

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Resistance against Stigma in Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*

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Letter of Recommendation

Miss. Sangita Wagle has completed her thesis entitled “Resistance against Stigma in Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from May 2008 to March 2009. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Resistance against Stigma in Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*”, submitted to the Central department of English, Trihuvan University, by Sangita Wagle has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner* deconstructs the binary between those who suffer and those who cause suffering. In the novel, Amir, who is the privileged member of Pashtun group uses his supremacy to dominate, humiliate and make fun of Hassan, who is the son of his father's servant. Assef, member of the same Pashtun group also uses his power to abuse and brutalize Hassan and Sohrab too. Ali, Hassan and Sohrab suffer stigma because they belong to the marginalized Hazara group and are poor as well as abused. Nobody is free from stigma. Their stigma transmits to Amir bringing remorse and self-reproachment which have transformative power. As a result, he becomes successful to resist the stigma with the little smile of Sohrab, who has imposed himself in the dark.

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Sangita Wagle

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CHAPTER-I

Introduction

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* attempts to represent the discrimination and marginalization of poor ethnic minority i.e. Hazara group on the basis of religious difference which is prevailing in Afghan culture for ages.

The novel is told through the character of Amir as he seeks redemption for his guilt. The story is about two boys who symbolize opposite ends of socio-political hierarchy. Amir is Pashtun, is Sunni, wealthy and literate, whereas his servant's son, Hassan, is Hazara, Shia, poor and illiterate. They both have lost their mothers and shared the same wet nurse following their growth to adulthood, the reader is drawn to. The deformed Hassan and his father are mocked in public places by the members of upper group. Nevertheless, Amir realizes that in the long run he is better off than the illiterate Hazara in such discriminating society. Amir's realization of himself as Pashtun, a sophisticated ruling class in Afghanistan and his knowledge of differences between Sunnis and the Shia invite the suffer of Hassan and his son, and that ultimately transfers to Amir too.

In *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini gives us a vivid and engaging story that reminds us how long his people have been struggling to triumph over that force of violence forces that continue to threaten them even today.

In addition, Hosseini's own personal experiences and impression that he received during his childhood days in Afghanistan as a sophisticated son of a dominant Pashtun family like Amir in *The Kite Runner* have played a vital role in shaping the structure by the novel. His work provides an indigenous look into an Afghan experience, which some critiques have considered as a more realistic account of Afghan and Afghanistan than any work produced by even the best Journalists.

Hosseini's was born in 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan where his father was a diplomat and his mother taught Farsi and History. The family left Afghanistan in 1976 when Hosseini's father was posted to the Afghan embassy in Paris. Following the 1978 coup and the subsequent Russian invasion, the Hosseini immigrated to the United States, receiving political asylum in 1980. Hosseini is now a physician and lives with his wife and two children in California. Having lived through that time period in Kabul the final years of the monarchy, the birth of Republic, and the first years of Daud Khan's leadership- Hosseini has left comfortable writing about it especially focusing on the Marginalization and discrimination of Hazara group on the basis of religion and race.

Being is a text based research so the text has been studied from the perspective of stigma theory. The differences and the conflict between the royal clan of Afghanistan, Pashtun and the ethnic minority, have led the superior group to stigmatize inferior group. *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini's novel of 2003, has received many critical appreciations from various critics, scholars and writers. They have focused on different issues like Afghan Diaspora, migration, family relationship, hypocrisy of those hiding their sins under the cloak of religious, ethnic as well as religious differences leading to cultural conflict among the characters which results in the ultimate betrayal of friendship.

Geraldine S. Pearson reviews *The Kite Runner* from the perspective of psychiatric and mental trauma:

From a psychiatric using perspective, this novel illustrates numerous clinically pertinent themes. Amir's exposure to the traumatic assault on his friend, Amir, haunts him for most of his life and this childhood event has a powerful impact on his adult decisions and feelings.

Pfefferbaum (2005) notes that symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are mediated by the event, exposure, and a subjective reaction. (66).

Commenting on Hosseini's stories, Laura Bush analyses the text from the historical perspective. Thus she finds the text being, "Are set against the backdrop of Afghanistan's tumultuous history, "His complex portrayal of human nature however, transcends geographic boundaries" (1). Monika Mehta says, "The Kite Runner offers a moving portrait of modern Afghanistan from its pre-Russian invasion glory days through the terrible reign of the Taliban. Hosseini smoothly adds Farsi words to his clear, plot- driven prose; at once point, Amir's enemy eerily foreshadows the slaughter of a persecuted ethnic minority"

For loyal Miles, the novel is about the national identity: There he remarks the texts from betrayal in friendship.

The tensions in this relationship mirror Afghanistan's struggle in the 1970s to maintain a traditional sense of national identity in the face of government instability and invasions by a foreign power. Broader elements of Afghan society, such as ethnic and class divisions, also make it impossible for Amir to consider Hassan, his closest childhood companion and family servant boy, a friend. The gradual unraveling of both relationship and Amir's eventual attempts to reconcile with his father and with Hassan provide a structure through which Hosseini compellingly examines Afghanistan's recent cultural and national history. (207)

Interpreting the text from the perspective of the betrayal of friendship, Bob Corbett remarks that, "There is a beautiful and informative story of Amir, an Afghan boy who

betrays his closet friend, Hassan, when they are just 12 years old. He lives with this guilt for many years, paying deeply in pain and suffering, always wanting to redeem himself for his betrayal" (371).

The other critic Ronny Noor sees the novel focusing on sin and redemption:

A novel of sin and redemption, a son trying to redeem his father's sins. This lucidity written and often touching novel gives a vivid picture of not the Russian atrocities but also those of the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. As far as the Afghan conflict is concerned, we got a selective, simplistic, even simple-minded picture. (148)

Stella Algoo Baksh describes *The Kite Runner* as a haunting and quite extraordinary first novel by Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan medical doctor now residing in the United States, according to Baksh, the novel:

Launches readers into the realities of Afghan society, using the political events of Afghanistan from the 1970s to 2001 to foreground a touching and memorable story of the friendship between two boys of differing social class and ethnic backgrounds. It foregrounds the complexity and difficulty of the achievement of personal salvation and the recognition of self. (143)

Such perspectives and approaches are mostly reader oriented and the author oriented but they have talked less about the issue that this thesis is going to extra. This dissertation primarily focuses on the effect of stigmatization of Hazara minority on the basis religion and culture.

Thus Pashtuns superior state mind leads them to stigmatized minority Hazara group. They never considered minority group as the citizens of Afghanistan who

should also have rights to have self-identity. Minority group identity is their, how they obey the order of majority group. As a result minority group people get stigma.

The present dissertation examines the study of stigma, which deconstruct the binary between those who suffer and those who cause suffering. The study analyzes and interprets how the position between those who suffer and those who causes suffer is blurred. Hassan and Soharb suffer stigma because they belong to the marginalize Hazara group and are poor as well as abused. Furthermore, their stigma transmits to Amir bringing remorse and self- reproachment which have transformative power.

This dissertation is mainly divided into four parts. The first part of the thesis gives general synopsis of the text, writer and the subject matter. This part elaborates the statement of problem as well as the hypothesis. Some critic's views are also given place in the introduction of the whole thesis.

The second chapter includes a discussion on the theoretical modality. The stigma and its effects have been discussed in different titles. The criticisms related to each title are brought and introduced. It shows how the majority groups always marginalize and humiliate the minority groups in the same religion too.

