

# Women's Social Status And Suppression In The Tribal Region: A Content Analysis Of Jamil Ahmad's The Wandering Falcon

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## Abstract

The study delineates the status of women in the tribal regions of Pakistan as depicted in the novel "The Wandering Falcon" by Jamil Ahmad. It also reveals the exploitation of women at the hands of men who possess power. It unpacks the role of tribal traditions, which influence the conditions of women in the region. The study has been conducted under two props coherently interwoven: one is 'The Second Sex' by Simone de Beauvoir, and the other is 'Feminist Theory in Sociology' by Ashley Crossman. The paper adapts the method of 'Textual Analysis' by Catherine Belsey. The study textually analyses "The Wandering Falcon" to explore evidence related to women's social status, marginalisation, and suppression in a tribal and patriarchal system.

**Keywords:** women's social status, tribal traditions, women's suppression, and marginalisation.

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## I. Introduction

Jamil Ahmad was born on June 1, 1931, in Punjab, Pakistan. He remained a storyteller, a novelist, and a Pakistani civil servant. He was awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2016 and the Man Asian Literary Award in 2011. He was ambassador to Pakistan in Kabul during the Soviet invasion in 1979. He published his only and best novel, "The Wandering Falcon," in 2011.

In "The Wandering Falcon", Jamil Ahmad depicts women's status in tribal male-dominated society. If one ponders for a while, he or she can come to know that the author has elaborated on the discrimination between men and women in the tribal region in a very magnificent way. He has left no stone unturned to highlight the dominance of men and the subjugation of women.

"Men treat women unjustly; they deprive them of their rights and take them as commodities" (Qasim, Iftikhar, Qasim, 2021). The authors also talk about women's suppression, deprivation, and objectification, but they do not refer to the heavy work load that is done on them both indoors and outdoors. My study is different from theirs in the sense that I have mentioned every single issue affecting women.

In addition, "Sattar, Yasin, Rizvi, and Khalid highlight the impacts of traditional rules on tribal people, especially women. They show the brutal laws of FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Area) and their influence on women" (2021). Their claim is different from the present study because they only focus on the laws and traditions of society and their impacts on women. On the other hand, my research aims to uncover women's physical violence along with their social status, i.e., how women are forced to work indoors and outdoors.

From the very start of the novel, Ahmad depicts how women suffer at the hands of men. He says that women are put under strict restrictions by men. These restrictions lie in every field of their lives, ranging from talking and dressing to taking life decisions. For instance, we can see in the first chapter of the novel that Gul Bibi wears a dark-coloured veil to cover her whole body along with her face instead of wearing it in extremely hot weather.

Worse than that, women are considered tools for money-making. There are a number of examples in the novel that depict how tribal men sell their own daughters in marriage to men whom they do not know at all. For example, Fateh Muhammad sells her flower-like daughter to an ice cutter whom he does not know at all. He does so only to make money and set their lives aside for a few days. He does not think for a moment about what will come out of this marriage; he puts his daughter's life on the line.

Women are considered merely sex-satisfying beings. They are used by men just to fulfil their sexual desires. For instance, we can see in the text that Sherakai, after running away from her husband's house, is sold by Hafiz Ullah to the contractors of brothels. It shows how brutally and inhumanely women are treated in tribal

society. I would say that they are used as the skin of bananas; they do not have any value in the male-dominated tribal society.

In addition, women find labouring both inside and outside to be difficult and frustrating. I totally disagree with this feminist's slogan, "Man for the field; woman for the kitchen". The mentioned slogan shows that women are to stay and work inside their houses. Whatever it is, they have to do the household activities. On the other hand, men are to work outside their houses; they have to earn a living for the family by doing outside activities. But in "The Wandering Falcon," everything is contrary to the above feminists' slogan; women work both inside and outside their homes. They, along with their household activities, go out and do the work that men are supposed to do. For instance, "Women, in the Shaktu Valley, Waziristan, having water casks on their heads, go on foot for miles to fetch water for their families" (Ahmad, 197).

