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**LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY  
IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
THE LITERARY TEXT AND THE IDEAS ABOUT  
SOCIOPOLITICAL GENDER FACTS, POWER, AND  
SEXUALITY FOUND IN THE BOOK *A THOUSAND  
SPLENDID SUNS* BY THE AUTHOR KHALED HOSSEINI  
THROUGH THE FEMINIST APPROACH**

**Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English**

**SILVIA LORENA FERNANDEZ GARROTE**  
**THESIS MENTOR: M.SC. DINNIER AMADOR SERRANO**

**SEDE ARANJUEZ**

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## **Abstract**

This research was carried out based on the analysis of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini during the last quarter of 2022 and first quarter of 2023. The analysis was done from a feminist approach to analyze the story and how the patriarchal ideologies affected the main female characters in the story regarding sociopolitical facts, gender facts, power, and sexuality. In addition, the results of the analysis were compared with the currently situation of the Afghan women found in the book versus today. Moreover, other crucial aspects were investigated regarding the origins of patriarchy and how they have permeated as a root of this country aligned with sociopolitical facts like civil wars, invasions, The Taliban regime, etc. Furthermore, since this research is done from a feminist approach, crucial aspects about feminism theories, ideas, struggles, and accomplishments during time are mentioned to confirm the importance of feminist waves in order to achieve gender equality.

## **Resumen**

Esta investigación fue hecha en base al análisis de la novela *A Thousand Splendid Suns* de Khaled Hosseini durante el último trimestre del 2022 y el primer trimestre del 2023. La investigación se realizó desde una perspectiva feminista para analizar la historia del libro y las ideologías patriarcales que afectaron a los principales personajes femeninos en relación con factores sociopolíticos, de género, de poder y sexualidad. Adicionalmente, el resultado de los análisis se comparó con la situación actual de las mujeres afganas versus lo encontrado en el libro. Además, otros aspectos cruciales acerca de los orígenes del patriarcado y cómo este ha permeado como raíz de este país alineado con factores sociopolíticos como guerras civiles, invasiones, el régimen Talibán, etc. Conjuntamente, como esta investigación está hecha desde una perspectiva feminista, aspectos interesantes acerca de las teorías feministas, sus ideas, luchas y logros en el tiempo son mencionados para confirmar la importancia de estos movimientos para alcanzar la equidad de género.

## Chapter I

### Introductory Framework

Have you ever heard the word Feminism? “ It is a word that fills with hope, with energy. It brings to mind loud acts of refusal and rebellion as well as the quiet ways we might have of not holding on to things that diminish us” (Ahmed, 2017, p.5) Throughout history, Afghan society has been managed by patriarchal ideologies as a social system where privilege and dominance positions are held by men, where women and families are controlled by a man that can be a father, the eldest male, or a group of males, all of them dominating women and children. Furthermore, Afghanistan is a country that has been ruled, during the last century, by kings and politicians who had made and caused extreme suffering to their women. However, the current situation of women in Afghanistan is not only the result of the Taliban policies, but also of a history over the centuries of women’s subjugation.

This country has had a tumultuous past in the last three decades, being occupied by communist Soviet troops and US international forces. Moreover, in the years in between Afghanistan has been ruled also by militant groups such as the infamous oppressive Islamic Taliban (Women in Afghanistan: the back story, 2022). Unfortunately, 'Afghan women were the ones who lost most from the war and militarization according to Women in Afghanistan: the back story (as cited in (Mosadiq, n.d.). Therefore, the purpose of this research is to make awareness about Afghan women and their inequality condition, as well as gender violence due to historical facts which have oscillated back and forth depending on the time period and other points.

Then, what are the principal reasons for this violence and inequality in gender, and who should be blamed? This would be that question that feminists and philosophers attempted to answer many years ago. Furthermore, this thesis is about a feminist approach analysis of the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini and therefore, it will analyze the patriarchal ideologies and the main causes of the current situation of Afghan women in society. This book, in an extraordinary way, exposes how the principal women characters have endless strength and resilience that helped them to fight against constant physical and psychological violence withing an anti-feminist society during the early 1960 and early 2000.