After the discussion of theoretical tools *The Kite Runner* has been analyzed textually in the third chapter. This textual analysis has been done on the basis of the theoretical tools discussed in the second chapter- with the help of different lines of the text, it has been proved that there is stigmatization of minority group and that ultimately turns to suffer, those who cause suffering. The final chapter of this dissertation consists of a short conclusion. The thesis concludes deconstructing the binary between those who suffer and those who cause suffering.

CHAPTER-II

Stigma of Religion, Tribe and the Race

The term 'stigma' was taken by Goffman from the Greek practice of branding or marking slaves and criminals. Stigma may also be described as a label which associates a person to a set of unwanted characteristics that form the stereotype. It occurs due to race, color, gender, nationality, disease, religion, mental illness, homosexuality, disability and so on. It is social, cultural and psychological construct which is understood as a kind of negative values and attributes of the society. In sociological theory, a stigma is an attribute, behavior, or reputation, which is socially discrediting in a particular way: it causes an individual to be mentally classified by others in an undesirable, rejected stereotype rather than in an accepted, normal one. Stigma occurs when an individual is identified as deviant having with the negative stereotypes that engender prejudiced attitudes, which are acted upon in discriminatory behavior. Goffman illuminate how stigmatized people manage their "spoiled identity" before audiences of normal.

Lennard J. Davis writes that we live in a world of norms:

Each of us endeavors to be normal or else deliberately tries to avoid that state. We consider what the average person does, thinks, earns or consumes we rank our intelligence [...] we consume a minimum daily balance of vitamins and nutrients base on what an average human should consume [...] there is probably no area of contemporary life in which some idea of a norm, mean, or average has not been calculated.

(9)

Disability arouses stigma in an individual. It appears due to the lack of bodily appearance which the society seldom desires. One must return to the concept of the

norms because society desires for the state of the normalcy. Unable to perform any social function due to lack in physical appearance is perceived to be an error or fault in the prevalent social circumstance. In the other words disability is stereotype with negative attitude. The concept of disability is a social construction. “Thus disability is a powerful social construct within most existing societies and because we are presented with conflicting images of the disable people have been placed into the role of abnormal outsider whose lives and experience are hidden from the normal majority.” (Ghai 46)

Disability is socially constructed from the biological reality because our cultures idealize the normal body and demand that we must have control upon it. Able-bodied thus dictates upon the disabled body and their knowledge is always silenced and invalidated. Moreover, the nature of disability discrimination has often very little to do with the individual’s capabilities and true characteristics. The stigma and stereotypes are the cause of the discrimination much more than the disability itself... Society ranks the disable person below the average or normal one. His behavior is discrediting. This causes him to mentally illness. Thus, he feels stigmatized. Stigmatized people are even ostracized or rejected in society. Erving Goffman, noted sociologist, defined stigma as a special kind of gap between virtual social identity and actual social identity:

Society establishes the means of categorizing person and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of the categories [...] when a stranger comes into our presence then, first appearance are likely to enables us to anticipates his category and attributes, his “social identity” [...] we lean on these anticipations that we have, transforming them into normative expectation into

righteously presented demands [...] It is then that we are likely to realize that all along we had been making certain assumption as to what the individual before us ought to be. [These assumed demand and the character we impute to the individual will be demand and the character we impute to the individual will be called] virtual social identity. The category and attribute he could in fact be proved to possess will be called his actual social identity. (203-204)

Stigma is an any condition, attribute or behavior that symbolically marked of the bearer as culturally unacceptable or inferior with the consequent feeling of shame, guilt and disgrace. In other word, it is a social process or related to personal experiences characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame or devaluation that results from experience or anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or a group. In any society, stigma has a negative connotation and discrediting effect:

Sometime it is also called a failing, a short coming, a handicap. It constitutes a special discrepancy between virtual and actual social identity. Note that are other type of discrepancy between actual and virtual social identity, for example the kind that causes us to reclassify an individual form one socially anticipated category to a different but equally well anticipated one, and the kind that causes to alter our estimation of the individual upward. Note to, that not all undesirable attributes are at issue. But only those which are incongruous with our stereotype what a given type of individual should be. (Goffman 204)

It is thus a social categorization that legitimates the negative attributes because difference is highlighted more than the similarity.

No people in this world are exactly alike. The variation in shape, size skin, color, gender, cultural background etc can be stigmatized at any time. That's why Erving Goffman says, "stigma is equivalent to undesired differentness" (qtd.in Coleman 217). First any human difference serves as the preliminary requisite to be stigmatized. Secondly to be stigmatized is an inescapable fate as this process depends upon cultural and historical background. "No one really even knows when if he or she will acquire stigma or when a societal norms might change to stigmatize a trait he or she already posses" (Coleman 226). In this sense, stigma is a social factor and becomes necessity of non stigmatized groups. Those possessing power or dominant group in the society determine the concept of stigma which human differences are desired and which are not. So the stigmatized people are always marginalized from the mainstream of the community simply because they do not relate to the norms of a specific culture and possess undesired difference from what the norms anticipate.

In this regard, it has become necessary to understand the concept of the norm in the prevalent society because any one can be stigmatized at any time. The concept of normalcy is again a social construct; it is not fixed or is shaped by cultural, historical and social forces. "Normality becomes the supreme goal for many stigmatized individual until they realize that there is no precise definition of normality except what they would be without their stigma" (Goffman 225). A man is stigmatized because he fails to represent the majority of the population. That is why Lennard J. Davis says, "The concept of norm, unlike that of an ideal, implies the majority of the population most or should somehow be part of the norm" (13). Ultimately, average then becomes paradoxically a kind of ideal, devoutly to be wished. In this way, the various extremes of human trait such as height, high intelligence, ambitiousness, strength etc would have been seen as error. Such

differences are therefore stigmatized in the long run. In this way, the construction of normalcy divides the total population into standard and non standard sub population.

Stigma is a human construction, which legitimizes the negative attributes to the human differences. The process of stigmatization occurs only when the social control component is imposed or the undesired differentness leads to some restriction in physical social mobility besides it also restricts access to the opportunities that allow an individual to develop his or her potential. In addition, stigmatized people are segregated, ignored, neglected and isolated from every social participation. Negative attributes upon the stigmatized people are thus cast down from the societal periphery. For instance, the dwarf people in every society are marginalized simply because they do not fulfill the pre –requisite for being normal. As they lack in their height they are stigmatized in every social factor. Though they are used in movies they are not portrayed as the main protagonist; they simply partake in the role of idiot and foolish. In this way they are used as the objects of entertainment rather than the subjects, and their contribution is seen as inferior. Not only this, they are given less priority on other job too. People do not suspect on their capability to work but they suspect on their difference which they do not represent with the majority of the population. With such attributes they are deprived and marginalized in every sector:

Stigma often results in a special kind of downward mobility. Part of the power of stigmatization lies in the realization that people who are stigmatized acquire to stigma lose their place in the social hierarchy. Consequently, most people want to ensure that they are counted in the non stigmatized “majority”. This of course, leads to more stigmatization. (Coleman 218)

Different ideologies are constructed and reconstructed by the society to prove that the stigmatized people are fundamentally inferior to the so called normal beings.

