throughout history women have always been marginalized in Afghanistan. They have been exploited throughout the history in the name of religion. The country is divided into various tribes and ethnicities

and these tribal and ethnic groups are led by their leaders or Mullahs who presented themselves as messengers of God. It is the prior responsibility of people to obey all their rules and commands. Gradually, these social and religious laws have become sedimentary. According to the system, the one who does not obey these established social and religious laws means he is disobeying and disrespecting his or her God. Those who do not obey religious laws should be punished. But it is great misfortune for Afghanistan that these laws are mostly applicable to women's freedom and their marginalization. They deprived them of their basic rights like right to education, right to freedom, right to speech, right to property, right to marriage, right to get job and so on. According to these traditional religious laws, women in Afghanistan were supposed to stay at home for cleaning the house, preparing food and giving birth to the children and taking care of them. Khaled Hosseini has clearly portrayed it through his female characters of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). In the novel, a male character Rasheed used as a mouthpiece to represent men of Afghanistan. Lack of opportunities and endless sufferings are considered to be a great misfortune for women to be born in Afghanistan. Their birth is not welcomed there. They do not get voice to speak against the system because very rarely they have got the opportunities and freedom to speak. They are always directed and controlled by men.

In his fictional work, Atiq Rahimi gives voice to her heroine in his novel *The Patience Stone* (2008). She narrates all her secret feelings and everything to her husband which she always desired to share in her life. It is the first time in her life she gets the courage to speak up against the system and against her husband, she says that "Things that have been stored up inside me for a while now. We've never had the chance to discuss them. Or let's be honest you've never given me the chance" (57). As her husband cannot move his body and even cannot speak. So, she says that "I can talk to you about anything, without being interrupted, or blamed!" (48). It is estimated that the women population in Afghanistan is around forty five percent of the total population. The people and the government of Afghanistan need to understand it very clearly that without women's progress the country cannot progress. They should be considered as the equal part of the nation. Rights and opportunities should be given to them so they can contribute equally to the nation's progress. Khaled Hosseini also reflects it in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by bringing a more liberal character Baby who is Laila's father. Baby believes that women should be treated with due respect and equality. He always encourages and motivates his daughter to get education. He gives more importance to her education than anything else, he says, "Marriage can wait, education cannot . . . You can be anything you want, Laila. I know this

about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men may be even more. A society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila. No chance” (114). If in Afghanistan everybody were Baby, only then Afghanistan would be the best nation for women and would make more progress. Moreover, like Atiq Rahimi gives the voice and courage to his heroine to speak up against the system, in the same way women of Afghanistan should be given opportunities and freedom to develop themselves. Taliban has again come into power in Afghanistan after twenty years following the complete departure of the US and other foreign forces on 31st August 2021. If Taliban goes again with *Sharia*, then the situation for women would get worsened than ever before in Afghanistan. Taliban needs to understand clearly that it is the need of the hour that women should be given equal and even more rights and facilities to empower them. They have always suffered for being women. The chapter concludes here.

Chapter 4

Afghanistan and its Culture: A Study of the Selected Novels

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher substantiates his theoretical stance on the cultural studies. For that concern the researcher considers T.S. Eliot's views on cultural studies. T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) in his work *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1949) explains the relationship between the culture and religion, and politics and education and how they formed the national culture. According to Eliot no culture can appear or develop except in relation to a religion because "culture will appear to be the product of the religion or religion the product of culture" (n.pag.). Eliot states that the culture is organic, as it grows, changes and it transmits to the succeeding generation. Eliot says in his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* that culture is the amalgamation of religion, politics, class, sects and education. He defines the culture in his book *Notes Towards the Definitions of Culture* (1949), that "Culture means the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. The culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, and in their religion" (120). In short, culture is the way of life in which people live and everything which is related to their daily routine. A cultural study is a broader term and it deals with the multiple aspects of the society. It is an umbrella term that covers all the socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-religious aspects of the society. The present study focuses on the gender studies, ethnicities, politics, and religion to understand the national culture, sub-national culture, and the transnational culture of Afghanistan through the textual analysis of the chosen texts. Literature and culture are closely associated with each other and text is the product of the culture. So, the study of the chosen works of the two contemporary Afghan writers helps to analyze and understands the socio-cultural aspects of Afghanistan. There is a great diversity in the culture of Afghanistan because of its central geographical location, multi-ethnicity, ideological difference in a single religion and so on. Moreover, the culture of Afghanistan has also been greatly influenced by the external forces, who have ruled or stayed in Afghanistan from Darius the Great in 500 BC to the America in the beginning of the 21st century.

So, the present chapter deals with the culture of Afghanistan and how it has changed and evolved over the years is discussed in this chapter. The main focus of this chapter is to study the culture of Afghanistan through the textual analysis of the works of two prolific contemporary Afghan origin writers named Atiq Rahimi (b. 1962) and Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965). Their works have been set in the present-day Afghanistan in which they have

presented the social, cultural, and political conditions of Afghanistan. After reading their works even the non-Afghans can visualize the socio-cultural and socio-political picture of Afghanistan. These two writers have presented the internal and external conflicts and their effects on the socio-cultural life of Afghanistan through their works. These writers in their texts have not only textualized the war-torn Afghanistan but also depict the peaceful and harmonious days of Afghanistan. They have narrated the life, culture and the tradition of Afghanistan by highlighting all the spheres of life. The depiction of social, political and cultural transformation of Afghanistan has passed during the last four decades is emphasized in the texts. So, the culture is always visible through the particular society's social, political, religious and economic affairs. Literature always reflects human life and the ways of living of every human being is the product of his culture. The work of art is the reflection of a culture of particular society in which the setting of the literary work takes place. So, the literature and culture are interlinked and are the two sides of the same coin. So, maintaining the relationship between literature and culture, the selected writers have textualized the life and culture of Afghanistan through their literary works. The chapter focuses on the cultural aspects portrayed by Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi. They studied the various social, political and religious aspects of the Afghan institutions and the various socio-historical events of Afghanistan. The chosen works which are significant to this chapter are: *The Kite Runner* (2003); *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007); *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013); *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006); and *A Patience Stone* (2006). The setting of all these selected novels is in between 1970s to 2000s.

Detailed Analyses of the Chapter

Focusing on the cultural diversity of Afghanistan, the chapter depicts that the cultural diversity in Afghanistan is the product of its central geographical location, multi-ethnic groups, and ideological differences within a single religion. There is no population census after 1971 in Afghanistan; therefore, none could have the exact idea about the total population of Afghanistan. It is estimated that the population of Afghanistan is around twenty-five million. This population of Afghanistan is consisted of multi-ethnic groups. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* ethnic group is “a community or population made up of people who share a common cultural background or decent” (n.pag.). There are total fourteen main ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Each ethnic group is further subdivided into many subgroups and clans. The major ethnic groups in Afghanistan are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Aimaqs, Turkmens, and Baluch. All these ethnic groups make Afghanistan a culturally diverse nation. Each ethnic group has different social, cultural and historical background.

Their ethnicity defines their social and cultural identity. Each ethnic group live collectively, shares a particular region, common social, cultural and religious values and beliefs. It can be easily identified to which ethnicity the person belongs by considering his physical appearance, the language which he speaks, the dress code he follows, and so on. On the basis of such differences, Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz argue in their book *Culture Smart! Afghanistan* (2013) that, “Society is organized mainly along ethnic and tribal lines. Most Afghans can recognize which part of the country someone hails from based on his tribe, and identify more with those who share their local language and culture” (18). Sometimes their multi ethnicity and social, cultural and religious differences also become the cause of internal conflicts in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country and its ethnic diversity also one of the causes of its cultural diversity. There are four major ethnic groups who constituted around eighty five percent of the Afghan population. Pashtuns are in majority, they live in the southern and northern part of the country. They have common language which is Pashto and they follow common social, religious and cultural practices. But even the Pashtuns are divided into many subgroups. The two main tribal groups of Pashtuns are, Ghilzai and Durrani. Ghilzai live in towards the eastern mountainous areas of the country and considered as more conservatives and illiterate. The people of the Durrani tribe are more liberal and educated. They live in the southern parts of Afghanistan. Pashtuns have been the dominant ethnic group in Afghanistan and they have unique identity. For their courage and bravery, they are titled as the men of swords. Tajiks are considered as the people of Iranian origin because of their physical appearance and speaking Dari language. Most of their population inhabits the north-eastern part of the country sharing its border with Tajikistan. For their contribution in the history of Afghanistan, they are regarded as the men of the pen. The other ethnic group is Hazaras who belong to *Shia* sect of Islam. Afghanistan is *Sunni* majority nation and Hazaras are considered as outsiders. They are not considered as true Afghans because of their foreign origin. In terms of their different physical appearance and different ways of practicing social, cultural and religious practices, they are exploited and discriminated in all walks of the life. The fourth largest ethnic group in terms of population is Uzbek, who live in the northern side of Afghanistan sharing the border with Uzbekistan. They have also played a major role to influence the culture of Afghanistan. For instance, in sports the famous sport *Buzkashi* which is now the national sport of Afghanistan was introduced by Uzbeks. Moreover, in terms of eating habits and dress code, they are different from the rest of the ethnic groups of Afghanistan. Despite all these social and cultural differences Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz

argue in their book *Culture Smart! Afghanistan* (2013) that;

Afghans have a passionate sense of belonging to their homeland. Over the millennia, a diversity of peoples have come to this land and influenced its inhabitants, culture, and language. But history has shown, at various points, when it came to resisting foreign interference, these diverse groups were able to set aside their differences and forge a uniquely Afghan identity. (50)

Afghanistan is the country in which majority of the people follow Islam religion. Since many years in the past, the territory of Afghanistan has been used by many rulers and conquerors for various political purposes. Therefore, the long years of existence and involvement of the various empires and conquerors in the social, political and economic affairs of Afghanistan played a major role in the cultural diffusion in Asia. Particularly they have made a greater impact on the life and culture of Afghanistan because of its central geographical location. The land of Afghanistan has not only been the attraction for political figures but for the people of every class and profession. Nancy Hatch Dupree rightly describes in her research paper titled “Cultural Heritage and National identity in Afghanistan” that:

Yet over the millennia a rich diversity of peoples has come to this land because it occupies a pivotal position at the hub where four great civilizations meet. This centrality of place as a zone of intercommunication has attracted conquering armies, men of intellect, missionaries, pilgrims, traders, artisans, nomads and political exiles. Some merely passed through; others stayed and settled. Whatever the manner of their coming, all contributed to Afghanistan’s heritage. It is in this reciprocal interaction of diverse influences that the medley of Afghan culture germinated. (1)

Conquerors and the Cultural Diffusion in Afghanistan

Cultural diffusion is a term used by German ethnologist Leo Frobenius in the late 19th century for the spread of cultural items and artifacts from one culture to another. Every society has its own system of religion, ideas, language, life style, technologies and so on. The spread of such cultural items would change the life and culture of another society. In the history of Afghanistan, Darius the Great (Persian Achaemenid Empire) was the first conqueror who came to Afghanistan around 500 BC. He was the king of Zoroastrian Empire. The expansion of Zoroastrianism in some parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan has influenced the language, culture and religion of Afghanistan mainly with the concept of a supreme deity. Many words of Dari and Pashto language have been taken from Zoroastrianism and even Afghanistan’s idea of solar calendar was also influenced by it. Alexander the Great was another ruler who landed in Afghanistan in 329 BC. with his army after destroying the Persian power by

overthrowing the last Achaemenid emperor. His short stay in Afghanistan had also played a great role in the diffusion of Greek culture. He made the new cities and established a new political structure in Afghanistan. After his rule, Kushans took control over Afghanistan in the 1st century BC. Kushans were the group of central Asian nomadic tribes. It was during that time the economic and cultural ties were made between China and the western world through the Silk Road. Kushans were creative and rich in artistic manner. They thrived Buddhism in India and Afghanistan. Their major cultural achievement was that they carved two giant size statues (175 feet and 125 feet) of Buddha in Bamiyan. Through their passion for Buddhism, Afghanistan not only became the center of the Buddhist learning but also the center of pilgrimage. In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), one day Babi goes on a trip to Bamiyan with his young daughter Laila and Laila's friend Tariq. On the way they talk about the history of Bamiyan. Babi tells them that "Bamiyan had once been a thriving Buddhist center until it had fallen under Islamic Arab rule in the 9th century. The sandstone cliffs were home to Buddhist monks . . . At one point there were five thousands monks living as hermits in these caves" (146). So, Kushans gave Afghanistan a new social and cultural identity at the international level. But unfortunately, these two statues of Buddha were demolished in 2001 by the Taliban's forces because they considered it against their religion.

In Afghanistan, most of the people followed the same religion today, which is Islam. The Islam religion came in Afghanistan only in the 7th century with the arrival of Arab Muslims who were the followers of Prophet Mohammad. After that the land of the Afghanistan was used and controlled by the different rulers for next several centuries including Genghis Khan and Babur of the Mughal Empire. These Mughal emperors also built some gardens and worked on some other cultural artifacts which are very famous even today and many known by their names. Moreover, they used Afghanistan not only as shelter but also as a strategic location to reach and get control over India. So, all these rulers and conquerors who have been discussed above, they have not only ruled in Afghanistan but also influenced the life and culture of Afghanistan. These historical, political and religious events became the cause of cultural diversity in Afghanistan.

The Beginnings of Afghanistan as a Nation

The influence of the native Pashtun tribes increased in Afghanistan in the 17th century and gradually, they started gaining power and control on different areas of Afghanistan. Under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Durrani, a Durrani Empire was established in the Kandhar region of Afghanistan. This empire was basically the confederation of Pashtun tribes. During his rule, different tribal groups were there in Afghanistan which had different social and cultural

origin. They were formed on the basis of their different ways of living and patrilineal principles. After capturing Kabul, he captured Delhi too which was under Mughals rules then. But he faced resistance in the north India by the Hindu Maratha, which resulted into the third battle of Panipat in 1761. Ahmad Shah gave Afghanistan a sense of national identity and the message of national unity. Because of his achievements for Afghanistan, today he is also remembered as the father and founder of Afghanistan. After the death of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the conflict began among the tribal chiefs for becoming the head of the kingdom. Seeing the turbulence, Timur the son of Ahmad Shah decided to move the capital to Kabul from Kandhar. But after the death of Timur, his son Zaman ascended the throne. He wanted to reestablish his empire in India also but India was then under the control of strong British forces. He was dreaming to expand his empire in India but he was dethroned by his own brother Mohammad and imprisoned him and the conflict among the tribes continued. Barbara Robson and Julien Lipson write in their book *The Afghans; Their History and Culture* (2002) that;

This kind of struggle for power tribe against tribe, family against family, brother against brother characterizes the inter-tribal relationships among the Afghans, and continued as their territory became crucial to the interests of greater powers, most notably the czarist Russians in the north and the British in the south. (23)

Therefore, the internal socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan not only took place between tribal to tribal but the inter-tribal conflicts were also popular. Each ethnic group had been subdivided into many sub-groups on the basis of their ideological differences.

The 19th Century and the Great Game

Seeing Afghanistan as the conflict zone, where everyone was fighting with each other for power especially after the death of Ahmad Shah, the interest of Britishers increased for Afghanistan. They also knew that if the condition in Afghanistan would remain the same, Russian could also use Afghanistan to reach Indian oceans to meet their requirement of warm water port. The increasing Anglo-Russian tensions and power struggle over central Asia is termed as the great game. So, to keep Russia at the arm's length, British fought series of wars against Afghanistan. Britishers had to face the defeat because the different ethnic tribes fought strongly and with a great courage. After the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1880 Abdurrahman Khan, a Durrani Pashtun declared himself as the Amir of Kabul. He was a strong man and learnt the fighting strategies from some English soldier to whom he considered as his mentors. Surrounded by Russia and British from the north and south side and Persia which lies in the west of Afghanistan was also under the control of foreign forces.

This time most of the regions of Afghanistan were under the control of different local khans and tribes. To make the country stronger with national solidarity Abdurrahman wanted to make it a single kingdom. During his ten years of rule in Afghanistan, he captured almost all the areas of today's Afghanistan by defeating all those Khans and tribes. The geographical division of Pashtun and non-Pashtun population was the major development during his regime. Most of the non-Pashtun people who are living with Pashtuns in the south of Afghanistan fled to the north of the country. Their migration later on created the major difference in the social and culture life of Afghanistan between Pashtun and non-Pashtun. The territory of today's Afghanistan was established during his rule. Moreover, the king was also a liberal kind of person and wanted Afghanistan to follow European ways to make Afghanistan a modern state. He worked for the welfare of Afghan women, and brought the major reforms in every field. He was the one who established the system of monarchy. It was done to avoid power related conflicts among the ethnic groups after the death of the king. Now, it was clear that after the death of the first king, his son would ultimately become the next king. It was the result of that system that after his death, his son Habibullah became the Amir of Afghanistan without any warfare. That was the major political development in the history of Afghanistan.

In 1891 it was decided by Russia and Britain that Amu Darya would be the northern border of Afghanistan and Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan was declared as a buffer zone between Russia and British India. Later in 1893, Durand line was drawn as the border of Afghanistan and the British India which is now the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan. But later on, after the partition of India and Pakistan when Pakistan came into existence this border based on the Durand line became the cause of animosity between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In 1919 after a short period of the Third Anglo-Afghan war, Afghanistan was declared as an independent nation on 8 August 1919 after signing Treaty of Rawalpindi between Afghanistan and the British India. So, under the leadership of Amanullah the grandchild of Abdurrahman, Afghanistan got its political independence.

In Russia, new Bolsheviks government came into existence and Afghanistan also signed a treaty of friendship with Soviet Union in 1921. Moreover, Afghanistan was one of first nations which gave recognition to the newly formed government of Soviet Union. The decision of Afghanistan set the foundation of new relationship with Soviets which lasted till 1979. On the other side, Amanullah's efforts to make Afghanistan a modern state by bringing major educational reforms and gender equality infuriated the tribal and religious leaders which resulted tribal revolts. Tajik's hero Bacha Saqqao took control on Kabul with the help

of his supporters and Amanullah was abdicated in 1929. Though Bacha Saqqao couldn't stay in power for longer period of time and dethroned after nine chaotic months. Pashtun leader Mohammad Nadir Shah took the throne and he was declared as the king of the country by his ministers. In 1931, the new constitution was also framed. King Zahir Shah came into power after the assassination of Nadir Shah on November 8, 1933 and he ruled the Afghanistan for next forty years. He was the last king of Afghanistan; Barbara Robson and Julien Lipson writes in their book *The Afghans; Their History and Culture* (2002) rightly observes that:

The first 20 years of Zahir Shah's reign were characterized by cautious policies of national consolidation, an expansion of foreign relations, and internal development using Afghan funds alone. World War II brought about a slowdown in the development process. During the war, Afghanistan maintained its traditional neutrality. (25)

After the Second World War, the political system of the world was evolving. There was the ending of colonial system and most of the colonial nations were getting their political independence. The new nations were coming into existence. There was the emergence of two superpowers: America and the Soviet Union with different ideologies. As Afghanistan was neutral and didn't want to stay with them, so both these powers were focusing on Afghanistan. Afghanistan's neutral policy helped in developing its infrastructure with the assistance of both these powers. Keeping in view the friendship treaty of 1921, the Prime Minister Daoud Khan approached Soviet Union for economic and military assistance, Russia agreed to help.

In 1950's and 1960's Soviet's involvement increased considerably in the process of Afghanistan's development which also affects the social and culture life of Afghanistan. America also supported and guided Afghanistan in its many developmental projects. In 1964, a new constitution was approved by the general assembly of Afghanistan. It was first new election in the history of Afghanistan. New election policies were formed which played a vital role in the polarization of the national politics. This new election policy opened number of seats in which people had the direct right to elect the assembly members in Afghanistan. In 1973, with the help of the leftist military and the civil officers, Daoud Khan came in power after bloodless coup. He declared Afghanistan as the Republic of Afghanistan and declared himself as the head of the country. After Daoud's headship, it was the end of Afghan monarchy. In 1977 leftist Khalq and Parcham jointly made People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and they were also able to make their government in 1978. During the rule of

Daoud Afghanistan underwent major changes. About his foreign policy, Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz write in their book *Culture Smart! Afghanistan* (2013) that “Doud’s foreign policy was steered by two main principles: to improve relations with the Soviet Union without sacrificing economic aid from the United States, to pursue the “Pashtunistan” issue by every possible means . . .” (41). But soon the conflict between Khalq and Parcham escalated over the power sharing, which spawned many rebellions especially in the countryside. The increasing intensity of these rebellions forced Soviets to enter Afghanistan with its troops to make the situation stable.

Now, America wanted to see Soviets defeat in Afghanistan. So, for that they were giving economic and military aid to Afghanistan via Pakistan against Soviet. The war began between the Soviets and Mujahedeen. It resulted into chaos and conflicts in Afghanistan. The Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989) forced millions to leave their country for Pakistan, Iran, America, and to some other countries as well in the cities. Soviets were able to take their control in urban areas but rural areas which were still under the control of Mujahedeen. They added the flavor of religion to unite the people and declared it as the religious war against Soviets. The political tactic helped greatly to unite the people of Afghanistan. Many Arabs came from different Muslim countries in support of Mujahedeen. Textualizing the historical event, Khaled Hosseini (b. 1965) depicts the situation of early 1980s. In his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), he describes “American president Reagan, had started shipping the Mujahedeen Stinger missile to down the Soviet helicopters, now that Muslims from all over the world were joining the cause: Egyptians, Pakistanis, even wealthy Saudis, who left their millions behind and came to Afghanistan to fight the jihad” (112). One of such foreign supporters was Osama bin Laden who also founded the Maktab al- Khidmat (MAK) to recruit huge number of fighters to fight against Soviets. America supported these Afghan rebels by supplying economic and military support via Pakistan. Long years of intense and destructive fight between Soviet and Afghans caused havoc in the country. Quoting the condition of the country and its people’s feelings, Khaled Hosseini reflects it through the conversation of a driver and Babi and his family in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). Driver while smoking and flicking his cigarette ash says in between the conversation “and that, my young friends, is the story of our country, one invader after another, Macedonians, Sassanians, Arabs, Mongols, now the Soviets. But we are like those walls up there. Battered, and nothing pretty to look at, but still standing . . .” (144).

