

I. Afghan Women and Gender Violence under Taliban

Sharon E. McKay's novel *Thunder Over Kandahar* captures the suffering of Muslim girls and women, who undergo through the continuous gender discrimination and patriarchal suppression under Muslim fundamentalism. Basically central characters Yasmine and Tamanna as well as their mothers go through gender traumatic experience throughout the novel due to the gender discriminatory behaviour of patriarchal society. All these characters have to go through various traumas including war, religious and gender trauma. However, in Afghanistan, females face trauma more than males since there is very subordinate gender role and position of women. Thus, this research observes cultural or historical trauma in general and gender trauma in particular in *Thunder Over Kandahar*.

The term 'trauma' provides a method of interpretation of disorder, distress and destruction caused by psychological repression. It locates that the effect of an event may be dispersed and manifested in many forms not obviously associated with the events, scars on a social body and its compulsive repeated actions. Moreover, trauma refers to the action shown by the abnormal mind to the body. The stress to the mind occurs due to various causes. If there are external causes like social, cultural or external factors that cause the torture or stress, the trauma is understood as Cultural Trauma. In its most general definition trauma describes an overwhelming experience of "sudden of catastrophic events, in which the responses to the event occurs in the after delayed and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (181).

Cultural trauma seeks the cause of trauma as the external factors or the certain social, cultural or historical incidents or events that make the victim traumatized.

Likewise, for many contemporary feminist theorists, the body is the site of imagination, representation, and emotions through which our reality, including our sense of self, is constructed. This view of the body provides a compelling framework for analyzing trauma, such as that is associated with sexual assault, as constituting the collapse of one's reality and the destruction of one's personal identity. One such analysis can be found, for instance, in Susan Brison's gripping narrative of her own experience as a survivor of rape trauma. Constance L. Mui writes about gender trauma with references of Brison:

Observing that she was no longer the same person she had been prior to the assault, Brison describes this devastating loss of self in terms of many psychological responses, including the inability to construct an ongoing narrative, an altered sense of autonomy and desire, the estrangement from her own body, as well as intense episodes of depression, fear, and numbness. (153)

In to the broad arena of cultural trauma, the gender trauma deals with the trauma faced by woman due to the discriminating nature of patriarchy. It includes the extreme torture caused by gender exploitation, harassment and rape of women in male dominant society as the cause of traumatic experiences.

In *Thunder Over Kandhar* both Tamanna as well as Yesmine become victims of cultural and war trauma of Afghanistan on the one hand. On the other hand, they become the victim of Muslim patriarchal culture because they belong to subordinate gender group. Both protagonists each time want to get out of this trauma and at last they succeed. In this novel, both girls face extreme pain due to the conservative thinking of the society as well as brutal behavior of Taliban in the name of culture protection of Muslim. The novel revolves around their attempts to break the barriers of conservative thinking of the

society. From the beginning to end, all the time most of the characters suffer from the discriminatory gaze of patriarchal society. Thus, all the females in the novel go through extreme tortures which are a form of gender trauma.

The reason behind the gender trauma is that Afghanistan is not only Muslim country, it is patriarchal based also, where females are restricted to walk alone, talk to men, wear comfortable clothes and also got married early. Likewise, Taliban has strict codes and conducts applied for women. If women violate these rules and regulation they are punished. Sometimes punishment is death penalty also. In the novel, Taliban people hurt people if they break the rules of Kuran. Yasmine and Tamanna as well as Yasmine's parents are wounded badly as they break the trends of Muslim culture in the assault of fundamentalists. So, this novel is the outcome of traumatic condition of different Afghani people created by the patriarchal society and the activities of Taliban in the name of protecting Muslim culture and religion. Basically women go through extreme traumatic feeling. The research tends to answer the questions such as: What might be the basic cause behind trauma faced by women in Afghanistan? How the central characters like Yasmine and Tamanna go through their traumatic experience?

The strict moral and religious code with vast gender discrimination applied by Islamic fundamentalism is the main reason behind the traumatic experience of novel's central female characters. However, these characters not only imprisoned within this gender trauma rather try to cope up with it in their own way and try to escape from it. The war of Taliban and the male dominated Muslim culture where female are taken as puppet and females have to do whatever males like and have to follow Muslim culture.

The characters want to get out from such traumatic disorder and start new life with new hope.

Thus, the primary objective of this project is to study the traumatic condition of the characters and show how they overcome from such psychological disorder and able to bring constructive feeling towards their homeland. All the characters-Yasmine ,Tamanna, Mina, Yasmine's Mother and father, Tamanna's mother the boy and other characters suffer from war and Muslim culture which also leads to loss of identity of the character and have to leave their own motherland. Though it takes many years to get out of this trauma, at last they become able to return to their own county. Trauma, at last, changes into feeling of nationalism. Since, to show healing trauma is the main objective of this research work.

Many attempts have been made to read this novel from various perspectives. One of the areas of review is historical, in which most critics have tried to locate them indifferent issues and the notions. Under different types of such notions like subaltern, female agency, quest of identity, colonialism and male dominations there is the interpretation of this novel. In acknowledgement of *Thunder over Kandahar*, the writer herself says that it is her research novel where she spent many years in Afghanistan though she is a Canadian citizen, "Every book has its challenges but along the way I met some amazing people, and most, if not all are friends for life whose commitment and ongoing tireless effort to the better the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan will not be dismissed or forgotten" (276).

In the same way, critic Arun N. Toke, an editor of *The 2011 Skipping Stones Honor Awards*, claims this novel as the adventurous journey of two women in the desert to get rid from the trouble maker:

In the city of Herat where they have come to live, Yasmine's mom is attacked by a Taliban group as the mother-daughter team walked and sang a children's song in a city park. After her mother's partial recovery from this bloody attack, the family moves away to a smaller town called Bazar-E-Panjyawati, to live in Yasmine's grandfather's house. That's where she meets Tamanna, about the same age as her own. The family hires Tamanna as Yasmine's companion and soon the two girls become best friends. Thus begins their life of friendship in a war-torn country. Read about their adventure-filled journey through the desert on foot, the risks they take and sacrifices they make for each other. (5)

Toke observes this novel as the struggle of two girls who want to escape from Taliban as well as cruel patriarchal society. As Yasmine's family is moving from Afghanistan from Canada to raise awareness and Tamanna is the victim of Muslim patriarchal society.

Likewise, in Marilyn Roessler's perspective, this novel is depiction of longing for homeland. Though characters suffer from different miseries in their country, they want to do something for their country:

This is a powerful novel of enduring friendship set amid the terror and chaos of present-day Afghanistan... Traveling through dangerous mountain passes, the two unaccompanied teens find themselves in mortal danger as they confront land mines, a suicide bomber, and roving bands of

Taliban. To keep their spirits up, Yasmine tells stories of her childhood about Babar, the gray elephant in a green suit. At one point the girls are separated and are left without the one thing that has helped them survive--each other. Reunited several years later, Yasmine and Tamanna discover that despite the horrific events of the past, both are driven to return home by memories of their family and a longing for their country.

Thus, there have been many attempts to interpret and analyze Sharon E. McKay's novel *Thunder Over Kandahar* but there has been no substantial study from the lens of trauma studies. This project will be an alternative dimension of reading of this novel.

Since there is strict religious codes and conducts and even the domestic violence as the main cause of the suffering of the women in *Thunder Over Kandahar* this research aims to observe the text with gender trauma perspective. In the novel women are marred while they cannot follow discriminatory gender codes and conducts. Likewise, some of the characters even should go through gender violence since patriarchy has been exercising the patriarchal power and female's body as if it is the proper site for gender violence. The bitter experience of gender violence and discrimination make them traumatized in Afghan society. It could be studied through the perspective of gender trauma due to the subordinate position of woman's body in the patriarchal Muslim community. It highlights how the patriarchy exercises its power in order to control, subordinate and exploit the female by making the target upon her body and how it creates the circumstances of gender trauma.