Nevertheless, they were regarded as less than humans-the “other”. Thus, stigmatized groups are not treated on equal grounds:

We construct a stigma- theory, an ideology to explain is inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity base on the differences, such as those of social class. We use specific stigma terms such as cripple, bastard, and moron in our daily discourse as a source of metaphor and imagery, typically without without thought to the original meaning. (Goffman 205)

Thus, stigmatization appears to be uncomfortable because any human difference serves as the basis for stigma. Moreover, it also manifest the underlying fear of being stigmatizes as anyone can be stigmatized at anytime. Stigma is therefore non-stigmatized people’s necessity in order to feel good about themselves. They possess false superiority assuming that stigmatized people are fundamentally inferior.

Consequently, stigmatized people accept themselves as “other” in the society. They accept their derogatory, self-hate and devalued status as the puppets of the social system. This is a kind of social and psychological death of the stigmatized people. Stigmatized people thus become dependent, passive, helpless and childlike because that is what expected from them. In fact they internalize what the societal norm desires them to be and “agree that he does indeed fall snort of what he really thought to be...” (Goff man 206) social rejection or avoidance affects not only the stigmatized individuals but everyone who is socially involved with them as family, friends, and relatives. A kind of permanent social rejection forces people to limit their relationship to other stigmatized people and to those whom social bond outweigh the stigma such

as family member. Hence, paradoxical societal norms establish a sub-ordinate and dependent position for stigmatized people. Stigma is in fact, the need of non-stigmatized people to maintain a sense of supremacy.

On the whole, stigma is a complex phenomenon of the society and it is ambiguously and arbitrarily defined. Basically, any human difference, different cultural background, or any other undesired attributes qualify to be stigmatized. The dominant group of the society judges the other groups. In the part, stigma reflects the value judgment of other group thereby creating a sense of supremacy. Stigma is a dynamic and powerful social tool:

If stigma is a social construct, constructed by cultures, by social groups, and by individual to designate some human difference as discrediting, then the stigmatization process is indeed a powerful and pernicious social tool. The inferiority \superiority issue is a most interesting way of understanding how and why people continue to stigmatize. (Coleman218)

Therefore, stigma is considered to be open-ended synthesis that continues from one generation to the next. In every society, difference occurs because no one is same in shape, size, and color and so on. Difference serves as basis for stigma and is the root of stigma. Thus, any attribution which is undesired is stigmatized. For e.g. Lerita M. Coleman argues:

Stigmatization that one feels as a result of being black or Jewish Japanese depends on the social context specifically social contexts in which one's skin color or nationality is not a desired one. A white American could feel temporally stigmatized when visiting Japan due to difference in height [...]

Thus, the sense of being stigmatized or having a stigma is inextricably tied to social context. (218)

Goffman's universal and historical forms of stigma may be mentioned as three different types:

Overt or External Deformities: There are abominations of the body – the various physical deformities “Such as leprosy, clubfoot, cleft lip or plate and muscular dystrophy”.

Known Deviations in Personal Traits: There are blemishes of individual character perceived as weak, will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid belief and dishonesty, these being inferred from a known record of for examples mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts and radical political behavior.

Tribal stigma: Finally there are the tribal stigma of race, nation and religion, this mode of stigma can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of family for e.g. in our in Nepali context, a child born in Dalit family will be automatically stigmatized for being the child of lower caste parents.

The process of stigmatization depends upon cultural and historical background. Stigma is a social construction rather than a reality and is created by ‘normal people’ that belongs to the particular dominant groups. In addition, the norms are of equal importance in that context that determines which desirable and undesirable attributes. Moving from one social or cultural context to another can change both the definition and consequences of stigma. For e.g. M. Coleman argues that, “A black student could feel stigmatized in a predominantly white university because the majority of the student are white and white skin is a desired trait. But a black student in predominantly black university is not likely to feel the effect of stigma” (218).

Another important writer Rosemarie Garland Thomson in his book says that:

Though any human trait can be stigmatized, the dominant group has the authority and means to determine which differences are inferior and to perpetuate those judgments [...] stigmatization not only reflects the tastes and opinions of the dominant groups, it reinforces that group's idealized self description as neutral, normal, legitimate and identifiable by denigrating the characteristics of less powerful groups or those considered alien. The process of stigmatization thus legitimates the status quo, naturalizes attributions of inherent inferiority and superiority and obscures the socially constructed quality of both categories. (31)

Lerita M. Coleman also says that, "Stigma allows some individual to feel superior to others. Superiority and inferiority however two are sided of the same coin [...]

stigmatized people are needed in order for the many non- stigmatized people to feel good about themselves" (218).

Stigma has been described as a dynamic process of devaluation that significantly discredits an individual in the eyes of other. According to UNAIDS, within particular cultures or settings, certain attributes are seized upon and defined by other as the discreditable or unworthy. Through this association, stigma is linked to power and domination. It creates inequality making some groups feel superior and other devalued. Stigmatization occurs in all aspects of human life. A person can be stigmatized because of anything from disease, disability, birth defects and mental illnesses to sexual preference, occupation and economic status. Christoph Lauber and Norman Sartorius had mention in their article that:

A critical reason for the widespread stigma attached to all mental disorders is that severe schizophrenia is taken as a paradigm for mental

disorders in general although it doesn't represent the variety of mental illnesses. As a consequence, all mental illnesses are stigmatized and considered to have the devastating effects of schizophrenia [...] segregation, expulsion and neglect are consequences not only for people who suffer from these disorders but also for all other who were labeled mentally ill, to all members of their families [...] (103)

People with mental illness are treated as other because of what the late American sociologist Erving Goffman called their "spoiled identity". Most of the general population in the all parts of the world holds the negative views towards people with mental illness. They are discriminated from the mainstream rules and laws. They even have to lose their job and individual rights, being ostracized from the society. So, Lauber and Sartorius further explain:

On an individual level people with mental illness are perceived as dangerous, violent and unpredictable. Societal or structural discrimination finds its expression in jurisdiction that restricts the civil rights of people with mental illness in, for example voting, parenting or serving jury duty, inequities in medical insurance coverage, discrimination in housing and employment and reliance on jails, prison and homeless shelters as the way of disposing of people with mental illness. (103)

In other words, the real issue was discrimination. And what's needed' is a kind of civil rights campaign on behalf of the mentally ill. Dr. Thornicroft, professor of community psychiatry in his book includes several harrowing first person accounts by patients:

It makes clear that, far too often, they are discriminate against by health care provides who are overly pessimistic about their chances for recovery [...] that people with mental illness get second or third gate care for physical condition [...] studies have shown that if you have a heart attack and you are known to have mental illness, [...] investigated less, treated less and more often. (11)

The negative judgments and prejudice towards those infected leads towards discrimination and stigmatization towards them. It is a mark of disgrace associated with particular circumstances, it is not only social but also cultural and psychological construction associated with negative values and attributes of the society and is in constant flux. When stigma is acted upon, the result is discrimination. Therefore discrimination is one of the main issues to cause stigma. Stigmatized individual are discriminated from the normal paradigm. Because of shame and fear to be stigmatized many HIV/AIDS participants never disclosed their disease to maintain normalcy. Lippincott Williams and Wilkin, in their essay ‘maintaining normalcy’ have written about HIV/AIDS participants struggle to maintain normalcy and how they face the problem while tackling it. The risk of being shamed, blamed and disrespected for being infected prevented some participants from disclosing their HIV status to others. An Asian participant in the ‘maintaining normalcy’ stated “I don’t want to tell anyone due to shame and privacy” Stigmatization by friends, family or coworkers could lead to being ostracized and labeled, as different; keeping the secret served to maintain one’s normalcy and need for acceptance. (269)

To achieve the normal life which is lost by the disease HIV/AIDS, the participant never try to disclose the fact. Fearing the stigmatization of others also impeded some participants from accessing health services. Participant further say that

“yet disclosure was often vital to getting support one needed to manage a life-threatening illness. An older participant who lived alone had struggled to call an ambulance after having severe gastrointestinal bleed at home” (269).