Unfortunately, sociological facts such women's low economic prosperity, social protection, freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes are problems that are reflected on the book, as well as today. Nowadays, Afghan women are still facing cruel treatment in their society. In addition, gender roles are highly patriarchal in Afghan culture, as men are viewed as the main income earners and women are expected just to make home duties. To illustrate, according to an article in *Addressing Violence against Women in Afghanistan: The health system response* (2015), almost 90% of women in Afghanistan have experienced at least one form of domestic violence, 17% have experienced sexual violence, and 52% have experienced physical violence. Sadly, according to Dunlap (2022), most of the time, girls are significantly less likely to receive a holistic financial education; and those women are taught to restrain their spending, while boys are taught about investing and rewarded for pursuing wealth. Likewise, this thesis will be considered crucial to compare the Afghan women's situation found in the book and its patriarchal ideologies with nowadays society, as well as which are the main causes of the patriarchal ideology in the description of the relationship

between the literary text and the ideas about sociological gender facts, power, and sexuality found in the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by the author Khaled Hosseini through the Feminist Approach analysis.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

The increase in gender violence in Afghanistan seems to be a problem that has been back and forth during the last decades due to war, history, religious, or sociological facts. Unfortunately, the Afghanistan conflict is a series of events and wars that have kept Afghanistan in a continuous state of armed conflict since 1978 and unfortunately, women are the ones who have lost more in these battles because they have completely lost their rights. However, besides all the previous factors mentioned, the root of the problem seems to be the “patriarchy,” which is the major impediment to women’s progression and development and even though, there are different domination levels all remain the same: men are in control. In this case, the Afghan society for many years, has given an absolute priority to men spreading male domination in all spheres, including not only women but also junior men, children, slaves, and domestic servants.

Explaining the “patriarchy” concept in a simple way, this ideology exaggerates the biological differences between men and women, believing that men must execute the dominant roles and that women only execute subordinate roles. Therefore, this concept has created during the times a system of social structures and practices, where men absolutely dominate and oppress women and, in some cases, exploit them. To illustrate, due to “patriarchy” supposes the natural superiority of men over women, this has brought and reinforce the male dominance as a devastating behavior affecting women through subordination. A clear fact is that all the power and authority within Afghan families remains

in men, which leads to other negative facts such depriving Afghan women of their legal rights and any kind of opportunities.

Another devastating effect of the Afghan Patriarchal Society is the pandemic of global male violence; however, it is important to point out that according to United Nations (2015), Afghanistan, during the last decades, has been affected by armed conflicts which have contributed to significant levels of instability, insecurity, violence, rule-of-law challenges, poverty, and underdevelopment, which have obstructed the effective realization and enjoyment of human rights for people of Afghanistan. Furthermore, even though men and women have been affected by these armed conflicts, it is an indisputable fact that women are the more affected. The violence against women, unfortunately, starts within their own families, being spousal violence and intrafamily violence every day more common. Most manifestations of family violence are not reported, as in the context of a patriarchal and conservative society, domestic violence is not always perceived as a crime and is condoned by authorities that attribute the abuse to a woman's disobedience of her husband.

On the other side, patriarchal thoughts accelerate and exacerbate the gender inequality in this country, where men and women do not have the same rights, opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges. There is no doubt that Afghan women have the worst restrictions compared to men, such as working outside from home, they have to cover their faces, and have always to be accompanied by a male chaperone when traveling certain distances. Therefore, this thesis aims to analyze why a patriarchal ideology has brought devastating consequences for Afghan women, affecting women's rights and their role within society. In other words, what are the main causes of the Patriarchal Ideology in the

Description of the Relationship between the Literary Text and the Ideas about Sociological Gender Facts, Power, and sexuality Found in the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by the Author Khaled Hosseini through the Feminist Approach?

## **1.2 Objectives of the Investigation**

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

To analyze the patriarchal ideology and its consequences against Afghan women found in the book compared to today's Afghan women situation.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the Afghan woman role found in the book versus today.
2. To analyze the position of men over women in Afghanistan and its consequences.
3. To compare the Afghan society found in the book with nowadays society.