Violence against woman under patriarchy is basic issue to deal with the idea that woman's body has become the site of violence in patriarchal society as well as a means

of control. The violence upon the female body includes the controlling, exploiting and subordinating female body. It particularly exists in 'Third World' and Islamic countries where female body becomes the site of violence and exploitation by patriarchy. In this connection, Ketu H. Katrak writes, "A politics of the female body includes the constructions and controls of female sexuality, its acceptable and censored expressions, its location socio-culturally" (9). The novel is set in Afghan society during the time of Afghan war. That is why, woman's trauma under the civil is the issues highlighted in the novel.

This research work attempts to draw gender violence and torture faced by protagonist and its relation to gender discrimination, body politics, and sexuality of its central character under the patriarchal Muslim social and cultural structure. Protagonist presents the dreadful but the mirror like picture of the traditional patriarchal Muslim society in modern Afghanistan where women have been facing the gender discrimination, torture, violence as if their bodies are made in order to exploit, torture and rapped by patriarchy. Under the patriarchal social and cultural structure, the protagonists face the violence. Likewise, some of the characters face the interpersonal torture which is caused domestic violence, sexual abuse and subordinate gender position in contemporary Afghan society. In this sense, the gender trauma faced by protagonist is caused by gender violence under patriarchy.

Gender discrimination, different hierarchical codes and conducts and different gender roles designed by patriarchal assumptions for males and females are some of the factors of patriarchal society that subordinates, exploits and tortures women. Even her family, relatives and nearest one's psychology too is shaped by similar patriarchal ideology. That is why,

woman finds the family as the source of inspiration and trust but the brutal domination and violence may start from here too. In this connection Deepti Misri argues:

Feminist historians of the Partition have observed that in addition to the staggering range of sexual brutalities women suffered from rioting mobs, another prevalent form of Violence against women had long remained acknowledge they although highly visible in the powerful cultural memory of the partition the preemptive sacrifice of women by their families in order to save family and community honor. (2)

The domestic violence against women is the result of assumptions of patriarchal society. Women are obligated to find the daily compassion for family but she should suffer the most in return. Behind the domestic violence as well as the gender discrimination, the body's politics of patriarchal assumptions could not be neglected. By violence, sexual harassment, rape or tortures like these patriarchy directly exploits women. On the other hand, regarding sexuality it questions upon the chastity or purity of women unlike to the men. Thus, woman's body has become the site of exercise of masculine power in patriarchy.

The same patriarchy makes the code and conduct regarding the chastity and purity of female body in one hand. On the other hand, it even tortures, exploits and sexually damages the female body. The torture faced by the characters of the novel too is related with their body. The patriarchal Afghan society exercises its power directly upon the body of the protagonist. Elaine Scarry observes what is remembered in the body is well remembered (109). Scarry attempts here "to make visible the political identity of the body is usually learn consciously effortlessly and very early" (109). She suggests that

“the presence of learned culture in the body is not merely inscribed upon or imposed from without body but must also be seen as arising from within the body given the body’s refusal to disown its own early circumstances its smut and often beautiful insistence on absorbing into its rhythms and postures the sign habit particular space and particular time” (109).

Keeping her exploitation, gender violence and continuous torture into the consideration, this research work aims to observe the novel through the perspective of gender trauma studies since these women have to go through ultimate suffering in patriarchal social and cultural values. This research analyzes the novel through the perspective of exploitation of female body, violence and gender discrimination. Thus, this research work tries to deal the lives, struggles and suffering of these female characters under the perspective of gender violence, torture and trauma. *NCCD Centre for Girls and Women* mentions, “Several interventions have recently been developed, though on order for services to be effective, trauma needs to be viewed and understood through a gender lens. There are several types of trauma including interpersonal violence (sexual and physical abuse, and domestic violence) as well as interpersonal” (1).

The report of *NCCD Centre for Girls and Women* has marked that even a violence and trauma could be observed through the gender lens. It is because of the suppression, exploitation and violence of women in patriarchal society. Women have to go through various tortures due to the gender discrimination and domestic violence the suffering of the women could be studied under the gender trauma.

The present research aims at setting the new ground through the analysis of this novel in the light of gender trauma. To prove the thesis statement gender trauma theorist

Kali Tal is introduced and some other trauma theorists are also used to support the argument of gender trauma and violation of female body. Gender violence refers to the socio- cultural definition of men and women, the way society distinguish men and women and assign them social rules. It is used as an analytical tool to understand social realities with regard to women and men. Gender trauma is the part of psychological trauma in a sense that psychological trauma refers to extreme stress that overwhelms such as violence, hate, crimes, sexual abuse and other events. Likewise, in gender trauma there is also sexual violence, different types of crimes which are done by men over the women.

Kali Tal, a gender trauma theorist presents in her book *Worlds of Hurt*, a coherent rendering of the relationships between individual trauma and cultural interpretation, using as it focus the phenomenon of sexualized violence against women. According to Kali Tal sexual violence against women means it is related to gender trauma. Individual trauma and cultural interpretation is also the related to sexual violence. The protagonist from *The Patience Stone* is victimized the domestic violence through gender trauma. According to the patriarchal culture all men want a women plays the roles of “purity and chastity these are the things Som is thinking of these are the truth that matter” (262). It is related to cultural interpretation.

Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin, the theorists of gender trauma, write in *Borders and Boundaries, Women in India's Partition* women's sexuality as it had been violated by abduction transgressed by enforced conversion and marriage and exploited by impermissible cohabitation and reproduction was at the centre of debates around national duty honor identity and citizenship in a secular and democratic India. They suggest that women searching the question about metrical relationship to nationality and citizenship.

Such as analysis of the experience of abducted women, for instance, sheds light not only on the Indian state. In order to heal from psychological and emotional trauma, we must face and resolve the unbearable feelings and memories. Behind the violence of Afghan women, the Muslim Fundamentalism is basic cause since the patriarchal Muslim community has vast gender discrimination.

Furthermore, the action taken by the protagonist symbolizes the consciousness of Muslim women about the oppressive patriarchal ideology. The revolution or resistance of Muslim women against the patriarchy could be studied under the Islamic feminism.

About Islamic feminism, Valentine M. Moghadam regards her view:

Islamic feminism . . . The very term as well as its referent are subjects of controversy and disagreement. Can there be such a thing as a feminism that is framed in Islamic terms? Is Islam compatible with feminism? Is it correct to describe as feminist or even as *Islamic feminist* those activists and scholars, including veiled women, who carry out their work toward women's advancement and gender equality within an Islamic discursive framework? (1135)

Women under Islam could be studied under the Islamic feminism. The Islamic feminism deals with the issues of suffering of women under the Islamic religious fundamentalism as well as Muslim women's effort in order to liberate themselves from the suppression within the contemporary religions, culture and discriminatory laws.

The only interpretation that dominates society is still a traditionalist interpretation that often discriminates against women in Muslim community. About the oppressive nature of the shari'ah and Muslim women's obligation to follow it Anwar writes:

Muslim women cannot reject shari'ah as it would be seen as rejecting their heritage, their identity, and often, when they question some aspects or dimensions of shari'ah, they will be accused of rejecting their religion. Adopting feminism, meanwhile, is regarded as betraying their religious, political and nationalist identities. Many Muslim women regard this as a false dichotomy and think that there are other choices that Muslim women can make. (2)

It must be noted that religious extremism is not confined to Islam alone, but what is unique to Islam is that codified Islamic law or shari'ah prevails in almost all contemporary Muslim societies and in recent times there have been greater demands for more Muslim laws to be implemented in all areas of life.