The Stigma of mental illness can be as harmful as the symptom leading to family discord, job discrimination and social rejection. Mental illness causes two kinds of harm. First is from the direct effect of the disorders- cognitive, affective and behavioral difficulties that limit one's ability to function effectively and second kind of harm – the social rejection, interpersonal disruption and fractured identity that comes from the stigmas of mental illness. Feldman and Crandall in their article focus on the social rejection:

In 1972, presidential candidate George McGovern named U.S. senator Thomas Eagleton, as his running mate. Only two weeks later, however McGovern asked Eagleton to withdraw his nomination, a request that the vice president candidate reluctantly honored. The reason for this sudden withdrawal was simple. Eagleton had admitted to being hospitalized and receiving electroconvulsive- “shock” – therapy for depression. (137)

Childless women in south Indian society are deviated from society. They are stigmatized. Social condition and trends stigmatized them. Catherine Koher Riessman in her article analyzes women's experience of stigma when they are childless and their everyday resistance practices. As stigma theory predicts, childless women deviate from the “ordinary and natural life” are deeply discredited (111).

For many people, stigma involves institutional and segregation from the mainstream of the community in education work, housing and other activities. They get fewer opportunities to acquire skills necessary for jobs. This stigmatization,

however, exists more on women than men. Stigmatization of women is not new; it has its root from earlier age, when African American women were double marginalized first by their own family member and second by American society member. They had to face obstacle in every field i.e. sports, education and so on. But, coming unto 21st century such situation and face of the women's participation on outdoor activity has changed such as Olympic game and are parts of endorsement deals with the athletic apparel giants Nike – the kind of deals that were previously the sole domain of the male athletic stars. Jaime Harris in their article provide information on Afro-American woman Olympians. He analyzes the way women athletes tried to erase the stigmas attached to race, gender and sexuality:

When the modern Olympic begin 1896, the ban in female athletes continued. In the 1900 Olympiad women were finally included, but it was not until 1932 that the 1st African- American were finally chosen to participate in the Olympic games held in Los Angeles/ California [...] Black female Olympians force in sport and society, throughout the 20th century, and as we enter the 21st, they continue to irrepressibly fracture the oppressive stigmas attached to race, and gender, and increasingly, sexuality. (79)

As we know disabled people are considered as abnormal, by the so-called normal once. Disabled people's voice are subsumed by the dominant or powerful socio-group; the able-bodies. In such social scenario, disabled woman is doubly marginalizes from the society. Hence, a woman is stigmatized where being disabled and woman is marginalized twice from the soico-group. The women is marginalizes not only the gaze of patriarchal society but also deprived from every socio-economics factors as in the heath education, employment and other services. In the male

dominated society women is always perceived as other in such social set-up women is consider as a secondary component in the society. From the beginning women were always seen as secondary factor. They were always historicized, objectified in the male dominated society and even perceived them as the 'other'. Gerda learner thus says, "Women had no history. So they were told; so they believed. Thus over symbol system which most decisively disadvantaged women" (144). in this way the women was always mythologized by the patriarchal norms.

The system of patriarchy can function only with the co-operation of women. And every docile, innocent and ignorant woman is desired in a patriarchal community to have supremacy over the women. With the dominant role in the community women were deprived from the social discourse. Men in fact, become the director of the women. Gerda Lerner therefore says:

The system of patriarchy can function only with the co- operation of women. This co-operation is secured by a variety of means: gender indoctrination: educational deprivation; the denial to women of knowledge of their history; the dividing of women, one from other by defining "repectability" and "deviance" according to women's sexual activities; by restraints and outright coercion: by discrimination in access in to economic resources and political power; and by awarding class privilege to confirming women. (142)

Therefore, women have always experienced the reality of self and community, known it, and shared it with each other. Yet' living in the world experience bears the stigma of insignificance. Disabled women are often discriminated not only because they are women but also because they are disabled. Disabled women are more subjected to a greater isolation due to the stigma of disability and related myth and fears.

Superstition beliefs and prejudice contributes strongly isolation of disabled women, be it directly or not:

The problems of women with the disabilities are further aggravated due to the accordance of inferior status to them within their own sex. Disabled women also lack role models and powerful advocates of their rights and problems. They are inadequately represented in the disability sector, which is largely dominated by disabled men unaware of the specific concern of disabled women. They do not have any representation in woman's organization and NGOs fighting against violence or for social empowerment, equality, rights and opportunities. Disabled women, thus have to fight not only with their own disability but also with an insensitive society. (Bhambani 86)

Women with disabilities are socially invisible, for they appear less and are seen less in public than the able-bodied people. As a minority group, physically disabled women are always ignored and devalued by majority. Because of the fear to be devalued by majority people they are less seen in the public places. This leads to further stigmatization. As a result they are tied in the chain of stigmatization in the long run which cannot be broken. Hence, stigmatized people are colonized by dominant groups.

Dominant group always possess the power. Power to control and have authority over society's rules and regulation. Power is another to cause stigma. Discipline was one of the symbols of power. For or example we can see in soldiers "..., likewise they will be taught never to fix their eyes on the ground, but to look straight at those they pass...to remain motionless until the order is given, without moving the head, the hand or the feet ... lastly to march with bold step, with knee and

ham taut, on the points of the feet, which should face out wards.” (180). Soldiers self-identity is acknowledge by how they obey the order. Soldier’s docile body is manipulated, shaped, and trained, to obey the order. The classical age discovered the body as object and target of power.

On the whole the stigmatized are ostracized, devalued, rejected, scorned, ordered and shunned. They experience discrimination, insults, attacks, and are even murdered. Here the question arises: Would stigma persist if stigmatized people did not feel stigmatized or inferior?

Lerita.M.coleman gives answer to this question:

Certainly, a national pride didn’t lessen then persecution of the Jews, nor does it provide freedom for black in South Africa. These two example illustrate how pervasive and powerful the social control aspects of stigma are, empowering the stigmatizer and stripping the stigmatized of power. (223)

Historically people of African descendant in the USA have experienced a stigmatization based on presumptions about their racial character and identity. This doesn’t mean that the responsibility for being stigmatized lies with oneself and the dominated group should always remain inferior and passive. They can overcome the stigma by ignoring the norms and avoiding or disobeying the existing laws based on stigma like Mahatma Gandhi and civil rights activist Rosa parks. The person who overcomes the stigma wins the world. Its current example is American most awaited president Obama Barrack, who is Afro-American.

Coleman states that:

“Understanding that the rationale for discrimination and segregation based on stigma lies in the mind of the stigmatizer has led people like

Mahatma Gandhi and civil rights activist Rosa Parks to rise above the feeling of stigmatization, to ignore the norms, and to disobey the existing laws based on the stigma” (223)

Finally, stigma theory reminds us that the problems we confront are not disability, ethnicity, race, class, homosexuality, religion or gender; they are instead the inequalities, negative attitudes, misrepresentations, institutional practices that result from the process of stigmatization.