## **1.3 Justification of the Study**

This research paper is focused on the Feminist Criticism approach, as it will help us to look at literature in a different way by applying perspectives of feminism to the text. It is going to be analyzed how the gender of the author affects the way in which literature is written. This feminist approach will look at how the characters, especially the female ones are portrayed and how it “reinforces or undermines gender inequality, oppression, physical and psychological gender violence.” The importance of this research is to expose the relationships between men and women and their roles in Afghan society, reminding us that these are totally unequal, as there is reflected a strong particular patriarchal ideology and that these unequal relationships may appear in a variety of ways in the

production of literature. Therefore, feminist theorists invite us to pay particular attention to the patterns of thought, behavior, values, and power in the content of a text.

In this case, the analysis of this novel has extreme importance due to the context of the story, which sadly reflects on all possible ways how women in Afghanistan are portrayed, since many years ago due to political, social, and religious facts. Regrettably, the text represents exactly how women and girls suffer from gender violence all over Afghanistan, since violence against them is a pervasive problem regardless of their age. Even though, there are any organizations among them “The implementation and awareness of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (EVAW), they are still limited and perpetrators of attacks against women continued to enjoy impunity throughout decades.

Throughout time, Afghanistan has been a compulsive country, where women’s human rights have been changing due to different sociopolitical and religious reasons. However, women have been the most affected, for example, the Taliban punishments such as lashings and executions against women based on their own justice system. Consequently, this feminist approach analysis should be relevant for any women, men, and society in general where patriarchal practices are not accepted, as it is important to create awareness and try to find out how to help. Indeed, it does not matter where people is from, everybody should try to be an advocate for Afghan refugees in their local communities by talking with friends, family, and colleagues who have an anti-refugee point of views.

In fact, it is a reality that many people are not aware that thousands of people across Afghanistan are at serious risk of reprisals from the Taliban system for speaking and acting freely as citizens over the past 20 years. This includes women’s human rights defenders, academics, journalists, and all those who have assisted the United States and its allies in

peacebuilding efforts. Sadly, there are very few opportunities to escape Afghanistan or to seek for asylum, so people can help others to understand this and why emergency measures must be taken.

In addition, the literary analysis of this book, besides giving an idea of how Afghan women struggle every day ever since they are children, can help to think and rethink how people can help them; for example, promoting with local governments this concern for the rights of Afghan girls and women, and asking them to be inclusive and welcoming to Afghan citizens fleeing the country. In addition, this may include expanding the list of refugees eligible or removing the barriers that refugees may face when obtaining visas, flights, and financial support. Moreover, donations to organizations that support girls and women during this crisis, because there are not enough funds to support and protect Afghan women. In addition, there are books in the market that help parents and give advice on how to raise a feminist daughter under some suggestions such as: “ I matter. I matter equally, Not 'if only' Not 'as long as' I matter equally and Full stop” Chimamanda (2017).

On the other side, for people interested in this book, reading through Hosseini’s pages will give the reader not just the plot and a glimpse of a horrific lifetime of war-hit in Afghanistan, but also the innate feeling of connectivity to the souls of the female characters of the book. The book will transport the reader and provide a way of compassion and empathy for Afghan women, whose suffering has been taken to unimaginable limits. Besides, this book takes the readers through the tyranny of war that commonly forced people to abandon their homes and flee Afghanistan to settle in other countries, which is similar to what is happening nowadays with other close nations in Latin America. In a perfect way, Hosseini gives a robust portrait of a “patriarchal despotism” where women are agonizingly abused by

fathers, husbands, and particularly sons. This makes his tale a powerful and harrowing story of Afghan women's conditions but eventually leave readers surprised by the strong spirits of the main female characters.

Without question *A Thousand Splendid Suns* will leave in other's life "A Thousand thoughts in their mind!" and with conviction future readers, especially female ones, will thank life to be born in any blessed country different from Afghanistan. Even though, violence, discrimination, deaths, sorrows, and abuse represented in this book are fictional, we cannot forget that all this truly happens every day in Afghanistan. On the other side, clearly is good to know that this story is just a work of fiction. However, at the moment that readers realize the fact that somewhere someone in Afghanistan is facing these same atrocities, if not worse than they will feel heart broken, and equally readers will feel sorry for all the daughters who got abused, all the moms who were discriminated, and all other forgotten innocent victims.

