

I. Poetics of Women's Suffering

The Bookseller of Kabul, a non-fictional novel by Asne Seierstad, portrays the pathetic condition of women due to culture, orthodox dogmas, civil war, patriarchal society and socio-economic condition Post Taliban society. The exemplified characters like Saliqa and Jamila who are bitterly abused and locked inside their rooms; even Jamila is killed by her own brothers in the name of morality, religion and custom. In this book Seierstad tries to show the lives of Afghani men, women and children lead after the fall of the Taliban. She does this through a case study of one family. Economically, the Khans are not upper class family but the way they live justifies their class. In her first meeting to Khan she finds deep class division that is dominant in the society. The real name of Khan is Shah Muhammad Rais but in this book his name is changed as Sultan Khan; the middle class family in terms of earnings. The author writes and investigates about the Khan and his life in her book. She finds the life of Khan is not different than other Muslims as long as traditional.

The structure of Afghan society is constructed in the religious shape with the psychology of male domination as the male captures all means of production in the society but the writer tries to show the so called democratic environment in the Afghan society but in reality Khans represents the autocrat class. While Sultan generally supposed women's rights, capitalism and other social liberties in his conversations with outsiders, he still keeps a firm, patriarchal grip on his family. Despite being wealthier than most Afghans, Sultan refuses to send his sons to school, and instead forces them to work at his bookstore. He marries a second wife and exiled his first wife to Pakistan where she has to live alone and keep his second house. Sultan's ruling arm also extended over his youngest sister, Lelia, whom he keeps in his home as a servant. This contradiction is due to old tradition and values that

dominates the female in the society. However, Seiersted highlights the pathetic condition of women in Islamic culture; it shows the possibilities of women's emancipation from conventional norms determined by Islam culture. The dream of female characters Shakila and Liela to be free in *The Bookseller of Kabul* reflects the suppression inflicted on the women by patriarchy in the Afghan Society. The society that commodifies the women regarding religion and culture, the domination due to class division the women in Afghan society are doubly suppressed in the novel; first they are female as sexually suppressed and second their class is economically deprived. In this context Naval El Saadawi says as follows:

Before Islam it even used to happen that a woman would practice polyandry and marry more than one man. The woman was not allowed to exceed ten husbands and if she overstepped this limit society branded her prostitution; in both of the case women are suppressed by the men in sex culture . . . However, most of women in the Muslim culture have succumbed to heavy load of patriarchal class society; women in the society work as labor of free of cost and have ended up prisoner, that prevents them from economic and social life of their society. (117)

As El Saadawi claims in the above lines the culture and values prevailed in the Muslim society overlooks the women under the patriarchy further forms new way to treat women in the name of religion. In terms of sexual affairs the living standard of the people is closely related to economic standard as the producing the means of survive is most important than other remaining. Male in the society are head who earn for their family , as a result there is the psychology rooted in to the females that a men who is capable to mention the survives for women can use woman by his will as in

the novel *Sultan* uses his sister. In this context the economist as well as critics

Amartya Sen views as follows:

One of the most brutal features of the gender inequality takes the form of physical violence against women. The incidence of such violence is remarkably high, not only in the poorer and less developed economies, but also in the modern and wealthy societies. Indeed, the frequency of battering of women even in the richest and most developed economies [...], studies have suggested that there are as many as 1.5million cases per year of rape and physical assault on women in the third world. But, not in the least parameter the Muslim women face great difficulty when they live in poor economy with strong tradition and values. (236-237)

As an economist and critics Sen, tries to show the relation of economy that dominates the life of women in the third world society. The economic status of the people may differ but it is not as much that the Marxist feminism, thus studies it in detail where there is relation of the class to each other. Sen with his great knowledge in economy clarifies the statement that economy determines the lives of people. In the Muslim culture the economy and tradition plays dominant role. Sexuality, gender and class are determined by the economy in most incidents. In *The Book Seller of Kabul* the writer shows the family economically middle standard but in terms of culture this family is considered as bourgeois family but the female characters in this family are suppressed. In this context critics Rhys' *Wide Sargasso* comments as follows:

Set in the post Taliban Afghanistan, the book attempts to depict a picture of the life of an Afghani middle class family. I had randomly picked it, attracted by its seemingly interesting title only to find myself

utterly disappointed. The writer, Asne Seierstad, who has worked as a reporter in many of the war ravaged parts of the world, has this time failed to portray a candid and impartial presentation of an Afghan life. From the example of the text books by the communist leaders and the Taliban to the way a wedding is described as a third rate wedding simply because it was celebrated in the conventional Afghan way clearly shows that in the book everything contrary to the American culture, life style and ideology is presented as evil and oppressive. It is because the system is under the bourgeois culture. (12)

In the above paragraph Rhys' Wide Sargasso claims that the Muslim culture dominates entire life of human beings in Afghani society. In the western discourses about this country, it is claimed that the people in this country are savage and uncivilized; they follow the orthodox norms and live in forests. This discourse about Afghani society creates stereotypical concept among the men who practices in a way that women have no alternatives except of being a puppet in the hand of patriarchy. Suguna Paul in her book *Women's Oppression Pattern and Perspective* comments about Muslim culture and the western discourse as follows:

It is the politics of western countries that shapes and reshapes the culture for their own benefit. While talking about Muslim culture and specially about Afghan culture the American and Europeans creates a tradition and culture that thrive the whole Muslim world; as a result the rest of the world take it as it is described in the discourse, after the fall of Taliban the international community and countries declared their decision as the democracy and so on . . . thus it is the reality further guides the Muslim culture and about Muslims. (76)

Paul states the condition of women in Muslim culture that is shaped by western countries. She views the poor condition of women in the third world society. The attempt of western countries is to prove their superiority and domination over third world countries as Paul states in the above paragraph.

After spending three months with a bookseller, Sultan Khan and his family, Seierstad strongly brings out the daily life affair of Afghani people. She is able to portrait the events of Afghan traditions, customs, family models and the role of women, the changes felt by rule of USSR, Taliban and democratic coalition. She portraits the struggle for survival of Afghan people also. In this context Michael Arditti comments as follows:

A colorful portrait of people struggling to survive in the most brutal circumstances, bear witness to the power of literature to with stands even the most repressive region. Whatever Seierstad tries to show is that the region fully covered and practiced by culture and tradition and its domination over the life style of the people. The women who live in such situation are depicted by the writer in her novel, however it is her attempt to reveal the suppression. (16)

In the above lines Arditti comments upon the novel in the basis of the tradition and culture existing in Afghan society. The base structure of the society is its culture and other notions which forms new way to living. But the domination of USSR and other culture's interference in the community there exist a different class as shown by Seierstad in the novel. She criticizes the marriage system and other phenomenon of the cultures of Afghan to release the women from forth coming suppression. In this context Donald N. Willber writes as follows:

Under the Islamic law a man is permitted to have four wives and many concubines as he wishes. The prosperous head of an extended family group may have one or two supplementary wives. A man may take a second wife, if his first wife is barren or a young when first one grow old. About the marriage and sexual relation the Islamic law is liberal for men but as far as the women concern in terms of sexual relation there is provision but in favor or for the men's benefit women are allowed to have such relation. (264)

This is common in Muslim society that the men are head of the family and head of the every part of the social life; and the most important fact is that the men thus have power to create or to do whatever they wish to do. Religious practices also marginalized the women. Their wills, fate and even the lives are determined and controlled by Islam religion. In September 1996, Taliban broadcasted an appeal to women:

Islam is a religion of deliverance and it has decided that a certain dignity belongs to women. Women must not make it possible to attract the attention of evil people who look lustful upon them. A woman's responsibility is to bring up and gather her family together and attend food and clothes. If women dress fashionable, wear ornamented, tight seductive cloths to show off, they will be damned by the Islamic Sharia Law and can never expected to go to heaven. (87)

This is the part of Muslim law that prohibits women from every aspect of freedom though the system is called democratic. Seierstad shows the male domination in Afghan family system that is because of the different traditional concepts rooted in the male psychology. Though Sultan is in second position after his mother, his

position is stronger than his mother because of his economic control over family and norms of Islamic culture. He seems tyrant in the family and treats his son as a servant and compels him to sell candies and books in spite of attending school. He even resists his sister from getting education and doing jobs. Karen Steel views that:

Women in Afghanistan remain hidden anonymous identifiable only as 'burqua', their values determined by their premarital purity: and then by their ability to bear sons. This would be the fate all of Sultan Khan's female relatives including Bibigul, his mother, given away at eleven to a man in his sixties; Sharifa his pensioned off wife; Sonia his sixteen years old second wife; Feroza, is pity and hardworking sister who was sold at fifteen to a reach man in his forties. (55)

It is their customary habit of being hidden from other people but there is another important politics behind this hidden system is the sexual molesting and suppression. In the terms of Marx it is the commodification of the female body; the female body is used as a means of satisfaction for males. The oppression of women in Afghanistan is linked to a world of male dominance most significantly associated with the Islamic fundamentalist group the Taliban in the early 1990s. It was during this period that the last signposts of Marxism were torn down, and the rights of women were completely abolished. From the Marxist angle, this lack of hierarchical birthright puts them in a lower class. In this perspective the Marxist critics Ann Ferguson claims as follows:

Everywhere we find that women are excluded from certain crucial economic and major roles for political activities, that their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than are the roles of men. It means the women are merely treated as the object of the patriarchy. It seems fair to say then, that all contemporary

societies are to some extent male-dominated, and although the degree and expression of female subordination vary greatly, sexual asymmetry is presently a universal fact of human social life. (231)

Due to the economy of the people living in a community determined their class but in the case of women the class is already existed that dominates them in the name of religion, tradition, culture, values and other means of survival.

Asne Seierstad was born in 1970 to a feminist author mother and a leftist politician father, Seierstad did not stay long in her birthplace, Lillehammer Norway. She lived in France, and then went to Mexico after college; she worked for Russia's news agency ITAR-TASS in Moscow; she spent six months in China studying Chinese, resided in Belgrade in an artists' collective, then in Venice, and took German classes in Berlin. Fluent in five languages and with good working knowledge in another four, Seierstad is able to cover her subjects as few other war correspondents can. She studied Russian, Spanish and the history of Philosophy from Oslo University. She worked as a correspondent in Russia between 1993 and 1996, and in China in 1997. Between 1998 and 2000 she reported on the war in Kosovo for Norwegian television and in 2000 she published *With Their Backs to the World: Portrait from Serbia*. In autumn 2001 she spent three months in Afghanistan, reporting for a number of major Scandinavian newspapers. In 2003 she reported on the war in Iraq from Baghdad.

Seierstad has received numerous awards for her journalism. *The Bookseller of Kabul* is one of the best selling Norwegian books of all time, and has been translated into many languages. *With Their Backs to the World: Portrait from Serbia*, her first book is an account of the time she spent reporting in the Russia. This book was extended and its name was changed slightly, To a portrait of Serbia, Signaling that

Serbia's Back is No Longer Turn in to the World. In this book she follows thirteen people from different part of the country, representing a rough cross – section of Serbia. She describes their lives and records their thoughts, providing a degree of insight into Serbia's national psyche and its historical causes. She visited Serbia three times during the process of writing the book, first in 1999, after the NATO bombing campaign, when Milosevic was still in power and when UN sanction were still in place. Thus this book carries her experiences of war and the peace process and she witnesses several war that destruct several people's lives.

This research has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter mainly provides an introductory outline of the study. It incorporates the explanation of hypothesis in terms of how the Muslim women are suppressed and become the puppet in the hand of patriarchy in terms of their economic status in the society. With the help of third world feminism theories the introduction includes a brief introduction about the culture and values; prevailing the Afghani society. It also provides a detail introduction to the writer and her works.

The second chapter is the development of theoretical modality that is to be applied in this research paper. It gives a short introduction to third world feminist study and develops critical tools by making ideas from the study of Marxist way. This part of work deals with the idea of third world feminism including women's suppressing which will be the critical approach to the study of the text.

The third chapter of the research is an analysis of the text at a considerable length of the basis of the second chapter. It will cite out some extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the study. The chapter will serve as the core of this work. The chapter also provides a detail analysis of diverse Muslim culture and values regarding

the women and their position in the society where the males are superior and the females are called inferior; that is to be shown from the text to justify the hypothesis.

The fourth chapter is the conclusion of the whole study. On the basis of the analysis of the text done in the chapter three, it will conclude the explanation and arguments put ahead in preceding chapters.

II. Subjugation of Women in the Third World

The Bookseller of Kabul, a non-fictional novel by Asne Seierstad, portrays the pathetic condition of women due to culture, orthodox dogmas, civil war, patriarchal society and socio-economic condition in Post Taliban society. The exemplified characters like Saliqa and Jamila who are bitterly abused and locked inside their room, and it is unfortunate that Jamila is killed by her own brothers in the name of morality, religion and custom. In this book Seierstad tries to show the lives of Afghani men, women and children after the fall of the Taliban. The position of women in Muslim culture in Afghanistan is vulnerable when we analyze it through third world feminist perspective.

Third World feminism has been described as a group of feminist theories developed by feminists who acquired their views and took part in feminist politics in so-called Third World countries. Muslim women's issues as viewed by three prominent Third World feminist scholars: Sri Lanka-born Kumari Jayawardena, Indian-born Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Iranian-born Haleh Afshar. Third World feminism is a fairly new area of feminist theory. However, political scientists, particularly in the West, have been reluctant to acknowledge women's extensive participation in political processes. Iranian women and their support for Islam looks at the arguments presented by the female advocates of Islamism for rejecting Western options of feminism and choosing the Islamic way for women. In this context Chandra Talpade Mohanty says as follows:

Third World women and the politics of feminism and Jayawardena in her eye-opening *Feminism and nationalism in the Third World* (1986) are both critical of the ethno-centralism of Western feminism. They feel that mainstream Western feminists do not take into account the

unique experiences of Third World women or the existence of indigenous feminism in Third World countries . . . feminist awareness of their particular religious and cultural contexts in former European colonies and the third world countries. (87)

As Talpade Mohanty claims in the above paragraph that describes about the base or ground for third world feminism it is clear that the suffering of the women is existing generation to generation in third world countries. The suppression and subjugation of women in Muslim culture and the emancipation from such condition is the motto of the third world feminism. Kumari Jayawardena, a leading feminist figure and academician in Sri Lanka, in her well-known work *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* focuses on feminist movements in Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. She defines feminism as embracing movements for equality within the current system and significant struggles that have attempted to change the system. She further says about this issue as in the following paragraph:

Some call this particular feminism among the Third World women 'alternative feminism'; others term it 'cultural feminism', 'colonial feminism' or 'postcolonial feminism'; still others call it 'Islamic feminism' depending on the emphasis, focus or standpoint which is embraced, However, Islamic feminists advocate for women's rights and social justice grounded in an Islamic framework not only in Third World countries. (340)

Jayawardena in the above paragraph says Just as it is difficult to speak of a singular entity called 'Western feminism,' it is difficult to generalize about 'Third World feminism' but it is another part which further clears the way to develop the term. Third world feminists are neither automatically founded unitary group nor they are

analyzed as victims, but the focus is instead on a dynamic oppositional agency of women but also strategic bargaining in spaces that are intersections of the private and the public spheres. The development of cultural aspects of the society is based on the practices in terms of political awareness of the people but it is less possible when there is misunderstanding upon the intersection in the different aspects of public life.