Similarly, Norani Othman regards her views that the Islamic law is problematic in Muslim society:

Unfortunately, the codified Islamic laws in many of these countries are also problematic, being frequently contradictory to contemporary notions of rights and equal legal status of men and women. With global Islamic resurgence since the 1970s and 1980s throughout the Muslim world, most governments in most Muslim countries – whether modern or secular-oriented – all have to respond to these demands of their Muslim constituencies. The compromise made by these governments have allowed for more and more Muslim laws that are retrogressive for women to be adopted and implemented as shari'ah laws. (340)

Islamic law is problematic for woman so there should be a distinct Muslim feminism in order to trace the women's suffering under Islam. There is therefore a real need for contemporary Muslim women constantly to engage with Islamic issues, mount a challenge against the monopoly of interpretation and constantly maintain their struggle against the control by patriarchal religious authorities.

Norani Othman further asserts her view that Muslim women should change the discourse about Islamic laws. In her own words, “Contemporary Muslim women also need to change the terms of the Islamic discourse in their respective countries and at the same time try to build bridges between secular and progressive Muslim feminists and human rights activists” (340). The suffering and the violence of the characters from *Thunder Over Kandahar* leads to the extreme phase of trauma who even lost their past memory. Yasmine, the central characters even forgets her name, identity and parents during her trauma as Judith Lewish Herman says about this phase of trauma:

The traumatized person may experience intense emotion but without clear memory of the event, or may experience intense emotion but without clear memory of the event, or may experience intense emotion but without emotion . . . Traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in psychological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory. (34)

It is the gender discrimination that makes the protagonist to reach to such state. The patriarchy exercises its power within the female body based on gender discrimination. However, in board level this research brings the reference of nature of gender violence in patriarchy in order to trace that female body is the site of violence in patriarchy.

Thunder Over Kandahar gives a sense of universality in the woes faced by women from different corners of the world in the hands of men who intend to subjugate them through various violent means. Physical abuse against women as the most controversial, visible and obvious forms of domestic violence can be simply defined as any act or behaviour that causes actual physical pain or harm to the victim, leaving behind severe consequences that are not just physical in nature, but mental as well. “Despite all the laws, programmes, and shelters developed to address wife abuse still several pretexts and excuses are made by the abusers who hit their wives, thereby presumable reframing their violence as non-abusive” (Malley-Morrison and Hines 39). Women regardless of their race, colour, culture, age and social strata are the targets of physical violence as they suffer by means of “being slapped, punched, kicked or thrown, to being scalded, cut, choked, smothered or bitten” (Koss et al. 42).

The novel reflects the exploitation and control of female body and sexuality in patriarchal Muslim community. It directly addresses the politics of patriarchy made upon the female body and sexuality. Ketu H. Katrak writes:

A politics of the body involves *socialization* involving layers and levels of ideological influences, sociocultural and religious, that impose knowledge or ignorance of female bodies and construct woman as gendered subject or object. Women writers present the struggles of protagonists to resist patriarchal objectification and definition as daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law. Socio-cultural parameters of womanhood—wifehood, mothers of sons valued more than mothers of daughters, infertility, widowhood—are grounded within economic, political, and

cultural norms that consciously and unconsciously constitute an ideological framework that controls women's bodies. (10)

According to Katrak, the post-colonial patriarchal society imprisoned women by narrow down their freedom and controlling their sexuality in the name of morality. The mark of morality is shaped according to the norms of Victorian society. She further says, "For female subjects, experiences of colonial domination are gender specific and rooted in the control of female sexuality throughout a woman's life. In most postcolonial cultures, a traditional, pre-colonial patriarchy is reinforced by colonial Victorian morality" (11). Keeping these controls upon female body and sexuality as well as exercise of masculine power upon their body into the consideration this research aims to observe the novel *Thunder Over Kandahar* and evokes the female body as the platform for masculine violence which causes the gender trauma.

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first chapter elaborates introduction to thesis, the statement of problem as well as hypothesis. It gives some general framework and the methodology as well. Some critics are also brought in introduction part to be applied while analyzing the novel. Gender violence including female body, sexuality, abuse and gender discrimination brought by patriarchy is analyzed in the novel in the second chapter of the research as the main cause of gender trauma. Last chapter summarizes the entire research with conclusion that Islamic fundamentalism is the main cause of gender trauma in Afghanistan.

II. Female Body as a Site of Violence in *Thunder Over Kandahar*

Gender discriminating patriarchal society basically exploits, oppresses, and victimizes women by applying patriarchal power directly upon the female body. The physical torture is inflicted on woman's body in order to suppress her in such society. The direct oppression of female body is obvious in such societies since both the community and domestic violence against women are the result of gender discriminatory perception of patriarchal society. Regarding violence as the common phenomenon of patriarchal society Khan says, “. . . Violence is a common social ill that destroys thousands of women's lives worldwide” (20).

Though the violence against woman is universal phenomenon in patriarchal society, the ratio of such violence is higher in developing countries particularly in the countries like Afghanistan where there is domination of Islamic Fundamentalism. That is why, this reality of gender suppression requires more scholarly attention since many Afghan women are affected by it. Similarly, it remains overlooked due to socio-cultural norms that consider discussions about it as social taboo. Thus, it is clear that there is critical situation of suppression of female under patriarchy which could be analyzed through gender trauma experience.

The violence against women is hidden within a certain family and culture in Afghan scenario. However, as Parveen argues that “there is a rising trend among members of the Afghan Diaspora in portraying domestic violence against their womenfolk back home through such artistic mediums as fiction” (15). Therefore, this research examines the manifestation of gender violence and the application of masculine power upon female body in the Afghan context through a textual analysis of *Thunder*

Over Kandahar by Sharon E. McKay. This breakthrough novel highlights the harsh reality of the misery suffered by many Afghan women on a regular basis. They have to undergo through massive exploitation of female body due to various forms of violence in all level including psychological, physical, social and cultural aspects. Some of the female characters in the novel have to endure in the poverty-stricken, war-torn and staunchly patriarchal environment of their homeland. Likewise, other female characters who somehow try to adopt modernity should go through direct violence by religious fundamentalists.

The novel begins with the experience of Yasmine, one of the central characters, in Herat, Afghanistan. In the beginning scene of the novel, Yasmine's mother offers her go to outside, "Come, put on your scarf. We will walk through the ice cream-chocolate, your favorite" (1). Yasmine hesitates to go outside, "I don't want to go out" (1). Yasmine's family actually has returned from Oxford to their homeland. Yasmine cannot adjust in Afghan society since it is not women friendly. McKay narrates, "They had lived in Herat for almost a year now-ten months, to be really accurate-and Herat, Afghanistan, was a long way from Oxford, England" (1). Yasmine is born and raised in Oxford so regards her home of Oxford as home not the home of Afghanistan. She says to mother, "I want to go home" (2) and mother replies, "Yasmine, this is our home" (2).

Women are marginalized in Afghan society. They lack education and active public life rather they should be confined in narrow domestic space. Regarding the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan, McKay narrates, "Half of the girls could barely read, and every week one or two left school to get married. Married! At fourteen" (2). This marks the hardship faced by Afghan girls who should marry in under age. The life of

women in Afghanistan seems miserable during Taliban rule. The suffocating life is presented in these lines:

Yasmine looked up past Mother's shoulder to the window—a window that looked nowhere. All the windows in the house Baba had rented either faced a wall or were covered up. Mother said that during Taliban times the windows in homes were blackened or covered to prevent strangers from seeing the women inside, and when the Taliban left the window coverings had stayed . . . Taliban had only retreated, they were never far away. (2)

These lines capture the imprisonment of women during the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Women used to hide within their home windows were even blocked so that other males could not see them. It assumes the insecurity of women in Afghanistan.