Similarly, women in Tirah, Afridi, walk on foot twice or thrice a day for miles to fetch water. Apart from this, they also go to the jungle to collect firewood. So, pondering over these activities, one comes to know that women are double marginalised, first inside their homes and then outside in society. They are put under a heavy burden of work because, along with their own work, they do the men's work as well. Thus, we will go through this discussion in detail in the analysis part to see how Jamil Ahmad has shown the plight of the tribal women.

### **Thesis Statement**

The present study inquires whether tribal systems add to the stringency of patriarchal social systems, resulting in diverse and more rigorous ways of exploiting women.

### **Objectives of the Studies**

- To investigate how women are subjected to labour not only indoors but outdoors as well.
- To highlight that women are used as objects in marriage.
- To find out the status of women in the tribal patriarchal system.

### **Research Questions**

1. In what ways does the tribal system marginalise women?
2. How does the selected text depict the physical exploitation of women?
3. How are women's opinions on marriage silenced?

## **II. Significance**

The paper explores the objectification of women in FATA, the tribal area of Pakistan, in the selected text. A number of studies have been published on the novel that discuss the problems of women, but they lack information regarding the root causes of women's double marginalization. The present study reveals how women are suppressed under the traditional tribal system. It also highlights that women are still the target of physical labour both inside and outside their homes. Besides, it unravels the forced marriage ritual prevailing in the tribal region, where women are sold and bought like common goods in the market. It fills the gap by finding the root causes of the exploitation and forced marriages of women.

## **III. Literature Review**

Considerable work has been done on this novel. Plenty of critics have given their views about Jamil Ahmad and his work. He has been listed among the great authors of his century. Steve Inskeep is an American writer and critic. He has given his views about Jamil Ahmad and his novel in his reporting in 2011. He has highly appreciated Jamil for writing about such a region where there is no bound to the barbarity of women. According to him, he listens to news about this region where light suppression is done during the day on a daily basis. This area has been depicted in journals or the news as an ambush by terrorists. Talks about kidnapping for ransom and murder for the sake of honour are very prevalent in the news bulletin. So he wanted to read about the area. Jamil Ahmad has helped him fulfil his desire in a very vivid way by writing the novel. According to Steve, Jamil has done an unprecedented job for the masses of the region, as he has become their voice. Here, I quote his exact words. *I have been meaning to write for the longest time about "The "Wandering Falcon", a novel that illuminates one of the most perilous regions of the world. The book recently published in the U.S. engages your head as well as your heart; the story of its creation is as fascinating as the story itself. "The tribal areas" is one of those phrases we repeat all the time in the news broadcasts. Sometimes, we call them "mountainous tribal areas" or "lawless tribal areas," where militants are suspected of hiding from the overhead cameras of American drones.*

He says, "The characters, the tales, and the landscape are rendered with clarity, sympathy, and insight. The author makes us travel with him. We ourselves can see snow-capped mountains in the moonlight, and high on that slope are the silhouettes of ice-cutters, who for many years have been hacking away at glaciers to bring

some refrigeration to the valleys below. The book offers a rich picture of the "mountainous, lawless tribal areas" we have previously known mainly for bullets and bombs."

Allan Clause is an Indian writer, critic, and social activist. He is greatly impressed by his work and regards Jamil Ahmad as his best writer. (2011) According to Allan, courageous people like Jamil can do much more for the welfare and prosperity of backward areas. He says that the author has placed the regions of mountains and deserts in front of us. There dwelled people from various tribes who were undiscovered until the twentieth century in the outer world. They are strong believers in their primitive customs and beliefs. They recall their forefathers by following their rituals strictly. They treat their women in a harsh way. They are resolute not to give liberty to women. He says that they believe that if they give their women freedom, they will bring fate to their honour. These tyrannies recall critics of the Stone Age. Their situations are not different from those of the tenth century.