The Indian critic Sarojini Sahoo says as follows:

Third World feminism is not a 'gender problem' or confrontational attack on male hegemony, but an integral part of femaleness separate from the masculine world. Third World postcolonial feminists argue that oppression relating to colonial experiences, particularly racial, class, and ethnic oppression, has marginalized women in postcolonial societies. Postcolonial feminists challenge the belief that gender oppression is the primary force of patriarchy. (78-79)

As Sahoo states in the above paragraph only the oppression is not a primary force of the male dominated society; in different cultures there may be various forms of domination over women. But in post-colonial third world the feminists struggle to address women's rights and issues within their own cultural models of society rather than through those imposed by Western colonizers. Turkish-born Deniz Kandiyoti, in her edited work, *Women, Islam and the State* (1991) deals with analytic debates in the field of gender and development as well as the suppression of women due to these dominant factors. She says as follows:

Examining the relationship between Islam, the nature of state projects and the position of women in the modern nation states of the Middle East and South Asia with social and economic change and the major

policy challenges is present in Third World countries. The studies of women in Muslim societies have, by and large, neglected the role of the state and remained relatively untouched by the growing body of feminist scholarship on the subject. How the treatment of women and of Islam has for a long time been dominated by ahistorical accounts of the main tenets of Muslim religion and their implications for women.

(25)

The religion Islam is rude to the work projects and in the development sectors where women can play effective role; rudeness, strictness and prohibition over female activities leads the social norms as if it was the old Muhammad age in the society. The main hindrance to make women economically strong in Muslim society is their conservative thought regarding modern conception of development. It is because most of the demography is uneducated. And the meaning of education is opposite to the main stream education is spread all over the world. Islam determines the education for women and thus they are not aware to the modern technology and its importance. However the psyche is not prepared well for the change in society, this is because of the male domination that is existing in the society. Different movements in the feminist stream are based on the same ground, it does not matter the country or community is different. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes the women's suffering as follows:

Some Muslim women refer to their form of feminism, namely their project of articulating and advocating the practice of Qur'anically mandated gender equality and social justice, simply as a 'women's movement'; 'Middle Eastern feminism'; or as 'Islamic feminism' in

order to distinguish Islamic definitively from Western feminism. Although rooted in Islam, many Islamic feminists have also used secular and Western feminist discourses and have sought to include Islamic feminism in the larger global feminist movement. Not everyone, however, believes this is necessary. Some have sought to include Islamic feminism in the larger global Islamic feminist movement. (93)

As Spivak presents her ideas about the suffering of the women in third world it seems clear that the domination over women is not new rather it is constructed since long and the term is developed as third world feminism. The term first wave was coined retrospectively after the term second wave feminism; the period of activity in the early 1960s to 1980s and began to be used to describe a more recent feminist movement that focused, not only on political inequalities but also on addressing social and cultural inequalities. Eastelle Freedman compares first and second wave feminism. She argues that “the first wave focused on rights such as suffrage; the second wave was largely concerned with other issues of equality, such as ending discrimination.” (464) Carol Hanisch, a feminist activist of the time, coined the slogan ‘The personal is political’. This became synonymous with the second wave implying that “all theories about women and gender need to be checked against real-life experiences” (Braidotti 197). This appeal to ‘the politics of experience’ originated from Marxist epistemology (real-life conditions are the most important indicator of the status of women). “Issues like violence against women, women’s control over their bodies, and sexuality were articulated as issues of public concern and politics” (Desai 459). This opening up of the ‘private’ realm to activism led to the development of numerous kinds of autonomous women’s organizations and women’s studies

centers. *A Concise Glossary of Feminist Theory* (1997), edited by Andermahr and others, provides a useful introduction to these key feminist concepts. It was at this time that the French philosopher and existentialist, Simone de Beauvoir became known for her maxim. She says as follows:

‘One is not born a woman, but becomes one’ is focusing on the social construction of ‘Woman’ as the ‘Other’. This, as fundamental issue to understanding women’s oppression and argued that the attitude of considering women deviant and abnormal beings should be set aside for feminism to move forward . . . to hold public office; to work; to fair wages; to equal pay; to own property; to education; to serve in the military; to enter into legal contracts; and to have marital, parental and religious rights in the society. (134)

Over the years several sub-movements of feminist ideology have been developed in the West, which often overlapped. Consequently, some feminists identify themselves with several types of feminist thought. These include liberal feminism, radical feminism, and socialist or Marxist feminisms, each with its distinctive explanation of the origins of sexism and suggestions for overcoming it. But, the socialist or Marxist feminism proceeds from the principle that the capitalist economic system needs to be changed in order to liberate women. Whereas socialist feminism sees the core of the problem in sexuality, Marxist feminism finds it in work.

Thus, Marxist feminism asserts the primacy of class oppression over gender oppression, whereas socialist feminism asserts the coexistence of both in explaining the subordination of women. Radical feminism and liberal feminism are particularly based in the First World context, but in the third world the movement raised to establish the right of women while the condition of women is under the political

conscience. In this condition there is inclusion of property rights, the issues of household works and wages they can earn in comparison to male; moreover there are other surfaces in third world which can be defined as the main cause of their suffering, such as the orthodox social structure and other cultural practices prevailing in the society. This form of feminism described here is more often found in the Second and Third World contexts, as supported by scholars such as Chilla Bulbeck and Valentine Moghadam. Chilla Bulbeck and Valentine Moghadam say as follows:

It is crucially important to acknowledge the discipline that a feminist scholar is coming from in order to understand the foundations of the debate she is part of . . . Black feminists and later Third World feminists critiqued the hitherto normative experience of white, middle-class Western women. The idea of women's interests shared by all women regardless of race, class or sexuality: 'all women are oppressed by all men,' and 'sisterhood is global,' became highly contested at that time. (18)

Scholars had pointed out several gaps in this approach. Firstly, because most feminist analysis had been done by middle-class white women in the Western European and North American contexts, Western terminology carried the feminist discourse forward (Mills 142). Secondly, the Western methodology of feminist analysis, terminology and theory created a situation in which the discourse on women's issues was seen as foreign and Western by Third World people, men and women in their daily life. In this context Valerie Bryson says as follows:

The problem here is not so much that it should be rejected and the idea of female superiority, but that in stressing men and women's common humanity; it does not seem to consider the idea that this

humanity could incorporate the values that have traditionally been associated with women. Similarly, although the assumed descriptions of the trials and tribulations of marriage and maternity were in the part of much needed corrective to the prevailing syrupy view of domestic bliss it is not clear the role and other necessary elements that eventually affected the issues. (154)