One of the most pitiful aspects of gender discrimination is obligation of Burkha. Women are not allowed to walk out without Hijab or Burkha. In the novel, the protagonist and her mother should go through various experience of violence while they cannot follow all the codes and conducts applied by Islamic rules. McKay narrates, "Yasmine tied the hijab under her chin, careful that it hid all her hair. She did not wear headscarves all time in England" (3). It marks the difference between Western and Muslim community. Yasmine and her mother are grown up in Oxford so it is hard to follow the traditional codes and conducts of Islamic fundamentalism. However, Taliban has applied various gender discriminating rules for women. McKay mentions:

When the Taliban were in control of everything, a woman could not go out of the house without a *maharam*, a male to walk with her. It wasn't like that anymore, but still, most women on the street were accompanied by

men or boys. And in Taliban times, all women had been forced to wear *burkhas* outside the house. Many women still wore the long gown that covered every inch of them, even their faces. (5)

Yasmine does not like all these costumes forcefully applied to women. She says, "It was hard to imagine that there was real woman under there" (5). According to Yasmine, it makes woman ugly. Thus, Yasmine and her mother come out from home without Hijab and Burkhas. It leads them toward the gender violence since a religious fundamentalists attack the mother. McKay mentions, "Feet pummeled the ground. Yasmine turned. Men in black turbans, with black *surma* smeared around their eyes, piled out of the back of a truck. They carried sticks, chains, and clubs, all raised up in the air. They were running toward them" (10).

Mother makes Yasmine hide on the bush. However, these religious fundamentalist people attack on mother. The pitiful scene is expressed as:

They had surrounded her. Mother fell to ground and covered her head with her arms. the whacks on her back sounded like rice bags being dropped from a great height. *Thud, thud, thud.* 'You, the daughter of america, don't you know our laws? You dress with no respect. Don't you know that a woman cannot go out without a man?' They yelled. Yasmine scrambled out of the bushes . . . he hurled her back into the thorny bushes, as if she were nothing, a piece of paper, litter. (10)

Mother faints since she is deadly attracted. However, other people come there and rescue both mother and daughter. The condition of women is shown as, "They tried to pull

mother out of the truck as if she were a sack of apples. Mother slipped out of their grasp and slammed down onto the ground" (13).

Violence against women is a universal phenomenon that transcends all cultural, social, economic, racial, and ethnic strata. According to UNICEF, "It is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (1). Likewise, about the critical situation of gender violence in religious fundamental countries, Garcia-Moreno et al. observe:

Although violence against women is a global phenomenon, it is more prevalent and profound in third-world countries, especially those in which religious principles and patriarchal values are upheld as rules of governance. It is therefore in a conservative patriarchal society that gender inequality, manifested as male dominance, subsequently leads to violence against women. (3)

Afghanistan is one such country that is basically shaped by the rule of Islamic Fundamentalism in social and cultural level. Hatfield, Thurston and Basiri argue that "although no reliable statistics exist regarding the incidence of violence against women in Afghanistan . . . all state that the situation for women is desperate" (3).

Thunder Over Kandahar brings the similar violence against women under the patriarchy of Afghanistan. Therefore, the issue of violence against women is not a product of author's imagination, but rather a truth of Afghan society. Women in Afghanistan inhabit a world as Babur mentions, "structured by strict religious, family and

tribal customs . . . subjected to discrimination and violence on a daily basis” (4).

Moreover, as mentioned by Ohchr Unama, “the violence which scars the lives of a huge proportion of Afghan women and girls is rooted in Afghan culture, customs, attitudes and practices” (1).

As a result, Afghan women have a restricted liberty to escape the cultural norms and traditions that dictate a submissive and subordinate position for females. Rubin mentions, “A large part of this dilemma can be traced back to Afghan society’s misinterpretation of Islam in which women are viewed as weak and vulnerable, and subsequently relegated to the bottom rung of the socio-cultural hierarchy” (10). Given the overwhelmingly patriarchal nature of Afghan society, Afghan women are thus subjected to various restrictions, hardships and atrocities in their everyday lives.

Likewise, Ohchr Unama mentions, “In a country like Afghanistan, acts of violence against women are not openly condoned but neither is it challenged nor condemned by society at large or by state institutions” (1). As such, it does not come as a surprise that this state of affairs is hardly treated as a disregard for the most basic of human rights in Afghanistan. Rather, many Afghans consider it so commonplace to the extent that bringing it up in public is treated as a petty matter.

Yasmine's mother's legs were broken and she is directly taken to a hospital where her husband too arrives later. However, she cannot get treatment there since male doctors are not allowed to involve in treatment of others wife. Her husband asks the doctor what is matter behind not treatment her. The doctor replies:

'Never mind who's running the government now doctors are still being watched' he explained. 'Male doctors do not want to take the chance of

attending a woman, and the only woman doctor in Heart has been forbidden to work by her husband. By looking at your wife, I think that her back is not broken but her leg is, in two places, may be three.' (15)

These lines mark the discriminating nature of patriarchy which makes a woman suffered. A female patient cannot get treatment by male doctors. Likewise, even a female doctor cannot practice because her husband forbids her to come in public space. It is a form of imprisonment of women as well as patriarchy's control upon them.

Both Yasmine and her mother become traumatized by this incident. The movement while she phones her father, McKay mentions, "'Please, please,' Yasmine begged. 'It's important! Tell him that we were' . . . She dithered while wiping her face with the back of her hand . . . Yasmine lay beside her mother, buried her face in the pillow, and tried to muffle her sobs" (15-16). It gives the detail of the extreme suffering of both mother and daughter due to the sudden attack. Attack is made because both of them come out from home without any male relative. Their action was against the laws of Islamic fundamentalist.

Thus, the female characters of the novel go through life-threatening violence at the beginning of the novel. This incident makes them traumatized. Regarding the role of life threatening force as the main reason of trauma, Kali Tal In this connection, regards, "An individual is traumatized by a life-threatening event that displaces his or her preconceived notions about the world. Trauma is enacted in a liminal state, outside of the bounds of 'normal' human experience, and the subject is radically ungrounded" (15). Kali Tal mentions the trauma of women and girls due to the assault from males, "Women and girls are taught to believe that they provoke men into to assaulting them, and that

they will bring pain and humiliation upon themselves by dressing, speaking or acting in the provocative manner" (20). It is patriarchy that oppresses the female which is the major cause of gender trauma.

McKay narrates about the codes and conducts applied for women by Islamic rules, "At first Yasmine did not look up. She had learned a lot in a year. Do not meet a man's gaze. Do not be alone with a boy who is not a relative. Do not let any skin show. There was many *do not's*" (17). Furthermore, a friend of father suggest him, "Your wife should not have called attention to herself that way . . . Heart is not as dangerous as Kandahar City, but things happen. You should warn her" (17). In this sense, Yasmine and her mother becomes first victim in the novel. Thus, extreme Islamic fundamentalism makes women suffer and traumatize in *Thunder Over Kandahar*.

Likewise, Yasmine makes good portraits. However women are forbidden to make portraits. Her father says, "My dear, if we are to survive we must make changes. You must not draw faces. It is frowned on" (22). Yasmine wants to return Oxford however her mother suggests her, "Come sit . . . What happened was terrible, awful, but what would it say about us if we run away" (22). She even reveals the family history behind their move toward England, "Baba's mother and other older sisters were killed by Russian bomb. Grandfather took Baba to England when he was ten years old" (23). In this sense, the family throughout history has gone through trauma. Their family home is in Bazaar-E-Panjwai located in Kandahar. Thus, due to the terrible attack and possibility of another attack the family moves to Kandahar.

However, journey towards Kandahar is not easy for the family. Both mother and daughter should have *Hijab* and *Burkha* in order to cross the journey otherwise; they

would be targeted by Taliban or the Islamic fundamentalists. Yasmine's father buys two *Burkhas* for wife and daughter according to the advice of their driver. Again the driver suggests for ugly *Burkha* for mother since brand new blue *Burkha* could drag the attention of other males. The driver suggests, "They are too beautiful and will draw attention . . . Get another once for your wife" (25). Father buys another two new *Burkhas* and exchanges it with dirty *Burkha* of a begger woman. McKay says about *Burkha*, "Yasmine covered her nose. It stank like a goat's pen" (25). All these incidents mark the hard life of Afghan women who are not secure even at their own society.