Khaleif, a social activist and writer, published an article related to the same theme in (2014) in Bloom magazine. She says: In the tangle of disintegrating climate-beaten and broken slopes, where the fringes of Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan meet, Jamil Ahmad starts an amazing novel "The Wandering Falcon". This is the area that Ahmad conveys to energetic life: forsaken and some places barbarous, ladies have no future, are treated more awfully than creatures, are denied training, and have no privilege before their inverse sexual orientation.

She appreciates Jamil's writing technique in that he has depicted the sketch of mountains in such a way that it makes outsiders feel afraid of its location. He has highlighted a number of themes in a small book. He has illustrated many cultures, such as the Wazirs', Mahsoods', Dawars', and Chitralis'. It seems to readers that whole scenes are placed before them.

Since critics say that this region is famous for some causes such as brutality, harsh treatment of women, kidnapping for ransom, the lifestyle of the kings, hospitality, and Pakhtunwali, they have also made severe rules related to women. They include: they cannot go out without the permission of the men; they cannot laugh in front of the men; they cannot wed according to their will, etc. These rules make them feel like servants in the house. They are considered inferior to animals.

Tribal traditions also play a major role in the subjugation of women; they not only make the male dominant but rather snatch basic human rights from the female. "Bride-price," which is known as "Vulvur" in the tribal area, is the mandatory ritual of the marriage (Gulnaz S). The girl's father or brother should fix an amount with her father-in-law before the engagement. This ritual, the bride price, is considered very important because it increases the bride's honour in the eyes of her in-laws; the higher the price, the more respect she will get.

Besides, bride price creates a slave-master relationship between a bride and her father-in-law's (Gulnaz S). She is dependent on the economic basis in her father's house, but when she gets married on the "bride-price" condition, she will again become a slave to her in-laws. She will develop a relationship that will be full of dependency and a lack of true honour.

Women are considered commodities (Gulnaz S). They are sold as goods in the market. The women's dealing does not end; rather, it is inherited in great proportion among the tribal people. They do not hesitate or feel ashamed to sell their own daughters. They even do not think for a while to see to whom they are selling their daughters or sisters; rather, they treat them as selling tools in the market.

What the present literature on the novel lacks is the double exploitation of women, i.e., indoor and outdoor labour done on them. They not only perform household errands, but they also collect wood from the jungle and petch water on their heads from a long distance. It also fills the gap about how tribal rituals deprive women of their marital decisions.

#### **IV. Research Methodology**

The research has been conducted by adapting the method of Catherine Belsey's Textual Analysis'. Belsey was born in 1940 in London and died in 2021. She was a British critic and literary figure. She gave this method in order to help readers or scholars delineate, comprehend, or decode a text. Belsey is of the view that in order to know the text in a better way, it is important to know about its context. She says that context provides one with enough knowledge to reach the underlying meaning of the text. For example, Titian's painting of 'Lucretia and Tarquin' (1571) calls readers' attention to the multi-interpretations of the sketch. By looking at the picture for the first time, one will catch one meaning, but if he repeats his observation and looks into it from a closer distance, he will come out with another, quite different meaning. So, she focuses our attention on the fact that meaning is not fixed or objective; rather, it is something permeable and subjective.

Belsey suggests some important features of the text analysis. First of all, she says that text analysis must include a brief summary of the main text that is being analysed later on in the discussion part. For a renowned work, only a brief introduction will be sufficient, but for a common book, a detailed summary should be given. By doing so, the readers will understand what the research article is about.

The next thing she talks about is context. She says that unless one knows about the background of the text, he or she cannot understand it. It is necessary to provide readers with an insight into context so that they may easily develop awareness about the background knowledge.

The third feature she describes is an unambiguous and logical interpretation of the text. She says that the interpretation should be based on one's original understanding of the text.

The fourth factor is to finish your argument with proper proofs from the text. Your argument will be more valid and reasonable when it is based mostly on text-related references. These references could be taken from the main or primary text or secondary sources like the internet, articles, books, libraries, etc. These are some of the necessary steps that one has to take while conducting qualitative research by applying Catherine Belsey's method, 'Textual Analysis'. The paper has been designed under a qualitative paradigm.