Valerie Bryson in the above paragraph describes the root cause behind the male domination; as it is the issue connected to the politics. The women in the third world societies never participated in the politics actively and the very reason is the male psyche existed in the community as describe by Valerie Bryson. Third wave feminism began in the early 1990s arose as a response to failures of the second wave. Its particular purpose was to avoid the over-emphasis on the experiences of upper to middle-class white women. Its focus was not on 'what was wrong in patriarchy so much as what was wrong with women or more specifically, feminism' (Bulbeck 1997:219). In this context Mahnaz Afkhami says as follows:

Its origins can be found as early as the mid-1980s when the African-American feminist leaders, such as Gloria Jean Watkins (pseudonym 'bell hooks') in *Aren't I a woman* Feminist theorizing was that feminism excluded and devalued black women. Bell hooks claimed that academic feminism is part of white culture, thus, feminist research became defined for some as part of the problem, rather than the solution. (236)

Mahnaz Afkhami tries to show the origin of the third world feminism and its detailed emphasis on the world. She talks about the academic position of the women and their effort toward the feminist movement in the third world. Women who teach, research,

and publish about women, but who are not involved in any way in making radical social and political changes are not actually feminist if lifting oppression is not a priority to you then it is problematic whether you are part of the actual feminist movement to me racist white women cannot be said to be actually feminist.

Several black feminists prefer to use the term 'womanist' as coined by Alice Walker rather than 'feminist'. Others reject Walker's term as too radical. Nonetheless, as noted by Fiorenza, some feminists of the second/third world argue that abandoning the term 'feminism' would be a mixed blessing: Fiorenza claims:

Not only would such a practice credit the historical achievements of feminism as a worldwide political movement to white European/American women, it also would relinquish the claim of feminists around the world that they have shaped and continue to define the meaning and practice of feminism in a different key. Instead of rejecting feminist movement as white middle class, these feminists maintain that women of all colors have always engaged with feminism or 'feminist movement' – to use bell hooks' expression. (73)

In these above lines of Fiorenza there is an expression of the equality in terms of political movement and she tries to establish the norm that women are not superficial but there is something better platform for them where there is no debate between color, race and gender, etc. But as far as the Indian sub-continent and Asian movement of the feminism concern in the pattern of the movement there is no debate between the black women's movement and other women's movements; such as Muslims, Hindus and other Mongolians. But the reality behind this movement in this region is supported by the male and this is because of the male hegemony the women

further suffer in their newly made space in the society. Basically the men in every sector promote their movement and that means the presence of men always dominates them. In this context Samira Luitel says as follows:

The Marxist feminists believe social existence determines consciousness, so the belief system that women have is the product of her role in the family and at the work place which have kept them in a sub-ordinate position. Marxist feminist insist to analyze the links women's work and women's self image. In their belief, the women's work shapes their thought and female nature. They also link the capitalist system of power relation as well as exchange relations to influence women inversely where the employer has the monopoly on the means of production. (94)

Here in the above lines Luitel shows the relationship between women and the means of production in terms of the Marxist view. She shows the domination through the working culture in third world countries. In a way that the suppression of the women can be seen in the religion that shapes the psychology of the people in the society. Tradition and religion are as Marxists believe are root causes of women's suffering in the third World. In this context Rajendra Prasad Pant says as follows:

In the context of the third world Indian sub-continent the religion shaped tradition clearly has defined and separated the role of men and women from each other. It is the very household and the women have a complex constellation of roles: manager of the household, caretaker of her husband and children and faithfulness regarding her family. In a way that, the tradition, culture, religion all are synonymous and

interrelated to each other. Tradition has always been involved to continue the suppression of the women in the third world. (11)

As described in above lines the suffering is directed by the religion in most cases but it is also true that every society is guided by particular religion. In the third world the dominating religions are Hindu and Muslim and both of the religions have their own tradition which treats women as second class citizen and their right is determined by the tradition that is men made. This biasness can be observed in the level of traditional emphasis and its impression in the society. The religion is not only the cause of suffering as many critics argues in this perspective and the debate is solved by many Marxist feminists. One of the prominent writer and feminist writer Taslima Nasreen says about the rights of women and their position:

The Western model is an empty (if not hypocritical) claim on the part of middle-class white women that all women are sisters in virtue of their 'common oppression'. This is a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality, since divisions will not be eliminated by wishful thinking or romantic reverie about 'common oppression' despite the value of highlighting experiences . . . and if it is concerned about the rights in the lives of women in the third world, especially the Muslims. (56)

Taslima argues that the position of the women in the third world country is shaped by the male conceptions since long time and the colonial period adds something bad to the issue and makes women as if they were slaves in their lives. However this is the matter of the Muslim women, the whole Asian women are suppressed and the religion is not the matter rather it becomes the means of suffering. The conspiracy behind the

women's suffering is the illusionary slogans wandered in the community; such as sisterhood, women as pure and innocent, women and earth is same, etc. The concept of sisterhood is based on solidarity among diverse women. Solidarity, which is built through hard, ongoing political work, confronting conflicts, work finding common interests and goals, and work opposing sexist oppression in all its forms is the base for the further movement in the third world feminism. In this context K. Millet states as follows:

The family is indeed a central part of the societies power structure; such it both sustains patriarchal or in the 'public' world and is self a source of women's oppression. Far from being a 'natural' arrangement based on mutual love and respect in which the emotional, sexual and domestic needs of adult partners are mate and their children cared for . . . the politics and the common goal of the patriarchy is to oppress the women generations to generations. (198)

It is the sexual movements and its effects in the third world are shaped by the tradition and other cultural aspects existing in the society. Women from different social groups may choose to focus their political activities on issues that are especially compelling to them, but their thinking and their initiatives must be informed by an awareness of other women's needs and concerns. In this way, feminist solidarity can be achieved without eradicating women's difference. Many scholars feel that black feminism paved the way to alternative feminism that is the third world feminism. Indeed, the term 'third world women' has been used interchangeably with the description, 'women of color.' Postcolonial feminists had strong ties with black feminists because colonialism usually contains themes of racism. Both groups have struggled for recognition, not only by men in their own culture, but also by Western feminists.

In the third world the female are mainly dominated due to challenge they have to face in the area of cultural expression. Main three streams are there; behavior in social interaction, freedom of movement and women's rights in public worship. These three elements are really the problem for the women and in the way of socialization.

An influential contribution to women's rights issues in the area of cultural expression and socialization by the author Wadud is his own personal behavior in social interaction as independent professional women activists. He made a significant input to the debate on women's rights to socialization by his own conduct. In addition, Wadud is an example of one who has contributed as an author of Diaspora literature, migration stories from women's points of views, which help women in making progress. Wadud has brought an additional dimension to the debate by claiming women's right to public worship. He says as follows:

This contribution to the debate has not just been theoretical but also practical: it has modeled how women can take part in public worship . . . also calling for contemporary initiatives in North American communities which take the form of women's retreats during conferences, workshops and luncheons to activate and inform women's contribution to the debate has been in their research of the Muslim world with particular reference to Islamic feminism, which has been used as a methodology to propose solutions to women's issues.(38)

As the authors have shown the research on women's rights in contemporary times has required new tools and avenues, in this Islamic feminism has proved to be one.

Whereas secular feminism in Islam was mainly rooted in national soil and thus deeply local, Islamic feminism's universal and global character are recovering a holistic Islam in which secular and religious merge (Badran 318). Women's movements

attempt to change women's social contracts through national activism and even global activism. This thesis has discussed some of these issues earlier in this chapter, touching on particular areas in women's lives besides the cultural expression, as freedom of movement is closely connected to the right to education and work.