Finally, Soviets withdraw after ten years of futile effort to take control over Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the ten years stay of Soviet and its fight with Afghan forces

greatly affected the social and cultural life of Afghanistan. After their departure, the situation in Afghanistan worsened. The different factions who were fighting against Soviets collectively during the Afghan-Soviet War, now started fighting against each other for power. Now, the Civil War began in Afghanistan. During the Civil War, Afghanistan experienced a huge economic and cultural loss. The number of displacements of people increased considerably. Soon after the departure of Soviets, America stopped its funding to Afghanistan. Now, the Mujahedeen fighters of Afghanistan were fighting against each other for their vested interests. To restore the peace and harmony in Afghanistan, Taliban came into power in 1996. On the other side, Osama bin Laden who played a pivotal role in the Afghan-Soviet War was expelled from his own country Saudi Arabia in 1991 due to his involvement in anti-government activities. Even, Sudan refused to give him shelter and finally, he settled in Afghanistan where he was accepted by Taliban. Here, he called for a *jihad* against America which resulted the 9/11 attack in the New York City and Washington D.C. in 2001 which caused a huge loss to America. America's president George Bush declared war on terror demanding Taliban to hand over Osama. They refused because they considered it against Pashtunwali. Finally, Afghanistan was attacked by American and other NATO forces and the government of Taliban was defeated successfully.

Association of the Religion and Culture

Afghanistan's daily life is regulated and controlled by its religion. It is a Muslim majority nation with 99 percent Muslim population. This population is affiliated with different sects and having faiths of Islam. Their faith on religion gives shape to their daily life activities and the social behavior. Mainly, the population of Afghanistan is divided into two factions: one is Sunni and the other is Shia. They are divided on the basis of their differences in their ideologies, beliefs and religious practices. In Afghanistan Sunnis are in majority and Shias in minority. Here, the *Sunni* line of Islam follows the tradition of Hanafi School which is one of the schools of *Sunni* tradition. The social and cultural life of Afghans is decided by their association of which school of Islam the particular community belongs to. The division between the two factions of Islam also leads them to have different ideologies, life styles, different social attitudes, and socio-cultural life. These religious practices are taught by illiterate religious leaders who belong to the peasant class and they work in other occupations also. So, there are theological, devotional and ideological differences between the Sunni and Shia population. The number of Shia population is very low not only in Afghanistan but around the world. They are only around ten percent of Muslim population. Only Iran and Iraq are the Muslim countries, where Shia population is in majority. Their minority in strength and

affiliation to the different religious beliefs and practices lead them to face the persecution, discrimination and marginalization in all walks of life by Sunnis. Moreover, the ideological differences in terms of religion, lead them to differences in the socio-religious practices, which caused the great trouble to establish peace and harmony in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan the Tajiks and other ethnic groups are the part of Northern Alliance. They are more liberals and moderns. The Taliban living in south of the country are mostly Pashtuns, who are very conservatives. They follow the Deobandi school of thought which is based on Wahabism (the philosophy which is based on very conservative Islamic tradition originated from Saudi Arabia). So, by following this philosophy, Taliban instruct people to follow the simplicity in their habits, and put various restrictions on women. These different kinds of Islamic practices impact the socio-cultural life of Afghanistan. Their degree of adherence to the religion decides their daily routine life and shapes their social behaviour as well as the ways of life. In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), Mariam is not able to give birth to a child and suffers at the hands of Rasheed who beats and abuses her. In such a difficult time, she remembers the verses from Quran which Mullah Faizuallah taught her during her childhood, “And Allah is the East and the West, therefore where ever you turn there is Allah’s purpose . . .” (88). Some pray five times a day by following all the instructions which have been given by their religious leaders and some Afghanis do not care about and pray whenever they wish to pray. So, the daily routines, habits, dress code, behaviour and the life style of Afghan people are closely associated with their religion.

Ethnic Diversity and Patrilineal Principles

Afghanistan is a country comprised of multi-ethnic and multi tribes. These groups are formed and worked on the basis of patrilineal principles. All the variations in their social, religion, and cultural practices are adhered to the patrilineal principle. Even the people those who migrated to the other countries in the wake of wars and political insurgencies take care of their culture in the other countries too. Every tribal group has its own ways of living which is closely associated with their religion. Every group has different ways of practicing the religion of Islam. The practice of Loya Jirga is still prevalent in Afghanistan in almost all the societies. Almost all the tribes and societies have their leaders who guide and direct their people. Even each family is governed and directed by the head of the family who is the decision maker in all important family affairs. So, these things make it clear that in Afghan societies you cannot make individual decisions neither in your family nor in the society. Most of the families in rural areas are joint families and patriarchal in nature which are directed and controlled by the head of the family. Women act as the caretakers of the children and

household affairs, while male members earn for their families by working in some government and private sectors.

Cultural and Religious Festivals

Although, most of the Afghan families live a very conservative life, yet they celebrate different festivals over the years. In Afghanistan, *Nawroz*, (means the new day of the year) is the festival which is celebrated in all parts of Afghanistan. Various forms of dishes are prepared, and cultural programs are performed on this day. People of all the age groups and every sex celebrate this day as the first day of the New Year (the influence of Zoroastrianism). On this day people wear new clothes, greeting with *Nawroz Mubarak*, visiting in the houses of friends and relatives, sharing sweets and so on. Women decorate their houses and prepare some special dishes on this day. Besides *Nawroz*, Afghanistan being a fully Muslim country also celebrates other famous Muslim festivals like Mawlid-e Sharif (birthday of the Prophet Muhammad), on this day people go to mosques to pray and religious leaders give sermons in praise of the prophet. *Muharram*, *Jashn-e Afghan* (celebrations of Afghanistan's Independence Day on August 8), *Eid al Fitr* and *Eid- e Qurban* every year with full zeal and enthusiasm. Amir in the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) tells about some of the ways of celebrating Eid-e-Qurban. He remembers that it was celebrated last time before leaving Afghanistan. He discusses the religious significance of the festival, "a day to celebrate how the prophet Ibrahim almost sacrificed his own son for God. . . ." (71). Amir remembers that Baba had bought some sheep in that year to celebrate the festival. Mullah after reciting some prayers sliced the throat of the sheep with the long blade knife. Amir says "The custom is to divide the meat in thirds, one for the family, one for friends, and one for the poor. Every year, Baba gives it all to the poor. The rich are fat enough already, he says" (72). In Afghanistan, the wedding celebration is another important social event which is celebrated for many days with culture and religious flavor. The birth of the first boy in the family is also welcomed with special celebrations but unfortunately, the birth of girls is not welcomed in the families. This gender based celebrations is biased in Afghanistan, which is hardly opposed by any Afghan ruler.

Talking about the situation before Soviet's invasion, Amir, the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) talks about the peaceful Afghanistan in which the common Afghan was not worried about getting education and about the development of the nation. Majority of the people lived the nomadic life and after long day's herding their sheep and animals, they enjoyed their family life. They used to celebrate different religious and cultural festivals with great zeal and enthusiasm. Amir illustrates it with an example of New Year's

celebrations “I remember one time Baba took me to the yearly Buzkashi tournament that took place on the first day of spring, New Year’s Day. *Buzkashi* was, and still is, Afghanistan’s national passion . . .” (20). Moreover, wrestling and kite fighting tournaments are other two famous sports of Afghanistan. They go for picnics to some special destinations on Fridays. The life and culture of Afghanistan has its roots in the Persian culture. In everything like food, cultural and religious events, the life style got heavily influenced by the Persian culture. The number of ethnic groups in Afghanistan share their borders and ethnicity with the other neighboring countries so the influence of these neighboring countries could also be seen on the life and culture of Afghanistan.

In dishes *pilaus*, *kabobs*, *chalows*, *aushak* are famous among Afghans. All these dishes are made or cooked in different ways by using various ingredients. The profession of the most of the people in Afghanistan is herding sheep and catling especially in the rural areas. The milk products are the part of Afghans daily diet. Among such dairy products buttermilk, yogurt, and cheese are commonly consumed by Afghans. Besides it, dry fruits, fresh fruits, vegetables are important part of their daily diet. In beverages black and green tea is commonly used in all the areas of Afghanistan. As the culture of Afghanistan is closely associated with the religion so most of Afghans avoid drinking alcohol only pockets of educated and some people of elite class living in some urban areas consume alcohol. People of Afghanistan wear traditional dress which they have associated with their religion. Women wear loose clothes covering head to toe. They cover their face with *burqa* (veil) because people in Afghanistan believe that looking at a woman’s face is only her husband’s business. In the novel titled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) a character named Rasheed tells his wife the stories about his customers at every night. He also teaches her about the culture and tradition of Afghanistan to follow. He also criticizes those Afghan women for not following the proper dress code. Rasheed wants Mariam to wear scarf all the time whenever she needs to go outside because according to him, “A woman’s face is her husband’s business only. I want you to remember that. . .” (69). Moreover, women in urban areas are not bound to wear any traditional dresses; they follow the European ways of dressing up. Men in rural areas wear long *kurtas* (shirts) and bagging trousers covering their heads with turbans or Afghani cap. One can see the huge difference in the life style of people in rural and urban areas of Afghanistan. People of rural areas are conservatives and still follow the traditional beliefs and values. The people of urban areas are strongly influenced by the life style of Europeans and are very much liberals. *Atan* is the national dance of Afghanistan which is performed with the Afghan music. People of Afghanistan danced in a rhythmic pattern around the circle. This

dance is performed on some special occasions like on weddings, New Year's celebrations, and in some other local festivals. Both men and women participate in this dance. There is no gender or age war in performing this traditional dance of Afghanistan. Amir living in America remembers his marriage day, and tells the readers that even living in America, Afghans do not forget their cultural practices. He painted the beautiful view of marriage, "I picture colorful platters of *chopan kabob*, *sholeh-goshti*, and wild-orange rice. . . I remember sweat-drenched men dancing on the traditional *atan* in a circle, bouncing, spinning faster and faster with the feverish tempo of the table, until all but a few dropped out of the ring with exhaustion" (157-158). So, this is the way writer Khaled Hosseini reflects Afghans culture and their love for their traditional dance and music.

Folklore and Superstitions in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the culture of the oral literature is still very much prevalent. People believe on the old stories with the flavor of religious and cultural beliefs. Khaled Hosseini reflects the traditional culture of storytelling in the Afghan society. Parents tell stories of *div* and *djinns* to their children before sleeping. For example, Khaled Hosseini begins his work *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013) with a folklore, in which Saboor is telling a story of Baba Ayub and a *Div* to his children Abdullah and Pari before going to bed. The story is based on the monster *Div*. The monster takes Baba Ayub's most loving son Qais to some unknown place followed by Ayub's struggle to get his son back. In this way Khaled Hosseini depicts the rich culture of folklores in Afghanistan. The folklores are not only narrated for the purpose of entertainment but have some social, religious and moral values, which ultimately reflect the life and culture of Afghanistan. These are based on the religious beliefs, love, warfare and the sufferings of the Afghan people. These stories are associated with religion by the religious leaders of different sections. People follow and practice such beliefs in their daily life. Another Afghan writer Atiq Rahimi (b. 1962), who in his novel *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006) not only reflects the Afghan people's belief on such stories of *djinns* and *divs* but also reflects the psychological effect of such beliefs on them through his character Farhad. Farhad is a college going student and one night after having party he is coming back to his home. He is beaten up badly by some Russian soldiers because he doesn't know the curfew password. For such a minor mistake he is beaten up badly and he falls on the ground unconsciously. Seeing him in the street, an unknown young and beautiful widow named Mahnaz secretly drags him inside her house. Later, he finds that neither he could move his body nor could he open his eyes. He thinks that *djinn* has entered in his body. Talking about the culture Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz write in their book *Culture Smart! Afghanistan*

(2013) “There is a widespread belief in *djinns*- invisible, demon-like creature that hide in dark places and play tricks on people . . .” (81). Even in the Khaled Hosseini’s novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) a women character named Nana whose marriage was cancelled because a week before her marriage *djinn* had entered in her body and “Nana collapsing suddenly, her eyes rolling back, her arms and legs shaking as if something were throttling her from the inside. . .” (10). Moreover, when Nana dies in mysterious circumstances by committing suicide, Jalil’s wives believe that *djinn* had entered her body and the *djinn* had taken her life. About the Afghan people superstitions, Khaled has textualized such superstitions through the character of Rasheed who is Mariam’s husband. Rasheed tells her about the people’s superstitions of shoes, “putting them on bed invited death into the family, that quarrel would follow if one puts on the left shoe first” (63). So, by including such incidents about *djinns* and *divs* both Rahimi and Hosseini has depicted Afghan people’s beliefs and superstitions on such things.

Music and Literature in Afghanistan

Afghanistan’s Persian literature which is written in Dari script is the oldest and most famous literature which is available in the rhymed poetry. The best example of Persian poetry is Omar Khayyam’s *The Rubaiyat*. The Persian form of poetry has also influenced the Pashto poetry. Moreover, the Afghan music is the part of the daily life. Writers who are the part of the present study have given importance to the music in their works which shows the role and importance of music in the Afghan culture. In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) when Mariam is taken to Jalil’s house after the death of her mother Nana, Niloufar the daughter of Jalil comes to her with her gramophone. Niloufar tells Marriam about gramophone and put it on and the music starts:

I will use a flower petal for paper
And write you the sweetest letter
You are the sultan of my heart
The sultan of my heart. (41)

Moreover, talking about the time of 1970s when Afghanistan was comparatively more peaceful and harmonious. People enjoy their vacations at home and on picnics at different places of Afghanistan. Amir remembers about the kite fighting tournament of one of 1970s winters and majority of the people enjoyed the tournament by sitting, “hot tea steaming from thermoses, and the music of Ahmad Zahir blaring from cassette players. . .” (58). So, the writer Hosseini here tries to show the passion and love of Afghans for the Afghani music. The Pashto poetry is based on life of people is very famous in Afghanistan. Jalil, who visits

onevery Thursday to Mariam and tells many stories about Afghanistan, especially about Herat and its great people. One day when he tells her about the great fifteenth century Persian writer and poet Queen Gauhar Shad and Jalil also told her that “Heart, the city where Mariam was born, in 1959 had once been the cradle of the Persian culture, the home of writers, painters and Sufis” (4). Another character named Babi in the same novel knows many ghazals of Hafez and Rumi. Moreover, this Pashto poetry has the oral tradition and even the illiterate people of Afghanistan use such poetic lines in their daily conversation. Moreover, Persian writing and literature has also influenced the contemporary writers of Afghanistan. In the acknowledgment of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), Khaled Hosseini himself says about the title of the novel that “the title of the novel comes from a poem composed by Saeb-e-Tabrizi, a seventeenth century Persian poet . . .” (405). In Khaled Hosseini’s work *The Kite Runner* (2003), the main character of the novel Amir reflects this poetic culture in Afghanistan. He leaves his country short after the Soviet’s invasion for America and while living there he remembers his childhood days in Afghanistan. He recalls the situation of 1960s when Amir was in his early years of life. He remembers the days of picnic, and such days never came thereafter in his life. He remembers that “we sat at a picnic table on the banks of the lake. . . On Fridays, the lake was bustling with families out for a day in the sun . . .” (14). So, those were the worth-living days in Afghanistan. Amir remembers the poetic culture in Afghanistan; even the layman knew the famous poetic lines without knowing the poets. Wherever people gathered they used to recite poetry. Even in school he remembers that “we used to play a game called *Sherjangi*, or battle of poems” (18). His team always won that competition in the school. As at the age of eleven, he had read everything from Rumi, Hafez, Khayyam and the other famous poets who were taught in his school. Hosseini also reflects this fondness of Afghan’s people for the poetry through Amir in *The Kite Runner* (2003). Hosseini, in his another novel *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013) talks about the rich poetic culture of Afghanistan by stating that, “we Afghans love our poetry; even the most uneducated among us can recite verses of Hafez or Khayyam or Saadi” (111). Long years of wars and political insurgencies have given birth to the many writers in Afghanistan. Now writers are writing to express themselves, the pain and sufferings of the common people and writings on every subject by using all the genres of writings. Contemporary writers who are prominent are Lida Abdullah, Zohra Saed, Fatana Jahangir Ahrary, Sahar Muradi, Sara Hakeen, Zaheda Ghani, Shakila Naseer, Fevzie Rahgozar Barlas, Donia Gobar, Shekaiba Wakili, and Donna Yasaman Saimander. Most of these writers have depicted the social and political conditions of Afghanistan. Through their writings these writers have presented the

life, culture, and political conditions of Afghanistan. Moreover, the culture of writings is also reflected by the contemporary writers through their writings. Amir, who is the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003), was also fond of writing. He writes stories and tells Hassan and Rahim Khan who praise his writings and later in his career he becomes a great writer. On his return to Afghanistan after more than twenty years, he tells the driver Farid about his profession as a writer and also tells him about his latest novel named *A Season for Ashes*. Furthermore, in another novel by Khaled Hosseini titled *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013), a lady character named Nila Wahdati is projected as a great writer and writes poetry on every subject and about her own life.

Language and Literacy in Afghanistan

Pashto and Dari are the two most spoken languages of Afghanistan. Both the languages have their roots in Iranian languages. This Pashtun population speaks Pashto, while the people living in northern areas and belong to non-Pashtun community speak Dari. The minority of the people speak Uzbek and Turkmen. People living in the southern part of the country which is associated with Pakistan also speak and understand Urdu and Punjabi. Although, the Arabic alphabets are used for writing these languages but none of the languages mentioned above are related to Arabic language except Urdu. In Afghanistan, Dari is the mostly spoken language of Afghanistan despite Pashtun has been designated as the national language of the country. Almost in all the official works Pashto is used and everyone needs to have the basic knowledge of it to seek employment. The half of Pashto speaking population lives in Pakistan. In Afghanistan most of the times, Pashtuns have been the part of government. In those schools where Dari is the medium of instruction, students of such schools have to learn Pashto as separate subject. In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), Hosseini has shown that a Pashtun character Tariq. At home Tariq speaks Pashto with his parents. When Laila who is a Tajik and Tariq's girlfriend listens Pashto, she more or less understands Pashto because she has learnt it in the school. So, the writer depicts that Pashto is mandatory in the schools to learn for non-Pashtun students. Despite all such efforts and compulsions to learn Pashto, Dari is still spoken by the majority of the population of Afghanistan. It is the medium of expression and communication in their daily life. Although, both languages are ethnically and geographically divided, yet these two share the lexical items, which are mutually intelligible.

Education and Literacy in Afghanistan

Since Afghanistan's existence, sporadic attempts have been made to make the education compulsory and for all children. In Afghanistan, still about one third of the school age

children attend the school. In this meager number, the number of girls' student is very low. Most of the families do not prefer to send their children to get formal education in the modern subjects. People in rural areas prefer to give their children religious training instead of getting formal education in the schools. Majority of the Afghans are against co-education system. They are against the modern system of education. The people in rural areas are more conservative and reject the modern education system. Babi, Laila's father tells Laila about the conservatives of the rural areas. He says that in rural areas religious leaders and leaders of different tribes do not want their people to follow the modern policies. According to Babi, "there, men saw it as an insult to their centuries old tradition . . . [but] to be told by the government and a godless one at that, that their daughters had to leave home, attend school, and work alongside men" (133). Moreover, such variations in the life style of rural and urban areas could be seen when Mariam and her husband Rasheed were visiting through Kabul one day. They both travelled on every week around the Kabul city. One day Rasheed told her while passing by the crowded Chicken Street that "Around here is where foreign diplomats live, rich businessmen, members of the royal family that sort of people live here. Not like you and me" (73). While roaming there, Mariam also saw women of the Kabul city who were completely different in look, in terms of language, when compared with the women of poor and rural areas. Rasheed called them modern women of Afghanistan who didn't hesitate to walk among strangers and even talking to the strangers was not a bad thing for them. Rasheed told his wife about them that "They think they're being modern men, intellectuals, on account of their education. I suppose. They don't see that they're spoiling their own *nang* and *namoos*, their honor and pride" (69). These women were wearing short dresses, dark sunglasses, busy on their telephone calls and some of them even smoke publicly. From their looks and their ways of talking, Mariam thought that they all had the University degrees. After seeing women roaming around the Kabul city, Mariam was shocked. She couldn't imagine that women could live their life in such an independent way. For instance, during the Soviets rule in Afghanistan, the Soviets' efforts of expanding the modern education system in rural areas was strongly opposed by the conservatives. Conservatives destroyed the educational institutions and even killed many teachers who were there to teach the children. They mostly targeted those schools which were established to promote liberalism and co-education in the rural areas. These conservatives supported Taliban because during their rule girls were not allowed to attend the schools and boys were encouraged to get the religious education.