CHAPTER-III

Resistance Against Stigma in Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

In the well told and extremely readable story *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini explores the nature of Amir's psychologically constructed mind set against the turbulent background of his native Afghanistan. Amir is a privileged member of the dominant Pashtun tribe growing up in affluent Kabul in the seventies. Hassan is his devoted servant and a member of the oppressed Hazara tribe, whose first word was the name of his boy-master, the boys are inseparable as child in the relatively stable Afghanistan of the early 1970's but are from different religious and ethnic background. Amir belongs to privileged majority Pashtun and Hassan belongs to an ethnic minority Hazara, an oppressed class of Afghanistan. Despite this inseparable relationship, Amir never feels comfortable about their relationship. As the consciousness of race and religion grows more and more in Amir's mind, he falsely creates the circumstances where Hassan is framed as thief and breaks the relationship.

Hosseini explores the picture of Afghanistan in which Pashtuns were educated and superior to illiterate Hazara. Stigmatization of loathed minority group in Afghanistan is well captured in the novel by the writer. Even 12 yrs old Amir is conscious of his superior position in comparison to Hassan:

[...] as I read him stories he couldn't read for himself. That Hassan would grow up illiterate like Ali and most Hazara had been decided the minute he had been born, perhaps even the moment he had been conceived in Sanabbar's unwelcoming womb after all, what use did a servant have for the written word? (24)

Therefore, Amir is conscious about his position though he plays with Hassan. He never gives up one chance to insult Hassan while telling him a story, "My favorite

part of reading to Hassan was when we came across a big word that he didn't know. I'd tease him expose his ignorance" (24).

History is evident that discrimination of minority Hazara group is not new. Having Mongoloid and Mogul descendants, Hazaras are barely mentioned in the textbooks too. Pashtuns had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras who had tried to rise against the Pashtuns. In the nineteenth century, the Pashtuns had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. Though, they tried to rise against but the Pashtuns had "quelled them with unspeakable violence" (8). They had killed Hazara, driven them from their lands, buried their homes, and sold their women. "The reason Pashtun had oppressed Hazara is that Pashtuns were sunni Muslims while Hazara were Shia;s (8). This group is circled with negatives attributes. Further-more the awareness of existing norms of his class, Amir never considered Hassan as his friend:

The curious thing was. I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either. Not in the usual sense, anyhow. Never mind that we taught each other to ride a bicycle with no hands, or to build a fully functional homemade camera out of a cardboard box. Never mind we spent entire inters flying kites, running kites. Never mind that to me, the face of Afghanistan is that of a boy with a thin-boned frame, a shaved head, and low-set ears, a boy with a Chinese doll face perpetually lit by a harelipped smile. (22)

An encounter with Assef, the local bully, in which Hassan spring has appalling consequences, destroying their friendship and driving Amir to desperate measures to rid himself of Hassan, " I actually aspired to cowardice, because the alternative the real reason I was running was that Assef was right [...] he was just a Hazara , wasn't he? (68).

Ali and Hassan decide to live at their own; Amir's relief is short lived: his cowardice has been detected. Baba and Amir are soon in flight with themselves when the Russians invade. They flee first to Pakistan, and then to America where Baba's old life of influence and power is at an end. They make a new life for themselves, embracing the San Francisco Afghan community, where Amir eventually marries. But Amir remains haunted by his failure to protect Hassan. In part, it is these demons and sometimes impossible quest for forgiveness that bring him back to his war torn native land after it comes under Taliban rule. Once in Peshawar, where Rahim Khan, Baba's old friend is dying, Amir learns that he is to find Hassan's lost son, Sohrab. In doing so, he must summon his courage and face not only his old enemy but also the destruction that has been brought upon his homeland. So, now the position between those who suffer and those who cause suffering is same. Sohrab has to suffer because he is from marginalized Hazara group.

The novel forecasts the existing social evils, shocking human beings on the basis of religion and ethnic consciousness. Particularly, it presents the heart breaking picture of marginalized Hazaras and devastating thinking of so-called upper-class Pashtuns which has been prevailing in Afghanistan for ages. The religious tussle between Shia and Sunni is further clarified in the novel, "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 Shia's and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing" (22).

Through symbolic structure, Hosseini deals with the inequalities and injustices in Afghanistan throughout the terrible sweep of history. As we know, both Amir and Hassan were Muslim, but inequalities were always on the way for poor Hazara people's just because they were Shi'a Muslim. In Afghanistan, where Pashtun people dominated the society, Hazara people's voice was always marginalized. In

such social scenario, Hazara was always perceived as other in such social set-up, Hazara is considered secondary. Like women, Hazara people had no history, so they were told and they believed that the, “school texts barely mentioned them and referred to their ancestry only I passing” (8).

The concept of normalcy is social construct; it is not fixed and is shaped by cultural, historical and social forces. Normalcy becomes the supreme goal for many stigmatized individual until they realize that there is no precise definition of normalcy except what they would be without their stigma. A man is stigmatized because he fails to represent the majority of the population. Hassan and Ali in the novel are stigmatized because they fail to represent the majority i.e. Pashtun groups. Ali is double marginalized because first he represents the minority group and second he has Polio. Once, when he has gone bazaar to buy Nann with Amir, he imitates his walk trying to make fun of him:

“I was walking behind him, humming, trying to imitate his walk. I watched him awing his scraggy leg in as weeping arc, watched his whole body tilt impossibly to the right every time he planted that foot [...] that got me giggling. Little turned around, caught me aping him.

He didn’t say anything. Not then, not ever. He just kept walking. (7)

Though he didn’t say anything but we can feel that he was humiliated by the particular incident. Every human being feels bad to be insulted and funned by others. Even the older kids chase him and mock his walking.

Ali’s faced and his walk frightened some of the younger children in the neighborhood. But the real trouble was with the older kids. They chased him on the street and mocked him when he hobbled by. Some

had taken to calling him Babalu, who did you eat today? They barked to a chorus of laughter. “Who did you eat, you flat-nosed Babalu?”(8)

Hassan, too, has to face such situation. In one overcast winter day, when they were chasing the kite, Amir decides to toy with him. As we know, stigmatized people are puppets in the hand of normal people:

Suddenly I decided to toy with him a little. “I don’t know. Would you?”

“I’d sooner eat dirt”, he said with a look of indignation.

“Really? You’d do that?”

He threw me a puzzled look. “Do what?”

“Eat dirt if I told you to,” I said. [...]

But there was something fascinating-albeit in a sick way-about teasing Hassan. Kind of like when e used to play insect torture. Expect no, he was the ant and I was holding the magnifying glass. (47)

Hassan feels humiliated and inferiorized by Amir’s question, “would you [...] eat dirt if I told you to?”(47) Amir shows his superiority by teasing without understanding him. This particular situation hurts him and his face changes. The minority Hazara group’s people are mocked and scolded everywhere. The deformed Hassan being the part of this group faces such situation many times. Once when Amir and Hassan to movie, they use the short-cut through military barracks Zainab for a new Iranian movie.