#### **1.4 Antecedents**

Even though, the importance of women's contribution to society has been recognized nowadays, the division between men and women in society, economics, and politics still remains. According to Borroso (2020), many women nowadays say that 'feminist' describes them well and many see feminism as empowering or polarizing. Since the early days of the women's rights movement, the term "feminist" has been a source of much debate. Therefore, feminism can be defined by the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes and it has been manifested worldwide represented by various institutions committed to act on behalf of women's rights and interests. These institutions analyze women's and men's social roles, experiences, interests, and chores. Moreover, some of these feminist movements have special interests in politics or any other fields, such as anthropology, sociology,

communication, media studies, home economics, literature, education, and philosophy.

However, it is still a problematic battle.

Since its beginnings, feminism struggles to end the division between the two sexes, supposedly due to biological differences. As any other movement, feminism has its historical background. Some authors place the beginnings of feminism during the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when Guillermine of Bohemia proposed to create a women's church (Palomar, 2022). However, it was during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when an organized and collective struggle began. Throughout the years, women have participated in great historical events in the last centuries such as the Renaissance, the French Revolution, and the socialist revolutions. Nevertheless, in a subordinate way, later it was from suffragism that women claimed their autonomy. According to Tynwald (2022), women from the Isle of Man (British) were the first women in the world who could vote in a national election in 1881. Later on, in 1893 according to *Women and the vote* (2018), New Zealand was the first self-governing country in the world in which all women had the right to vote in parliamentary elections.

On the other hand, it was not until 1837 that the term 'feminism' became associated with women's rights, when the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) coined the term feminism. According to Macmillan (2015), Fourier had expressed his support for women's rights in *The Theory of the Four Movements and of the General Destinies* (1808), where he compared the treatment of women in the Western world to that of slaves. He concluded that 'the extension of women's privileges is the general principle for all social progress. Then, after Fourier coined the term, feminism developed into theory and what is now known as feminist literary criticism. In fact, literary criticism is like any other, but its perspective is feminism and arises from the viewpoint of feminist politics or theory, which

does not take traditional assumptions when reading a text and at the same time, supports women's knowledge and experiences.

As precursors of this movement, the struggle of women began after the French Revolution, linked to the ideology of the Enlightenment and to the new working conditions that emerged from the Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, the French Olympia de Gouges, in her *Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens* (1791), stated that the "natural rights of women are limited by the tyranny of man, a situation that must be reformed according to the laws of nature and reason" (Gouges, 1791). Moreover, in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote the *Vindication of the rights of women*, raising unusual demands for the time such as equal civil, political, labor, and educational rights, and the right to divorce as a free decision of the parties. Fortunately, this feminist movement has growth across the world and throughout time, spreading all over the world.

As mentioned before, feminist movements have a long history that has gone through moments of interruption or weakening; however, it has managed to consolidate important transformations that have resulted in legal reforms, public policies, and cultural changes, which, although limited, are more evident in the younger generations. From the first steps of the suffrage movement at the end of the 19th century to the consolidation of the movement for the legalization of abortion in the second decade of the 20th century, the mobilizations of feminists and women have made decisive achievements in several fields of public policy and legislation contributing to the transformation of sexist social practices, and have struggled with prejudices associated with gender, class, ethnicity or race and sexuality. According to Top Ten Moments for Women's Rights (2018), some important movements have been led in regard to changing policies and social norms on abortion, or women actively participating in

shifting the frame on climate change. Another important fact was that a Nobel Peace Prize recognized sexual violence as a weapon of war, were the winner Dr. Denis Mukwege, worked extensively with a survivor of sexual violence by the Islamic State. On the other side, regarding the Feminist Movement in Costa Rica, there are some stories to tell, too.