Thus, the family moves to their homeland Bazaar-E-Panjwayi, Kandahar and the novel reveals the actual suffering of woman due to the domestic violence. The novel brings another central character Tamanna and through her family the author reveals the suffering of her mother. Tamanna's twin's brother has been missing for five years and he has become a Taliban soldier. Father is already dead. Their uncle is patriarch of the family. However, the entire household is run by her mother effort and her uncle spends money in gambling and drinking. He even mentally and physically harms both mother and daughter. McKay narrates:

Many months ago, Mor had tried to offer Uncle advice. 'What you are doing is against the laws of Islam. You will get hurt,' she had said, gently and kindly. Tamanna, holding her breath, had watched it all from the doorway of the house. Uncle Zaman's face had turned as red as a pomegranate. He'd spat on the ground and screamed, 'No woman tells me what to do, you *ahmaq!* You woman! I will not be told how to behave in my own house!' But it wasn't his house. It was Mor's house. Then Uncle

Zaman shook his fist under Mor's nose. But Yelling and shaking a clenched fist did not satisfy him. He slapped Mor and then he punched her and when Mor crumpled to the ground he kicked her, screaming. (31-2)

The given lines give details about domestic violence against women by male family members. Even within home they are not secured. Here, Tamanna's mother is badly beaten by her brother-in-law because she has just suggested him to do well. There is common to beat women by their male family members. They are treated like animals or object. It is the oppressive patriarchal nature which has been torturing women throughout history.

The scene of domestic violence does not end here. While Tamanna tries to save her mother from Uncle Zaman she too goes through his attack. McKay narrates, "Stop, stop!" Tamanna had run across the courtyard then and pitched herself on top of her mother. Uncle had pulled back his leg and let it fly. When his foot landed on Tamanna's hip, there was a sound, a crack and searing pain that ricocheted up her body and left her throat scorched" (32).

The domestic violence against women is another major cause behind the trauma faced by Afghan women. The beating of the uncle causes, "Three seasons had passed since then, and Tamanna's hip had still not healed properly" (32) shows how much trauma a girl face due to the domestic violence occurred in Afghanistan. Likewise, Uncle Zaman and grandfather all are depended upon mother's earning. Tamanna and her mother could have supported themselves if they have been allowed to keep all that they have earned but "almost everything they earned went to Uncle" (32). Thus, there is even an economical exploitation among the female characters.

Regarding the fearful appearance of Uncle, McKay mentions, "Some might have called him rugged and handsome, but Tamanna thought him menacing and fearsome" (33). It assumes that girls and women even should face the gender violence within their home. The fear of Uncle goes through the entire life of Tamanna and her mother. Uncle even gives her emotional torture, "if you get dirty eye again I will make you wear a burkha. I will not have you spoiled for marriage" (34). Woman under Islam should live strict life following hard rules for purity and chastity. It makes them traumatized.

Thus, domestic gender violence is one of the major causes behind the suffering and trauma of Afghan women as mentioned in *Thunder Over Kandahar*. It could be examined that Zaman's depictions of domestic violence against women in the novel as a highly engendered phenomenon resulting from gender inequality and a sexist hierarchy of power prevalent in Afghan society. Furthermore, physical power exercise of males upon female as if female body is for exploit, subordinate and control through masculine violence. Regarding the violence against women Kali Tal mentions, ". . . women are threatened with violence, regardless of their race or class" (20). Thus, the violence against women is existed in all classes and races.

As mentioned in the novel, main forms of domestic violence, namely physical, sexual and emotional abuse, which make women suffered and traumatized. In this sense, the female characters go through gender traumatic experience. Both the central characters, Yasmine and Tamanna as well as their mothers have gone through similar gender traumatic experience caused gender discrimination existed in Afghan society, based on Islamic fundamentalism. The Afghan society as well as codes, conducts,

morality and chastity designed for women is completely based on Islamic fundamentalism. It makes women tortured from home to society.

Through her central female characters, McKay has presented a harsh critique on the codes and prejudices as well as female oppression and gender inequality prevalent in Afghanistan's patriarchal society. The recognition of violence against women as a form of gender-based discrimination and deprivation of human rights provides a platform for addressing the issue as well the reasons behind its emergence and prevalence in all societies regardless of the boundaries of race, culture and religion. From a feminist viewpoint, domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, domestic abuse and spousal abuse is a aspect that makes women traumatized. The targets or victims of violence are Afghan women who are considered as inferior, subordinated, oppressed and marginalized in both social and domestic spheres. They suffer from unequal institutional and legal power, as well as "cultural imperialism e.g. the absence of information about women's achievements and contributions in history books" (McCue 5). In this sense, women are targeted of violence within both family and society.

As a form of gender-based violence, domestic violence against women therefore refers to any act of violence towards woman, which causes psychological, mental, sexual, physical and emotional suffering, apart from restricting and depriving her of her basic rights and freedom. It is not, as Leverage argues, "an isolated, individual event but rather a pattern of repeated behaviours that the abuser uses to gain power and control over the victim" (60). Leverage further explains that within the domestic sphere, it is mostly "perpetrated by males who are, or have been in position of trust, intimacy or power for example a husband, boyfriend, father, or anyone in the position of power" (61). She adds

that domestic violence has many forms and manifestations which vary from “mild repetitive verbal abuse (psychological abuse) over the years to extreme forms of injury (physical abuse) or violence” (60).

Common occurrence and extensive incidence of domestic violence turned it to a global issue without any cultural, racial, economic or social frontiers and a “typical an accepted behaviour by society” (Leanage 60). This cycle of abuse against women with its diverse manifestations and forms appearing in every stage of a woman/girl’s life, ranges from sex-selective abortion to murder. It has several displays “including, but not limited to, battering, sexual harassment, and rape” (Koss et al 3). However, the scope of this controversial phenomenon increases in conservative and traditional societies such as Afghanistan, in which Rahimi’s novel is set. Three prominent forms of domestic violence against women, namely physical, emotional and sexual abuse are presented in the novel.

Physical abuse, also known as battery, usually begins with small and minor acts of abuse such as a squeeze or pinch but gradually intensifies in severity, taking more fatal and lethal forms over time. Scholle, Rost and Golding mentions, “Despite the growing recognition that physical abuse affects physical and mental health, events of abuse usually remain unreported by women and unrecognized by medical professionals” (607). According to Echeburua, Sarasua and Zubizarreta’s paper on comparative therapies for battered women, “the severity and frequency of the aggression are related to increases in depression” (1785). Their findings have further revealed that approximately half of women who have been subjected to battery or physical abuse in the past tend to “experience high levels of depression and lower self-esteem” (1785).

Battery or physical abuse plays a role in the deterioration of an individual's self esteem and mental health. This clearly indicates that physical violence in its various degrees and manifestations is often regarded as the most direct show of power for man to exert his dominance on woman. This perhaps explains the high occurrence of physical abuse against women by men in societies where poverty, illiteracy and deeply-rooted patriarchal norms hold sway such as in Afghan society.

Coming back to physical abuse in general, McCue defines a typical pattern for the common forms of physical abuse which occurs when the intimate partner pinches or squeezes the victim to inflict pain before proceeding to more severe acts such as "pushing, pulling, jerking, shaking, shoving, biting, slapping, hitting, kicking, striking and punching" (8-9). Moreover, McCue considers:

Throwing the victim or throwing objects such as household utensils at the victim, inflicting a constant series of blows and injuries, breaking her bones, causing miscarriages or injuries requiring a therapeutic abortion as well as various other internal injuries, depriving the victim of medical treatment, threatening with conventional weapons such as guns and knives, causing permanent disability or disfigurement and finally, murder, all as forms of physical abuse inflicted upon female victims by their male partners. (9).