You! The Hazara! Look at me when I’m taking to you! The soldier barked. He handed his cigarette to the guy next to him, made a circle with thumb and index finger of one hand. Poked the middle finger of his other hand through the circle. Poked in and out. In and out. “I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her good. I took her from behind by that creek over there.” The soldier laughed. One of them made a squealing sound. (6)

Hassan feels humiliated, “in the dark, after movie had started, I heard Hassan next to me, croaking. Tears were sliding down his cheeks” (7). Even the teachers distinguish Shi’a and Hazara as if they were disease, “He skimmed through a couple of pages, snickered, handed the book back. That the only thing Shi’a people do well, he said, picking up his paper, ‘passing themselves as martyrs. He wrinkled his nose when he said the word Shi’a, like it was some kind of disease” (8). In Afghan society, Hazara people are deeply discredited with the negative view about them. Assef, a son of affluent Pashtun Afghan father and German mother’s vision that, “Afghanistan is the land of Pastun. It always has been, always will be. We are the true afghan, the pure afghan, not this flat nose here. His people polluted our homeland our Watan. They dirty our blood” (35). Afghanistan for Pasthun, signifies the Pasthun mentality to dominate Hazara. Hazara people are compared with garbage, dirty things. They have no self respect and identity of their own, “Afghanistan is like a beautiful mansion littered with garbage and someone has to take out the garbage” (249).

History has seen discrimination done upon the of Hazara groups. They were born to be servant in Pashtun house. They have no self-identity and self-respect. They are deeply discredited in Afghans society, though they are the citizens of that country. Different names are given to them despite their own names like; a loyal Hazara, Loyal as a dog disrespectful donkey, Hey, Babalu, who did you eat today? They barked to a chorus of laughter “who did you eat you flat-nosed Babalu?” (8).

Stigmatization of Hassan is based on religion and historical background. Discrimination of Hazara people is not new. It has its root back. They face attack even death without any reason. People sitting in supper-ladder show their power and feel that they have right to do anything:

In 1933, the year Baba was born and the year Zahir Shah began his forty –year reign of Afghanistan, two brother, young men from a wealthy and the reputable family in Kabul, got behind the wheel of their father’s ford roadster High on the hashish and mast on French wine, they struck and killed a Hazara husband and wife on the road to Paghman. (21)

This is not more than the story of Ali himself, took place when he as just five year old. It has become a legacy for those who are considered to be in the upper ladder of social hierarchy to torture, to betray, to ruin, to stigmatize and even to seize the life of such gullible ethnic minorities. People like Hassan are the scapegoats in the hand of people like Amir, who even have to give up their life for nothing: Amir doesn’t kill Hasan .He is killed by another Sunni, Pashtun later along with his wife on the streets leaving their son Sohrab, an orphan, with the same fate that his grandfather had met long ago, but Amir even have to suffer later because of his childhood choices.

Though they were fed by the same nurse, which that means that they share a brother hood relation, a kinship that not even time could break. Amir breaks the relation and even the creates the situation where Hassan and Ali are forced to leave the house. Ali says, “Life here is impossible for us now, Agha sahib we’re leaving” (92). They are forced to ostracize themselves from Pashtuns society to their Hazarajat.

The stigmatization process is indeed the pernicious social tool, constructed by cultures, by the social groups and by the individuals to designate some human difference as discrediting. Thus, society plays an important role in the mind of individual. Though Amir and Hassan have a friendship, Amir didn’t accept the relation heartily. His mind was covered with consciousness of class and race. When, Amir tells his first ever story to Hassan. He gets some feedback from Hassan. He was

well-aware that Hazara child have no right to read and write. But, Instead of this Hassan criticizes his story which makes him stunned. Amir mind covered with conscious of class and race explores that “Hassan, who couldn’t read and had never written a single word in his entire life. A voice, cold and dark, suddenly whispered in my ear, what does he know, that illiterate Hazara? He’ll never be anything but a cook. How dare he criticize you?” (30).

Stigma allows some individuals to feel superior over others. Superiority and inferiority, however, are two sides of the same coin. In order for one person to feel superior, there must be another person who is perceived to be or who actually feels inferior. Stigmatized people are needed for many non stigmatized people to feel good about themselves. If there would have not been Hassan whom Amir would have shown his superiority? Obviously there would be next Hazara boy to be an escape goat in the hand of people like Amir. Because when Amir grows up in Kabul, the slave- like old practices of Hazara still continued. Daily discourse makes Amir to think that he is superior compared to Hassan. Thus, he says, “While I ate and complained about homework, Hassan made my bed, polished my shoe, ironed my outfit for the day, and packed my books and pencils” (23).

Stigmatized people are even ostracized by the society. Thus, they are well aware of their position in the society. In the novel too when Baba and Rahim khan sipped black tea and listened the breaking news of the coup on Radio Kabul. The word ‘republic’ came over and over again. Hassan asked Amir “Does ‘republic’ means Father and I will have to move away? [...] I don’t want them to send me and Father away” (33). Poor Hassan was well aware about the existing norms and social rules which were cruel against his people. Also he accepts the way he has been living. When Amir says that he will bring television to him when he would be grow up boy.

He replies, "I'll put it on my table where I keep my drawing," Hassan said [...] for how he'd accepted the fact that he'd grow old in the mud shack in the yard, the way his father had." (51). Stigmatized people accept their devalued status as the puppets of the social system. Amir falsely creates the situation where Hassan has to accept that he is a thief. When Baba asked, "Did you steal that money? Did you steal Amir's watch, Hassan's?" Hassan's reply as a single word, delivered in a thin, raspy voice: "Yes." (91). This particular incident turns Hassan into Silence. When Amir forces him to look at Hassan, he remains silent; "... I forced myself to look at Hassan but his head was downcast, his shoulders slumped, his finger twirling a loose string on the hem of his shirt" (93). Long after when he is brought to that house, he prefers to live in that mud shack yard. Rahim Khan forces to live in main building but he says, "What will he think? He comes back to Kabul after the war and finds that I have assumed his place in the house?" (182).

There is only the servant and master relationship between Pashtuns and Hazara. If someone tries to break this relation society becomes obstacles in their way. This point is clear by Rahim Khan revelation with Amir, Rahim Khan says, when he and Homaina, Hazara girl tries to go against saying:

You should have seen the look on my father's face when I told him. My mother actually fainted. My sisters splashed her face with water. They fanned her and look at me if I had slit her throat. My brother Jalal actually went to fetch his hunting rifle before my father stopped him" [...] it was Homaira and me against the world. And I'll tell you this, Amir Jan: In the end, the world always wins. (86)

Stigma is a dynamic process of devaluation that significantly discredits an individual in the eyes of other. Assef never gave respect to the minority Hazara group. He always had a view that these people impure his people's blood. Specially, he tortures and devalues Hassan, a poor Hazara boy.

Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hand on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his own

belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper. He moved his head slightly and I caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. (66)

It has been the legacy of pashtun people to show their supremacy against the Hazara people. Assef being the part of Pashtun group show his supremacy to abuse Hassan. And he feels that, "there's nothing sinful about teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey" (66).

Stigmatized people are ignored by the so-called non-stigmatized group. Stigmatized ones lose their self identity in front of dominant group. When Hassan requests Amir for walk, Amir states that, "I want you to stop harassing me, I want you to go away" I snapped (77). This makes Hassan sad and deep inside he feels humiliated by his so called friend's behavior. They accept their devalued status as the puppets of the social system as the 'other'. And they even lose their self-respect behaving in way what actually is desire from them.

Stigma reflects the value judgment of other group thereby creating a sense of supremacy. Afghanistan under Taliban rule banned kite fighting. Not only Pashtuns but Taliban also disrespected minority Hazara group. They were mercilessly murdered, "And to year later in 1998, they massacred the Hazara in Mazar's Sharif (187). There is a general view regarding Hazara people that they were liars, thieves, criminal and so on. False statements are created about these people. When Hassan confesses that they have been living in that house to care but no one believes him:

The Talibs said he as a lair and a thief like all Hazaras and ordered him to get his family out of the house by sundown. Hassan protested. [...]