Moreover, the polygamy has been the common practice in Afghanistan. The

novelist, Khaled Hosseini has portrayed it in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). One day a tragic incident took place. The bomb was exploded at Laila's house, in which Laila's parents were killed and she was severely injured. Rasheed took her to his home and started taking care of her. When she recovered completely, he decided to marry her. Laila didn't want but she had no one in her family to live with as her family had died in the explosion. So, she had no choice and reluctantly agreed to get married. Rasheed's first wife Mariam got disappointed and angry over this marriage. She objected the decision of Rasheed to marry Laila. But using his authority, being a male, Rasheed didn't listen to her, he told Mariam "Don't be so dramatic. It's a common thing and you know it. I have friends who have two, three or four wives. Your own father had three. Besides, what I am doing now the most men I know would have done long ago. You know it's true" (208).

Emergence of Taliban and the Transformation of Culture

On the other side, the Taliban came into power after the Civil War concluded. The good time for women has become the thing of past now. As Laila contemplated about her past life with her parents, her school days, and she remembers her father's dream to see Laila to become a great woman in Afghanistan. Khaled Hosseini says in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) that "the freedoms and opportunities that women had enjoyed between 1978 and 1992 were a thing of past now . . ." (253). People of Afghanistan were happy that they got rid of from the power hunger Mujahedeen. Afghan people considered Taliban as pure and incorruptible. Taliban soon announced on loudspeaker about their new policies and laws in Farsi and Pashto separately for men and women. They announced that now Afghanistan would be known as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and its citizen were supposed to follow certain laws which were:

All citizens must pray five times a day. If it is prayer time and you are caught doing something other you will be beaten. All men will grow their beards . . . All boys will wear turbans . . . Singing is forbidden. Dancing is forbidden. Playing cards, playing chess, gambling and kite flying are forbidden. Writing books, watching films, and painting pictures are forbidden . . . If you are not Muslim, do not worship where you can be seen by Muslims. If you do, you will be beaten and imprisoned. If you are caught trying to convert a Muslim to your faith, you will be executed. (270)

These are the rules which they announced for men only. While Taliban made separate rules for women, which were also announced through loudspeaker and on radio too. For women the new rules were:

You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander

aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a *mahram*, a male relative. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home. You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten. Cosmetics are forbidden. Jewelry is forbidden. You will not wear charming clothes. You will not speak unless spoken to. You will not make eye contact with men. You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten . . . Girls are forbidden from attending the school. All schools for girls will be closed immediately. Women are forbidden from working. If you are found guilty of adultery, you will be stoned to death. Listen. Listen well, Obey, Allah-u-Akbar. (271)

All these rules which Taliban had set for its citizens were mandatory and people had to follow. So, now all the freedom which women had during the Soviet rule had become the thing of past. In comparison to men, the women had to follow more social restrictions. The new policies of Taliban's government gave more authority to men and now they had more rights to control the women in their families. The constant political upheavals and insurgencies since last four decades forced millions to leave their country to settle down in the other countries. Further, the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003), Amir himself migrated with his father to America in the wake of rising insurgencies in Afghanistan. In America, he noticed that many migrated Afghan families were working in flea market of San Jose. Most of the time, collectively they celebrated each happy movements like birth of their children, their own birthdays with Afghani music. But when they listened the news of Afghanistan's destruction and the loss of lives, they shook their heads mournfully. Amir says that "tea, politics and scandal, the ingredients of an Afghan Sunday at flea market" (128). In new cultures which are partially or completely exotic to them. Ultimately, they had to face cross-cultural, socio-political and socio-linguistic challenges. They had the feelings of isolation and alienation. They also face discrimination and were treated as the second class citizens in the US and in the other countries. The people who shift to the other countries face mental and sexual harassment. They do not feel safe in the other countries. Afghans also live under the fear of losing their own life, fear of losing their children, their career, fear of losing their property, and they feel insecurity in everything. They also lose their culture and drastic change take place in their daily routine. The life caused the great worries to them. All these things badly affect them psychologically. Most of these Afghans were facing mental health problems because of all these changes and insecurities they had, about which they were ignorant.

Most suffering community of Afghanistan which faces great problems are the women of Afghanistan. Every year number of women have to leave their country to the United States and to some other countries which have absolutely different culture, values and the social system. Sudden changes in the social system about which women of Afghanistan are not aware lead them to the serious problem of adjustment. Robson and Lipson argue rightly in his book *The Afghans; Their History and Culture* (2002) that:

Afghan women have been coming to the United States since the late 1970s. Thus, as a group they provide a striking picture of the transition from a very traditional, patriarchal, family- and home-centred society to a technologically oriented, individualistic, egalitarian society marked by social isolation and a focus on obtaining material goods. (58)

The main problems among the people of Afghanistan are political power, economic, sectarian, and ethnic diversity. Except Pashtun, all other ethnic groups feel that the injustice has been done to them. The main issue among them is their way of practicing Islam. Ismailis and Shia Hazaras are the minority. They have different ways of following Islam than Sunni Muslims who are in majority in Afghanistan. To sort out these ethno religious conflicts, the separate worship centers have been established in Afghanistan for Hazaras and Ismailis. They do not worship in Sunni mosques. Moreover, they are living in the areas where the other ethnic groups do not live in majority.

Since antiquity, Pashtuns have been the most dominating ethnic group in Afghanistan in all the spheres of social and political life. Even today, they consider themselves as the most superior from the other ethnic groups. They believe that they are the true rulers of the country and are born to rule only. The major ethnic groups in Afghanistan are Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimaqs, Turkmen, and Baluchi. All these ethnic groups are further subdivided into many other sub groups. Their culture, language and ways of living vary which give birth to the social and political conflicts among them. Moska Najib and Nazes Afroz write in their book *Culture Smart! Afghanistan* (2013) about the society in Afghanistan that, “society is organized mainly along ethnic and tribal lines. Most Afghans can recognize what part of the country someone hails from based on his tribe, and identify more with those who share their local language and culture” (18). The tense relationship between the ethnic groups has been illustrated by Khaled Hosseini in his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) through the main characters of the novel like Amir, Hassan, and the antagonist of the novel Assef. Hazaras are the most exploited ethnic group in Afghanistan. Hassan is a Hazara boy in the novel, who lives with his father as servant in the separate little mud hut in

the south side of the house of Amir and Baba. Hazaras are dominated by the other ethnic groups in every sector of social and political life of Afghanistan. They have no written history as Khaled Hosseini tells it through the character Amir. Amir one day tries to find the history of Hazaras in his mother's history books. He finds an old book in which a chapter has been dedicated to Hazaras, the Hassan's community. Amir narrates what is expressed in the book:

I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It is said the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had quelled them with unspeakable violence. The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes, and sold their women. The book said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a. (9)

Except all this, Hazara people are humiliated by calling with bad names like flat-nosed, mice-eating, and many other names by other people of the society. Hassan's father Ali is addressed by the village children by all such names. Hassan is a Hazara boy and Amir is a Pashtun, they grow up together and are of the same age. They spent their first twelve years of life together. They both played together, but still both were conscious about their ethnicity, Amir clearly says that "Hassan and I fed from the same breasts. We took our first steps on the same lawn in the same yard. And, under the same roof, we spoke our first words" (10). Amir still considers him only as Hazara nothing else, as Amir says in the novel that "never mind any of those things, because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end I was Pashtun and he was a Hazara. I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that, nothing" (24). Hosseini further helps the readers to explore the social and political condition of Hazaras through the character of Assef, who harshly and openly criticizes the Hazaras. Throughout the novel, he keeps torturing and criticizing the Hazaras. Assef says that the Hazaras while flicking to Hassan that "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our *watan*, they dirty our blood" (38). Through, Assef Khaled has tried to illustrate the hatred relationship between the ethnic groups; Pashtun and Hazaras. In the concluding part of the novel, when Amir comes back from America to Kabul in search of Hassan's son Sohrab after getting phone call from Rahim Khan, Amir comes back after twenty-seven years in search of Hassan's son. Here, he meets Assef who has joined Taliban. Assef fondly and proudly narrates the tragic incident of the Hazara massacre of 1998 in Mazar-i-Sharif, "we left the bodies in the streets, and if their families tried to sneak out to drag them back into their homes, we'd shoot them for dogs. Dog

meat for dogs” (225). Hazaras are not liked by the other ethnic groups. Like Assef there are many others who want to get rid of from the Hazaras. So, Hazaras are deprived of all their basic social and political rights. Just, because they are Hazaras. So, the people of Afghanistan were chained in the shackles of ethnicity, illiteracy, ideological gap, gender discrimination, language and cultural issues which have been the causes of unending internal conflicts in Afghanistan. These ethnic conflicts are not always between Pashtuns and Hazaras but among other ethnic groups too. Pashtuns have dominated the country in all social and political sections. Other ethnic groups have the feelings of injustice and inequality which creates ethno political conflicts in Afghanistan. Babi, a character in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is a Tajik, reflects such feelings of the political injustice which has been done with his community. He says, Tajiks are in minority and Pashtuns are in majority. Babi tells it to his daughter Laila that “Tajiks have always felt slighted, Pashtun kings ruled this country for almost two hundred and fifty years, Laila and Tajiks for all nine months back in 1929” (128). The character Babi who is a well-educated and logical man condemn such tensions among the ethnic groups of Afghanistan. He says “To me, it’s nonsense, and very dangerous nonsense at that- all this talk of I’m Tajik and you’re Pashtun and he’s Hazara and she’s Uzbek. But when one group rules over the others for so long . . . There’s contempt. Rivalry. There is. There always has been” (128).

Nomadic Life and Culture in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is the country with huge nomadic population. In 1979 out of total 13.05 million populations 80, 0000 were nomads. Khaled Hosseini has also mentioned about the nomadic life, their culture. During the summers, they migrate to the mountains. In his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) revisiting his childhood days, Amir recalls how he and Hassan had a lot of fun with moving nomads when they passed through their villages. He says that:

We chased the *Kochi*, the nomads who passed through Kabul on their way to the mountains of the north. We would hear their caravans approaching our neighborhood, the mewling of their sheep, the baaing of their goats . . . men with dusty, weather-beaten faces and women dressed in long, colorful shawls, beads, and silver bracelets around their wrists and ankles . . .” (24-25)

These nomadic people belong to all the ethnic groups, who in Afghanistan have nothing to do with politics, education, and developments of the country. With the changing of season, they move from one place to another. They live primarily in the rural areas and the northern parts of Afghanistan and also other pastoral areas as well. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) Nana and her daughter were living in a kolba at some distant place. There, they also

experience this nomadic life and the culture of Afghanistan. Hosseini describes it by narrating the daily life of Marriam and Nana at *kolba*, “In the mornings, they awoke to the distant bleating of sheep and the high-pitched toot of a flute as Gul Daman’s shepherds led their flocks to graze on the grassy hillside. . .” (15). But, during the Soviet- Afghan War they also played a very crucial role for Afghanistan, and since then, they have also become the part of mainstream politics. The nomadic population didn’t belong to one particular tribe but they were from all the tribes of Afghanistan.

Afghans and the Pashtunwali

According to Kaushik Roy, who writes in his book, *War and Society in Afghanistan* (2013) that “In the 1980s there were fifty-five ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Pashtuns comprised the largest ethnic group followed by the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and the Hazaras” (164). Every ethnic group in Afghanistan follows social, religious, and cultural practices. For instance, Pashtuns follow *Pashtunwali* codes of living in their daily routine. Such socially and politically constructed theories and norms are used as a weapon to achieve all the social and political goals in Afghanistan by the power loving people. Roy takes a quote to define *Pashtunwali* from the autobiography of Masood Farivar (b. 1969) a Mujahideen leader who writes in his autobiography that:

People lived their lives according to the guiding principles of *Pashtunwali*; the way of the Pashtun. Its main tenets required showing hospitality to all, providing shelter for those in need, and retaliating against those who have wronged you. *Pashtunwali* made no distinction between rich and poor, landlord and peasants. (qtd. in Roy 166)

Even this concept of *Pashtunwali* is also reflected in *The Kite Runner* when Amir and Baba discuss the marriage and the girl for Amir. Baba, talks about the girl’s father that “the man is a Pashtun to the root. He has *nang* and *namoos*. *Nang* *Namoos*. Honor and pride, the tenets of Pashtun men. Especially when it came to the chastity of wife, or a daughter” (134). Baba praises about the Pashtun community that they always help others in the need of the hour. They consider themselves as the true Afghans. Amir remembers that what Baba said about Pashtuns, “we may be hard-headed and I know we’re far too proud, but, in the hour of need, believe me that there’s no one you’d rather have at your side than a Pashtun” (147). Through the character of Baba, Khaled tries to show the ways the ethnic groups in Afghanistan have been constituted on the basis of different philosophies, which are political motivated. All the social and religious functions are connected with the culture of the ethnic group for achieving some political goals. Masood Farivara Mujahedeem later joined *jihad* writes in his autobiography that:

Jihad was being waged first and foremost in defense of our *namoos*; our woman, our honour. *Nammoos* is what defines every male Afghan. The worst insult he can suffer is *benammoos*; a man whose womenfolk have been violated. Back in Sheberghan, shortly after the Soviet invasion, I would overhear my father recite to a relative the famous Afghan motto about three most important things to every Afghan man's honour: women, land, and gold (in Farsi, they all start with the letter z- *zan*, *zameen*, and *zar*). The easiest way to provoke an Afghan is to violate one of the z's, he said, and the Russians had violated all three. (qtd in Roy 166)

In the early 1970s it was made Afghans feel to fight against Soviets as it was their moral duty, because they had violated all the three z's (*zan*, *zameen*, and *zar*) of Afghans. Creating such politically motivated discourses among Afghans increased the amount of contempt between the Soviets and Afghans. The concept of *Pashtunwali* has also been explored by Hosseini in his novel *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013) through the marriage of Nila Wahdati who belongs to the cosmopolitan Kabul of 1950s as she was of the French origin. She is poetess, who writes poetry on the controversial subjects. She is westernized in nature and behaviour. Her ways of living are completely different from a Pashtun's way of living. On the basis of her poetry based on vulgar themes and her life style she is presented as an immoral character in the story. She is married to an Afghan man named Mr. Wahdati. To their marriage, her husband's rejects her because of her westernized life style. Mr. Wahdati opposed their marriage because;

He said it was well known in Kabul that she had no *nang* and *namoos*, no honor, and that though she was only twenty, she had already been "ridden all over town" like Mr. Wahdati's car. Worst of all, he said, not only had she made no attempt to deny these allegations, she wrote poems about them. A murmur of disapproval spread through the room when he said this. One of the men remarked that in his village they would have slit her throat by now. (93)

Moreover, in another novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) Hosseini has depicted the darker side of this *Pashtunwali* in which women have to suffer. In the novel, Hosseini has depicted it through the life of Nana who is a young, unmarried girl and works as a maid in the house of a rich man Jalil, who lives in Harat. Jalil has three wives and still he makes sexual relationship with Nana and she conceives. Everyone considers her at fault and she is thrown out of the house by Jalil to maintain his respect, and even her father doesn't accept her in his house to maintain his *nang and namoos*. Moreover, in Afghanistan, people think it is their duty to respect and honour their guests. It is their duty to save the life of their guests. After

9/11 attack, America declared war on terror and they demanded Taliban to handover Osama bin Laden but they refused to do that because it was against the *Pashtunwali*. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Tariq tells Laila that “Taliban have announced that they won’t relinquish bin Laden because he is a *mehman*, a guest, who has found sanctuary in Afghanistan and it is against the Pashtunwali code of ethics to turn over a guest . . .” (373). So, such kinds of customs Pashtuns had in Afghanistan. Moreover, the girls’ marriage at an early age has always been a common practice in Afghanistan. One of the two wives of Jalil justified that how common it is in Afghanistan before arranging the marriage of Mariam. Talking about the about the Mariam’s age, they say that “Yes. But I’ve seen nine-year-old girls given to men twenty years older than your suitor. Mariam. We all have. What are you, fifteen? That’s a good, solid marrying age for a girl” (47). Marrying at this time for Mariam was a great mental torture and she looked at Jalil and said that “I don’t want this. Don’t make me . . .” (47). But nobody listens to her and forced her to marry with Rasheed.

Rural Life vs. Urban Life in Afghanistan

Afghanistan faces internal and external conflicts, poverty, displacement, ethno-political conflicts, gender inequality, droughts, and many other problems as well. But besides all these problems, there is a huge difference in the life and culture of rural and urban areas. People of urban areas are free in their daily life while the people in rural areas are under the control of conservative religious leaders. People living in the rural areas are bound to religious, social, and cultural practices. For such leaders, religion is more important than the freedom of a human being. Such differences in culture are also the part of Afghan origin writer; Khaled Hosseini.

In Khaled Hosseini’s novel *The Kite Runner* (2007), the high-class culture is reflected by Amir’s father Baba who is a rich Pashtun businessman. Amir remembers that before Soviet’s invasion, many rich profiles people used to come and meet with Baba and “discussed their favorite three topics: politics, business, soccer . . .” (4). In another novel of Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Sun* (2007), in which the man who represent the urban culture is Jalil, who is a rich businessman of Harat. He has three wives, big house, owns theatre and established business. Mariam is his illegitimate daughter with Nana who worked there in his house as maid. But when Nana gets pregnant with Miriam, she was thrown out of the house to live in a faraway kolba where she gives birth to Mariam. Jalil visits to Mariam on every week and tells her the stories of his children, about the movies and many other things related to the city of Harat. Mariam always desire to live in Jalil’s house. So, there is a huge difference in the life and culture of people who are living in the rural areas and

the people living in the urban areas. Another most famous novel, *And the Mountain Echoed* (2013) in which the Wahdati family represents the life and culture of Kabul's urbanized and the rich class. Wahdati family has no child of its own. Mrs. Wahdati wears short dress, sunglasses, writes poetry on every subject, she does smoking and drinking too. They have servant named Nabi who manages them a girl of his sister named Pari to adopt. While in rural areas the life of people is completely different in Afghanistan. Most of them live in small mud houses and herding and agriculture is their main occupation. Moreover, such differences also become the cause of social conflicts in Afghanistan. Most of the time people living in urban areas consider the people of rural areas as traditional, conservatives, illiterate, irrational and above all inferior to them. Such kinds of feelings give birth to the hatred relationship among the people. For instance, Rasheed, who considers himself as superior to Mariam because he lives in Kabul. Moreover, he always finds fault in Mariam and one day he tells Laila that "we are the city people, you [Laila] and I, but she [Mariam] is *dehati*, a village girl . . ." (216).

Life of Afghans in the Refugee Campus during the War Years

Years of war and political crises in Afghanistan forced millions of people to leave their country. Many people were leaving for Pakistan, Iran, India and some others to America. Poor and helpless people had no option except the Peshawar refugee camp. So, most of the people were living at Nasir Bagh refugee camp near Peshawar. The condition in the refugee campus was not suitable to live especially after the ending of the Afghan- Soviet War (1979-1989). All the countries funding Afghanistan suddenly stopped after the war. In all their novels Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi have reflected the unprecedented displacement of people due to political havoc and their life in the refugee camps. One of such novels is *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) in which many such characters leave the country mainly Tariq and his family. Tariq spends long time in the Peshawar refugee camp and when he comes back to Afghanistan to meet his girlfriend Laila, her family had been killed in a war and then she had become the second wife of Rasheed. Tariq tells Laila about the life in the refugee camp, "After the war, Soviets fell apart, and the West moved on. There was nothing at stake for them in Afghanistan anymore and the money dried up. Now Naser Bagh is tents, dust, and open sewer. . ." (326). He further tells Laila about the life in the refugee camp after the departure of Soviets and no more funding to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Now the condition is not appropriate to live in the refugee camp. People are dying there frequently; Tariq says that his father died there in the winter without any pain and he died while sleeping. He tells Laila "A lot of kids died, Dysentery, TB, hunger . . . I saw so many kids buried. There is

nothing worse a person can see” (327).

Influence of Religious Leaders in the Socio-Cultural Life of Afghanistan

In Afghanistan about ninety nine percent people follow the Islam religion. The influence of Islam could be seen in the daily life of people. For every good or bad thing which happens in any Afghan's life, he associates it with the God's will. Moreover, the practices of worship and the ways of following Islam vary from place to place and from clan to clan. Speaking broadly, the followers of Islam are categorized into two categories: Sunni and Shia Muslims. Sunni Muslims are in majority and they follow the practice of five times *namaz* (prayers) and strictly follow other religious beliefs and practices. Shia Muslims are not much serious towards the religious practices. They don't consider it necessary to follow the practice of five-time *namaz* and go out to churches on every Friday. They enjoy more freedom in religion than Sunni Muslims. So, the culture of Afghanistan is closely associated with their religion. Whatever the people wear, the ways they live, the food they eat, the way they greet, the way they celebrate cultural and religious festivals are very much connected with their religion.