## **V. Theoretical Framework**

The study has been conducted under the framework of two theorists whose ideas are logically interwoven: the first is "The Second Sex" by Simone de Beauvoir, and the other is "Feminist Social Theory" by an American social expert and activist named Ashley Crossman. Simone de Beauvoir was born in 1908 in Paris, France. She was a French existentialist philosopher, social theorist, feminist activist, and writer. She was influenced by Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Beauvoir, in "The Second Sex," talks about the suppression of women on the basis of their gender. She is of the view that women are suppressed in the hands of men because they characterise them, i.e., make their identity as being other. She says that women are excluded from human identity since they lack power and control. She uncovers the history of women's subjugation in patriarchal society. Men see themselves as the subject, while women see themselves as the object. She says that women are shown as disfigured, trivial, and imperfect, while men are shown as perfect, significant, and powerful. Men enjoy every field of life, while women depend on men's mercy.

Simone de Beauvoir believes that humans recognise themselves when they compare themselves to other things, but this notion is unsuccessful in the matter of gender comparison.

In her book's first part, known as 'Facts and Figures', she asks about the main reasons for women's subjugation. She focuses her attention on psychoanalytical, biological, and historical materialism. She says that on the basis of these aspects, there is a distinction between men and women, but this distinction cannot be the cause of women's subjugation.

She then highlights the role of myths in considering women as 'eternal feminine'. The myths have shown their identity as fragile, incomplete, and emotional from the very beginning. She opines that women have been made "eternal feminine" by society, not nature. In her book's second part, namely "Women's Life Today", she says there is no distinction between men and women on the basis of capacities; women are not feminine from within, rather there are certain outer institutions that make them so. Beauvoir analyses the developmental stages of women from childhood to puberty or marriage; she finds that women are made to follow and accept passively what is given to them by the hands of men. So, women become limited only to household work, childbirth, and men's sexual satisfaction.

In addition, de Beauvoir describes the economic dependency of women; she says that women have been pressed under the heavy pressure of financial security. As men hold wealth and all the assets of the family, women have nothing to claim; therefore, they accept whatever is provided by men. She suggests that women can be independent and free if they make themselves financially strong and stable.

Ashley Crossman's theory is based on four main concepts: "gender differences," "gender inequality," "gender oppression," and "structural oppression". Different feminist theories have given different examples in order to better define gender differences. For instance, cultural feminists analyse different values of womanhood and femininity to understand where the difference exists between men and women in experiencing the social world. Other feminists are of the opinion that the different roles that are assigned to men and women by institutions make gender differences easily noticeable. For example, the division of work in the household is based on sex.

Existential and phenomenological feminists concentrate on the marginalisation of women. They say that women are defined as "*others*" in patriarchal *society*". Some feminists look at how masculinity is developed and, with it, how femininity is nurtured in girls.

Feminist theories related to gender inequality concentrate on the idea that women stay inside the home and that their social experiences are not only different but unmatched to men's. Liberal feminists believe that women are equal to men in the capacity for moral reasoning and agency, but patriarchy and the division of labour on the basis of sex have denied that this concept can be proved by women. So, it makes women bound to their household activities and not to participate in outside social affairs.

Liberal feminists indicate that women face gender inequality due to heterosexual matrimony. They believe that women do not benefit from being married to men. They claim that, compared to unmarried women and married men, married women are more subjected to stress and depression. That is why the division of

labour on a sexual level, both inside the house and outside in public, should be changed. By doing so, women can achieve equality in matrimony. Theories related to this are harsher than those of gender difference and gender inequality. They believe that women are not only different from men or unequal to men, but they are also oppressed, subordinated, and even abused by them.

There are two major theories of gender oppression: "psychoanalytic feminism and radical feminism. Power is the vital element in both theories. Psychoanalytic feminists believe that conscious reckoning cannot depict the production and reproduction of patriarchy. They reformulate Sigmund Freud's theories of human emotions in "Childhood Development and the Working of the Subconscious and Unconscious".