Hassan protested again. So they took him to the street [...] and shoot him in the back of the head.”

“No.”

“-Farzana came screaming and attacked them-“

“No”

“-shot her too. Self-defense, they claimed later.” (192)

They are treated less than human. They have no self- identity; also it is far away from them. Respect for humanity is missing there in Afghanistan, earlier when country was ruled by king and later when it was under Taliban rule. Poor Hazara people are always in trap. People from superior group never give one chance to dishonor them. Those who are dishonored, have no self-identity. Ali is dishonored by his master and Hassan whose identity was stolen. Amir meeting with the Talib, clears the point that minority Hazara group has no respect in superior groups eye:

Door- to-door. We only rested for food and prayer,” the Talib said. He said it fondly, like a man telling a great party he’d attended. “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 then too. We left them in the streets for days. We left them for dogs. Dog meat for dogs. (243)

The process of stigmatization depends upon cultural and historical background. Stigma is a social construct rather than belonging to the particular dominant groups. Moving from one social or cultural context to another can change both the definition and consequences of stigma. For example when Hassan and his family were in the Hazarjat they were happy. When Rahim khan offers to get back to Kabul, Hassan’s revelation makes clear that they are happy, “Hassan said the village was his home, he and Farzana had made a life for themselves there. And Bamiyan is so close” [...]

(181). Coleman had stated in his essay that, “A black student could feel stigmatized in a predominantly white university because the majority of the student are white and white skin is a desired trait. But a black student in a predominantly black university is not likely to feel the effect of stigma” (218). Thus, the sense of being stigmatized or having a stigma is inextricably tied to social context. Hazara people are inextricably tied to social context. A Hazara person is desire trait in Hazarajat. Thus, Hassan is happy there.

Stigma is considered to be open-ended synthesis that continues from one generation to next. As we know stigma can be mentioned as three different types but in this novel “*The Kite runner*” we are exploring the tribal stigma of race, nation and religion which can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of family for e.g. Sohrab, the son of Hassan. He has to suffer because first he was the son of Hazara family and most importantly son of poor Hassan. This is the main issue to be sexually abused by Assef. Assef, when he was a member of Pashtun group, used his superiority to dominate Hassan. After many years when he is Taliban officer, he is using his power to destroy Sohrab’s future by enslaving him. When Amir returns to Afghanistan to search Sohrab, an orphanage sexually abused by Assef, “His head as shaved, his eyes darkened with mascara and his cheeks glowed with an unnatural red” (244).

Sohrab is puppet in the hand of Assef. He has to do what Assef orders him. Sohrab’s docile body is manipulated, shaped and trained to the order:

One of the guards pressed a button and Pashtun music filled the room
[...] sohrab raised his arms and turned slowly. The stood on the tiptoes,
spun gracefully, dipped to his knees, straightened, and spun again. His
little hands swiveled at the wrists, his fingers snapped, and his head

sung side to side like pendulum. His feet pounded the floor, the bells jingling in perfect harmony with the beat of the table. He kept his eyes closed [...] Sohrab danced in circle, eyes closed, danced until the music stopped. (245)

Stigmatized people are violated by non- stigmatized people. It has become the mentality of power-holder to torture and think that they can do anything to show their power. For example, when Amir confesses that he wants to take Sohrab to a better place, Assef tortures Sohrab:

He shoved Sohrab in the back, pushed him right into the table. Sohrab's hips struck the table, knocking it upside down and spilling the grapes. He fell on them, face first, and stained his shirt purple with grape juice. The table's legs, crossing through the ring of brass balls, were now pointing to the ceiling. (250)

Sohrab, a boy whose hands are small, the skin dry and calloused, feels stigmatized. Amir also feels his condition sympathetic, he who first saw in the Polariod with his father; there he was secured in the father's arms finds his condition pathetic now.

Permanent social rejection forces people to limit their relation to other stigmatized people and to those whom, social bond outweighs the stigma such as family member, friend and relatives. Social rejection's deep seated in Shorab's mind which forces him to limit his relation with the others. When Amir offers his hand for friendship, no answer was from his side, "I put my hand on his arm, gingerly, but he flinched. He dropped his cards and pushed away on the stool. He walked back to the window" (267).

Because of fear to face the humiliation, torture, rejection and so on stigmatizes people prefer to remain in isolation untouched by society. Moreover, they hesitate to

be seen in public places and also prefer to communicate less. As a result, they are tried in chain of signifiers i.e. more stigmatized. Mentally tortured Sohrab denies going back to orphanage because of fear already existing in his mind. When Amir confesses that he should go back to orphanage:

“Home for kids?” he said, his smile fading. “You mean an orphanage?”

“It would only be for a little while.”

“No,” he said. “No, please.” [...]

“You promised you’d never put me in one of those places, Amir Agha,” he said. His voice was breaking tears pooling in his eyes [...]

“Please! Please, no! He croaked. “I’m scared of that place. They’ll hurt me! I don’t want to go.”(299)

Sohrab feels ignored and rejected. This makes him to commit suicide. Like stone, he has an appearance but not the feeling. After his father’s death, Sohrab becomes an Orphan and is enslaved by Assef. His identity changes from Sohrab to the sexually abused child. As a tortured soul, he wants his old life desperately, “I want my old life back,” [...] “I want my Father and Mother Jan I want Sasa. I want to play with Rahim Khan Sahib in the garden. I want to live in our house again.” he dragged him forearm across his eyes “I want my old life back” (309).

Fearing to go back to that desert place i.e. orphanage, he attempts to commit suicide, “Sohrab was under twenty four- hours-a day suicide watch. Hospital protocol, Dr Nawaz had informed me” (306-307). We can interpret the line by arguing that Sohrab has no option other than to give-up his life than to feel humiliation, torture and so on. As a result he commits suicide.

After, suicide he becomes silence. He was well aware that after bandages were removed, he was just another homeless Hazara orphan, who has no-identity:

But he knew that when the bandages were removed and the hospital garment, he was just another homeless Hazara orphan. What choice did

he have? Where could he go? So what I took as a yes from him as in actuality more of a quiet surrender, not so much an acceptance as an act of relinquishment by one too weary to decide, and far too tired to believe. What he yearned was his old life. What he got was me and America. (310-311)

This line shows the helplessness of a Hazara boy, who had no option but to surrender himself against his fate. His identity is under crisis, thus has had an inferior complexity

No one ever really knows when he will acquire stigma. Thus, stigma is difficult to avoid and is an inescapable fate for anybody. Amir, who used his knowledge and power to stigmatize Hassan. But, later it becomes an inescapable fate for him. Though religiously, he was superior to Hassan but psychologically he was inferior. His nature misses the guts to accept the truth i.e. he was dishonest, disloyal towards his friend which hurts him for his rest of life. No one is free from stigma because difference arouses stigma, which engenders negative stereotype behavior. To, overcome his guilt, he suggest Baba to keep new servants in his home replacing Hassan and Ali. When Baba was digging the soil and planting the bulbs. Amir says, “Baba has you ever thought about getting new servants?” (78), this shows Amir’s fears to face the truth. He was dishonest to everybody and towards himself. Moreover, it also manifests the underlying fear of being stigmatized as anyone can be stigmatized at anytime.

Though, physically Amir’s suffers starts from Rahim khan calls but mentally he suffered after he made the choices over those mountains:

There is way to be good again, he’d said.