The feminism movement in Costa Rica began with the struggle of Ángela Brown, who was one of the founders of the Liga Feminista Costarricense in 1923. Unfortunately, 97 years after it was founded, its impact on the search for a fairer and more egalitarian society continues. During those times, it was also allowed women's right to vote when a group of women created a strategy to make it possible (Acuña et al., 2020). Her effort also marked the beginning of the professionalization of women's education, as well as better salaries in the 40s for female teachers (Navas, 2020). Another view is that the cradle of feminism in Costa Rica was The Colegio Superior de Señoritas, which was struggling for almost 27 to exercise their right to vote (Acuña et al., 2020). Bernarda Vásquez Méndez became the first Costa Rican woman to cast a vote on July 30, 1950.

### **1.5 Scope**

While the majority of women in the world can live in societies where their human rights are respected, there are still countries and societies where women have completely lost their rights, and their role in society as human beings has been atrocity perpetrated.

Definitely, Asian and African countries are highly beaten by these patriarchal ideologies and their negative consequences combined with religious, political, and social aspects are unfortunately directly affecting women in Afghanistan and other parts of the world. The aim of this study is to analyze from a feminist approach the book, as well as to create awareness

about Afghan women and their inequality condition and gender violence due to historical facts, which have oscillated back and forth depending on the time period. Therefore, the scope of this project is limited to analyzing the content of the book in regard to how patriarchal ideologies negatively affect Afghan women and their role in society compared to nowadays Afghan women's situation by analyzing sociopolitical and historical facts.

## Chapter II

### Theoretical Framework

The literary analysis of a literature piece helps the readers to have a better understanding of the structure of the text, including critics of written work. In this thesis, a literary criticism with a feminist approach will be applied to this novel, considering that the feminist one is the most appropriate for this type of book. In addition, this research has the intention of creating awareness among readers about the pros and cons of patriarchal ideologies and how these behaviors have been affecting women during the last decades and nowadays in Afghanistan. Moreover, a complete analysis of the novel will be done.

#### 2.1 Literary Theories and Approaches

This thesis is a literary analysis from a feminist approach of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; therefore, it is relevant to have this concept and others closely related as clear as possible. According to the dictionary Webster (2022), literature is defined as “ Writing in prose or verse, especially: writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest.” To explain the concept in a broader way, it is a group of written works, not any group but a type of writing that had been created from the art concept like imaginary works such as poetry, prose, fiction, drama, biography, political, spiritual and many others through excellence in its execution. On the other side, there is the concept of “Theory” which, according to the dictionary Webster (2022), is “a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena.” In other words, these are the ideas and methods that can be use in the practical

reading of literature, each one with its own description and principles in attempting to understand literature. Consequently, the unified term “Literary theory” is born from here.

As we can see, the term “Literary Theory” defines concepts and enablers for the readers, which help them to have a better understanding of literature including critics of different types of written work. Furthermore, the analysis of a literary text allows a better structure text comprehension. Considering this, literary theory is the idea that guides literary criticism and helps to differentiate literary texts from others and allows to classify literary texts into categories. According to Dellinger et al (2022), one way to think of literary theory is that it acts as a critical lens to view a particular work allowing a critic to analyze a text within a specific theory. Similarly, when using the critical lens, the critic evaluates the literary text based on assumptions within a specific literary theory and then, develops a literary criticism.

As previously mentioned, even though, there are several types of literary criticism, it was considered that the feminist one was the most suitable for this book. Let us start by defining feminism. According to Webster (2022), it is the belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests. The reason why this approach was chosen, is that there is still a lot of work to do in regard to women's rights, even though it is the 21st century, in some countries like Afghanistan women do not have any kind of human rights. In like manner, the plot of this novel reflects much of the Afghan women's situation in society back in the 70s when men had power over women which led to making their lives miserable.

Above all, it is necessary to make awareness about this situation. Certainly, in most countries, women have some essential rights such as the right to respect the innocence of the youngest girls, the right to go to school and have a job, the right to enjoy a healthy society where both genders have equal social conditions, the right to walk free wherever they want to go, the right to choose who do they want to marry, and so on. However, in other parts of the world, specifically in Afghanistan, women cannot have these natural and basic human rights due to different reasons. Most importantly, this analysis is going to compare how the book portrays women in society and how they are nowadays. Therefore, it is essential to understand how patriarchal ideologies play a significant role in this indiscriminate world for females in the Afghan society, nowadays.