In relation to the issue of limited space for worship, Badran calls for 'unlimited space' in public worship, a call referred to as the 'mosque movement'. Although Badran is the most vociferous advocate for women's public religious participation of the four selected authors, she is not alone. As globally Muslim women have gained additional rights in social interaction, movement and religious participation in recent years. The evaluated solutions offered by the critics and situated their contributions against a broader background of other voices in the debate concerning challenges faced by Muslim women in contemporary Muslim.

The whole third world feminism is based on the movement against women's suppression and violence existing due to tradition and religion; in the political sphere, in the social norms and values. In the one hand, however women are seem free in the society, but on the other most important part the female are commodified by the bourgeoisie and the patriarchal pattern of the society. What ever are the cause of women's suffering no critics are able to find the reasons and causes behind this. This research work, however attempt to create a new way to the third world feminism on the base of Marxist feminism. The theories analyzed in this chapter will be helpful for textual analysis in the third chapter.

III. Subjugation of Women in *The Bookseller of Kabul*

A non-fictional novel by Asne Seierstad *The Bookseller of Kabul*, portrays the pathetic condition of women in post Taliban Society in Afghanistan. Due to culture, orthodox dogmas, civil war, patriarchal society and socio-economic condition of the women in the society there are several incidents of women's suffering in the society. By the help of this book the writer tries to show the subjugation of women in the Muslim society. The exemplified characters like Saliqa and Jamila who are bitterly abused and locked inside their rooms; even Jamila is killed by her own brothers in the name of morality, religion and custom. In this book Seierstad tries to show the lives of Afghani men, women and children lead after the fall of the Taliban.

The Plot of the novel is based on the war and its destruction that people have to face in the society. However it is non-fictional novel there are several characters that represent the real scenario in the contemporary Afghan-Taliban-American War and the writer uses the war events as the plot of the novel. In the beginning she thinks to write the journal but later on when she writes deeply about the Muslim culture she finds the condition of the women is under the never ending suffering due to patriarchy, and thus she writes a novel about a family of bookseller in Kabul. Moreover it is the story of a bookseller it represents the whole Afghan entity of the women. And the story is based on the events during the Taliban War.

In the novel there are several characters but the Major characters are; Sultan Khan, Bibigul, Jamila, Saliqa, Liela, Mansur, Sonya, Sharifa and the writer herself is the narrator of the story. She narrates whatever she observes in Sultan Khan's family during the war and this story represents the condition of the women and the family in

the Afghanistan. Sultan Khan is the male character in the novel who is bookseller in the street. He is the main person in the family as per in the most Muslim families in terms of economy and the as it is the long tradition where the male becomes the main person in the family. Sultan follows the religion and tradition strictly like other Muslims in this way he seems rude and traditional. He locks his youngest sister Liela inside the housework and treats as if she were the servant. This man is somewhat kind and courageous to other people but regarding the behavior to the family members, especially to the females he becomes violent and follows the Islamic Law. Another important character is Bibigul, a female who is the head of the family suffers different types of subjugations along with her daughters. She is old lady having faith in Islam and follows the Islamic Law. Other major characters are her daughters who suffer in their life; sometime due to culture and tradition, sometimes due to religion and moist of the time they suffer due to their poor economic condition as it generally happens in most of the third world countries.

In the novel, *The Bookseller of Kabul* the writer just after the fall of the Taliban, happens to meet a bookseller named Sultan Khan who allowed a western journalist to move into his home and experience firsthand his family's life in the newly liberated capital city of Kabul. From that act of openness emerges this remarkable book, already an international bestseller-the most intimate look yet at ordinary life for those who have weathered Afghanistan's extraordinary upheavals. One husband, two wives, five children, and many other relatives sharing four small rooms opened up their lives, unforgettably.

First is Sultan himself, a man whose love of books has exposed him to great risks over his thirty years in the trade. He has seen his volumes censored, ripped apart, even burned in the street by the Communists and the Taliban. Each time he rebuilt his

business, hiding the most controversial texts, surviving prison, traveling treacherous back roads to Pakistan to order much-needed schoolbooks. He takes joy in selling books of history, science, art, religion, and poetry, and defends his business against competitors and theft with a primal ferocity.

But Sultan is also a committed Muslim with strict views on filial respect and the role of women. We meet his wife, Sharifa, when she learns that Sultan is taking a new bride, as his status in the community dictates. Despite custom, it is agonizing for the mother of Sultan's children to see her place usurped. We follow their teenage son, Mansur, as he embarks on his first religious pilgrimage, which embodies all the excitement of youth's first rebellion. And we see Sultan's younger sisters, as one coquettishly prepares for her wedding while another seeks a job to escape her family's tight grip.

Stepping back from the page, award-winning journalist Åsne Seierstad allows the Khans to speak for themselves about their joys, sorrows, rivalries, loves, dreams, and temptations. Through this close-knit household, we gain an intimate view-as few outsiders have seen it-of life in an Islamic country just beginning to find its way between the forces of modernity and tradition but it is another important event that the women in the households face so many problems in the name of faith, religion and it happened since long ago. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty says the third World women and the politics that suppress the women or their existence as indigenous in their particular religious and cultural contexts specially in Muslim cultures the root of the politics may not be understood easily. When Sultan talks to his mother Bibigul about his sister's marriage in the following manner there lays the entire motif of the Muslim psyche that dominates the female:

'A friend of mine would like to marry Sonya,' he told the parents.

t was not the first time someone had asked for their daughter's hand.

She was beautiful and diligent, but they thought she was still a bit young . . . as a bargaining chip in the marriage stakes, and he and his wife were always expecting the next bid to be even higher.

'He is rich,' said sultan. 'He is in the same business as I am. He is well educated and has three sons only but his wife is starting grow old.' (12-13)

As in the above lines Sultan tries to convince his mother Bibigul to marry his sister to a person who is already married and has three sons. There is a politics that Sultan thinks that is he wants his business and necessary money. So he favors that marriage. In this way he proves the Muslim cultural domination over the female in the society as Mohanty claimed.

In the third world Muslim country marriage and the custom is closely related to the economic status of the people that is criticized by Marxist critics in their own way. Whatever the critics say is not important rather what custom are prevailed in the society that may be the cause of the women's suffering. Kumari Jayawardena, a leading feminist figure and academician focuses on feminist movements in Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As she defines feminism as 'embracing movements for equality within the current system and significant struggles that have attempted to change the system in Muslim countries there are several obstacles for equality of women. In the Islam, though women are said to be free and equal to the male counterparts but it is their sex or gender that makes them apart from the equal access to the main stream of the society. The equality is not only in the sphere of their daily life rather in the marriage and divorce they are said to be use their own ideals

but in reality there lies the domination that is proved by the following comment of the narrator in the novel.