Radical feminists believe that being a woman is a positive thing in and of itself, but it is denied in patriarchal societies. They believe that the base of patriarchy is physical violence, which can be defeated if women realise their own value and strength, form sisterhoods with other women, challenge oppression critically, and form female-based separate networks.

The majority of structural oppression is directed at the controlled gender. The theory believes that capitalism, patriarchy, and racism result in the oppression and inequality of women. Social feminists agree with Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx's theory that capitalism exploits the working class, but they expand this exploitation to gender as well. One way is the economic oppression of women, which is the gender wage gap. It shows that men are paid more for the same work than women.

### **Analysis of "The Wandering Falcon"**

In this, the research questions developed by the researcher will be answered by analyzing the novel "The Wandering Falcon" by Jamil Ahmad. References from the text are given in order to have a better understanding of the discussion related to the status and hardships of women in tribal areas. From the very start of the novel, the oppression, hardship, and torture of women are depicted by the novelist. Jamil Ahmad shows that there is no limitation to the hardships of women. They are portrayed as the only beings who are responsible both for their own work as well as the work of men. We can find a number of instances in the novel where women are busy both inside and outside of work.

In the first chapter, "The Sin of the Mother," we can see that Gul Bibi, after eloping with her lover, takes shelter in one of the dusty rooms of the fort. There, they have nothing to sit on or lie on. She herself knits a mat for their room. Besides, she makes baskets for soldiers as gifts because they provide them with rations and shelter. She looks after her son as well, along with the other duties of the home like cooking, washing, sweeping, etc.

In addition to this, one can see throughout the novel that women are busy with household activities that are imposed on them by patriarchal society. If we look at chapter three, "The Death of Camels," we will find a good example of it. In this chapter, the history of the Torak tribe is explained. "The men are busy unhitching the panniers from the animals, bringing their loads to the tents, mostly carpets, dried fruits, and nuts, which they carried with them to sell in the cities. The women too were busy, cooking, milking the she-camels and sheep, or suckling their babies" (Ahmad, 97).

From the above passage derived from the text, we can assume a gender difference exists between men and women as their duties or labours are divided. Men are busy with the activities that are assigned to them, and women carry out the labour that is imposed upon them by male dominance. Along with the work, they have to feed and care for their babies, which adds to their hardships and burden.

In the same chapter, when Dawa Khan and his son place the last load in Gul Jana's tent, the younger wife of Dawa Khan, they see that she is busy cooking for the family. "It was Gul Jana's turn to cook for the family that evening, but the other wife was helping her by cooking the bread" (Ahmad, 99). So, again, one can notice how women are forced by men to do the work that is assigned to them. They, whether willing or not, have to do their work in every condition.

Apart from this, when the first Kirri (which consists of a hundred people) of the Torak tribe under the control of Dawa Khan reaches the fort of Sandeman, Dawa Khan decides to stay here. Here, I quote from the text. "When he announced his decision to the Kirri, there was considerable jubilation; the happiest were the women, who insisted on moving towards the nearest clump of trees. They wanted to have sturdy branches around them on which they could hang their children's cradles. In their minds, home and permanence meant only staying long enough to wash clothes or to affix the cradles to the trees" (Ahmad, 152).

So, we can see that women are again and again exposed in the novel as being limited only to the breeding and caring of children; along with that, they are bound to such work that develops their femininity. On the other hand, they also strengthen the masculinity of the men by sticking to such activities as washing, cooking, sweeping, etc. It also shows how difficult it is for women who do many things at the same time, for instance, washing clothes and caring for or suckling their babies. So, the writer reveals that women who are assigned to stay at home suffer from long-distance travel.