Maintaining the relationship between culture and literature the selected writers of the study have depicted the deep association of Afghan people with their religion. By including the religious characters in their literary works they have also reflected the influence of the religious leaders in the daily life of Afghans. For instance, Mullah Fatiullah Khan a religious character in the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003), about him Amir tells in the novel. Amir remembers that when he was in fifth grade Mullah Fatiullah used to teach them about Islam. He taught him the ways and uses of performing five-time *namaz*. Then he asked to memorize some verses from the Quran but he never told Amir and Hassan the meaning and translation of those verses. He remembers that he also told them that drinking is a sin in Islam and people should avoid it. When Amir tells about the sayings of Mullah, Baba being liberal completely rejects the sayings of Mullah. In another novel of Khaled Hosseini is *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) the religious character Mullah Faizullah who plays a great role in the development of the story. He used to visit at Nana and Mariam's kolba and told them the stories about the God. Mariam loves to listen his sayings about the God and throughout her life she remembers and practices his sayings in the novel. In Atiq Rahimi's novel, religion and the religious characters also play a major role. A novella *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006) by Atiq Rahimi a character named Da Mullah Saed Mustafa is a religious character. The influence of the religion and religious leaders can be seen from the life of the main character Farhad. One curfew night, Farhad is heavily drunk with his friends and after drinking he returns to his home. On the way police arrests him and beat him badly

because he doesn't know about the curfew password and disrespects the Russian soldiers. Police beats him so badly and he falls in the street from where a lady named Mahnaz drags him to her room and nurses him to get his health back. During this period, he is lying unconscious and when he starts recovering instead of remembering other things, he remembers the saying of Mullah Saed. In this state he thinks that he is not able to move his body because *jinn* had entered in his body. Then the voices of the lady and a small child are overheard in the house. He thinks that these voices are the voices of God, the voices from the graveyard. He thinks that he is in hell because he couldn't get the place in heaven because he hasn't done anything according to the sayings of Mullah Saed. In another novel of Atiq Rahimi, *The Patience Stone* (2010) depicts that an unnamed lady character who is nursing her comatose husband. Instead of doing any other thing she is praying to God for many days for his recovery. In this way, the influence of religion and the sayings of religious leaders in the life of people of Afghanistan has clearly depicted by both the Afghan origin writers: Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi through their literary works.

Conclusion

The chapter deals with the culture of Afghanistan by analyzing the chosen literary works. Writing an overview of the history of Afghanistan, the chapter depicts that how the culture of Afghanistan has evolved. While dealing with the culture of Afghanistan, the chapter highlights the ethnic diversity in Afghanistan. There are total fourteen main ethnic groups which are further sub-divided into many other small ethnic groups. Also, the chapter depicts that in Afghanistan the culture of the people is closely associated with their religion. Their religious leaders decide what they have to do and what they should not do in their daily routine. The differences in their religious beliefs and practices also create differences in their cultures. Each ethnic group has its different ways of living and practicing its religion and that is the main cause of the cultural diversity in Afghanistan. Moreover, the different ways of practicing the same religion not only make Afghanistan a culturally diverse nation but also becomes the cause of potential conflicts among the ethnic groups. The chapter reflects the deep association of religion and the culture of Afghanistan through the analysis of various characters from the selected texts. Through the character analysis the chapter shows that in Afghanistan the constitution, gender roles, recreational activities, sports, music, festivals, marriage ceremonies, education, punishments of different crimes etc., are closely associated with their religion. Religious characters such as Mullah Fattullah Khan, Da Mullah Saed Mustafa, Mullah Faizullah, etc., influence with their teachings to the various characters in the chosen texts. Moreover, the chapter depicts that the culture of Afghanistan has a long history

of its own. The culture which today people follow started evolving after the establishment of the cities and forming a new political structure during Alexander's invasion and his short stay in Afghanistan. With the establishment of cities, urban areas developed and rural and mountainous areas remained the same. Furthermore, the difference in the city life and the rural life created a gap between the life and culture of people living in the cities and people living in the rural areas. The gap kept increasing with the coming of each new ruler and with each new government in Afghanistan. Moreover, the geographical conditions of Afghanistan are also responsible for widening this gap between the rural and urban life. Even no ruler has been able to get an absolute control on the rural areas of Afghanistan. That is the reason that most of the rural areas have been unaffected by the modernity. They still follow the old religious beliefs and practices. So, it has maintained the big gap between the life and culture of rural and the urban areas. Moreover, the existence of multi-ethnic groups in Afghanistan is another cause of the cultural diversity in Afghanistan. Each ethnic group has its own way of living on the basis of some patrilineal principles. Every ethnic group practices different religious and cultural myths which create religious and ideological differences among them. The population of Afghanistan is comprised of many ethnic groups and the diversity of ethnic groups reflects the cultural diversity of Afghanistan. But among these ethnic groups only Pashtuns have dominated culturally and politically. The other ethnic groups which are comprised of around sixty percent of population have been socially, politically, economically and culturally marginalized throughout the history of Afghanistan. So, this long year of marginalization not only creates the ideological gap among the ethnic groups but also becomes the cause of socio-political conflicts which ultimately destabilize the country's condition. Moreover, the religion plays a vital role in the life and culture of Afghanistan. The religion has been used as a major force to unite the people of Afghanistan against the external forces who had attacked on Afghanistan in the past. In Afghanistan, majority of people follow Islam but it is practiced in different ways and make Afghanistan a culturally diverse nation. Moreover, to avoid internal conflicts the policy makers must be aware about the religious and cultural beliefs and practices of Afghanistan before making any new policy or the law for it. So, the chapter four of the thesis concludes here successfully.

Chapter 5

Afghanistan Then and Now: A Study of the Rahimi and Hosseini's Works

Introduction

In this chapter, researcher attempts to depict that the Afghanistan has been the conflict zone and the victim of geopolitics from the early 1970s to the contemporary time. The chapter deals with the social, political, cultural and economic impacts of frequent internal and external conflicts on Afghanistan through the textual analysis. The chapter discusses the similarities and differences in the socio-political structure of Afghanistan between the present and the past. The present chapter titled “Afghanistan Then and Now: A Study of the Rahimi and Hosseini's Works” presents the socio-political picture of Afghanistan before 2001, and after 2001. The chapter discusses the causes and effects of all the socio-political conflicts from the perspective of Karl Marx's theory of Dialectical Materialism. Under the lens of Dialectical Materialism the chapter does the textual analyzes. The chapter depicts that how the contradiction and limitations in each new political development have given birth to the new socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan since 1970s.

Karl Marx (1818- 1883) borrowed the idea of the dialectical materialism from German idealist George Hegel's (1770- 1831) dialectics. Hegel's dialectics explains the causes of change in the society with the changing of ideas. The dialectical materialism explains the ways the society passed or developed from one stage to another through conflict and struggle between the two classes. According to Marx, the struggle between the two existing forces gives birth to the new stage in the society. The new stage would be different and become the cause of change in the society. Every existing stage in the society has some contradictions and limitations. At present, people do not know about those limitations and contradictions, to this stage Marx calls thesis. When those contradictions and limitations in the existing stage are manifested, here comes the reactionary stage which is called antithesis. Finally, the struggle between thesis and antithesis gives birth to the third stage which is called synthesis. According to Karl Marx, synthesis is the most superior stage among all the stages. Paul Randolph (b. 1968) defines the concept of thesis, antithesis and synthesis in his book *The Psychological of Conflict* (2016), “where thesis represents the unity or the status quo; antithesis is the challenge to the status quo, and synthesis is the new product resulting from the conflict between the two” (33). So, according to Marx, history of mankind is the history of class struggle in which two classes exist; the capitalist and the working class. They are always in a conflict. One tries to maintain its status quo and the other tries to mobilize by

getting control on the material resources of the society. So, in this chapter, researcher attempts to depict how Afghanistan has been the conflict zone from the 1970s to the present time. It projects the social, political, cultural and economic impacts of all the internal and external conflicts on Afghanistan through the textual analysis of Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi's chosen works. The study also depicts the similarities and differences in the socio-political structure of Afghanistan between the present and the past. The present (Now in the study); which has been assumed as after 9/11/2001 and the past (Then in the study) which is before the 9/11/2001 attack by Al-Qaida on America's the World trade Centre. The literary works of chosen writers reflect the socio-political conditions of Afghanistan from the early 1970s to the late 2000s, which has been the period of great political upheavals in the history of Afghanistan. On the basis of the textual analysis, the present chapter studies about the recent political developments in Afghanistan over the last twenty years to find the similarities and difference between the two periods. The major political developments which took place in Afghanistan and led to the great chaos and conflicts in Afghanistan. The chosen texts have primarily covered the major events after 1970s to 2001 such as: Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), Civil War (1992-1996), Taliban's takeover (1996-2001), 9/11 attack on World Trade Centre, and America's declaration of war on terror, its invasion of Afghanistan after the 9/11 attack, and Taliban's takeover after US withdrawal on 15th August 2021.

The chapter titled "Afghanistan Then and Now: A Study of the Rahimi and Hosseini's Works" discusses in detail that the Afghanistan has witnessed conflict after conflict since last four decades. Even now, after the takeover of Taliban on 15th of August 2021, the situation in Afghanistan is not stable because now the conflict is in between Taliban and anti-Taliban groups. The chapter discusses the causes and effects of all the socio-political conflicts from the perspective of Karl Marx's theory of dialectical materialism. From the perspective of Marx's theory, the present chapter reflects the ways each new political development has given birth to the conflict in Afghanistan. The chapter studies scientifically about the causes of each conflict at the various stages in the history of Afghanistan and the pattern through which one stage gives birth to the other because of the contradictions and limitations in every stage.

Undoubtedly, all these internal and external conflicts and each political development has made Afghanistan a mere battleground and spawned many socio-political conflicts in the country. The chosen works which are the part of the present chapter are: *The Kite Runner* (2003), it has been set during the period of 1970's to 2000s. The novel depicts all the major socio-political and socio-cultural developments during the period. Through the character of Amir and Hassan, it not only depicts the ethno-political conflicts in Afghanistan but also

presents the major political developments in the country from nineteen seventies to the early 2000s. It shows that the country has suffered with each new political development. The second novel which is the part of the discussion in this chapter is *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) written by Khaled Hosseini. This novel focuses especially on the life of women during pre-Taliban, and Taliban period through the characters of Nana, Mariam and Laila. The last novel which is the part of the chapter is *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006) by Atiq Rahimi. This novel also depicts the life of the Afghan people under the rule of Soviet by analyzing the characters of Farhad and his friends, a lady named Mahnaz and Farhad's mother. Through these three literary works, the chapter depicts that Afghanistan has been the conflict zone since last four decades. The chapter also depicts the social, psychological and economic effects of conflicts on the people of Afghanistan. So, the chapter discusses in detail the causes and effects of frequent conflicts in Afghanistan through the textual analysis of the chosen writers broadly from the perspective of conflict theory.

Detailed Analyses of the Chapter

The conflict theory does the materialistic interpretation of history. Karl Marx (1818- 1883) studies in detail about the causes and effects of conflicts in his theory named the dialectical materialism. When Marx grew up in his life, it was the time of industrial capitalism in Europe. He was unhappy about the condition of the working class. He wanted to change this system of society, but he knew that to change the society he must understand the pattern of society. For that purpose, Karl Marx went back to the stages of human history to understand the system of the present society and expecting the future form of society. He wanted to understand the pattern of different stages of human history such as the slave society, feudalism (lords and serfs), capitalism and in future the communism. He thought that behind all the social phenomena there is some particular law which works. So, he wanted to find that law which works in the development of different stages in the history of mankind. After having an analysis, Marx came to conclude which he has explained in his theory of history or dialectical materialism. He explains the pattern or law behind the development of history or the different stages through which history developed. In his theory of the dialectical materialism or the theory of history he explains that the society passed or developed from one stage to another through conflict between the two classes. This theory of Karl Marx is also called the materialist conception of history.

Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) was influenced from the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) who was an idealist. In Karl Marx's Dialectical Materialism, the word dialectical is derived from the theory of dialectics which was given

by Hegel. The theory explains the causes of change in the society. According to this theory all the changes and developments at various stages throughout the history of mankind is the result of struggle and contradiction between the two forces or classes. The contradiction between the two existing forces gives birth to something new in the society which is different and becomes the cause of change in the society. So, according to the theory of dialectics, the change is the result of contradiction between the two forces. Marx says that every existing stage in the society has some contradictions but presently people do not know about those contradictions and limitations and to this stage he called thesis. With the passage of time, there would be the manifestation of those contradictions and limitations in the thesis and the next stage would come which is the reactionary one in which people would react about the contradictions and limitations of the previous stage. So, only because of the contradictions and limitations in the stage one, stage two would come into existence. The stage two would be the reactionary stage and Marx called it anti-thesis. Now, there would be the struggle between thesis and anti- thesis which gives birth to the third stage which is called the synthesis. In synthesis there would also be contradictions and limitations but they would be less than the stage A and Stage B. Because of it, this stage would be the superior stage and brings major changes in the society. Though, the third stage would stay for a longer period of time and become the cause of change in the society. But some day or the other, this stage would also face the challenges from some section of the society. Finally, there would be the development of another stage results new thesis, and this process goes on. Hegel used this idea in his theory of dialectics to give the idealistic interpretation of the history. Marx borrowed this idea from Hegel in his theory of dialectical materialism to present the materialistic interpretation of the history. According to Hegel, the struggle in the history is the result of ideas and the struggle of ideas leads to the development in the history of mankind. According to him, thesis is the first idea and anti- thesis is the second idea and the mixture of these two leads to the better idea which is synthesis. So, in this way Hegel gives the idealist theory of change in the history of mankind. According to Marx, the development of history is not the result of struggle between ideas but the development of history is the result of the struggle between the two classes; the rich and the poor. According to him, the origin of classes lies in economic (matter). Marx says the changes in the process and socio-political system is the result of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. According to Marx behind the origin of classes there is always some economic reason and the history of mankind is the history of class struggle; the struggle between the classes. A sociologist C. N. Shankar Rao uses the reference of the opening lines of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Marx in his book *Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social Thought* (2012) to define the history

of humankind as the history of class struggle:

The history of the hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried an uninterrupted, now hidden and now open fight, a fight that each time ended in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (qtd. in Rao 734)

It is deduced from the above quote that every stage has the two classes; one is the dominant class and other is the dominated one. One tries to maintain the status quo and the other tries to mobilize to become the better version of itself and the struggle between the two continues. In the slave society, the struggle between master and slave, then, the new stage was the feudal society and there was the struggle between the lords and the serfs. The final stage is the capitalist society in which there is the struggle between the capitalist and the working class. According to Marx, economy is the reason behind the origin of all these classes. Marx reduces everything to economy and for that reason he is also called as economic determinist.

According to Marx, social relation of the production decides the class of the individual. If you are the owner of the production, then you are the dominant class. If you don't own it then you are the subservient class or the working class or dominated class. So, the social relation of the production becomes the cause of the origin of classes. The numerical strength of the dominant class is always less than dominated class but still working class is ruled and controlled by the ruling class. According to Marx, there are two methods of domination which are used by ruling class to dominate and control the working class, first by using the means of violence such as police, army, court, and so on. However, Marx says that you cannot control or rule over them for longer period of time by using only the means of violence. So, the other method they use is the ideological superstructure. They build the ideological superstructure (ideas, culture, beliefs, morality, religion, law etc.) over the material or economic base to control the working class. Ideological superstructure is built by the dominant class to maintain the status quo. The function of ideological superstructure is to explain, justify and legitimize the division of labor, class differences and vast inequality of wealth, status and power that exist in the society. The ruling class justifies and explains that all the institutions and socio-political system of the society is for the welfare of the working class. But actually they are used to exploit them and to maintain the status quo. The capitalist class rule over the working class until they remained in false consciousness and realized that they are actually exploited by the ruling class. Therefore, the class consciousness replaces the

false consciousness and the working class revolts against the ruling class which is the reactionary stage against the thesis to which Marx called ant-thesis. Paul Randolph (b. 1968) also explains the cause of reaction in his book *The Psychology of Conflict* (2016) that "most conflicts have one common thread; a request or demand followed by a refusal and the demand will also contain an emotional element, driven by feelings of anger, hurt, betrayal of the perceived injustice" (72). Finally, there is the birth of new stage which is synthesis.

Afghanistan has been the victim of geopolitics, because of its geographical location. It has been conquered and ruled by the various rulers belonging to the different parts of the world. They have used it as a politically strategic location for getting control over the central Asia and the Middle East, and on the Indian subcontinent. It is a landlocked country, sharing its borders with three central Asian countries namely Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan while concomitantly sharing its borders also with Iran, Pakistan, and China. All the central Asian countries are located mainly to its north, Iran is located to its West, China is situated to its northeast, and most of its east and south territory has the border of Pakistan. Meirav Mishali Ram argues in her research article titled "Afghanistan: A Legacy of Violence? Internal and External Factors of the Enduring Violent Conflict" that "Afghanistan's history and politics has largely been affected by its location at the crossroads of the Central, Western and the Southern Asia, making the country a zone of conflict between external powers" (Ram 6). Its central location, multi-ethnicity, power politics, traditional religious and cultural laws, and the wave of modernism are some of the major causes of continuous internal and external conflicts in Afghanistan.

The land of Afghanistan has been used by various rulers to invade India, central Asia and the Middle East from Turkish ruler Mahmud of Ghazni to Ahmed Shah Abdali, before the establishment of British Empire in India. These rulers of Turko-Parsian and Turko-Mangolian traditions developed governing machineries mainly through focusing two organizations, as American anthropologist Thomas Barfield asserts in his book that "Administration was placed in the hands of 'men of the pen', literate Persian speakers familiar with the government, while military commands were allocated to 'men of the swords'" (88). Men of swords were tribal groups of Pashtuns. The rulers of Afghanistan had their own system of exercising the powers with predetermined Islamic ideologies and beliefs to run the administration. The land of Afghanistan was never colonized by the British Empire. Russia was the other most powerful nation during that time and wanted to have control on Afghanistan and the central Asia. There was the race between two powers during the early 19th century for supremacy over the central Asia between British Empire and the Russia

which is known as "The Great Game". British wanted to have control over the Emirate of Afghanistan in fear that if Russian Empire invaded over the Emirate, there could be the danger for British supremacy in India, they didn't want that. Both were trying to enhance their influence on Afghanistan to reach the other adjoining countries. It was formally ended with 'Anglo- Russian Convention' of 1907 and it was the end of the longstanding rivalry in the Central Asia. Russia promised to stay out of Tibet and Afghanistan. The territory of Afghanistan was drawn during the Second Anglo-Afghan War by demarcation of Durand line in 1893. Afghanistan was declared as a buffer zone and it was decided that no one will interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan afterwards. But to take control, British fought to the Emirate three times called Anglo-Afghan Wars. After the short period of third Anglo-Afghan War, Afghanistan was declared as an independent nation after signing a treaty of peace between the British and Afghanistan in Rawalpindi in 1919.

In 1933 Zahir Shah comes into power after the assassination of his father King Nadir Shah. After the Second World War, there is an end of British supremacy while America and the Soviet Union are emerged as the two powerful forces. Both are expanding their powers to get the political control on the other countries. During the early years of the 1950s both America and Afghanistan had good relations and both countries exchange their ambassadors for the first time. During this period, the Afghanistan government also allows America to develop hydroelectric and irrigation projects in its Helmand River Valley. It was America's political strategy to invest on Afghanistan to get political and economic control over Afghanistan. Actually, the United States of America was using Afghanistan for the strategic purpose to restrain the Soviet Union and communism to the south Asia and the Middle East.

On the other hand, when Pakistan came into existence Afghanistan's Pashtun population became the part of Pakistan's territory on the basis of Durand line. After the partition of India and Pakistan, this Pashtun population demands to have a separate nation called 'Pashtunistan'. Afghanistan supported them but Pakistan didn't want that at any cost. Afghanistan was not powerful both in finance and defense then. So, Afghanistan approached America to buy arms but America refused to give any kind of assistance to Afghanistan because Afghanistan had refused to become a member of the anti-communist Baghdad Pact of 1955. The pact was the military alliance during the Cold War. Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and the UK were the members of this anti-communist Baghdad pact of 1955. But the Soviet Union took the advantage of this and did all for Afghanistan which America refused to do. They supplied huge arms, tanks, airplanes, and other technical aids to Afghanistan. Because of the Pashtunistan issue, the relation between Pakistan and Afghanistan got

deteriorated and it also became later the cause of the Cold War rivalry. Taking the advantage of tense conditions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, America started using Pakistan for its supremacy and to prevent the Russian influence over Afghanistan. Now, America was giving its support to Pakistan and the Soviet Union supported Afghanistan. The Human Rights Watch asserts that “After World War II, both the US and the Soviet Union used economic assistance to compete for influence. After the US established military ties with Pakistan in 1954, Afghanistan increasingly turned to the Soviet Union support” (Human Rights Watch, n.p.).

After the WW2, America and the Soviet Union came out as the superpowers with their strong military forces. They tried to expand their influence to the central Asia and the Middle East, while doing so Afghanistan being in between the Central Asia and the South Asia became the victim. Comprehensively, the superpowers wanting to unfurl their power-led-ideologies, Afghanistan got reduced to a mere battleground. Furthermore, building on Kaneshko Sangar’s research paper entitled “Afghanistan’s significance for Russia in the 21st Century: Interests, Perceptions and Perspectives” where he glorifies Afghanistan for its “untapped deposits [that] could exceed a trillion dollars for any nation” one concludes how Afghanistan being rich in mineral resources marked with massive deposits of copper, aluminum, silver, gold, iron, ore, lithium etc., and at the same time Afghanistan could be an easy gateway for the dominant countries in the past. So, they didn’t want to keep themselves contained only to Afghanistan but wanted to use Afghan land for the expansion of their powers to the Central Asia because “Central Asia not only contains vast hydrocarbon fields, both onshore and offshore in the Caspian Sea, that have the potential to serve as an alternative to OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) suppliers of energy resources but is also one of the most important crossroads/intersections of the world’s energy communications in the North-South and Europe-Asia direction” (Sangar 66). Apparently, plundering Afghanistan of its resources, America and Soviet amplified their vicious attempts. Therefore, the country has been the centre of interest for these powers for a long time. After the Soviet-Afghan War for ten years and the Soviets withdrawal in 1989, Mujahedeen came into power and the Civil War broke out in Afghanistan which lasted for four years. This period of the Civil War was more devastating and destructive in the Afghan history and forced millions to take safeguard to themselves. In 1996, the Civil War ended and there was the emergence of Taliban with the radical Islamic ideology. They put more restrictions on the Afghan people by imposing Sharia law under which all kinds of social, political and cultural restrictions were imposed on the people of Afghanistan especially on women. Their

new and strict policies were considered against humanity that forced millions to leave their country. After 9/11 attack, America entered in Afghanistan with the promise of establishing peace and ending the terrorism. America's entry means the end of Taliban from the centre. American forces stayed in Afghanistan for twenty years but still they couldn't establish peace in all parts of Afghanistan. Their complete withdrawal in August 2021 opened the doors for Taliban to make their government under the leadership of Haibatullah Akhundzada. For which, they had been fighting for the twenty years; Taliban finally became victorious. The reports of violence by Taliban against anti-Taliban, women and girls started coming through media outlets soon after they gained the power.