Eighteen years have passed since Sultan and Sharifa got married and two years since he got himself wife number two. Sharifa lives like a divorced woman, but without the freedom granted divorced women . . . Divorce is not an alternative if a woman demands divorce she loses virtually all her rights and privileges, the husband is awarded the children and can even refuse the wife access to them. She is a disgrace to her family, often ostracized, and all properties fall to the husband. Sharifa would have to move to the home of one of her brothers. (32)

The above statement of the narrator proves the Muslim ideals in their daily life than that of the equality they show ahead of the rest of the world. Sultan marries Sharifa and divorces her to marry a second woman without any reason but Sharifa could not argue about this marriage rather she has to go to her brother's house because there is not a provision of second marriage for the women in Muslim law, but if they marry without the permission their position is like that of a whore. AS Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes the women's suffering like that Muslim women refer to their form of feminism, namely their project of articulating and advocating the practice of Qur'anically mandated gender equality and social justice, simply as a 'women's movement' the law in Islam is the superior law and the males describe the provisions according to their will. The form of domination is the sex mutually because whatever there lies in the surface of the crime is women or female sex; the Muslim's main weakness is the sex and the whore is the byproduct of the same society where this is called the crime. In the novel Saliqa loves one of the boys named Nadim who is not chosen by her family and uncle. When she happens to meet him in the next street light

her crime begins. They share the letters to each others and finally her love affair is disclosed and her Uncle hits her face until she bleeds from mouth and nose and scolds as in the following manner which is the justifiable example of the suffering as well as subjugation of the women:

The aunt hits Saliqa hard on the mouth when she returns, locks her in to the room and phones a mother in Islamabad. Her uncle grabs a piece of broken wire and beats her repeatedly while her aunt hold on to her . . . and says: 'What have you done, what have you done?' 'You are whore,' the uncle screams. 'You are a disgrace to the family, a stain on our honor, a rotten branch.' 'If she can sit along in a taxi with a boy, I am sure she is capable of other things, says Nasrin, a friend of an aunt.

(40)

Only due to the love affair of a girl she is strictly beaten and wounded while this is normal for the male similarly responsible to the affair. This is one of the brutal forces that dominate the females in several ways. In the Muslim culture to sleep with another man for women may have some provisions but as far as the girls are concerned there are no provisions but it is tradition that a man who broke the virginity of the girl is called gentle man. In this way on the one hand there is the issue of biological needs that a human must have to quench but most important in the Muslim living is the system and culture that avoids the will of the women and their sexuality is highlighted as the cause of the crime. Often in most of the cases the women themselves are said the criminal and accused of misleading the youths in the society. As Spivak says in her criticism about the suffering of the women in third world it seems clear that the domination over women is not new rather it is constructed since long and the term is developed as third world feminism; that is whatever happens that dominate the

women is studied in the light of the feminist perspective. In this novel there are several instances that there is the domination of the women can be seen. The male in the society gives the presents to the women, make them happy so that they could use them as the sex object. Even in the level of school life no matter what will happen next to such women in the society. The following dialogue between Mansur and a Student shows the subjugation of the women:

Mansur says, 'Can I help you?'

Have you got advanced chemistry? She says.

'Unfortunately we are sold out, but I have a few copies at home. '

I was expecting you yesterday,' he says, professionally friendly. 'I have the books at home, but did not know the edition as there are many prints and you may not pay the prices so if you would like to come with me at my home?'

They are quiet for a moment. Silence is the best persuasion. Mansur thinks a while and says, "You need the book, don't you?"

Wonder of wonders, she agrees to go with him and he presents her a car, beautiful car and they go to the restaurant . . . the next week the Girl is killed by the Taliban rebellions in the name of the religion.

(126-127)

In the beginning Mansur expresses his feelings and presents gifts to the student; even the car is so expensive gift in the Kabul. Within a week he seduces her and killed in the name of religion and the newspaper publishes the news in the accountability of Taliban rebels. It is because the Taliban rule is strict in terms of religion and custom that the people have to follow but here she does not follow properly and finally is killed by the patriarchy.

De Beauvoir says 'One is not born a woman, but becomes one' focusing on the social construction of 'Woman' as the 'Other' as no one is born as women but the social construction of women is a process that makes women and the subjugation is possible. This is exactly suitable in the context of Afghani women presented in the novel. First women are separated from the main stream of the social politics and economy and secondly they are othered in the context of their living as well as cultural practices in the society. This, as fundamental issue to understanding women's oppression and argued that the attitude of considering women deviant and abnormal beings should be set aside for feminism to move forward. The phrase 'Women's liberation' was first used in the US in the 1960s. This movement campaigned for women's rights, including the right to vote (universal suffrage); to hold public office; to work; to fair wages; to equal pay; to own property; to education; to serve in the military; to enter into legal contracts; and to have marital, parental and religious rights. In the book stall of the Sultan people gather and talk about the right if the women in Muslim community under the army regulation of America. The narrator participates in such discussions and she finds that the people eager to secure the right of the women have relation to the Taliban in other hand. When one of the school girls was killed after the rape Sultan comments as follows:

. . . if you copy the western dresses and wear them it means the men!

Control them but not every time. It happened because she wanted to something more than she was granted by religion.

Mansur says, 'I loved her but I didn't think such calamity because of love, girls have not right to love?'

It is not a matter of love but the matter of the respect you pay to your religion. If you cross the boundary certainly would get wounded,

anymore . . . She is killed by the sacred group of the people . . . but it is not humanity to kill people in the name of religion and culture. (87-88)

As in the above lines we can see the nature of the people influences the showiness; Sultan appreciates the act of killing a girl but ahead of the narrator he says it was wrong and inhuman act of the killer. This is how the cultural discourse made since long creates a vague concept regarding the women and their position in the society. There is neither fixed law nor the freedom that cooperate with the law; a type of rigidness in the culture dismantles the psychology of the people. Thus, the tradition and culture guided by the tradition shapes the further way in the context of women and their lives. The terminology and theory created a situation in which the discourse on women's issues was seen as subjugation for it is cruel and makes alienation in the life of female. As Valerie Bryson says the problem here is not so much that it should be rejected and the idea of female superiority, but that in stressing men and women's common humanity; it does not seem to consider the idea that this humanity could incorporate the values that have traditionally been associated with women. Similarly, although, the assumed descriptions of the trials and tribulations of marriage in their culture seem not dominated, it can not be avoided easily in other day to day necessities. In the novel there are several examples of domination there we can glimpse the basic types of domination. The following paragraph of the narrator shows the domination in Afghan society as follows:

During the entire wedding ceremony no one has seen the newlyweds exchange the single smile. 'What a wonderful job you have done', she says to Mariam. For the first time she will have her own bedroom. For the first time in her life she will sleep in a bed. She sits down beside Wakil on the soft bedspread . . . the next day, before breakfast Wakil's

aunt comes over to Bibigul, Shakali's mother. In her bed she has the piece of cloth that Leila nearly forgot, the most important item of her. The women take it reverently out of bag and hands it to Shakila's mother. It is covered in blood. Bibigul thanks her and smiles while tears run down her cheeks and the belief of testing virginity is justified.

(108)

The above paragraph shows the concept rooted in the Afghan society regarding the marriages and the test of virginity of the newly married women as it is the biological interfere for sometimes the blood may not seen and such women called impure in the society. Further it is believed that the piece of the cloth covered with blood must be shown to other girls though they are small; to teach them about the virginity that they have to prove themselves in their life in future. It is the culture silently followed as it is not written of whipped in the community and the most interesting fact is that the law is somewhat liberal in such cases but it has been ever practiced.