Likewise, emotional abuse as a form of destructive behaviour refers to any emotionally abusive behaviour that is designed to subjugate and control women through sexism and gender-based power imbalances. It ranges from verbal abuse and constant criticism to more subtle tactics, such as intimidation, manipulation and refusal to ever be pleased.

This emotional form of violence annihilates woman's self confidence and self-worth, reducing her to a state of self-blame. It may happen through the belittling and minimizing of her abilities as well as through intimidation and repeated reminding of her sense of worthlessness and lowliness. All forms of emotional abuse eventually "cuts to the very core of a person, creating scars that may be far deeper and more lasting than physical ones" (Engel, 10).

Likewise, Brassard, Hart and Hardy describe emotional maltreatment as "a repeated pattern of behaviour that conveys to women that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted, or only of value in meeting another's needs" (715). Emotional abusers simply manipulate and humiliate their victims' emotions through various patterns. According to McCue, manifestations of emotional abuse which leave psychological scars in woman's mind and heart may appear in various forms, ranging from mockery in a general sense to hostile "jokes" about the habits and faults of her gender.

Specifically, these include insulting her repeatedly, ignoring her emotional needs, withholding approval and support as a form of punishment, yelling at her, addressing her with derogatory terms such as "crazy", "bitch" and "stupid", degrading and humiliating her in front of others particularly her own family and relatives, blaming her for any trouble or failures in the abuser's life, questioning and minimizing her abilities as a wife, mother, partner and worker, blackmailing her with threats of abusing her children and separating her from them by means of custody as well as threatening her with physical and sexual abuse as retaliation against her perceived insubordination.

Shayegan in his paper *The Invisible Trauma in Afghanistan* reveals that many instances of sexual abuse "are intentionally kept hidden by the victims" (28) out of fear

that their testimonies will not only lead to family dishonor but also to them being sentenced to honor killings. This is partly reflected within the areocentric framework of Afghan society, where Shayegan affirms that “sex . . . embodies mainly the social and cultural sense rather than physical or biological character” (28). Women are traditionally confined to the domestic sphere. Gendered violence against women in Afghanistan is both inevitable and unavoidable as Afghan society itself is deeply rooted in patriarchal norms and male supremacy that shape its socio-cultural structures. “Compounded with the loopholes in the existing laws, these reinforce male supremacy, thereby disadvantaging women and girls” (Wamue-Ngar 3). Similarly, Wolf in his article “Forgotten Promises in Afghanistan” laments that “the lifeline for many women is still formed by an absolute dependence on the support of their male-dominated families and communities, which avoids any empowerment of their female members” (14). Based on patriarchal ideologies, women are wrongly considered as objects to fulfill and satisfy men’s sexual desires and needs.

Shayegan hypothesizes that “in Afghanistan’s cultural context, sex-based identification of woman is a social reality”, thereby confirming that “sex service for men are considered coercive” and a “culturally-expected role of a woman” “which is a kind of sex based identity creation” (29). This is supported by Wamue-Ngar, who affirms that “once a woman enters into any form of marital contract, be it legal or illegal, permanent or temporary, the male partner has access to unlimited sexual control over her” (3-4). She adds that it is clearly impossible and unattainable for victims of sexual violence to accuse and press any charges against their abusers “because of evidential rules concerning sexual crimes” (3-4).

Traditional societies plagued by poverty, illiteracy and conservatism such as Afghan society tend to place in high regard some unalterable cultural practices which validate sexism and gender-based violence through which women are considered as subordinate to men. According to Wolf, apart from domestic violence, rape, abduction and forced marriage, “women have to suffer from traditional practices like baad and baadal” (14), baad being a way of “solving conflicts between two parties . . . by trading a girl as a compensation for a crime” that usually concludes “with the death of the traded woman/girl or she gets forced into slavery and/or marriage”, while baadal “consists of the exchange of daughters between two families for marriage” whereby such exchange is based on mutual arrangement as well as commitments, if one in-law is treated badly, her exchanged counterpart will be too” (14).

Shayegan paints an equally grim picture of the position of women in Afghan society, in which he states that sexual abuse “increases the risk of objectifying women as commodity of man’s leisure, irrespective of their will” (29), “especially in forced marriage...which is oriented to desire to hurt, humiliate and dominate through sex” (29). This undoubtedly leads to a violent and cruel cycle of self blame, guilt, shame and embarrassment. Physical abuse has always been considered as one of the most severe forms of abuse, mostly because so many women suffer from its chronic after-effects to the point that they cannot even continue their social lives normally. According to McCue, physical abuse is defined as any sort of hitting either with an object or with one’s body parts as well as pinching, shoving or violent shaking to inflict pain. It is also defined as serious physical or physiological mistreatment that can potentially cause death or severe harm to the victims. As explained earlier, besides the physical injuries and pain of

battery, victims of physical abuse also suffer from psychological wounds and consequences of violence in the form of posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety and fear.

Female characters in the novel *Thunder Over Kandahar* go through regular torture that makes them tortured a lot. For example, when Yasmine and Tamanna have been studying school Taliban arrive and threaten them to the death. One of the Taliban is Tamanna's twins brother who has been missing for five years. He says to Tamanna, "Has your family no pride or honor? . . . To wear white on your feet is to break our law. White is a holy color, the color of peace. You may not walk on it" (64-5). Thus, even in the color of shoes Taliban targeted the teen aged girls. Likewise, a teacher is killed by Taliban in front of students and he says to students, "Look up! You students, you girls, watch what happens to a man who breaks our law" (65). It is one of the horror scenes that makes protagonist mentally tortured.

At the movement another central characters Yasmine should face the ultimate torture by Taliban McKay mentions, "A young, grinning Talib rolled her over his foot. Yasmine, her face exposed, looked up into the sun" (66). Suddenly the leader of the group tortures her, "'See this girl?' The old man poked Yasmine with his foot. 'She has dishonoured islam, and for that she will die.' More bullets pierced the sky" (66). Threatening to kill for a fourteen years old girl does not end here. Rather McKay narrates, "'Death,' the Talib shouted. The young Talib who had stood in front of Tamanna picked up his gun and aimed it at Yasmine" (67). Anyway, Tamanna begs for Yasmine life with her brother, "The bullet had gone into the sand inches from Yasmine's head" (68).

This incident makes her traumatized. Her mother is already in process of recovery due to the first physical attack. Now Yasmine too is injured both physically and mentally. She is in bed rest with her mother. Regarding the traumatic experience of mother and daughter, McKay narrates, "'You have been in Allah's hands for two days, Daughter.' Mother pulled away and sank back into the pillows. 'We were wrong, Yasmine. Wrong to bring you here. Your father and I have agreed. We will leave this place, this country. He is making plans. As soon as you are better we will leave'" (71). Thus, the entire family go through extreme trauma due to the attack of Taliban at school. They, particularly, target the young girls who somehow unable to follow strict Islamic laws and codes and conducts for women and girls. Thus, the trauma faced by female characters is gender trauma caused by gender discriminatory nature of Islamic fundamentalism.

Yasmine asks to her mother, "Mother are you awake?" Mother replies, "I am my daughter. Do you feel better?" Yasmine again replies, "Lie still. I am much better. But now it is you who are sick. Are you warm enough?" (76). This conversation marks the suffering of both mother and daughter. It is the trauma faced by entire women community of Afghanistan. About the tortured faced by Afghan women, McKay narrates, "An Afghan woman sang a song longing for death. She asked that she die and become the water in a stream, the wind over the desert, the grass of the plains. Yasmine closed her eyes and let the words float around her" (76). Within the song, Yasmine thinks about her family's return to England.