The Afghan-Soviets War and its Effects

The great political upheaval only began after the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Before the Soviets political and military intervention, Afghanistan was comparatively much peaceful. Afghan people used to celebrate different religious and cultural festivals. Amir, who is the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003), remembers those days of Afghanistan when people were happy and enjoyed their Fridays. He remembers that "we sat at a picnic table on the banks of the lake. . . On Fridays, the lake was bustling with families out for a day in the sun . . ." (14). Amir and his family left the country soon after the Soviet's entry in Afghanistan and he settled down in America. He recalls everything which he and his family's servant's son Hassan used to enjoy at home. In the school Amir used to participate in the poetry competitions which Amir always won. People used to have great enthusiasm on the eve of the New Year's celebrations. Amir says, "I remember one time Baba took me to the yearly Buzkashi tournament that took place on the first day of spring, the New Year's Day. *Buzkashi* was, and still is, Afghanistan; national passion . . ." (20). During the King Zahir Shah's forty years rule which was ended in the year 1973, Afghanistan has been much peaceful because it was the only time when Afghanistan stayed away from the world politics.

After the Second World War, the world was changing, there was the end of colonialism and many countries were becoming independent from the British rule. Meanwhile, Afghanistan was also experiencing the peace and stability in the country. Though in terms of development, literacy, poverty and the gender equality, its record was not good but still the peace was there in the country. The people of Afghanistan had never experienced peace in the last forty years. The involvement of the foreign powers in the socio-political affairs of Afghanistan especially in the late nineteen seventies has been mainly responsible for disturbing the peace and stability of the Afghanistan. After Daoud Khan's coming into the power, the political structure of Afghanistan changed suddenly and completely which became

the cause of destabilization and conflicts. Khaled Hosseini writes in his book *The Kite Runner* (2003), that in 1973 “Kabul woke the next morning to find that monarchy was the thing of past. The king, Zahir Shah, was away in Italy. In his absence, his cousin Daoud Khan had ended the king’s forty-year reign with a bloodless coup” (34). So, it was not only the end of monarchy but also the end of dynastic politics. Daoud Khan declared himself not the king of the country but the President. He changed the political structure of Afghanistan. He was a true nationalist and wanted to work for the strengthening of the nation by establishing the new laws and policies. For that purpose, his inclination towards America and the Soviet Union increased and talking about the period, Amir says that;

For the next couple of years, the words economy development and reform danced on a lot of lips in Kabul. The constitutional monarchy had been abolished, replaced by a republic, led by the president of the republic. For a while, a sense of rejuvenation and purpose swept across the land. People spoke of women’s rights and modern technology. (40)

It is deduced from the aforementioned quote that it was the time when the foreign intervention increased in Afghanistan. The increasing amenity between the Afghanistan and Pakistan over the Pashtunistan issue opened the doors for the Soviet supported government in Afghanistan. So, both America and Soviet were extending their influence in the central Asia and the Middle East and Afghanistan being in between became the battle ground for both the powers. Daoud Khan’s modern policies to make education compulsory for all, empowered the women, and several other measures gave birth to the demonstrations and unrests in the many parts of the country especially among the conservatives of Afghanistan. Finally, the President Daoud Khan was assassinated and here the establishment of the Soviet backed government which is constituted by combining the two political factions; Parcham and Khalq. Rasheed is a character in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) listens the news on radio soon after the assassination of Daoud Khan, “A revolutionary council of the armed forces has been established and our *watan* will now be known as the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan” (100). Abdul Qadir a political leader of the ruling party announced on radio that “The era of aristocracy, nepotism, and inequality is over, fellow *hamwatans*. We have ended decades of tyranny. Power is now in the hands of the masses and freedom loving people. A glorious new era in the history of our country is afoot. A new Afghanistan is born . . .”(100). The developing relations of the main leaders of Afghanistan’s ruling party with America and Pakistan forced Soviets to invade Afghanistan in 1979. Hafizullah Amin is the strong man of the Soviets toppled Daoud Khan’s regime in 1978. Nur-Mohammed Tariki, the mentor of

Hafizullah Amin became the party leader and the President and the Prime Minister of “The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan” and Amin became his Deputy Prime Minister. So, he was not happy and wanted to have more powers in the new government. His desire for more power caused many exacerbating political unrests in Afghanistan. Soviet Union didn’t want to see Amin in power because of his ties with Pakistan and America. Therefore, they advised Tariki to do something and it was attempted to assassinate Amin. But Amin saved himself and later Tariki was killed on 14 Sep. 1979. Amin tried to make relations with Pakistan and America which the Soviet Union never wanted to see, On 24 December 1979, Soviet’s army itself entered in Afghanistan. Drawing the picture of the time, Amir, the protagonist of the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) says that it was the end of Afghanistan’s all freedom, and its people’s happy life, he says:

The end, the official end, would come first in April 1978 with the communist coup d’état, and then in December 1979, when Russian tanks would roll into the very same streets where Hassan and I played, bringing the death of Afghanistan I knew and marking the start of a still ongoing era of bloodletting. (34)

After the entry of the Soviet forces, they formed a new government under the leadership of Babrak Karmal, who became the President of Afghanistan. Lots of uprisings took place and to suppress them Karmal government arrested, tortured and executed the dissents in the countryside. But these measures couldn’t help to combat the insurgency. The level of violence forced many Afghans to leave the country. It is estimated that out of sixteen million population, five million left the country during this period (Human Rights Watch). Soon Soviet took control all over the cities and other communication systems too. But because of the tough geographical conditions, it was not easy to control the hilly and the rural areas where there were no roads, but only big mountains. So, they couldn't capture the rural areas, which were still under the control of different warlords. They didn't want to live under the control of the Soviets. Meanwhile, Pakistan, America, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim as well as anti- Soviet countries were also encouraging and supporting militarily and economically to Afghanistan against the Soviet. When the Soviet Union invaded the country, lots of people had to leave their native places in fear of losing their life to the other countries. And here the ten years war between the Soviets and Afghan’s Mujahedeen took place.

Soviet’ Rule and Socio-Political Crises in Afghanistan

The word displacement is often associated with chaos, conflict and crises. Afghanistan is one of those countries which are the worse to live because of the decades of internal and external conflicts, unprecedented killings, movements, and mobilizations of people to the other

countries. In Afghanistan with every political upheaval, millions of people leave their country to save themselves. Since late 1970s to the present date, Afghanistan has been in deep trouble because of the persistent internal and external conflicts. After the intervention of the foreign forces in Afghanistan, the social, political and economic conditions of Afghanistan have been greatly affected. In the wake of the Cold War, after the Second World War, Afghanistan being the centre of the central Asia and the Middle East become the victim of power politics. The major powers like America and the Soviet tried to use Afghanistan for their own political purposes. By their interventions, Afghanistan has faced huge loss in everything. In this chapter, the social, political, cultural, economic and psychological effects of the Soviet's occupation in Afghanistan have been studied through a detailed analysis of a novella *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006). The study of this novella helps to understand the nature of the Soviet-Afghan war and its social, cultural and psychological effects on the civilians of Afghanistan from young children to the old age men and women. So, this novella is based on the real life of Afghan people. Every character in the story represents every age group of Afghanistan and its sufferings at the different levels. Afghanistan has been a conflict zone since last four decades. It resulted into a huge migration and displacement of the civilians. These displacements bring poverty and insecurity in everything among the Afghan people. This process of displacements and migrations increased at the considerable amount after the Soviet's political intervention in Afghanistan.

The study of the novella is based on one incident which took place in the night during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) and changed everything in the life of the main character named Farhad. The unexpected events in the life of Farhad represent the sufferings of the people of Afghanistan. It depicts the persistent conflicts in Afghanistan which have spawned uncertainty and insecurity among Afghans, and forced millions to leave their country to the neighboring as well as some other European countries. Elisa Lopez-Lucia in her research paper titled "Migration and conflict in Afghanistan" quotes the data given by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in which it claims that

76 per cent of Afghans have had some experience of displacement in their lifetime. Out of these, 41 per cent were internally displaced while 42 per cent were externally displaced, and 17 per cent have lived both situations. Afghanistan is still one of the main countries of origin of refugees worldwide. At the end of 2013 around 2.56 million Afghan refugees were living in 86 countries, of which around 95 per cent settled in Pakistan and Iran. (UNHCR 2014, n.p.)

A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear (2006) is a novella by the contemporary Afghan

origin writer Atiq Rahimi (b. 1962). It is the story of Farhad and the other characters who are associated with him. The story reflects the enmity and the development of hatred and psychological conflicts among the Afghans during the Soviet's rule and the atrocities against the civilians. The main characters are Farhad, Enayat, Mahnaz, Farhad's mother, Moheb deaf and dumb brother of Mahnaz, De Mullah Saed Mustafa, Yahya a young child of young widow Mahnaz, a trafficker, and unnamed Russian soldiers. All these characters represent the sufferings of the people of Afghanistan during the war years and their social and psychological state of mind through which they have gone through during the war years.

The work *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006) by Rahimi presents the condition of common people in Afghanistan and their sufferings due to the internal and external conflicts. In the fear of dark future and in fear of losing their life they leave their country. The story also reveals the faith of the Afghan people on the traditional religious practices which also increase their level of sufferings.

Every character in the story of the novel represents the life of people in the war-torn Afghanistan. The main character of the story is Farhad, who is a college student. Enayat and Farhad are very close friends and because of the war and communists' rule Enayat's family decides to leave Afghanistan in fear of losing their life and career. Both friends get emotional as they are parting, so Enayat and Farhad drink heavily. When Farhad is on his way to his mother's home some soldiers beat him badly. It is the curfew night and Farhad drunk heavily and doesn't know the curfew password. For such a minor mistake he is beaten up badly and he falls on the ground unconsciously. Seeing him lying in the street an unknown young and beautiful widow secretly drags him inside her house. The name of the lady is Mahnaz. She nurses Farhad, as he is completely unconscious like a dead person. In this unconscious state, he has lost the balance of his mind and experiences many things in sub-conscious state. The writer has described all those things which Farhad experiences in this state of sub-conscious. He is not sure whether he is sleeping or not, if he is in the heaven or hell, if he is at his home or somewhere else. Through all these thoughts of the protagonist the writer builds the story and presents the life in Afghanistan's people during the Afghan-Soviet war (1979-1989). Farhad is lying in the bed hearing the voices of the same lady and her child. But unconsciously he associates those voices with the God. He is trying to speak but fails and then remembers the saying of De Mullah Saed Mustafa. He recalls that Mullah had once said to Farhad's grandfather that when you are unable to move your body it means you are in nightmare and cause of nightmare is that *djinn* has entered in your body. So, Farhad's behaviour on such thoughts shows the strong influence of the religious leaders on the life of

Afghan people. Everything which happens to him while lying in the bed he associates it with the God. He thinks that it is the punishment of God for his wrong deeds which forces him to hate himself and says that "I'll stop thinking. I'll do nothing but say the *Kalima* till my soul comes back home. In the name of Allah . . ." (13). But the reality of his physical and psychological state is completely different. He is neither in nightmare nor a *djinn* has entered his body. He was beaten up by some Russian soldiers badly leaving him to die in the street. Now, because of the injuries, neither he could move his body nor he has strength to speak anything. Subsequently, when his health gets better, the incident which was happened last night comes into his mind.

He recalls that when he was returning after the party the police officers had stopped him. Seeing Guns in their hands he got frozen, then another soldier came closer to him and asked him the curfew password about which he had no idea. Farhad even told them that he was going to home. However, then "I felt the butt of a Kalashnikov ram into my guts. My mouth filled with blood and I spat out the words: "The password for the curfew? Sorry, no I've forgotten" (34). He remembers that he was trying to lean close to the soldier to tell him that he was too drunk to remember the password. But he was whacked in the stomach by Kalashnikov and then he fell down and everything went dark. He cannot remember anything which happened to him thereafter.

All these thoughts are going on in his mind but due to the severe injuries he has lost the balance of his mind. He hears the voices of a lady and a child. The child is calling him father. Then in the same situation, he remembers the another saying of De Mullah Saed Mustafa which makes him believe that he is dead because the experiences through which he is undergoing are the same as endorsed by Mullah Saed Mustafa. Mullah's words make him even believe that he is dead and has been buried in the grave next to his grandfather's grave. He thinks that the voices of the lady and a child are coming from the graveyard. Farhad starts thinking about his place in the heaven or hell. He ponders over what he has done for God. De Mullah Saed Mustafa had instructed about the ways through which Farhad could find his place in the heaven. He remembers the sayings of Mullah and feels guilty and while talking to himself he regrets that "You never prayed five times a day. You never made the *Hajj*. You never gave alms . . . You never fought *Jihad* for God. . . And all that means I'm not a true Muslim. That means I'm full of sin"(31). Unsurprisingly, here Farhad not only reflects the process of going to the heaven or hell according to religious leaders but he also projects the nature of true Muslims approved by the religious leaders in Afghanistan. They influenced the people of Afghanistan greatly especially in executing the affairs of Islamic duties. However,

the common people are gullible and they follow the religion illogically.

Farhad gradually, recovers from the traumatic situation after he was beaten up by the security forces, when he was failed to communicate the security password. While recuperating from the trauma, Farhad gains his consciousness and feels altogether different than earlier. He is recovering and now he can open his eyes and see the child and a lady. He can feel the pain in his body which prevents him to speak and moves his body freely. He even remembers that soon after the incident in the darkness of the night a woman comes with a lamplight revealing her face calling him brother and said in hurry "Quick, get inside! The soldiers have come back!" (44). He was taken inside by the same lady whose voices he had heard and the child Yahaya who was calling him father. The child has become fatherless about which he doesn't know, so he considers Farhad as his father. Soon after, the soldiers come in the street searching for Farhad but they couldn't find him. Now, Farhad is thinking about his mother that she must be worried about him and hasn't sleep during the night. She must be kept reciting the verses from the Quran and praying for him. So, he wants to go to his mother but the lady doesn't allow him to go anywhere. He tells her that it is not safe to go outside at this time because police is there in the street searching for him. She hides him from the police in the rectangular shaped hole in the house.

Gradually, Farhad knows the reality as he is getting conscious; he asks the lady everything about his stay at her house. She narrates to him that "My son, Yahaya, and I were sitting outside in the terrace when we heard a jeep pull up, and then soldiers cursing and shouting followed by the sound of someone being kicked and punched. After they'd gone, I went into the street, and found you passed out in the sewer" (53). Now, the lady requests Farhad to stay for that night at her house safely. She tells him that police has already searched this house thoroughly so now, they won't come again here. Therefore, he is completely safe now inside the house and leaving the house without planning could be dangerous for him. But Farhad is unable to understand the reason of searching for him by the police as he has not done anything wrong. He tells to the lady that "I have no idea why they arrested me and beat me up. All I did was to forget the password!" (54). But the lady tells him that in these days in Afghanistan not having party membership card or password is considered as a crime. As it is still night and Farhad is worried about his mother's anxiety for him. He knows that her worries will also disturb the peace in the house. Once Farhad gets conscious, he is worried about his mother and wants to leave for his home but every time he is stopped by the lady named Mahnaz. She says that she has no desire to put his life in danger only for his safety she is doing all this. It is still darkness outside and the lady asks him to wait

for more time and offers him a cup of tea. While having tea the lady tells him about her miserable life, that:

Let me assure you, it's impossible to imagine anything worse than what I've been through these past few years. There's nothing darker than total darkness. . . A year ago, my husband was thrown into jail. Then came the news that he'd been executed. I haven't told Yahaya. He thinks his father has gone on a journey to a faraway city called Pul-e-Charkhi. (56)

Now, Farhad's attention shifts from his mother's worries to the deep troubled life of this lady. The lady is so young living with her child who even has never seen his father. The child who calls Farhad as his father because child's mother has been kept telling her that his father would return one day and the child thinks that Farhad is his father. But in reality his father had killed by the Russians and would never return. So, like him, there are millions of children in Afghanistan who have never seen their fathers. Farhad thinks about his mother and her worries for him. He thinks that she would not have slept a wink and now the curfew is no more so she may have gone to Enayat's house and looking for him. Then she would have gone to the Department of Ministry to know about him. But she would be disappointed when she won't get any information about him. She would think that her son might have left the country or imprisoned by the police. Then Farhad also curses his father who had left Farhad's mother alone with her three young children. In Mahnaz's absence, Farhad searches his shoes and makes plan to leave for his home to meet his mother, then Mahnaz comes and warns him about the police men who are patrolling outside in the street. Now, even Mahnaz doubts on Farhad and thinks that he is not an ordinary person. So, she asks him doubtfully to tell who exactly he is, then Farhad explains her everything truly and politely, he says that:

I have no idea! I keep asking myself that, too. All night I've been thinking about everything I've done in the past couple of days—and nothing can explain it. I'm no rebel; I've got no connection to the resistance, to jihad, or to revolution ... I was hanging out with a friend who had to leave Kabul city. After we parted I was simply walking back home. Sure, it was late, well after curfew, and the night patrol caught me. But it was nothing, nothing serious ... The only thing I can think of is that I made the mistake of calling an ordinary officer 'Commander'—and that he thought maybe I was making a fool of him. (68)

Believing in Farhad's words, Mahnaz decides to go to his mother to tell her about Farhad, so she goes to Farhad's home. After arriving there, she narrates everything to Farhad's mother. It is very important for the people in Afghanistan to follow rules and laws which are made by

the communist government. Those who break these laws they are imprisoned or beaten up badly and sometimes executed too. These people have no option other than to leave the country or become the communist people. There is no respect of the religion or the people's feelings for their culture and traditions. In fear of severe punishment or imprisonment, many people commit suicide like Enayat's brother commit suicide in jail. Communists wanted to spread terror among the common people of Afghanistan. So, that they are left with no option except fleeing to the other countries, committing the suicide or rot in jail and face the atrocities of Russian soldiers.

Mahnaz returns from Farhad's mother house and tells Farhad that police was even searching for him at his house during the Morning Prayers. She tells him that his mother is worried about his life. So, she wants him to leave Kabul as soon as possible. Mahnaz tells him that his mother would come later on. Farhad then doubts on Mahnaz's kindness and generosity for him. He thinks that she is doing all this to trap him. Many people who die in prison or in the blast, they are not handed over to their families. They are buried in the communal graves. For example, in the novella *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2006) Atiq Rahimi depicts it through the lady character Mahnaz whose husband was buried in the communal grave without performing any rituals or offering any due respect. Soon after his death all her family members decided to leave for Pakistan as the situation in the country is not favorable to live. But Mahnaz doesn't want to leave Afghanistan. She had become a widow in such a young age and if she went with her family, she had to marry one of his brothers-in-law which she didn't want. So, it shows that people who are staying in Afghanistan, they are only due to some reasons otherwise no one wants to live in Afghanistan in such difficult time of war when one doesn't know what would happen the next hour to him or her. This means there is uncertainty in Afghanistan, and the life is unpredictable as well.

Now, it is clear that it is a great danger to the life of Farhad and it is disastrous for him and for his family to stay here in Afghanistan. If he stays in Afghanistan either he would be imprisoned or beaten up badly. So, his mother knows the fact, arranges a trafficker to take Farhad to Pakistan. His mother gives him an envelope in which the address of his father has been written who is already staying there in Pakistan, with his second wife. He knows nothing about his first wife and the family. Farhad's mother also gives some money to him. His mother tells him everything and ways to reach Pakistan. Farhad is worried about his mother, brother and sister's staying in Afghanistan in such a horrible time. But his mother with her wet eyes asks him not to worry and assures him that the situation in Afghanistan would get improved soon.

Farhad's mother gives the most beautiful and expensive carpet of the house to a trafficker as a payment for taking Farhad to Pakistan because she does not have money to pay. His mother says to Farhad that "His payment is that carpet we don't have money, so it is the only thing I could think of." And she further asks Farhad that "you must go. I'll bring Parwaneh and Farid with me once I sell the house" (91). Before Farhad leaves for Pakistan, his mother has already left him. The reason behind her early leaving was clear that she could not see her son's departure. She is uncertain about his life and doesn't know whether she would be able to meet him again or not. Trafficker comes with the same carpet in which he wants to wrap Farhad in such a way that he can easily cross all the police check points without letting police to know anything about Farhad. Before he is wrapped in the carpet and put into the car, Yahaya, a small child who calls him father comes with a glass of water for him. Farhad goes to see Mahnaz last time and wants to say thanks for all which she has done for him. Mahnaz who is cooking in the kitchen seeing him there, Farhad remembers his mother and feels dejected. He feels love and respect for Mahnaz and wants to put his hand on Mahnaz's shoulder and wants to cry but he doesn't muster up the courage to do it. He feels that he has been living in this house for years. He feels that Mahnaz and Yahaya are known to him for many years. Mahnaz who is cooking and side by side she keeps telling her life story to Farhad which reveals her sufferings being a woman in Afghanistan. After the death of her husband, her family fled to Pakistan leaving behind her with her child and her deaf and dumb brother Moheb who is also mentally unfit. It is very difficult for her to earn in the war torn in Afghanistan.