A way to end the cycle

With a little boy. An orphan.

Hassan's son. Somewhere in Kabul. (198)

Still plagued by remorse, Amir heads for Pakistan where he is to make a shocking discovery. He is soon back in Afghanistan, in search of one person who could forgive his sin. Hassan and Sohrab stigma transmit to Amir, the person who made other to suffer has to suffer now:

“But I wondered. True. I hadn't made Ali step on the land mine, and I hadn't brought the Taliban to the house to shoot Hassan. But I had driven Hassan and Ali out of the house. Was it too far-fetched to imagine that things might have turned out differently if I hadn't? [...] where most people didn't even know what a Hazara was. May be no. But maybe so. (198)

The choices he had made over those mountains and also framed Hassan as a thief has landed him back to his native land; “sadness came over me. Returning into an old, forgotten friend and seeing that life hadn't been good to him, that he'd become homeless and destitute” (216). The more he faces the truth, sense of regrets increases in him more. Till, when he was in America, he tried to drive away his sin but circumstances didn't let him. More over he regret for what he had done. He feels heartily helpless now. He is mentally and physically weak. Inferiority complex increase in him more:

Maybe so. We had both sinned and betrayed. But Baba had found a way to create good out of his remorse. What had I done, other than take my guilt out on the very same people I had betrayed and then try to forget it all? What had I, other than become an insomniac? What I had ever done to right things? (264)

Earlier he was unaware of what was right and what was wrong. Now situation, time and circumstances has changed Amir's mind. Conversation with Soraya reminds him how he has used his knowledge to ridicule Hassan. The sense of regret gets deeper and deeper in his mind. He remembers; “Yes,” I lied. I thought of how I had used my

literacy to ridicule Hassan. How I had teased him about big words he didn't know (132). Remembering those incidents which were occurred with Hassan makes him embarrassed for what he has done. Inferiority increases resulting into low self-esteem. When Soraya explores her past Amir becomes sure that she is better person than him, "courage was just one of them" (144). Mentally he is inferior and weak and never dare to deal with truth maybe he was feared what other will thing. After the revelation of Rahim Khan that Hassan had with him in his house. Listening Hassan name from Rahim Khan, his past memory haunts him. How he had cheated his loyal friend and challenged his loyalty:

"I wasn't alone for all of them. Hassan lived there with me."

"Hassan," I said. When the last time I had spoke his name? Those thorny old barbs of guilt bore into me once more, as if speaking his name had broken a spell, set them free to torment me a new. Suddenly the air in Rahim khans little flat was too thick, too hot, too rich with the smell of the street. (176)

The attitude he had shown towards Hassan when he was child. Now, he has to pay the price for those entire wrong acts which he had done to Hassan. Also he heartily regrets for all those acts he committed Hassan, who was loyal to Amir. But, Amir challenges his loyalty and humiliates him. After many years now he has to prove his worthiness and he was under microscope:

As I waited for his reply, my mind flashed back to a winter day from long ago. Hassan and I sitting on the snow beneath a leafless sour cherry tree. I had played a cruel game with Hassan that day, toyed with gun, asked him if he would chew dirt to prove his loyalty to me. Now I was the one under the microscope, the one who had to prove my worthiness. I deserved this. (310)

Now, it becomes clear that Amir creates the situation where Hassan has to suffer. He committed the sin which ruined both boys future. Sohrab, son of Hassan same fate of his Father follows him. Being the viewer of shorab suffers, Amir guilt bores on him more. And regrets for his sin, which makes Hassan, Sohrab and he himself to suffer. In search of Sohrab, he landed back to Afghanistan in hope to drive away his sin. And he is somehow successful to overcome his regret. He bring Sohrab to America who has taken cover himself in a dark place, "it was the silence of one who has taken cover in a dark place, curled up all the edges and tucked them under"(315).The person who overcomes the stigma wins the world. Amir who feared to face the truth later faces it. His inner guilt comes out. With the little smile of Sohrab, who has imposed himself in silence? When Amir looks down at Sohrab, "One corner of his mouth had curled up just so. A smile. Lopsided. Hardly there. But there." (323). This makes Amir happy at least Sohrab had smiled. Though, it was the only smile, nothing more" (324) but hope is there so he welcome it with open arms thinking that, "when spring comes, it melt the snow one flake at a time and maybe I just witnessed the first flake

melting.” This line reflects the happiness of Amir without his guilt. Finally, he is successful to overcome the stigma tied with him.

CHAPTER-IV

Conclusion

The present study of the novel *The Kite Runner* deconstructs the binary position between those who suffer and those who cause suffering. The suffering of stigmatized people i.e. Hassan and Sohrab stigma transmits to Amir. Later, this is inscape fate for him too. Though there are issues like Afghan diasporas, migration, family relationship, hypocrisy of those hiding their sins under the cloak of religious righteousness, the dichotomy of the privileged and unprivileged the novel *The Kite Runner* uses the political events of Afghanistan from the 1970s to 2002 showing the realities of Afghan society, to foreground a touching and memorable story between stigmatized and non-stigmatized group. The study analyzes and interprets the marginalization of minority Hazara group, which brings stigma on them.

Khaled Hosseini present *The Kite Runner* with simplicity and clarity, a novel of great hidden intricacy, most harrowing truth about the evil of power, the power of religion to shock human beings on the basis of religion and ethnic consciousness *The Kite Runner* tells a heart breaking story focusing on Hassan, Ali and Sohrab and non-stigmatized group focusing Assef and Amir, Who later feel stigma by his guilt. Amir is Sunni, Hassan is Shia. He is born to a privileged class; the other to a loathed minority one to a father of enormous presence; the other to a crippled man. One is a voracious reader; the other illiterate. The poor Hassan is born with a harelip but Amir's gaps are better hidden deep inside.

Hosseini's story soars from the last days of Kabul's monarchy into the atrocities of the Taliban which turned the boy's green playing fields red with blood. It points an eye opening picture of what Afghanistan was and what it has become shockingly, one thing never changed stigmatization of minority group dominating and even killing

them. Earlier Pashtuns used their power to mock, shunned and even shocked the minority group. Later when country was under Taliban, this sympathetic group has to face double marginalization one from Pashtun people and second from Taliban.

Through symbolic structure, Hosseini deals with inequalities and injustice. The novel is told through the character of Amir himself. The story is about two friends who symbolize opposite ends of a sociopolitical hierarchy Amir is Pashtun, Sunni, wealthy and literate whereas his servant's son, Hassan, is Hazara, Shia poor and illiterate. They both have lost their mother and shared the same wet nurse. The deformed Hassan and his father are mocked in public as they emerge from a minority Hazara. Hazaras and Shias could never move up the hierarchy. The hierarchy which was there from ancient time. This all leads to the stigmatization of Hassan.

Historically, the Hazaras were the most oppressed ethnicity in Afghanistan. Till now they are oppressed. Nonetheless, the protagonist realizes that in the long run he is better off because he is Pashtun and not a Hazara in such a discrimination society. Society shapes the individual mind. In the novels, Amir's mind is shaped by society, where minority group's behavior is discrediting. As a result, they are stigmatized in long run. But, later he feels stigma because of guilt, which ultimately is overcome by Amir.

To a final analysis *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, therefore, depicts the consciousness of superior state i.e. power by the character Amir, which leads to stigmatization of Hassan, thereby causing him to suffer. Later it is escapable fate for him to. But finally, he overcomes it.

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