Furthermore, we can see how Jamil Ahmad has given a description of tribal women's hardship in his work. In chapter five, he refers to the women of Shaktu, a valley in Waziristan. "Wazir and Mahsud women look after ragged patches of corn on either side of the vestigial banks" (Ahmad, 247). If one ponders over the given line from the text, he or she can come to know how much hardship is faced by tribal women. They not only bear the household work along with caring for babies; rather, they are also forced to work outside their home, which is generally assigned to men. This is the key issue that should be noticed: women are considered to stay at home and work inside, not outside, in patriarchal society. As Tennyson says, "Men for the field, and women for the kitchen." Then how is it possible in a male-dominated society like tribal areas that women, along with their household duties, do work outside in the fields? The people of tribal regions consider it a sort of humiliation for themselves if their women go out of their homes. So, it remains a question mark in my mind: If they have a spark of honour, then how do they let their women work outside in the fields?

So, it shows that when women work for men's benefit, it does not matter if they go out of their homes because the beneficiaries are men and the women are just exploited, whether inside or outside their houses.

In chapter six, once again, the author indicates that women are subjected to harsh labour at home as well as outside. As he says, "A few girls walked past with water pitchers on their heads to fetch water from some spring, perhaps miles away. They would make at least three trips during the day to get water for their menfolk, and yet find it within themselves to make another trip to refill the wayside casks that provided water for travellers" (Ahmad, 320). The author frequently refers to the labour of women outside their homes. He says that women are forced to do harsh types of work for men. As he depicts, carrying water pitchers on their heads, women fetch water from a long distance. They are used to doing so just for the sake of the men in whose hands they are being exploited. In turn, women are deprived of their basic rights; they are not allowed to speak for their rights.

Jamil Ahmad has very vividly indicated the long-lived ritual of the tribal people: that they sell their daughters, sisters, and even mothers in marriage to other men. They consider this sale to be a bride's price. Women in these regions are bought and sold like tools in the market. The author has given a hint to a number of meanings in this primitive ritual. First, the people who sell their daughters or women to earn money in return, as we can see in chapter three of the novel: "Torak Khan has summoned another Kharot in the court, whom Torak says has married his mother after his father's death without any bride price. As Torak says, "As the eldest, the money is due to me, but the man refuses to pay it. I have to get it out of him. My mother agrees with me" (Ahmad, 128).

For these people, money is everything, even if they are ready to sell their mothers after their father's death. They are just obsessed with making money, no matter how they earn it. They consider it their privilege and do not feel any hesitation to do so. They think that by taking money over women, they are producing a kind of protection and respect in their in-laws' house. As Roza Khan says in response to Torak Khan, "You are right, son. No man respects his wife or her family unless he pays a price for her" (Ahmad, 129). It is their blind thought that by taking money from women's in-laws, we can provide them with the life security and respect that women desire to have.

The second and most important thing is that they sell their women's willing power, desires, and decision-making faculty to those by whom they are bought. Third, when these women go into their father-in-law's house, they are treated as tools by their in-laws and even their own husbands. As we can see in the case of Shah Zarina. Shah Zarin, a beautiful maiden, is sold by her father, Fateh Muhammad, who is a mullah, to an unknown ice cutter. Her husband has a bear, which he admires a lot. With the passing of time, when Shah Zarina complains about the bear, her husband startles her by saying, "He can buy another wife but not another bear" (Ahmad, 460).

So, it is the fruit of selling one's daughter for money. Actually, this bride price is not taken for the protection and respect of the women; rather, it bestows women with insecurity about their lives and respect.

Besides, women, who are compelled and have no one to look after them, are sold to brothels in a brutal way. They are exported like tools to the market or city. The merchants range from a common person to a big contractor. We can see this in the case of Sherakai, the daughter of Sher Beg. "Sherakai is sold by Afzal Hafeez to the contractors who were the regular suppliers to the city brothels" (Ahmad, 497).

So, women are regarded in the tribal regions as sources of earning money, no matter what their future will be. They are sold and bought like common goods in the market, at the hands of men.