The narrator in this book tries to show the different aspects of the domination with the help of some political tips as well as most of the cultural practices that have been followed since the Muslim civilization. In one of the chapters in the novel she mentions the cultural domination that is legally proclaimed by Taliban that is broadcasted by Radio Sharia in 1996. In these commandments the women are treated as if they were not human being. The following decrees show the domination that has been practiced since Kabila civilization:

1. Prohibition against female exposure: it is prohibited for the drivers to pick up women not wearing the burka, on pain of arrest. If such women are observed out on the streets, their homes will be visited and their husbands punished. If the women wear inciting or

attractive clothes, and they have no close male relative with them, the driver must not let them into car . . .

12. Prohibition against washing clothes by the river embankments:

women who break this law will be respectfully picked up in the manner of Islam, taken to their house and their husbands will be severely punished . . . and the next decree is about prohibition against tailors sewing women's clothes or taking measurements of women.

(86-87)

These decrees proclaimed by Taliban show the domination and its practice in Afghan society. During Taliban rule in the country the women suffered directly a lot but there is not difference between the sufferings during Taliban and the American controlled Government of Karzia. In both of the situations the women have to suffer but the degree of their suffering is changed. In this liberal ruling system women are facing the domination because the discourse Taliban created is still in the mind of the people.

These decrees mentioned above threatened the men to gain control over their females in their households. They controlled their wives in such cases they tried their best and often they killed their wives that is not a crime in respect to go against the Sharia Law. In the novel the writer shows such difficulties where a man merely becomes mad; in one hand there is Law of the government and the most important problem is their religion and its archetypes. The equality in the social structure can be seen in documents only as there is not a common practice of equality; in schools, supermarkets and other public places people show their respect to equality but they do not practice in their life but in the case of foreign people especially in the case of women the Afghan men feel more liberty and freedom to talk and show themselves the follower of equality. It is common in the society that the women must wear burka

in public places and ahead of the men in their house. It is sometimes expected in the case of foreign women as the writer herself wears the burka in Kabul in her stay. The burka wearing is another bottom of women's suffering in the society. In the novel narrator shows the catastrophe of wearing burka in the following way:

They walk on, and weave around their heads in all direction to see better. Burka-women are like horse with blinkers, they can only look in one direction. Where the eyes narrows the grille stops and thick material takes its place; impossible to glance sideways the whole head must turn; another trick by the burka-inventor: a man must know what his wife is looking at. The women are compelled to wear burka not because of their religious prosperity but because of the narrow concept of the men regarding their sexuality. (89)

Above paragraph shows the importance of wearing burka according to male hegemony in the society as it is the law created by men. Men don't like to expose their wives publicly because it is common belief that the evil men may be lured when they see open and clean faces of women. Whatever the reasons are given the main stuff is that it is a type of hegemony shaped by the tradition and religion simultaneously. In most of the case the religion plays dominant role in the suffering of the women as the religion creates the ground for men and probably the religion is outcome of men's archetype. The religion is not only the cause of suffering as many critics argues in this perspective and the debate is solved by many Marxist feminists. One of the prominent writers and feminist writer Taslima Nasreen says about the rights of women and their position relating this issue to the Islam. She claims that the religion is misinterpreted. She says when the religion accused the women as prostitution the same religion manages the law for the men like "such men or male should be killed by cutting their

penis (78)." Taslima argues that the position of the women in the third world country is shaped by the male conceptions since long time and the colonial period adds something bad to the issue and makes women as if they were slaves in their lives. However this is the matter of the Muslim women, the whole Asian women are suppressed and the religion is not the matter rather it becomes the means of suffering. The conspiracy behind the women's suffering is the illusionary slogans wandered in the community; such as sisterhood, women as pure and innocent, women and earth is same, etc. but the women themselves are obstacle to get rid off from the subjugation as they follow the rules created by men; a following of discourse existing in the society. In the novel Jamila follows the rule set by men. The following paragraph shows the fact:

Sharifa sighs. 'Jamila committed a serious crime, but more from ignorance than a wicked heart'. 'She didn't deserve to die. But Allah rules'.

However, one thing bothers her: the two days of family council when Jamila's mother, her own mother, agreed to kill her. She, the mother, it was, who in the end dispatched her three sons to kill her daughter. The brothers entered the room together. Together they put a pillow over her face; together they pushed it down, harder, harder, until life was extinguished. (43)

In the above paragraph the women are strictly follow the patriarchy as both women agreed upon to kill Jamila. They ordered their two sons to kill Jamila as because they know that Jamila had sexual relationship with other man. It is taken as a serious crime and they killed Jamila. Here the women are main hindrances in the way of female's emancipation from subjugation. But the contradiction is that the Muslim women have

belief in sisterhood as claimed by Nasreen. The concept of sisterhood is based on solidarity among diverse women. Solidarity, which is built through hard, ongoing political work, confronting conflicts, work finding common interests and goals, and work opposing sexist oppression in all its forms, is the base for the further movement. As K. Millet states that the family is indeed a central part of the societies power structure; such it both sustains patriarchal or in the 'public' world and is self a source of women's oppression. Far from being a 'natural' arrangement based on mutual love and respect in which the emotional, sexual and domestic needs of adult partners are mate and their children are cared. It is one of the ideas of sisterhood where Millet and Nasreen both are agree to each other.

It is the sexual movement and its effects in the third world that is shaped by the tradition and other cultural aspects existing in the society. Women from different social groups may choose to focus their political activities on issues that are especially compelling to them, but their thinking and their initiatives must be informed by an awareness of other women's needs and concerns. The rethinking on this issue is necessary according to writer in her novel where she tries to presents how politicians use women by which the large numbers of domination cases have been observed since long. In this way, feminist solidarity can be achieved without eradicating women's difference; in the politics, social issues and other cultural practices as well as religious rituals. In the society women are just like the escape goat in the hand of males. In the family of the bookseller Sultan there are female members waiting for their turn to be sacrificed in the name of so called religion and tradition. Leila is one of the female characters in the family of Sultan who suffers and more than that she is used as the means of earning for Sultan family during her marriage. Like Leila most of the Muslim women are in the verge of this reality and they never go against this system

until they know their position in the society but the male psychology determines their knowledge which is another surface of their domination but she knew the reality and tries to oppose the rules. She sometimes tries to remain without burka and tries to talk to her friends in the lonely places. In this context the narrator presents the activities of Leila she watches in one of the mornings in the Kabul as following:

'I want to fly! I want to escape!' She shouts one day while sweeping the floor. 'Out!' She cries and swings the broom around the room.

'What did you say?' Sonya asks and looks up from the floor where she is sitting gazing into space and moving her fingers over the pattern in the carpet.

'Nothing', answers Liela. She can not stand it any longer. The house is prison. 'Why is everything so difficult?' she moans. She normally going her side, but she feels she can not stay inside. (257)

The above paragraph clearly shows the feelings of the women in Muslim family. The women are not only dominated simply rather their life becomes a types of burden in their life and they try to escape like animals in search of freedom but it is not possible as the structure of the society is powerfully captured everything inside it. It is not only the daily work that women have to perform in the houses it is the matter of their lifelong psychology that has been shaped and reshaped by the male dominated society. No women can escape from such system easily but the writer presents the voice of the revolt of women in her book by the help of the character Leila.

In the third world the female are mainly dominated due to challenge they have to face in the area of cultural expression. Main three streams are there; behavior in social interaction, freedom of movement and women's rights in public worship. These three elements are really the problem for the women and in the way of socialization.