After listening her heart wrenching story, Farhad wants to help her but she rejects his help and with her heavy voice, she says that she needs nothing. As their conversation is going on, a trafficker comes with a carpet in his hand and Farhad is wrapped in the carpet. The trafficker puts him in the car. Farhad wants to say goodbye to Mahnaz but he couldn't say, and the car moves. Farhad can hear the crying voice of Yahaya who is voicing "Father! Father!"(98). Farhad in the car can feel the smell of his house because the smell of the carpet and the house is same, he says;

My sweating face trapped inside the carpet heightens its smell. Such a familiar smell. The smell of our front room. Parwaneh used to play marbles on the black patterns of this carpet. Farid used to race his match box cars along its black lines. . . It was the best carpet in the house—my mother's dowry, given by her father to take to her new husband's house. (101-102)

On the way Farhad is thinking about Pakistan and then about his mother's life he doesn't like

to live with his father. He knows that the cause of his mother's sufferings is his father. He knows that his mother must be feeling alone and crying lonely while sitting at some corner of the house without telling anyone about her mental pain. He knows that no one would be there to take care of her tears. Thinking about her, Farhad always feels sad, now he thinks that "My mother wept to herself, lonelier than ever before. Walking back home from the shrine, she concealed her terrified face beneath her veil. More anonymous than ever before. More insignificant than ever before. Unable to confide to a soul, my oldest son, the man of my house, has become a fugitive!" (105).

When they are about to reach Pakistan, trafficker tells Farhad about some ways to live in Pakistan. He tells him not to tell anyone that you are from Kabul and have been a student of the university. He also forbids him to get involved in the political or religious debate with anyone in Pakistan. After arriving in Pakistan, Farhad stays in some mosque first. He sees that many young and old faces are sitting there and discussing some current political issues. Farhad while sitting at the corner of the mosque thinks about his family and mainly about Mahnaz and Yahaya as well. Meanwhile, seeing him sitting in such a pensive mood, one of the religious leaders comes to Farhad and asks him about some religious things about which Farhad doesn't know. He goes to some other religious leaders and talks about Farhad and calls him infidel. So, they discuss that such filthy people like Farhad have no right to live in Pakistan because they pollute our land. So, it shows that the young people from Afghanistan are not considered with respectful eyes by the people of the other countries. Farhad feels insecure in the mosque which is considered as the home of God. So, he decides to leave the mosque. So, the novella *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* reflects the social, cultural, economic, and the political effects on the people of Afghanistan in the wake of the Afghan-Soviet war through the life of Farhad, that shows the political upheavals in Afghanistan. The novella depicts that people in times of the crises prefer to leave their country instead of losing their life. But on the other hand, their displacement could be either internal or external makes an adverse effect on their mental health and career as well. For instance, in the story *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* Farhad and his friend who are college students aspiring many big dreams. The war and the political upheaval in the country force them to leave their country for Pakistan. Moreover, through the character of Farhad's mother who is destitute to pay the trafficker to take Farhad to Pakistan so she gives her beautiful and expensive carpet to the Trafficker as his payment. Through her character, writer also depicts that how difficult for mothers to live in fear of losing their children during the war. Another character Mahnaz presents the social, economic and psychological state of all the women of

Afghanistan who have lost their husbands in the war or in prisons and even their families have left them with their children. So, all the characters in the novel are connected to Farhad and writer has clearly reflected the life of Afghan people during the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989). Though the writer has covered many themes in the novella but the study mainly focuses on the theme of migration of the people in the wake of crises and its social, economic and psychological impacts on people of Afghanistan.

People were fleeing the country not only in fear of losing their life and career but also to save their pride and honor because all kinds of tortures and harassments were being done against the Afghan people. Publicly they were being abused both physically and sexually. Uncertainty and insecurity in everything was the part of every day's life. No one had the courage to raise the voice against the cruelties of the Russian forces. Khaled Hosseini portrays one of such shameful incidents in his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). The incident took place short after the Soviet's invasion in Afghanistan, when the characters of the novel named Amir, Baba on the way, a young married couple, and others were also in the truck fleeing to Pakistan. One of the Russian soldiers stopped the truck at the checkpoint. He peeped in the truck and said to the driver named Karim that "he wanted to have half an hour with the lady in the back of the truck." Baba said to Karim "ask him where his shame is." Solider replied "this is war and there is no shame in war" (107). In anger Baba, and the solider exchanged few words, then another senior Russian officer came there and apologies for his comrade's behaviour saying that "Russian sends these to fight, but they are just boys when they come here, they find the pleasure of drug" (107). So, through this incident Hosseini not only depicts the level of the Afghan people's sufferings but explicitly expresses the brutalities of the Russians against the civilians of Afghanistan. Baba said to Fariba about the young Russian soliders that "all these people know is war; they learned to walk with a milk bottle in one hand and a gun in the other" (173). Many people were leaving Afghanistan for the refugee camp in Peshawar to save their lives.

The Soviet-Afghan War and its Aftermath

The war broke between the Soviet forces and the anti-Soviet units soon after the invasion of the Soviet in Afghanistan in 1979. Afghanistan forces known as Mujahedeen were fighting against the Soviet soliders. They were also joined and supported by some Arabs and the Muslims of other Islamic organizations around the world. They motivated all the people of different factions to fight collectively against the Soviets. By associating the war with their religion, they named the war as a *dharmik yodh* which means the holy war. All those fighters came to be known as "Mujahedeen" which meant fighters in a holy war. They were supported

by all the major Muslim countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, etc. Seeing the Afghanistan as battleground, the United States in particular, provided massive support to the resistance forces, nearly all of it funneled through Pakistan. America was supplying huge money and the arms to Afghanistan via Pakistan to make these Islamic movements stronger to demolish the Soviet Union. Mujahedeen started guerrilla warfare against the strong Soviets. This was called *shapamar yodh* which means firing secretly from the mountains on the convoy or the group of people. Thousands of people were lost their lives during this fight between the Soviets and Mujahedeen. Soviet followed the way of violence to get control on these resistive forces, which caused huge loss to Afghanistan. Atiq Rahimi's work *Earth and Ashes* (1999) set during the Soviet-Afghan War in Afghanistan, presents the picture of Afghanistan through the character of Dastiguir and his grandchild Yassin. They are the only survivors from the village and now they are going to give this news to Yassin's father Murad. Murad works in some far away coal mine. Dastiguir and Yassin go to Murad to tell him about the destruction of his family and the village by Russians. When Dastiguir and Yassin are on the way and while waiting for the truck to reach Murad, the shopkeeper named Mirza Qadi asks Dastiguir that "I hear the Russian reduced the whole village to smoke and ashes last week. Is it true?" and Dastiguir replied "yes brother, I was there. I saw everything. I saw my own death." (24). The shopkeeper further enquired about the attack and in an irritating manner Dastiguir replied that "don't ask brother, they didn't spare even a single life. . . I don't understand why God saw it fit to punish us . . . the village was reduced to dust" (28).

Young boys of Afghan families were the part of this Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989). Many parents had lost their only sons in the war against Soviets. It has been portrayed in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khaled Hosseini through the character of two boys named Ahmed and Noor. They are Mammy's sons and killed in fighting against the Soviets. Their mother is a grief stricken and says, "I want to see my sons dream come true. I want to see the day the Soviets go home disgraced, the day the Mujahedeen come to Kabul in victory . . . so the boys see it too. They will see it through my eyes" (142). Afghani people were associating this war with their religion and making people believe that to go in the heaven they must fight against the Russians. The Soviet-Afghan War continued for almost ten years. Neither Soviets were able to get their control over Afghanistan's rural areas nor could Mujahedeen get their control in the urban areas. Urban areas were under the control of the Soviets. During this time, a young Saudi lad Osama bin Laden and some other leaders also reached there to support Mujahedeen. Many Afghans left their country and those who stayed in Afghanistan they were dejected and felt isolated. Amir, the protagonist in the novel *The*

Kite Runner (2003) was shifted to America. After many years he got a phone call from his old Afghani friend Rahim Khan who had been the regular visitor at Amir's house when Amir's family lived in Afghanistan. Amir remembers the time when they used to live in Afghanistan before the Soviet's invasion. Amir loved Rahim Khan because he always encouraged him to write poems and short stories during his childhood. On phone call Rahim Khan told Amir about the socio-political situation during the Soviet-Afghan War. Rahim Khan told that in 1986 he went to Hazarajat to find Hassan and meet him, because he was all alone, there was no one whom he knew in Kabul, he said that;

The biggest one (reason), Allah forgive me, was that I was lonely. By then, most of my friends and relatives had either been killed or had escaped the country to Pakistan or Iran. I barely knew anyone in Kabul anymore, the city where I had lived my entire life. Everybody had fled . . . No one to greet (in the markets), no one to sit down with for *chai*, no one to share stories with, just Roussi soldiers patrolling the streets. So eventually, I stopped going out to the city. (188)

The cities which were under the control of the Soviet forces and the people those who opposed the Soviet rule, they had left the country. Some had been killed in the encounters and others had displaced to the areas which were not under the control of the Soviet. Both the Mujahedeen and the Soviets faced huge economic loss during the war. Huge military and economic assistance to the Mujahedeen by the anti-Soviet countries forced the Soviet Union to think about their withdrawal. Mikheil Gorbachev became the Soviet's new general secretary and brought some political reforms. He decided to pull back his army. This historical event has been incorporated by Hosseini in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), a character named Babi comes with the news on April 1988 and informs that "they signed treaty! In Geneva, Its official! They're leaving. Within nine months, there won't be any more Soviets in Afghanistan!" (151). Soviet gradually started taking back its army but the Soviet backed government formed in Afghanistan led by Mohammad Najibullah. Babi listens to someone arguing about Najibullah that "he is their puppet. They'll keep the war going through him, you can bet on that" (153). Najibullah changed the tactics by presenting himself as a devoted Muslim and feigned to work for their welfare. Many times, he tried to settle the issue with rebellious Mujahedeen but they balked knowing the reality of Najibullah and his followers. A character named Babi says about the dual nature of Najibullah in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). He says "Too little and far too late. You can't be the chief of KHAD one day and the next day pray in a masque with people whose relatives you tortured and killed" (157). So, people were aware about Najibullah's political tactics. Finally, when he

was not left with any option, he had to surrender in April 1992. Just after one year following the withdrawal of the Soviet's army from Afghanistan, America stopped its funding to Mujahedeen. America knew that the Soviet has become powerless so America didn't want to spend its money on the anti-Soviets' activities in Afghanistan. Stating about the loss to Afghanistan, Amir was not happy and said that "Long before the Roussi army marched into Afghanistan, long before villages were burned and schools destroyed, long before mines were planted like seed of death and children buried in the rock-piled graves, Kabul had become a city of ghosts for me. A city of harelipped ghosts" (126).

The Soviet's Withdrawal and the Beginning of the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996)

After the departure of the Soviet Union, all different warlords who were fighting collectively against the Soviets now started fighting with each other for the political power. So, the Civil War begins in Afghanistan which is known as the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996). This time was terrible in Afghanistan's history because now the people of Afghanistan were not fighting with some external enemy but with each other. Rahim Khan, who is a character in the Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* (2003), tells Amir about the situation during the period 1992 to 1996. He tells him that when the Northern Alliance took control over Kabul different warlords of different factions were fighting for different parts of Kabul. Rahim Khan who has been the eye witness of all these events, that took place in Afghanistan from the late 1970s to 2001. He narrates everything to Amir about the difficult time of war:

If you went from the Shar-e-Nau section to Kerteh-Prawn to buy a carpet, you risked getting shot by a sniper or getting blown up by a rocket. If you got past all checkpoints, that was. You practically needed a visa to go from one neighborhood to the other. So, people just stayed, prayed the next rocket wouldn't hit their home. (184)

Leaders of different ethnic groups were trying to capture different parts of Afghanistan through violence resulted lots of killings and bloodshed took place during this period. Because of the fighting among various factions, people were leaving their country to the other neighboring countries like Tehran, Pakistan, Iran, etc., to save themselves and their families. Human Rights Watch labelled the situation in Kandahar "particularly precarious" (n.pag.), and noted that "civilians had little security from murder, rape, looting, or extortion; humanitarian agencies frequently their offices stripped of all equipment, and their vehicles hijacked, and their staff threatened" (Rubin n.p). Millions of people in Afghanistan lost their lives and many left the country to save their lives. But on the other side, with the support of Pakistan, different warlords decided to set up a coalition government but even then, some of the warlords didn't support and they kept on fighting for the power till 1996. With the coming

of Taliban into power in 1996, the socio-political situation changed completely in Afghanistan. Laila, a character in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is also one of the victims of war. After losing her parents in a bombing, she started living as the second wife of old man Rasheed. She tells Mariam [first wife of Rasheed] that "the freedoms and opportunities that women had enjoyed between 1978 and 1992 were a thing of past now . . . since the Mujahideen takeover in April 1992, Afghanistan's name had been changed to the Islamic State of Afghanistan. . ." (253). So, here Khaled Hosseini has depicted the positive side of the Soviet's rule in Afghanistan. Soviet worked for the rights of Afghan women. They wanted Afghanistan to be a modern and well civilized state based on the western and the liberal ideology. Somehow, they were succeeded in some urban areas of Afghanistan. They had to face the extreme level of resistance in the rural Afghanistan which later became the cause of their defeat. Rahim Khan, a character, through him Hosseini tells all these political developments and conflicts in Afghanistan from the Soviet's invasion to the Taliban government of 1996-2001, in the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). Rahim Khan who has been the eyewitness, talks about the chaos, conflict and the uncertainty of life which the Afghan people had in Afghanistan during the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996) after the complete withdrawal of the Soviet in 1992. He tells Amir that;

Shorawi were defeated and long gone and Kabul belonged to Masoud, Rabbani, and the Mujahedin. The infighting between the factions was fierce and no one knew if they would live to see the end of the day. Our ears became accustomed to the whistle of falling shells, to the rumble of gun fires, our eyes familiar with the sight of men digging bodies out of piles of rubble. Kabul in those days, Amir Jan, was as close as you could get to that proverbial hell on earth. (108)

Taliban's Genesis and their Rule in Afghanistan

Taliban as a movement came into existence in the year 1992-93, and it was started by clerics and the students who were studying in Pakistan's Deobandi Madrassas. They were also joined by some Mujahedeen fighters who were fighting against the Soviet during the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989). These Mujahedeen fighters left the country during the Civil War (1992-1996) amid the intense violence and conflicts among the different factions of Mujahedeen after the departure of the Soviet Union. The resistance forces of clerics and students were trained and motivated by Pakistan and the other countries first for the purpose of fighting with the Soviet Union. Later they established their government to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan. Most of them were ethnically Pashtuns. They were trained and guided in Pakistan's religious schools. Pakistan wanted to have pro-Pakistan government in

Afghanistan to fulfill its own political interests both in Afghanistan as well as in India. Most of them were the young students so they were given the name Taliban which is the plural of Talib (means student). So, by taking separate name, they also differentiated themselves from the rest of the Mujahedeen. During the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996) they came into power after defeating all the Mujahedeen factions and leaders who were fighting with each other for the power. They were mainly supported by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. People were happy with their arrival in the power because they were considered as less corrupt and followers of Sunni Islam. Most of them and their leaders had been the students of Deobandi schools so they believed in following the Wahabism and the radical Islam. So, because of Taliban's ideology they got a great support from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the other Sunni Muslim religious leaders across the world who believed in the radical Islam. Their entry in Afghanistan was welcomed by Afghans after the long years of wars. A character named Rahim Khan in the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) expresses the joy and happiness for Taliban, after the chaotic civil war. He says that "when the Taliban rolled in and kicked the Alliance out of Kabul, I actually danced on that street. And, believe me, I wasn't alone. People were celebrating at Chaman, at Deh-Mazang, greeting the Taliban in the streets, climbing their tanks and posing for the pictures with them (184). Taliban began their campaign from southern part after getting their control on Kandhar in November 1994. Gradually, by the September 1996, they were able to get their control all over the Afghanistan except some northern areas which were under the control of Northern Alliance. Moreover, there was also fear among some groups after Taliban's control like a Hazara boy Hassan express his fear to Rahim Khan in the novel *The Kite Runner* (2003), but he assured him that "The war is over. There's going to be peace, *Inshallah*, and happiness and calm. No more rockets, no more killings, no more funerals!" (197). Short after their full control in Afghanistan they banned on women education, they issued an ordered through which they put many restrictions on the freedom of women, they banned on all kinds of entertainment activities such as sports, music, dancing, television, and so on. Through loudspeaker and on radio *The Voice of Sharia*, their officials announced about the rules which people of Afghanistan had to follow. They announced separate rules for men and women. For men they announced that;

All citizens must pray five times a day. If it is prayer time and you are caught doing something other you will be beaten. All men will grow their beards . . . All boys will wear turbans . . . Singing is forbidden. Dancing is forbidden. Playing cards, playing chess, gambling and kite flying are forbidden. Writing

books, watching films, and painting pictures are forbidden . . . If you are not Muslim, do not worship where you can be seen by Muslims. If you do, you will be beaten and imprisoned. If you are caught trying to convert a Muslim to your faith, you will be executed. (270)

For women they made separate rules and announced separately that;

You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a mahram, a male relative. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home. You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten. Cosmetics are forbidden. Jewelry is forbidden. You will not wear charming clothes. You will not speak unless spoken to. You will not make eye contact with men. You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten . . . Girls are forbidden from attending school. All schools for girls will be closed immediately. Women are forbidden from working. If you are found guilty of adultery, you will be stoned to death. Listen. Listen well, Obey. Allah-u-Akbar. (271)

All people were advised to follow the order seriously as announced by the Taliban. Those who didn't follow their order, they were punished and executed publicly. In conversation between Rahim Khan and Amir, Amir asks him about the Taliban that "Is it as bad as I hear?" Rahim Khan replied, "Nay, it's worse, much worse. They don't let you be human" (183). Later, after the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, Amir returned to his country Afghanistan after two decades. He got a letter from his childhood friend Hassan who was killed by the Taliban. He wrote that letter to Hassan short before his death, in the letter he had written that, "Alas! the Afghanistan of our youth is long dead. Kindness is gone from the land and you cannot escape the killings. Always the killings. In Kabul, fear is everywhere, in the streets, in the stadium, in the markets; it is a part of our lives here, Amir Agha" (200).

Because of their atrocities and cruelties against the Afghan people, Taliban were condemned and widely criticized across the world. Moreover, in 2001 they also destroyed the two giant sized ancient statues of Buddha's in Bamiyan which were craved during the Kushan dynasty. They destroyed the heritage of Afghanistan because they considered these figures as against Islam.

In the name of Islam, they were exercising atrocities against the people of Afghanistan. Amir, the main character of novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) returns to his country after the twenty years in search of Hassan's boy Sohrab who has been taken away by one of

the Taliban's official Assef. Amir meets Assef, who tells him about the achievements of Taliban what they have done for Afghanistan. Amir condemns them and criticizes for what they are doing in Afghanistan, Amir argues that "Stoning adulterers? Raping children? Flogging women for wearing high heels? Massacring Hazara? All in the name of Islam?" (261). Although, despite all their atrocities and oppressions against the civilians of Afghanistan, three countries; Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE gave recognition to the Taliban government as the government of Afghanistan. Taliban declared Afghanistan as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They imposed radical form of Islam under the Sharia law, which brought some major changes in the life, culture and the social behavior of the Afghan people. Those who protested this ideology were beaten, tortured, publicly executed, and murdered. Many left their homes and the country to save their life. They went to Iran, India and to some other countries.

Brief History of Taliban

Taliban believed on Deobandi Islam, the tradition which began from India during the colonial period. Its first school was established Uttar Pradesh, India to educate the Muslim students about the meaning of Islam and the ways of practicing it. Later, after a century when Pakistan came into existence the number of such schools were opened in Pakistan mostly in the Pashtun areas along the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Many Islamic scholars were shifted to Pakistan to teach the Muslim students in these religious schools. In the 1980s when the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) began, many people from Afghanistan fled to Pakistan's refugee camps. Meanwhile, Pakistan took advantage of this development and recruited all the young boys who were in the age group of 10-20 in these schools to train them to fight against the Soviet Union. So, these religious schools were used by Pakistan's for its own political interests. Initially, these madrasas didn't get enough funding but in the wake of Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989), these schools got special boost through the foreign funding to escalate the anti-Soviet activities in Afghanistan. A substantial number of fighters who were fighting with the Soviet soldiers had been the part of *madrasas* played a major role in the war. Most of the students who were studying in these *madrasas* were ethnically Pashtun or the follower of Deobandi Islam. These students later came to be known by the name of Taliban, who were used to fight against the Northern Alliance during the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996). Finally, with the support of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the UAE and some other Islamic countries they were able establish their government in Afghanistan in the year 1996. Now, these schools moved away from their original purpose of teaching Deobandi Islam. In these schools' students were trained to fight by infusing the false religious beliefs among

them. America and the other anti-Soviet countries funded these schools to escalate the anti-Soviet activities in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan wanted to use these students not only in Afghanistan but also in Indian occupied Kashmir to escalate terror activities in India. The number of these schools also increased during the Soviet- Afghan War because millions of the people left Afghanistan and took shelter in Afghanistan's refugee camps. Pakistan took the advantage of such huge migration and recruited many young brains in these *madrassas*. They were trained to fight and motivated them by imbibing the flavor of religion. These young refugees had no other option to stay. With the help of foreign funding, the Taliban faction came into power in 1996 in Afghanistan. Many of the Taliban's key leaders including Mullah Omar had been the students of these religious schools and played a major role in fighting against the Soviet. After the withdrawal of the Soviets, Afghanistan plunged into a Civil War (1992-1996). Now, various ethnic groups and war-lords were fighting with each other for their own political interests. Among these groups one was the Northern Alliance, which was believed to be backed by India and Russia. Northern Alliance, under the leadership of Tajik leader Ahmed Shah Masoud fought with Taliban strongly. But with the substantial assistance from Pakistan, Taliban got its control in Kabul in 1996. All these things attracted many students in these *madrassas*. So, in such a way, these religious schools were moved away from their original purpose and became the victim of the power politics.