The family too plans to move to England after Taliban attack on school and torture Yasmine. On the other hand, Tamanna marriage is fixed. The next morning

Yasmine's parents have plan to visit the doctor FOB. As Yasmine wakes up at morning she is informed as, "Your parents have been shot . . . Your father was seen going into the fort. He talks *kharijis'* language. He is a spy. Your parents will be dead by the time the soldiers come with their army ambulance" (85). Yasmined is shocked with the news and and narration goes on, "Gulping air, Yasmine kept going. *Your parents will be dead*. That meant that they were not dead yet. *Not dead. Not dead. Not dead*" (85).

Now, Yasmine goes through extreme traumatic experience due to the shot of her parents. As the most of the trauma victim she cannot believe at first. However later she sees her parents laying on pool of blood, "Mother's old burkha, the one the driver had made her Baba by so very long ago, was blood shocked. Baba, too, was lying in the pool of blood" (86). Mother is still in extreme physical and mental trauma as she assumes that Taliban again attack them. She says to jasmine, "Yasmine! Daughter! . . . Run! Hide!" (86). Later her parents are sent to hospital of FOB. Yasmine meets her parents at coma. It is narrated as:

No, no, no, Yasmine covered her mouth. Her parents lay in high beds, eyes closed, their face pale as the white sheets that covered them. Baba's face was almost hidden by a mask, a tube run under Mother's nose, and there were machines flashing and beeping besides both of them. 'It looks bad. The mask is giving your father oxygen. That is your father, isn't it?' (100).

Her father is in coma as well as mother has been leaving with strong seductive. Medic tells to Yasmine, "Your mother is not in pain. We have secured her head, back, and legs so she can't move . . . Most people die from an assault like this because of loss of blood.

It was dump luck that we were out on patrol in the area" (100). Thus, the entire family goes through the trauma in Afghanistan. Basically, Yasmine should go through torture since her parents are unconscious. Her trauma is reflected as McKay mentions, "Yasmine felt faint" (100).

About her traumatic experience McKay further narrates, "She sank back into the pillow as Yasmine buried her head in Mother's blankets" (102). Her subconscious mother says to Yasmine, "Yasmine, I am sorry. We are so sorry . . . you are the *noor* of your father's heart. If only more Afghani men loved their daughters like your father does you, perhaps our country would not be in such peril" (102). Yasmine's mother's assumption well captures the plight and suffering of Afghan girls they are not treated as human being. Tamanna's brother Kaber's assumptions regarding women clearly marks the patriarchal assumptions:

Do you think I do not want to go to Heaven? Women do not have a full brain. If women take one point of view, the other view is the right one. I am a Talib. I will always be with Taliban, and I would never come with you. I will die for Allah, and my country. You will see. If you do not go home and do as you are told I will tell the commander and he will deal with you. He has four wives and so many daughters he does not count them and he says that goats have more brains than women. (197-8)

Thus, women are tortured by the patriarchal values of Islamic fundamentalism in the novel. They are exploited, suffered and they have to go through physical, mental, religious and social violence in the novel. It makes them trauma victim throughout the

novel. When domestic abuse comes to mind, people often conjure an image of a physically battered woman.

However, the characterization of abusive relationships is not limited to physical violence. Undeniably, many men and women suffer from emotional abuse as well, which is no less destructive. Sadly, emotional abuse tends to be minimized or overlooked, even by victims themselves. Brassard, Hart and Hardy describe emotional abuse as “a repeated pattern of behaviour that conveys to women that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted, or only of value in meeting another’s needs” (715). Along with reference to McCue’s description of emotional abuse covered earlier, images of this form of domestic violence can be found in *Thunder Over Kandahar*.

Likewise, a lot of girls and women are killed in the name of family honor. These lines related to Tamanna's family honor and her Uncle's assumption regarding Tamanna reflects the psychology of honor killing while Yasmine regards she should not be married in the age of fourteen, "No. Zaman's debt will not be paid. He blames my daughter. Says she is worthless-will never get a husband-she shames our family. He says that no man will want her-call it an honor killing. What honour is there in killing a girl? A perfect girl who he himself maimed? If she limps, it is his fault" (128).

Thus, in the novel Tamanna should marry since the money paid by bridegroom can pay the debt of her gambling uncle. Knowing the dark side of Tamanna's future, Yasmine aims to make escape from home as she says, "I beg you. dear Aunt, please, please, please. You know there is no life for her here. My parents live her as I do. She will be my sister" (128). Finally, she is allowed to run away since she has already meet her brother at mountain alone and her family would not get bride-price money as

Tamanna narrates, "Mor told me to run away. She is afraid that my uncle will kill me because he will not get the bride-price money" (133).

Thus, both Tamanna and Yasmine plans for run away. However, Tamanna is in extreme trauma. In this connection, McKay narrates:

Tamanna sat back, confused. Moments ago, she'd no future. Movement ago, she had made her peace with this life. She had decided to die. She hadn't thought of heaven or hell, of right or wrong. She had said a prayer, asked for protection for her mother, then reached for the red jug of kerosene that Yasmine's father used to fill the lamp. When she had tipped it and found it was empty, she knew that Allah had willed that today was not her day to die. (139-40)

Thus, Tamanna had even decided to suicide. However, the kerosene can is empty and she is shaved. her attempt to kill herself assumes that she has gone through extreme traumatic experience. She has the feeling of sense of loss of everything. She regards herself purposeless.

Mirand Alcock in "Refugee Trauma -The Assault on Meaning" writes about the loss of home, culture, family status and its role toward the sense of confusion and purposeless as well as traumatic circumstances. He says, "The meaning of life can seem to disappear with loss of home, culture, family and status. This can be lead to a sense of confusion and purposeless, in which inner resources become dislocated or seem lost" (191). The memory of Susie gives the traumatic impact to the family as she is the loved one of the family. Each members of the family are entangled within her memory.

Alcock mentions, "The price of survival can exacerbate loss of inner meaning and feelings of depletion and emptiness. People can be caught up in a cycle of repetition that makes it difficult to recover from those losses and to re-establish a life that has vitality, purpose and meaning" (292). Memory, remembrance of past or nostalgic views about the past is another cause of traumatic circumstance. Role of memory in the course of trauma is clearly discussed by the trauma theorists. Protagonist Charley too is haunted by the memories of the past. About the role of memory, Duncan Bell writes:

At a very general level memory refers to the process or faculty whereby events or impressions from the past are recollected and preserved . . . although memory is related integrally to history, most contributors to the debates over memory (and most, although not all of the contributors to this book) stress that it is also in some sense of separable from it, even if the exact boundaries between these two are elusive. (2)

Memory for Bell is the process of faculty which recollects the past events, happening, histories. It is nostalgic because it recollects the things which are lost in present while memory victim is remembering.

In *Thunder Over Kandahar*, both the central characters slowly returns to normal condition. They run away to Pakistan. To run away for both central characters is their means of coping process with trauma. It is the process of healing with trauma. Authors write book to cope with the critical phase of life is no more than a result of working through the trauma. The 'working through' is only possible in post traumatic phase while the survival tries to contextualize the past in present. LaCapra writes, "I see working

through as a desirable process. In working through, the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present and future" (1430).

In *Thunder Over Kandahar* both Tamanna's and Yasmine's 'working through' and 'acting out' level could be traced on their way to mountain when they run away. This conversion clearly marks their process of coping with trauma:

'I could not have tried. But I know now that I cannot leave my country. If I did I would bring shame to my family' . . . 'Please, Tamanna, just come with me. I am your family. You will feel differently later.' 'I do not know what is right and what is wrong anymore. You do not understand what it is to be Afghan. Tamanna wiped her eyes with her back of hand. She was resolute. 'I am Afghan, just like you, and I know that we cannot fight the Taliban alone. We cannot fight men who would not let us go to school, who make us prisoners, who make people ignorant and then use ignorance to control us.' (201)

In this communication it is clear that Tamanna is still in the process of 'working through' since she cannot completely detached from her past in Kandahar. Even now she is not sure she should move ahead or return back. It is her beginning phase for critical examination of past, present and future as told by LaCapra. It is her beginning phase of healing process.