The issue of socialization is raised by the author because she finds the life of the women in Kabul is in danger as they have no social affairs. It is a kind of domination arises due to the lack of socialization that means the female are under the domination of Muslim culture that prohibit their public life. And the women are limited under the household as they have to take care of the family, to look after their daughter and so on. This limitation creates a critical problem in the case of public affair like marriage, accidentally rape cases and elopements, etc. The following paragraph shows the compulsion of women of living inside the household:

A wedding is like a small death. The bride's family mourns in the days following the wedding, as though it were a funeral. A daughter is lost, sold or given away. The mothers especially grieve. They have had complete control over their daughters, where they go, who they meet, what they wear, what they eat. They have spent the most of the day together, got up together, swept the house together, and cooked together. After the wedding the daughter disappears completely; she goes from one family to the other. She can't visit when she wants, only when her husband allows. Her family can't drop in on her without invitation. (109)

This whole paragraph is about the system and the rule the women have to follow in their family in their life. It is obvious to follow because the whole social structure is based on this small event set by the men, merely it is one of the best ways to gain control over the female. The relation is determined previously and it can not be changed as in other culture. In the paragraph above the narrator presents a scene where we find the role of women as they only control their daughters. In the perspective of the men it is normal event but if it is taken as the main cause of the

suffering of the women it needs to redefine and it means that the male controlled the life using the female; formation of new discourse for forthcoming generation. Thus it can easily understood that why these women are subjugated in the light of their rule. It seems that the women are ruling their family because they are responsible for everything in the family but the reality is that such responsibility is the main obstacle to get rid from this well of subjugation.

The women are really dominated by the males in such normal condition it can not be imagined. In the Muslim culture it is difficult to define the role and duty of the women as it depends upon particular male members and their psychology. Women are slapped and cursed with out any reason is taken as the means of entertainment for the males because the men are called superior and they have this psyche gifted by their forefathers. The men do what ever they like as they present and signed the documents ahead of the world securing the right of the women but at their houses they treat women like slaves. The following paragraph shows the reality like this:

'Haven't we got any milk? I told you to by some!' Mansur taunts her.
 'You parasite', he adds. If she bristles, he always responds with the same cruel answer: 'shut up, you old bag.' 'This is not your home, it is my home', he says fiercely. Leila doesn't feel it is her home either. It is Sultan's home for Sultan and his sons and second wife. She, Bulbula, Bibigul and Yunus all feel unwelcome in the family . . . 'You bitch! Lazy bones! My shocks have got holes in them Eqbal cries and and throws them after Leile. (164-165)

In the above paragraph there is the picture of typical Muslim family under the domination of men that the narrator expressed in this novel. It is rally truth that there is no home of the women as they have no property under their use. Women in the teen

age live under their fathers' control and after their marriage they live under their husband. This is how the women in third world country are merely homeless in both cases. The husband is their house and everything in their life and they must bear whatever their husbands do. In the above paragraph the husband curses his wife in worthless matter. It is male hegemony that they want to prove their superiority showing the pride in the society and the women take it easily as they think it is natural.

In the third world country the Muslim culture is said rigid and strict in its cultural and socialization process. In such condition the women are marginalized and there is no other way except they accept and implement it in their life. The women live under the patriarchy and their whole life is used by men in the society. This type of commodification of women leads toward the violence. There is a religion that plays the dominant role in such suppression of women in the society. Patriarchy isn't religion specific it has a number of socio-economic as well as historical reasons. The issue of commodification of women isn't Islam specific, it's prevalent in almost all societies with multiple manifestations, the growth and rise of feminist school in west itself is evidence to this fact.

Historians and Archeologists argue for a phase of human society when it was matriarchical, yet the claims are contested because of scanty evidence.

Anthropologists describe men as historically "sexual aggressors" and women as the prize. The advent of agriculture can be a major turnaround as it brought male dominance because of their physical strength, size and aggressiveness. And women were victimized due to smaller size and their vulnerability as child bearers.

It's a well established fact that in all societies and almost in all epochs women are given the status of a property (sexual). They were taken as war booty, used for

economic dealings by their fathers, brothers and husbands in many forms in their life; sometimes at in their marriages, in the name of their virginity, and etc. Girls carry the name of their fathers when unmarried as their virginity is property of their fathers, which they will trade-off for social and economic reasons, and to it is tied the ideas of family respect, honor etc. which is so fragile that it may be on the stake at even an innocent action. When married they become the properties of their husbands, and it is signified by the change in their names after the marriage. With arrival and strengthening of Capitalist economy the commodification of women became more intricate. Women's bargaining position has improved due to economic and political changes, as they are no longer dependent on and under control of their fathers; they became potentially free to negotiate their own sexual relationships. But women found that within the free marriage market they have to trade their sexuality for the economic and status resources of men. As men have much greater economic resources and status in the society.

Now for women to get these resources and maximize her bargaining power, she has to appear both as sexually alluring and as inaccessible as possible. She has to hold her sexuality in reserve as a sort of grand prize that she exchanges for male wealth and status. Under such an arrangement, femininity and female virginity came to be idealized, and women were placed on a pedestal, so that an element of sexual repression was built into courtship ties, freeing themselves from economic dependence on men, they have gained the resources to challenge the double standard.

Whatever the writer presents in her novel *The Bookseller of Kabul* is her own experience in the country but almost all Muslim women have the similar suffering in the name of culture, religion and tradition. Thus this can easily be understood that the subjugation of the women is in different form lies under the society and the ultimate

result is the ruin of the families as well as the women. The novel by Asne Seierstad ends with the tragic end as there is the calamity in the family of Sultan. Sonya and her life is challenged by the orthodox Muslim norms as she wishes for a son in the family though she knows the reality that these males are the main cause of their suffering in the society.

IV. Women's Position in *The Bookseller of Kabul*

The present research study arrives at the following conclusion which is drawn in the light of critical analysis of preceding chapters. The novel *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad presents the predicament of third world Muslim culture. It shows the inert life of the women obliged to live the life of slave under the patriarchy as well as Muslim custom and tradition, within their own family. Seierstad shows how the characters have become the victim of tradition and culture regarding the women's condition as exemplified by the protagonist like Jamila, Leila and Sharifa.

The tradition and culture have the dominant role to form the social system and the society in the context of the third world. In the novel the family of bookseller named Sultan is typically Afghan family representing most of the Muslims. His sisters, mother and his wives suffer due to the religious conception existing in the society shaped by the Muslim archetype as in the third world most of the cultures are guided by the archetype.

The underpinnings like religion, patriarchy and bourgeois have given the birth to the tradition where women are discarded from the main stream of the society. Seierstad criticizes the tradition regarding domination and discrimination through her character Jamila, Leila, Saliqua and Sonya. The question raised by the people mostly in the society is about the sexuality of the women and the domination begins with this system.

In the novel Sultan Khan and other male as well as the tradition represent the bourgeoisie society under the rule of Taliban. Taliban is the byproduct of the strict religious conception and these male characters are follower of the Taliban rule in their life by which the women suffer in the proportional ratio in the society. And it is clear that the religion teaches the women to be faithful and loyal to their husband.

In this way the writer Seierstad tries to expose plight of the women based on her method of observation of the society. She experiences the life of women in Kabul and finds the domination in different sphere, different level of the society; with the psychology of the people she draws the picture of third world by the help of archetype.

In nutshell, Seierstad presents her characters being suffered by the culture and tradition of dominating the women such as in the novel, women suffer a lot and sexually subjugated. She attempts to change such tradition where women suffer by due to tradition, culture and religious underpinnings.

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