9/11 and the End of Taliban's Regime

After the 9/11, America demanded Afghanistan to handover 9/11 attack's mastermind and Al-Qaida leader Osama Bin Laden. They also demanded to close all the training centers of Al-Qaida and the other terrorist groups, but Taliban refused to accept anything. America declared war on terror and invaded Afghanistan short after the 9/11. America backed anti-Taliban which was called the Northern Alliance made the government in Afghanistan. All Taliban's key leaders fled to Pakistan and some surrendered and neutralized. So, it was the end of the Taliban's government. Hosseini has textualized America's retaliation after 9/11 in his novel *The Kite Runner* (2003). Amir, the protagonist of the novel describes the actual historical event which forced America to invade the Afghanistan. He further talks about the new political development in Afghanistan short after the 9/11 attack;

Soon after the attacks, America bombed Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance moved in, and the Taliban scurried like rats into the caves. Suddenly people were standing in grocery store lines and talking about the cities of my childhood, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif . . . That December, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras gathered in Bonn and, under the watchful eye of the UN, began the process that might someday

end over twenty years of unhappiness in their watan. Hamid Karzai's caracul hat and green chapan became famous. (332)

And short after the fall of Taliban, Amir returns to his own country and expresses, "I feel like a tourist in my own country" (214), because he knows nobody there, everyone looks at him as if he were an outsider. He doesn't know to anyone and even nobody knows him. Everything has changed since the Soviet's invasion and Amir says "returning to Kabul was like running into an old, forgotten friend and seeing that the life hadn't been good to him, that he'd become homeless and destitute" (227).

New constitution of Afghanistan was framed on 7 December 2004. Hamid Karzai became the president of Afghanistan. Karzai served two times consecutively as the president of Afghanistan. The US also deployed its forces in Afghanistan to rebuild and restore peace and harmony in the country. NATO and the American forces were deployed to destroy the terrorists training centers to eliminate terrorism from Afghanistan. But after some years of peace, Taliban regrouped in 2004-2005 and started terror attacks on American and NATO forces and selected killings of the Afghan government officials. Moreover, after the 'troop surge' by the president Barak Obama in 2009 to increase counterinsurgency efforts by deploying around 100,000 the US and the other international troops in Afghanistan. The troop surge helped to reduce Taliban controlled areas and their attacks for some years but they were not able to eliminate Taliban and their attacks completely. Seeing the major economic loss and the killings of the international troops, they decided to handover the country's security responsibilities to the Afghan forces. Only pockets of the foreign military forces were left in the country to train and guide the Afghan armed forces. This major decision of withdrawal of the international forces gave momentum to Taliban and helped them to expand their control on more areas of Afghanistan. Taliban's resurgence in 2015, soon after the withdrawal of huge number of troops on 28 December, 2014 increased the number of suicide attacks, bombings, assassinations, attack on parliament building, and attack in Kunduz city. The violence against the Afghan civilians and armed forces were frequently observed. In 2019, Asharf Ghani, the then President of Afghanistan announced that during his tenure of last five years more than 45,000 people had been killed. The figure revealed itself the violence of Taliban against the civilians of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the international forces. America and the other nations who had been working to establish peace and development in Afghanistan for so many years were disappointed over the absurdity of the Taliban. This level of violence in Afghanistan forced the US to have meeting with the Taliban officials to bring peace in the country. They had a meeting in Doha, Qatar on 29th February 2020 and signed an

agreement for peace in Afghanistan. America declared to withdraw its army from the Afghan soil within the next few months. Taliban promised not to attack on any civilian or government official and wouldn't give shelter to any terrorist group like Al-Qaida on its land. But even after the agreement Taliban continued their attacks on Afghanistan's forces and selected killings of non-Pashtun officials continued. On 13th April 2021, the US newly elected president Joe Biden announced that all the US troops would leave Afghanistan by 11th of September 2021. Within a short span of time Taliban took their control on most of the Afghanistan regions under the leadership of Haibatullah Akhundzada, this happened soon after the withdrawal of foreign forces. They only had to face resistance from the Northern Alliance in some northern part of Afghanistan under the leadership of the former vice-president Amrullah Saleh.

Situation after the Complete Withdrawal of the US on 9/11/2021

Soon, after the complete withdrawal of Americans and the NATO forces, Taliban got its control on Kabul. Taliban's takeover after twenty years following the collapse of American backed government of Afghanistan on 15th August 2021. There was a terror among the non-Pashtun population, women and the young girls. The instances of violence have been reported continuously from the media outlets against the agitators including women soon after the arrival of Taliban. It is also the cause of the internal conflicts in Afghanistan between the two factions; Taliban and anti- Taliban. Afghanistan is the country comprised of multiple ethnic groups which is the main cause of internal conflicts in Afghanistan. The major ethnic groups are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazara, Uzbek, and Turkmens. It is said that Pashtuns are around 37- 40 percent and Taliban mainly consist of Pashtuns. Taliban emerged in 1994 in Afghanistan with the support of Pakistan and ISI. After the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) Pakistan wanted to have its own control on the political landscape of Afghanistan because of its vested interests. During the Soviet- Afghan War, Pakistan trained number of students from Pashtun areas of Eastern and Southern Afghanistan to fight against the Soviets. They have been educated in the traditional Islamic schools with the teachings of Deobandi Islam. Sohal Rana and Sumit Ganguly, the authors of the article titled "Taliban's religious ideology- Deobandi Islam has its roots in Colonial India" define that:

The Deobandi brand of Islam adheres to orthodox Islamism insisting that the adherence to Sunni Islamic law, or sharia, is the path of salvation. It insists on the revival of Islamic practices that go back to the seventh century – the time of the Prophet Muhammad It upholds the notion of global jihad as a sacred duty to protect Muslims across the world, and is opposed to any non-Islamic ideas. (n.p.)

It is evident from the quote that during the anti-Soviet war, the number of these Deobandi seminaries increased considerably in Pakistan especially in Pashtun region, because of the war the amount of Afghan refugees increased in great number. In such schools the religious zeal was imbued among the young Pashtun students to fight against the Soviet. It is the cause that most of the Taliban are Pashtuns and if the rest of the people of the other ethnic group are associated with Taliban, they are just because they have sympathies for Deobandi school of thought. In both Pakistan and Afghanistan all the great leaders of Taliban including Mullah Omar had been the students of the Deobandi seminaries. Then the other major ethnic group is Tajiks, they are Sunnis living in the north region of Afghanistan which has the border with Tajikistan. The ethnic group which is on number three in terms of population is Hazara who are around the ten percent of Afghan population. These are Shia Afghans who lived in the central regions of Afghanistan.

Hazaras are said to be the descendants of Janghis Khan (1162- 1227) the founder of the Mongol Empire. They are in minority and not considered as Afghans in their physical features and their liberal attitude for their religion. They are always in conflict with Taliban. Even recently Taliban destroyed the statue of Hazaras famous leader Abdul Ali Mazari which arose the anger among the Hazara community. He fought against Taliban during the Afghanistan's Civil War (1992-1996) in Bamiyan. Another prominent ethnic group in Afghanistan is Uzbek which consists of around nine percent population of Afghanistan. They are Sunni Afghans who live near the border of Uzbekistan. Uzbeks do not like Taliban's dictatorship. The ancient city Termez of Uzbekistan enjoyed the trade relations with Afghanistan. There is also a railway line from Termez to Mazer-e- Sharif and there is a river that sprays Uzbekistan to Afghanistan called Amu Darya. After Taliban's control in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan even evacuated their railway workers from Afghanistan. It clearly indicates that they don't like Taliban government. Turkmens are the minor ethnic group in Afghanistan. They are around two percent, who live in the north and the north-west of Afghanistan along the borders of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

So, the above details of the ethnic groups clearly show that Tajiks, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmens together formed the 60% population of Afghanistan. These four non-Pashtun tribes are together known as the Northern Alliance. But it is unfortunate that despite such a great number they have never got the opportunity to rule in the country before 2001 only once. As a character named Babi correctly tells his daughter Laila about the Tajik and Pashtuns history in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). He tells her that "Pashtun kings ruled this country for almost two hundred and fifty years, Laila and Tajiks for all of nine months, back

in 1929” (128). Tajiks have been the second largest group after Pashtuns but still they have been marginalized politically. This long years of injustice and inequality has also been one of the causes of internal conflicts in Afghanistan. Babi further tells Laila that “we are all Afghans, and that’s all that should matter. But when one group rules over the others for so long . . . There’s contempt. Rivalry. There is. There it always has been” (128). So, Khaled Hosseini makes it clear that without giving equal opportunities to all, it is difficult to think about the national unity.

It is believed that the US, India, Russia, Iran, Turkey and many other countries support Northern Alliance. After Taliban’s coming into power Northern Alliance have regrouped again which means that all the countries who are interested in Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance is a wildcard against the Taliban. In the past, Taliban has been extensively funded by Pakistan army and ISI. Now, Pakistan is not that much sound in terms of its economy and hardly provides financial support to Afghanistan. Moreover, Afghanistan doesn’t have anything big to export except opium. So, both the Taliban and its founder depend on the other countries. It is also the fact that no country would support to any other country if that country has nothing to offer in return. Now, after facing huge loss faced by Russia and the US, they do not expect anything from Afghanistan. As America was there for more than twenty years and spent trillions of dollars for nothing. They lost their people. So, they realized that it is better to invest on their own people than to be here for the next ten more years. Finally on 9/11/2021 they decided to leave the country in the hands of Afghanistan’s people. Since 2017, the trade war has been going on between China and America and it is clear that they won’t work in collaboration for Afghanistan. Even the US alleges that China is responsible for spreading Covid-19 around the world. So, it is the race between these two countries for becoming more powerful in terms of economy. All these things reflect that if China involves in Afghanistan’s developmental projects the US would keep itself away from Afghanistan as recently Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi suggested that; “the United States should not expect support and cooperation from China while it is taking steps to deliberately contain and suppress China and undermine China’s legitimate rights and interests” (n.p.). Soon after their withdrawal Taliban got the control in Afghanistan and made their government under the leadership of Haibatullah Akhundzada. As far as Russia’s concern, it has also been in Afghanistan for more than ten years and couldn’t get any success. It is also a fact that if Russia has good relations with Afghanistan, it can reach to the Arabian Sea but Afghanistan is a landlocked country and to reach the Arabian Sea they need to have good relations with both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Only from China, Afghanistan can

expect something because China has the reason to fund Pakistan and Afghanistan. Even they know the reality of Taliban and its creator Pakistan. China has vested interest in Afghanistan because of its project of the New Silk Road that would boost its economy. Keeping it in view after the Taliban's control in Afghanistan, China and Taliban had also held many meetings.

Taliban's Present Government and it's Expected Future

Taliban entered in Kabul on 15 August 2021 caused great fear, anxiety and uncertainty across the country especially among women and non-Pashtun population. Taliban declared Afghanistan as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan by replacing the former name the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Taliban's spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid, announced the first list of 33 members who were included in the Taliban's new government. In the cabinet, Taliban's leader Haibatullah Akhundzada has been declared as Amir (head of the state) and he is the acting prime minister of the Afghanistan and Abdul Ghani Baradar is the acting deputy prime minister. Akhundzada was the governor of Kandhar and the minister in the 1990s government of Taliban. All the members who are in Taliban's caretaker cabinet are the great loyalists of Taliban and working with them for the last twenty years. According to Clayton Thomas who is an analyst in the Middle Eastern Affairs that;

Over half were, and remain, designated for U.S. and/or U.N. sanctions, including the Acting Interior Minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani. The U.S. Department of State has for years offered a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to the arrest of Haqqani, who is the head of the Haqqani Network, a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). . . (13)

Moreover, the important thing is that majority of the members are ethnically Pashtuns. Only one or two are included from the other minority groups but only on some unimportant and at low positions. No woman has been made the part of the cabinet in the country where around fifty percent population is of women. The exclusion of women from the cabinet reflects the ideology of Taliban's for women.

Soon after the Taliban's takeover after the collapse of the former Afghan government's former vice-president Amrullah Saleh claimed himself as the legitimate caretaker President of the Afghanistan. He demanded to Afghanistan's people to support him to fight against the Taliban. He was also joined by the son of late Northern Alliance commander Ahmed Shah Massoud. Saleh and Massoud are ethnically Tajiks and represent their population which is the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan after Pashtun. Tajiks also share their population with Tajikistan and even that is also the reason that Tajikistan is also against Taliban. So, the social and political marginalization of the non-Pashtuns and

minorities could be the danger for Taliban in the future.

Different Terrorist Groups could be a Great Threat to the Taliban's Government

In Afghanistan, since 1980s different terrorists' groups have been formed which are operating now in the different areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan mainly in the Afghan Pakistan border areas. It is estimated by the different political analysts that these terror groups could grow with much faster speed after Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan. Among these, two of them are very significant from the perspective of Taliban; they are Al-Qaida and Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP). The relation between Taliban and Al-Qaida is not that much strained so far. There have been some clashes and conflicts between Taliban and ISKP since last six years after the establishment of ISKP in 2015. In ISKP many former Taliban leaders have joined, who have the main base in the eastern border of Afghanistan. After coming into the power, Taliban executed ISKP's main leader. Recently, on 26th of August 2021 attack on the Kabul International Airport by ISKP leaving 163 people dead is the result of strong enmity between the two groups. Moreover, ISKP's suicide bombing attack in October 2021 in Kunduz killed around hundred people. They have also attacked on the Shia mosque in Kandhar which is the hub of Taliban. All these tragic incidents raise many questions about the inability of the Taliban's government to govern, protect and secure the country.

The Life of Women, Ethnic and Religious Minorities'

On the basis of Taliban's former role, they are considered to be the worst in terms of violation of the human rights in the world. There are communities which are expected to be oppressed mostly under the Taliban's rule; one is women and young girls and the other is ethnic and religious minorities. Since their takeover in August 2021, their officials have been kept assuring that it would be their priority to work for the welfare of women and ethnic and religious minorities. But still there is a great fear, agony, and uncertainty among the women and the minorities of Afghanistan. They know that there is a wide gap in between what Taliban say and what they do. Taliban are known for the oppressions and atrocities against the women and minorities of Afghanistan. Since their takeover, many reports have come through media outlets about the violence of Taliban against women protestors and the journalists. According to Clayton Thomas, who is an analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs that;

The Taliban have reinstated the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which enforced the Taliban's interpretation of Islam in the 1990s. The Taliban's government does not include the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which was not present in the prior Taliban government but had been a part of the former Afghan government. (23)

Moreover, on 18th of September 2021 Ministry of Education order to reopen all the secondary schools in which only male teachers and male students would attend. In some areas, no decision has taken so far about the schooling of girls. Even the news published in one of Afghanistan's newspaper named *Paywast News* on 13th of April 2021 about the protest of religious scholars regarding the reopening of the secondary schools for girls. They were urging Taliban's government to reopen the schools for girls because they said that (as published in the newspaper), "Female education is necessary because women form half of the society on the one hand and Islam has clarified everything for dignified, religious, and modern studies on the other" (n.p.). So, it has been almost nine months of Taliban's takeover but still they have not reopened the secondary schools for girls. Moreover, due to the prevailing political crises in Afghanistan after Taliban's takeover the unemployment rate has also increased in Afghanistan.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan one of the largest ethno-religious minorities are Hazaras. They are exploited and oppressed by other ethnic groups because of being Shia Muslims. They are only Shia community which lives in Afghanistan. Because of their different social, religious and cultural practices, they are not considered as the true Afghans. They mostly live in the central Afghanistan (Hazarajat) and some other parts of the western Afghanistan. In the previous rule of Taliban, they were massacred on several occasions. Because of the Taliban's past, there is also a great fear and uncertainty among the Hazaras. But recently Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) has emerged as a great threat for Hazaras. In the last year ISKP targeted many times the Shia mosques, schools and their places. However, so far Taliban has shown great support for Hazaras and did some work for their protections by providing the security to them. One member from the Hazara community has also been included in the Taliban's cabinet as an acting deputy minister for health. They are doing it just to show off themselves as the nationwide movement or they really concerned about Hazaras, time would decide it. In Afghanistan, the other religious minorities also live such as Hindus and Sikhs but now their population in less than hundreds.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses in detail to all the major political development and the historical events in the history of Afghanistan. It discusses the causes and effects of all the socio-political events since 1970s to the present through the selected texts of two contemporary Afghan origin writers Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini. It can be concluded that since last four decades every government which has been in power tried to govern and control by

imposing its own interests and ideology on the people of Afghanistan. Every government has worked for the certain sections of the society. Majority of the population has been ignored and unheard. Because of their marginalization and absolute deprivation caused conflicts in Afghanistan. Justice has never been done to them. Contradictions and limitations in each government's decisions and policies have always spawned the resistive elements and sometimes to the violent conflicts have taken place. The interests and ideologies of every government have been completely opposite from the interests of the majority of the population. So, such kinds of governments create a gap between the government and the public and ultimately become the cause of internal conflicts.

The population of Afghanistan is constituted by the multi ethnic groups. Each group has its own culture, belief system, ideology, and is different in the socio-religious practices. But in the history of Afghanistan except Pashtuns every ethnic group has the feelings of injustice and inequality. Non-Pashtun population of Afghanistan has been marginalized socially and politically. They have never got an opportunity in the mainstream political system of the country to express themselves. Through the deep analysis of the characters from the chosen texts, this chapter discusses all these socio-political aspects in detail. The selected writers have also highlighted these aspects in their novels. For example, in one of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is written by Hosseini, where a character named Babi expresses his feelings of injustice and inequality. Babi's ethnicity is Tajik and he tells Laila that "Tajiks have always felt slighted. Pashtuns kings ruled this country for almost two hundred and fifty years, Laila, and Tajiks for all nine months back in 1929" (128). Then his daughter Laila tells him that they should not think about the past. They should work for our nation with unity with the feeling that we all are Afghans. But then Babi says that "We're all Afghans, and that's all that should matter. But when one group rules over the others for so long . . . There's contempt. Rivalry. There is. There always has been" (128). So, the government of Afghanistan which gets political power needs to understand the fact that they can't govern the country peacefully until every ethnic group feels secure and gets equal treatment. It is too early to predict about the future situation of Afghanistan but according to many analysts Taliban rule in Afghanistan could be different and less repressive than their rule of 1996-2001. It has been the gap of twenty years and many things have changed since their last ruling period. According to the political analysts, Taliban now have changed their attitude and thinking for women, minorities and non-Pashtun population.

The chapter discusses in detail the Afghanistan's social, political and economic conditions through the analysis of the selected texts of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini. The

texts which are the parts of this chapter have been set during the period of late 1970s to the early 2000s. Different characters in the chosen texts represent the different time periods, different ethnicities, different age groups, the different cultures of the different areas, different level of violence and atrocities in different time periods, and the major difference in the rural and urban life of Afghanistan. Afghanistan has been in continuous internal and external conflicts since last four decades. The analysis of the characters and the historical events help to understand the level of violence and sufferings and the psychological effects on the people of Afghanistan in the wake of all these internal and external conflicts. Moreover, after studying all those historical and political events which are the background of the chosen texts help to conclude that the process of conflict in Afghanistan is unending. But with appropriate political strategy the level of its intensity could be decreased. Now, after America's complete withdrawal, Afghanistan has been the victim of internal power politics within the country which would create more destabilization in the country. As it is also clear that majorly Afghanistan has been politically divided into two factions; one is the Taliban and another is anti-Taliban group which is called the Northern Alliance. Ideologically these two factions are completely different. If Taliban is in power now, but some day or the other when Northern Alliance gets power, they would use it against Taliban and this system would not end. This is how the conflict theory works through the cycle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis and that is what Karl Marx argues in his theory of the dialectical materialism.

Conclusion of the Thesis

This research work is an attempt to depict the picture of the power politics that has played its role to bring forth the social, political and religious conflicts in the territory of Afghanistan. The present research considers the conflict theory as the foundation of the research. The research is absolutely based on the select novels of the two contemporary Afghanistan writers: *Atiq Rahimi* and *Khaled Hosseini*. Their works which have been the part of the present research are as follows: *Earth and Ashes* (1999); *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (2002); *The Patience Stone* (2008); *The Kite Runner* (2003); *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007); and *the Mountain Echoed* (2013).

The setting of all these novels primarily covers the period from the 1970s to the early 2000s in the history of Afghanistan. It is the most turbulent period in the history of Afghanistan. Therefore, the selected novels of Hosseini and Rahimi delve deeper into the socio-political structure of Afghanistan. These literary works help to understand the ways of each political development that has given birth to the new socio-political conflict.