Likewise, Yasmine has already cross the process of 'working through.' She is not sure her parents will survive or not however she is clear that not only she but she also save her friend Tamanna. That is why she is determinant to run away from Afghanistan.

She also requires knowledge from her past experience that is why she is able to convince her friend. Thus, the process of her action is her 'acting out' as told by LaCapra.

When LaCapra talks the process of 'working through,' he also mentions how 'acting out' comes together with it. He says, "Acting out is a process but a repetitive one. It is a process whereby the past, or the experience of the other, is repeated as if it were fully enacted, fully internalized" (148). Unlike in the process of working through, in acting out the victims repetitively remembers his past. There is not the critical distance with past. A complete trauma narrative as a means of cope with it goes through well bend of 'working through' and 'acting out.'

About the process of coping with trauma and self mastery it is relevant to deal with LaCapra's notion of the reformatory part of trauma. For LaCapra, trauma narration goes through two processes the 'acting out' and 'working through.' His description about acting-out and working-through as two processes by which persons and societies deal with traumatic historical pasts. La Capra says, "Acting out is related to repetition, and even the repetition compulsion . . ." (142) and "working through is the ability to undertake it . . ." (144). Finally both characters goes through 'working through' and 'acting out' that is their process of coping with trauma.

LaCapra's describes about acting-out and working-through as two processes by which persons and societies deal with traumatic historical pasts. LaCapra associates acting-out with a repetition compulsion, repeating the trauma and healing power to wound, and working-through with the generation of alternate relations between people that counter those destroyed by trauma and that continue to be threatened by acting-out. Acting out is a process where traumatized victims commit actions that somehow repeat

negative emotions/actions associated with trauma and working-through counters this process. Similarly, Susan J. Brison about trauma in her book *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* write, “. . . the trauma survivor must find empathic listeners in order to carry on. Piecing together a shattered self requires a process of remembering and working through in which speech and affect converge in a trauma narrative” (20). She further mentions, “The communicative act of bearing witness to traumatic events not only transforms traumatic memories into narratives that can then be integrated into the survivor’s sense of self and view of the world, but it also reintegrates the survivor into a community, reestablishing bonds of trust and faith in others” (20). Brison talks about the trauma narration by trauma survivor. For this purpose the speaker finds listener to carry on the survivors experiences. The process of remembering past and working goes together.

Though, finally, Yasmine is wounded in bombing. She becomes unconscious and no one is aware about her current condition. She loses all her memory and stays Quetta. Now she is called Famia. All suppose that Tamanna is killed in exploitation since, Tamanna has Yasmine's password and gold chain so the authority regards her as Yasmine. Thus, she is send to England with Yasmine's parents being their daughter. The parents to worries about Tamanna's future in Afghanistan and believe her as their own daughter Yasmine. Tamanna even complete her under graduation in England.

On the other hand, Yasmine lives as Famia in Quetta who at the beginning has lost all her memory. Later she gradually recovers it. However, the recovery is in process as McKay narrates, "Her memory had not completely returned although she did have

some recollections. She could not remember events names or places, but she could sometimes feel a memory" (248).

In this sense, the protagonist even at the end of the novel is in process of healing trauma. However, once her grandfather comes knowing her existence at Quetta he says, "Your name is Yasmine" (254) and she replies, "Yasmine, My name is Yasmine. Yes, that sounds right" (254). From this point she gradually receives her memory and she even recalls her parents and Tamanna. She even goes to England, meets her parents. However, after living for short, she returns to Afghanistan and involves building schools. Tamanna too involves in this work. In this sense, the characters retain control over their trauma.

Kali Tal mentions:

The survivors retain control over the interpretation of their trauma, they can sometimes force a shift in the social and political structure. If the dominant culture manages to appropriate the trauma and can codify it in its own terms, the status quo will remain unchanged. On a social as well as an individual psychological level, the penalty for repression is repetition.

(7)

Likewise, Daniel Goleman says, "On the one hand, we forget we have done this before and, on the other, do not quite realize what we are doing again. The self-deception is complete" (116). As told by Kali Tal the characters of the novel go through transformation within their trauma. Both Yasmine and Tamanna involve in social works like education and medicine. The involvement in social work too is a form of coping with trauma or process of recovery. In this state, both the characters go through 'acting out'

since they are able to maintain distance with their bitter past and they know they have to do better in future.

The trauma faced by the central characters is marked their journey with it. They have their two worlds before being traumatized and world after trauma. They go through a transformation through trauma as Kali Tal mentions, “Trauma is a transformative experience, and those who are transformed can never entirely return to a state of previous innocence” (119). Their journey of life could be observed through Lawrence Langer’s notion of trauma as he says, “The survival does not travel a road from the normal to the bizarre back to the normal, but from normal to the bizarre back to a normalcy so permeated by the bizarre encounter with atrocity that it can never be purified again. The two worlds each other” (88)

Thus, both the characters Tamanna and Yasmene should cope up with trauma with healing process which goes through the last part of the novel. They are not completely healed with their bitter experience of trauma but they are in process of healing with it. As told by Brison, both the central characters Yasmine and Tamanna are able to cope up with trauma because both of them become good listeners for each other. Thus, the novel *Thunder Over Kandahar* captures the gender traumatic experience of Afghan women and girls. It also gives the process of healing with trauma through the process of 'working through' and 'acting out' with the help of good listeners.

III. Islamic Fundamentalism as a Cause of Gender Trauma

This research has tried to explore gender traumatic experience due to the gender discrimination and violence based on Islamic fundamentalism in Sharone McKay's *Thunder Over Kandahar*. The novel captures the suffering of Muslim girls and women, who undergo through the continuous gender discrimination and patriarchal suppression under the Muslim codes and conducts applied for women. The central characters Yasmine and Tamanna as well as their mothers go through gender traumatic experience throughout the novel due to the gender discriminatory behavior of patriarchal society. All these characters have to go through gender trauma since there is very subordinate gender roles and position of women.

Trauma refers to a state of torture and disorder, distress and destruction aroused by the psychological repression and psychological violence. Likewise, gender trauma is caused due to the gender discrimination, gender violence, rape and harassment. In the board arena of cultural trauma, the gender trauma which deals with the trauma faced by woman due to the discriminating nature of patriarchy. In *Thunder Over Kandhar* both Tamanna as well as Yasmine become the victim of Muslim patriarchal culture because they belong to subordinate gender group and they have to follow the discriminatory codes and conducts applied by Islamic law.

From the beginning to end, most of the characters suffer from the discriminatory gaze of patriarchal society. Thus, all the females in the novel go through extreme tortures which are a form of gender trauma. The reason behind the gender trauma is that Afghanistan is a Muslim country and ruled the law of fundamentalists where females are restricted to walk alone, talk to men, wear comfortable clothes and also married early. Likewise, Taliban has strict codes and conducts applied for women. If women violated

these rules and regulation they were punished. Sometimes punishment is death penalty also. In the novel, Taliban people hurt people if they break the rules of Kuran. Yasmine and Tamanna as well as Yasmine's parents wounded badly as they break the trends of Muslim culture in the assault of fundamentalists.

The strict moral and religious codes with vast gender discrimination applied by Islamic fundamentalism are the main reason behind the traumatic experience of novel's central female characters. However, these characters not only imprisoned within this gender trauma rather try to cope with it in their own way and try to escape from it. These characters go through working through and acting during their healing with gender trauma and finally gained the knowledge of survive. Yasmine and Tamanna are able to cope with trauma because they both become good listener for each other. Though they are separated for years finally they meet and involves in different social works which is also their state of 'acting out' a form of healing process. Thus, the novel *Thunder Over Kandahar* captures the gender traumatic experience of Afghan women under Islam in general through its central characters who even at the end novel are in the process of healing with it.

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