As far as the status of women in patriarchal society is concerned, it is miserable. They are treated as unhuman beings. They are not taken into consideration as people with feelings, emotions, and intuition. They are known as creatures. We can see in the text that when Fateh Muhammad gives her daughter Shah Zarina in marriage to an unacquainted man, who brings a bear with himself to take her wife, they go very far and settle on the outskirts of the city by renting a room. The bear sleeps at night, and Shah Zarina sleeps during the day. She prepares a large quantity of bread, which would last for the morning meal the next day. Shah Zarina says to herself, "She could not understand why the bear had to have a room and they could not. (Ahmad, 460)." So,

after a lot of patience, she dares to ask her husband about it. He looked coldly at her and said, "He can get another wife, but not another bear" (Ahmad, 460). So, this is the status of women, according to Jamil Ahmad, in the tribal region and male-dominated society. They are considered inferior to animals.

Furthermore, when she becomes impatient with the bear, she hammers small nails at the end of the staff that her husband uses for beating the bear in the morning. The next morning, the bear gets sharp cuts despite harmless blows. It screams in pain, and the man notices the nails on the staff. He looks at her wife, who cannot hide her smile. "At that, her husband took the same staff and gave his wife exactly the same number of blows as he had given the bear" (Ahmad, 460). This is the situation of women in the hands of men who are ready to treat them as animals without thinking for a moment.

After that, Shah Zarina faces worse situations throughout her life with this man. He thought in his mind that she should not hurt the bear anymore. So, for that, he thought that she should be treated as a bear. As he says, "If the bear ate his food, so did Shah Zarina. If it chose to go to Hungary, so would she. If the bear stayed awake during the night, Shah Zarina could not join her husband in the only quilt they had. In the morning, along with the bear, Shah Zarina would get her day's beating" (Ahmad, 463).

So, the above-given reference from the text is sufficient for understanding the status of women in the tribal regions. Their level of status is lower than that of animals. They are looked down on as other creatures.

We can see in a number of instances in the novel how little girls are subjected to the suffering of different labours. In chapter six, on page 29, Hamesh Gul, along with Tor Baz and one visitor from Germany, come across a jungle while going to Bagh, Afridi. They say, "We met parties of firewood collectors. These were usually small bands of women and girls who moved exceedingly fast so that they could reach and occupy the best sites before the others did. The matrons walked in front while the very young girls—some of them hardly eight or nine years old—skipped along in the rear" (Ahmad, 322-23).

So, the mentioned lines show that little girls also suffer in a male-dominated society along with the grown-ups. Then they say that we met another party, which consisted of little boys and girls who were grazing sheep, goats, and cows. These children had water bottles and food with them. So, one can find considerable scenes in the novel where little girls suffer in the company of women. Where there is a patriarchal society, there will be no age limitation on the suffering or labour of women.

## VI. Conclusion

The study points out the suffering of women in different spheres and aspects. The theory of feminism has been applied to this research to indicate the areas of their suffering at the hands of men. The novel has many female characters that could illustrate the hardships of women in the novel, but Gul Bibi, Shah Zarina, and Sherakai are the major characters that show the real face of the male-dominated society in the tribal areas. For example, the eloping of Gul Bibi with her lover despite her being married shows that she was married against her will. It also gives an insight into the tribal society where love marriage is so rare and often results in the deaths of lovers, as we can see in the case of Gul Bibi and her lover.

Besides, marriage for money is also depicted by the author. As we can see in the case of Shah Zarina, who is sold for the sake of money to an unknown person with whom she cannot live long due to his animal-like treatment and at last runs away to her parents' house, it shows that people of the tribal regions so reluctantly sell their daughters in marriage to people whom they do not know at all.

In addition to this, the harsh treatment of Shah Zarina at the hands of her husband shows that women in these areas are considered like animals and even worse than them. As Shah Zarina is compared to a bear and treated like it by her husband, the same is the case with the majority of women in the tribal belt of KPK. They beat their women like animals; there is no care for their desires, comforts, or even basic needs.

Moreover, the harsh labour of women can be seen in the novel in many places. As the author has depicted about the women of Shaktu Valley in Waziristan. He says, The women of Wazir and Mahsud look after ragged patches of corn. It highlights that women of the tribal regions, along with their household work and breeding, also work outside in the field, which is double marginalisation for them.

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