The study delineates that Afghanistan has been the victim of power politics since the beginning of the Cold War because of being located at the crossroads of the Central and the South Asia. Due to its central geographical location, in political context Afghanistan has been a very crucial place for all the major powers of the world. Due to this reason, both America and the USSR were fighting to have their economic and political control over the territory of Afghanistan. It was due to their cold war rivalry, the people of Afghanistan suffered socially, politically, culturally and economically.

Eventually, the primary theme of the present research is thus to explore through the representation of the main protagonists of the targeted novels and the subsidiary characters in the novels. Derivatively, the study forms the grounds for the power politics from the perspective of the conflict theory proposed by the Marxian philosophers. They have presented the inseparable relation of the power and conflict. They depict that politics which is used for acquiring or retaining the power has been the main cause of the socio-political conflicts.

Comprehensively, the major domain of the current research emerges by employing the conflict theorists' notion of the conflict in power along with the politics. The prominent conflict theorists are as follows: Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, Ralph Dahrendorf and Randall Collins. Their theory of the conflict is comprehended scrupulously to examine the selected novels of the contemporary age. The selected novels reflect that the internal and external conflicts have been the integral part in the history of Afghanistan since recent four decades.

Each new political government came in power by forming a new thesis. The new thesis fulfills the socio-political interests of the certain sections of the society in Afghanistan. Majority of the people have the feelings of inequality and injustice which further give birth to the Marxian concept of the anti-thesis. The clash between the thesis and the anti-thesis creates the power conflict between the rivals. The study shows that the contradictions and the limitations in each government's thesis give birth to the antithesis.

The present study primarily deals with the social, political, cultural and religious conflicts in Afghanistan. The study mainly deals with the conflicts which are based on ethnicity, gender, traditionality vs. modernity, and the Mujahedeen vs. communists. The power conflicts among different Mujahideen factions during the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996), and the conflicts between the Taliban vs. anti-Taliban groups. This research thesis also talks about the causes and effects of all those internal and external conflicts on Afghanistan through the textual analysis under the lens of the Marxian theory of conflict. The ideas of Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, Ralph Dahrendorf and Randall Collins about the causes and effects of socio-political conflicts have been explored in depth. The study also reflects the role of the politics of power to bring forth the socio-political conflicts in the history of Afghanistan particularly after 1970s.

The chosen writers, Hosseini (b. 1965) and Rahimi (b. 1962) are the two most famous contemporary Afghan writers, who have steadily gained recognition as innovatively talented contemporary Afghan writers. Their novels have widened their readership and broadened their literary canvas to include the historical and the relational narratives, violence and trauma, religious fundamentalists' injustice and demand for the human rights.

This study establishes a substantial thematic coherence in all the selected novels through the intertwined study of the power and politics under the discourse of the conflict theory. Apparently, examining the social-eco-political scenario of Afghanistan, the present study titled "Politics of Power: A Study of the Select Works of Rahimi and Hosseini" focuses on the socio-political, socio-economic, socio-religious and socio-cultural scenario of the Afghanistan since the recent four decades. This study also shows how the territory of the Afghanistan has been the victim of the power politics during the aforementioned period in the history of Afghanistan. The textual analysis of the select works, the depiction of the historical events and their effects on the socio-political life of Afghans have been researched on to cover the proposed objectives of the present research. As selected writers are contemporary Afghan origin writers, so, their works deal with the contemporary Afghanistan's issues in context to the power and politics. Their selected works are the part of the present study, which

reflect the period of social, political and economic crisis in Afghanistan from the early 1970s to the early 2000s. They depict that internal and the external power conflicts are mainly responsible for the political imbroglio in Afghanistan.

Rahimi and Hosseini have reflected the trivial but politically motivated issues through their fictitious works. The study is carried out primarily from the perspective of the conflict theory, which advocates that the power conflict is an integral part of the human society in general and the Afghanistan in particular. The conflict is unavoidable for certain reason which is politically motivated. The study also shows that the cultural differences, gender inequality, the religious and ideological differences among the different ethnic groups in Afghanistan are the main causes of the internal socio-political conflicts. Moreover, the Afghanistan's central geographical location and its large deposits of rare earth minerals have been the cause of attraction for the foreign powers like the US and the USSR.

To begin with chapter one titled "Brief Candle" seamlessly explores the socio-political history of Afghanistan. This chapter discusses the ways the Afghanistan has been the victim of geopolitics. The role played by America and the Soviet Union to make Afghanistan a mere battleground from the 1970s to the present time is explicitly expressed in the thesis, especially, in the first chapter. This chapter shows how power and conflict are closely associated with each other by taking various instances from the history of Afghanistan. Apparently, the chapter highlights the politics of power by America and Soviet Union during the Cold War Period (1947-1991) and how the Cold War spawned socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan.

The theoretical stance of the study is the conflict theory. So, the chapter discusses in detail the conflict theory and about the views of its main proponents. In the light of the conflict theory, the chapter discusses the nature and causes of conflicts in Afghanistan especially after 1970s. By using the conflict theory, the chapter depicts that the conflict is an integral part of the society and every conflict has both positive and negative outcomes. Through analyzing the views of different conflict theorists, the chapter concludes that no conflict can take place in vacuum; it is always goal oriented. The amount of material goods and the emotional involvement in the conflict decides its intensity and the level of violence. The chapter concludes that how the power politics has played its role to make Afghanistan a mere battleground since 1970s by spawning the various internal and external conflicts.

The chapter two titled "Changing Paradigms of Power: Conflicts Negotiation and Growth" focuses on the socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan since 1970s. The chapter depicts that how different political groups were formed, the ways through which they

acquired power, and how they used the power in both the positive and the negative ways. The chapter depicts that how the power shifted from one group to the other through conflicts. All these questions have been answered in this chapter. So, the chapter depicts all those social and political factors which have been responsible for all those conflicts and their effects on the socio-political life of Afghanistan through the textual analysis of Khaled Hosseini's work *The Kite Runner* (2003). The major political events which are the part of the discussion in the chapter and which have been textualized by Hosseini in his novel *The Kite Runner*, as follows: the ending of monarchy in 1973, the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989), the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996), the Taliban's government (1996-2001), 9/11 attack by Al-Qaida on America's the World Trade Centre in 2001 and followed by America's entry in Afghanistan. Amir is the protagonist and the narrator of the novel, who narrates all these major events in the novel in reminiscent mode beginning with the peaceful Afghanistan of early 1970s to the early 2000s. The chapter depicts that how Afghanistan has passed through the various political stages since 1970s from monarchy to a republican state and then Taliban's rule to the American backed government of Afghanistan. Through the fictional characters, the writer depicts the real events in the novel. Amir is the narrator and he narrates all the political developments and their causes and effects on Afghanistan. Through the analysis of the main characters; Amir, Hassan, Assef, Baba, Rahim Khan, Ali and Surya, the chapter reflects the positive and negative impacts of all these political developments on Afghanistan. An in-depth analysis of the causes and effects of all these political developments, the chapter reflects the ways the conflict engenders conflict. The feeling of revenge, hostility, inequality, injustice and the sense of moral rightness gives birth to the further conflicts.

Furthermore, the chapter focuses on the intensity and level of violence of different conflicts. The chapter also reflects the ethno-political conflicts in Afghanistan through the study of the various characters named Amir, Hassan, Assef and Baba. Moreover, the ideological differences and the differences in the religious practices among different ethnic groups are also the cause of internal socio-political and religious conflicts in Afghanistan.

The third chapter of the thesis titled "Searching Utopia for Women: A Study of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *A Patience Stone*" particularly deals with the gender conflicts in Afghanistan. The present chapter deals with the struggle of Afghan women to liberate themselves from the patriarchal subordination and their sense of deprivation, inequality and injustice through the textual analysis of Khaled Hosseini's (b. 1965) *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and Atiq Rahimi's (b. 1962) *The Patience Stone* (2008). The chapter also

discusses the history of Afghan women and finds that the sporadic attempts have been made to raise their social status. The study shows the unending Afghan women's struggle to liberate themselves from the patriarchal rules of the Afghan society and their desire to have a better life. But their long years of struggle to have gender equality in the Afghan society has never been fulfilled so far.

Since late 19th century, sporadic attempts have been made to bring the gender equality by various rulers mainly Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901), Amir Habibullah (1901-1919), Daoud Khan (1973-1978), and the Soviet backed government of Afghanistan. But the chapter shows that these rulers and governments had to face the strong resistance for their attempts to bring gender equality. Majority of the Afghans feel that the freedom of women is against their religion. So, they strongly oppose the freedom of women in Afghanistan. The chapter reflects the gender conflicts and Afghan women's sufferings through the analysis of four main female characters; Nana, Mariam and Laila from *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and an anonymous woman protagonist of the novel *The Patience Stone* (2008). So, the study shows that throughout the history of Afghanistan, women have always been marginalized. They have been exploited throughout the history in the name of religion. Nana shares her experiences with her daughter Mariam and tells her about the male dominated society of Afghanistan. One day she tells her that "learn this now and learn it well, my daughter; like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman for her oppression. Always you remember that Mariam" (7). This chapter shows that during the Soviet's rule in Afghanistan, women were empowered and they were allowed to attend schools, they could work in the offices, they could walk alone without the male companion, they could wear what they wanted, they were allowed to join the politics as well. A character named Babi in the novel titled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) says to her daughter named Laila about the Soviets time in Afghanistan that "women have always had it hard in this country, Laila, but they're probably more free now, under the communists, and have more rights than they've ever had before . . ." (133). But after the Soviets withdrawal from Afghanistan, they lost all these rights especially after the overtake of the Taliban's government. In his fictional work, Atiq Rahimi gives voice to her heroine in her novel *The Patience Stone* (2008) and a comatose husband is in his bed lying unconsciously. His wife takes the advantage of that and tells him all about her untold feelings and the secrets. She says that "Things that have been stored up inside me for a while now. We've never had the chance to discuss them. Or let's be honest, you've never given me the chance" (57). It is estimated that the women population in Afghanistan is around forty five percent. The people

and the government of Afghanistan need to understand it very clearly that without women's progress the country cannot progress. They should be considered as an equal part of the nation. The rights and opportunities should be given to them so they can contribute equally to the nation's progress. Women's earnings and democratic environment at home could reduce the gender based conflicts in Afghanistan. Women issues have always been the matter of conflict between Afghanistan's conservatives and the governments which have supported the gender equality.

The chapter four of the thesis, titled "Afghanistan and its Culture: A Study of the Selected Novels" mainly deals with the culture of Afghanistan by analyzing the chosen literary works. By taking a brief overview about the history of Afghanistan, the chapter depicts that the culture of Afghanistan has changed and evolved. While dealing with the culture of Afghanistan, the chapter highlights the ethnic diversity in Afghanistan. There are total fourteen main ethnic groups which are further sub-divided into many other small ethnic groups. The chapter depicts that in Afghanistan the culture of people is closely associated with their religion. Their religious leaders decide what they have to do and what they should not do in their daily routine. The differences in their religious beliefs and practices also create differences in their cultures with reference to Afghanistan. Each ethnic group has its different ways of living and practicing its religion and that is the main cause of the cultural diversity in Afghanistan. Moreover, the different ways of practicing the same religion not only to make Afghanistan a culturally diverse nation but also becomes the cause of potential conflicts among the ethnic groups. The chapter reflects the deep association of the religion and culture of Afghanistan through the analysis of various characters from the chosen texts. For instance, the character named Farhad is deeply influenced by the teachings of Da Mullah Saed Mustafa. Mariam is influenced by the teachings of Mullah Faizullah and remembers his sayings during her difficult time to console herself. Through the character analysis, the chapter shows that in Afghanistan the constitution, the gender roles, recreational activities, sports, music, festivals, marriage ceremonies, education, punishments of different crimes etc., are closely associated with their religion. The religious characters such as Mullah Fattullah Khan, Da Mullah Saed Mustafa, Mullah Faizullah, etc., influences with their teaching to the various characters in the chosen texts.

Moreover, the chapter depicts that the culture of Afghanistan has a long history of its own. The culture which today people follow, it started evolving after the establishment of the cities and forming a new political structure during the Alexander's invasion followed by his short stay in Afghanistan. With the establishment of cities, the cities developed and the rural

and mountainous areas remained the same. Furthermore, the difference in the urban life and the rural life created a gap between the life and culture of people living in cities and the people living in rural areas. This gap kept increasing with the coming of each new ruler and with each new government in Afghanistan. Moreover, the geographical conditions of Afghanistan are also responsible for widening this gap between the rural and the urban life. Even no ruler has been able to get an absolute control on the rural areas of Afghanistan. This is the reason that most of the rural areas have been unaffected by the modernity. They still follow old religious beliefs and practices. So, it has maintained the big gap between the life and culture of rural and the urban areas. Moreover, the existence of the multi-ethnic groups in Afghanistan is another cause of the cultural diversity. Each ethnic group has its own way of living on the basis of some patrilineal principles. Every ethnic group practices different religious and cultural myths which create the religious and ideological difference among them. The population of Afghanistan is comprised of many ethnic groups and the diversity of ethnic groups reflects the cultural diversity of Afghanistan. But among these ethnic groups only the Pashtuns have dominated the Afghanistan culturally and politically. The other ethnic groups which comprised around sixty percent of population have been socially, politically, economically and culturally marginalized throughout the history of Afghanistan. So, this long year of marginalization not only creates the ideological gap among the ethnic groups but also becomes the cause of socio-political conflicts which ultimately destabilize the country's condition. Moreover, the religion plays a vital role in the life and culture of Afghanistan, and it has been used as a major force to unite the people of Afghanistan against the external forces which have attacked on Afghanistan in the past. In Afghanistan, majority of the people follow Islam but it is practiced in different ways and make Afghanistan a culturally diverse nation. Moreover, to avoid the internal conflicts, the policy makers must be aware about the religious and cultural beliefs and practices of Afghanistan before making any new policy or law for it.

The fifth chapter of the thesis titled "Afghanistan Then and Now: A Study of the Rahimi and Hosseini's Works" discusses all the major political developments and the historical events in the history of Afghanistan. It discusses the causes and effects of all the socio-political events since 1970s to the present. The chapter does the textual analysis of the chosen texts of two contemporary Afghan origin writers named Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini. Through the textual analysis, it is concluded that since the last four decades every government which has been in power tried to govern and control Afghanistan by imposing its own interests and ideology. Every government has worked for the certain sections of the society. Majority of the population has been ignored and unheard. Because of

their marginalization and absolute deprivation caused the socio-political conflicts in Afghanistan. Justice has never been done to them.

The chapter shows that the contradictions and limitations in each government's decisions and policies have always spawned the resistive elements and sometimes to the violent conflicts. The interests and ideologies of every government have been partially or the completely opposite from the interests of the majority of the population in Afghanistan. So, such kinds of governments create a gap between the government and the public and ultimately become the cause of the internal conflicts. The population of Afghanistan is constituted by the multi ethnic groups. Each group has its own culture, belief system, ideology, and different socio-religious practices. But in the history of Afghanistan except Pashtuns, every ethnic group has the feelings of injustice and inequality. Non-Pashtun population of Afghanistan has been marginalized socially and politically. They have never got an opportunity in the mainstream political system of the country to express themselves. Through the deep analysis of the characters from the chosen texts, the chapter discusses all these socio-political aspects in detail. The selected writers have also highlighted these aspects in their novels. For example, in one of the novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) written by Khaled Hosseini, a character named Babi expresses his feelings of injustice and inequality. Babi's ethnicity is Tajik and he tells Laila that "Tajiks have always felt slighted. Pashtuns kings ruled this country for almost two hundred and fifty years, Laila, and Tajiks for all nine months back in 1929" (128). Then his daughter Laila tells him that we should not think about the past. They should work for our nation with unity and with the feeling that we all are Afghans. But then Babi replied that "We're all Afghans, and that's all that should matter. But when one group rules over the others for so long . . . There's contempt. Rivalry. There is. There always has been" (128). So, government of Afghanistan which gets political power needs to understand the fact that they can't govern the country peacefully until every ethnic group is subjected to justice and equality. Moreover, after studying all those historical and political events which are the background of the chosen texts, help to conclude that the process of conflict in Afghanistan is unending. But with appropriate political strategy, the level of its intensity could be decreased.

Now, after America's complete withdrawal from Afghanistan on 9/11/2021, Afghanistan has involved again in the internal conflicts. Usually, Afghanistan has been the victim of internal power conflicts which creates more destabilization in the country. As it is clear, After America's complete withdrawal Afghanistan has been divided into two factions; one is Taliban and another is anti-Taliban group which is called the Northern Alliance.

Ideologically these two factions are completely different. If now Taliban is in power but some day or the other when the Northern Alliance would get power, they would use it against the Taliban and this system would continue. This is how the conflict theory works through the cycle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis and that is what Karl Marx says in his theory of dialectical materialism.

So, the present study explores the Marx's concept of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis to show that conflict is an unending process of a society and how the clash between thesis and anti-thesis brings conflict and change in the society through the textual analysis of the chosen works. By exploring the ideas of conflict theorists, mainly Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, Randell Collins and Ralph Dahrendorf, the study explores the conflict theory through the textual analysis of Atiq Rahimi and Khaled Hosseini's chosen works. It studies the nature and causes of conflicts in context to Afghanistan. Right from the beginning, the study explores the ideas of conflict theorists such as Lewis Coser and others that conflict is always goal-related and it is the goal which decides the intensity of the conflict and the level of violence. The study also explores the nature and causes of the Afghan-Soviet War (1979-1989), the Afghan Civil War (1992-1996) and the other internal conflicts through the lens of the conflict theory to understand the dynamics of the power politics in Afghanistan. The study depicts that the incompatible goals, shift from absolute deprivation to the relative deprivation of different ethnic groups, sense of deprivation, inequality, injustice, moral rightness and mobilization of the resources to the opposing groups are the main causes of intense and violent conflicts. Thus, the study is based on Afghanistan which is purely a Muslim nation. The life and culture of Afghanistan is closely associated with its religion. The study shows that in the history of Afghanistan religion has also been used as a tool to unite people to fight against the opposition. The conflict becomes more intense and violent because of people's strong emotional involvement and for emotional solidarity, religion is the best tool. Conflict has been an integral part of the Afghan society and it has both positive and negative outcomes.

So, the study deals with the last four decades of Afghanistan's history to explore the ways through which the power politics has made Afghanistan as the country of the socio-political conflicts. The study explores Ralph Dahrendorf and other conflict theorists' concepts that it is not the nature of human being but it is the social order and the structure of society which is responsible for all kinds of conflicts in the society. So, it is very important for the Afghanistan's social reformists and policy makers to learn from the past. They must create such kind of social and political structure in which everyone should get equal opportunities. They must ensure that everyone would get his or her due share in politics and other societal

affairs on the basis of its capability not on the basis of its ethnicity. By following such measures Afghanistan could become a more stable and the prosperous state.

Thus, the study is concluded that to avoid the intense conflicts and high level of violence in the society, the religion should not be mixed with politics. Religion should be used for the freedom of the all sections of society, not to keep them away from their freedom and their basic rights to live. The sense of deprivation and the unequal distribution of scarce resources is the root cause of all the conflicts. Implementing proper form of democracy is the only solution to avoid the major conflicts in the society. There should be no foreign political intervention in the internal socio-political affairs of Afghanistan. All things including religion must evolve with time, outdated practices must end, and religious laws may not have a place in the modern nation-states governed by the constitution. If religious interpretations and practices clash with today's way of life and the social structure, then perhaps it is the time for revision and reflection rather than the resentment. Hence, the conclusion of the thesis ends here successfully.

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CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION OF PAPERS FOR PH.D.

This is to certify that Mr. Kuldeep Singh pursuing Ph.D. (**Part Time**) programme in Department of English with Registration Number 41900171 under the guidance of Dr. Shikha Thakur has the following Publications / Letter of Acceptance in the Referred Journals / Conferences mentioned thereby fulfilling the minimum programme requirements as per the UGC.

S No.	Title of paper with author names	Name of journal / conference	Published date	Issn no/ vol no, issue no	Indexing in Scopus/ Web of Science/UGC-CARE list (<i>please mention</i>)
1.	Dr. Shikha Thakur, Kuldeep Singh “Historicity of the Text and Textuality of the History: A Study of Khaled Hosseini’s <i>The Kite Runner</i> ”	<i>Efflatounia</i>	July-September 2021	1110-8703, vol. 5 Issue 2,	Scopus

.	Kuldeep Singh, "From Voicelessness to Voicefulness: A Study of Atiq Rahimi's novel <i>The Patience Stone</i> "	<i>KALA: The Journal of Art History Congress</i>	2022	0975-7945, Vol. 8, No. 1	UGC-Care
3.	Kuldeep Singh "Casteism Debilitate Hinduism: A Critical Study of Arundhati Roy's <i>The Doctor and the Saint</i> "	<i>ANVESAK</i>	2022	0378-4568, Vol. 50, No. 2	UGC CARE
4	Dr. Shikha Thakur, Kuldeep Singh "Ethno-political Conflicts in Afghanistan: A Study of <i>The Kite Runner</i> "	<i>Design Engineering</i>	2022	ISSN; 0011-9342/ Issue 9	Scopus
6	International Symposium, LPU	The Interdisciplinary Hermeneutic: Reappraising the Socio- Cultural Episteme	05 March 2020		
8	National Conference				

	by the School of Languages and Literature at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, J&K	Contemporary Trends in Humanities and Social Sciences	20-21 January 2020		
9	International Conference by the Department of English, SRM Institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be University) Tiruchirappalli	Studying Interdisciplinary Narratives Through Literature, Language and	11-13 March 2022		
		Media ICIN'22			

Signature of Candidate

Signature of Supervisor