## **2.2 Patriarchal Ideologies**

### **2.2.1 Historical Concepts**

Behind all these gender differences, there are historical concepts to review, such as patriarchal ideologies that exist since many years ago. This concept refers to a social structure ideology in which men have more privilege and power than women. If we check the word's etymology, according to Ferguson (1999, p.1048), the word patriarchy means “ The rule of the father,” which comes from the Greek word πατριάρχης (patriarkhēs) (Oxford, 2018). Therefore, historically, the term has been always referred to domination and power over women and family, mainly social rather than biological. Unfortunately, patriarchy is so common that even those who are fighting against it, sometimes do not recognize some patriarchal social norms.

### **2.2.2 Patriarchal Social Norms**

Regarding social norms, degrees of patriarchal behaviors vary from a whole control over a woman and their action to unconscious biases in societies that are supposedly equal. Specifically in Afghanistan, patriarchy is a very common behavior where women cannot do much without the permission of a male guard that could be a husband, father, brother, or son. However, in other societies unconscious gender biases happens within our daily behaviors, traditions, roles, and religions. Therefore, it is crucial to identify and handle these detrimental norms by empowering future generations to achieve and experience true gender equality. Fortunately, nowadays there are many places where women fight every day for their rights. Nevertheless, in parallel women are furious, and it is not difficult to guess why, as women are constantly being judged, either women are too sensitive or not sensitive enough, either women go inappropriate dressed or too well dressed, either women are too fat or too thin, either women are very extrovert or puritans. Consequently, women are tired of all this, and yes, that is exactly what it is about, to stop all these behaviors and to start to respect every women in the world, it does not matter her skin color, her beliefs, or socio-political matters.

### **2.2.3 Taliban Regime**

To illustrate, in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan exists the Taliban regime. This movement emerged in 1994 during the Afghan civil war, formed by students from some eastern and southern Afghanistan areas who had been educated under traditional Islamic schools. Moreover, the Taliban regime held control of most of the country until they were overthrown after the United States invasion of Afghanistan on December 2001. Subsequently, once the US forces left the country, the Taliban regime took control again by establishing their social-political rules. This mainly affected the female gender, prohibiting teenage girls from receiving school education with the exception of the Koran study, as well as prohibiting

women from the right to work in most sectors different from health and education, according to Trofimov (2021). In addition, the Taliban regime also re-ordered women to wear “burqas” again in public, covering fully their bodies and faces according to some Islamic traditions. These rules also attempted to women’s freedom of movement by restricting women from traveling more than 70 kilometers without a close male relative. Therefore, it is clear that the Taliban regime is a detriment to women's human rights.

## **2.3 Afghanistan Women’s situation**

### **2.3.1 Men Power**

As a consequence, the power of men over women is undeniable and it raises in the center of families, where the only role for women is to work to raise, discipline, and educate the children. The women roles may vary among ethnicities and regions. Nevertheless, a traditional patriarchal system prevails within the families, where the eldest male has the most authority and decision-making power, and usually controls all family spending. In addition, every decision has to be approved by the husband or father (Evason, 2019). Moreover, all the economic responsibility falls on the husbands or fathers, as they are obligated to support themselves, their wives, their children, and any other parent or in-law living in the nuclear family. On the other side, children are also under this patriarchal hierarchy. Consequently, any type of disobedience act is seen as extremely disrespectful and a punishable behavior, even at a mature age. Sadly, all these established conduct rules only lead to strong gender violence.

### **2.3.2 Gender violence**

Hence, gender roles in Afghanistan society are totally unequal and highly patriarchal. The unique role for women is as homemaker, since it is considered that women do not need any financial independence, while men dominate the public sphere and women only have authority in domestic duties with children and other women. On the other side, unfortunately, gender violence in Afghanistan is covered by local laws which are not made to protect women's human rights. For example, since women are in their early years they are sold to older men, to illustrate 15% of Afghan women between 15-49 were married before the age of 15 (World Health Organization, 2015), and 46% before the age of 18. Unhappily, these women grow up thinking that all these patriarchal behaviors, as well as Islamic and Taliban rules, are correct and fair even though these can damage them. This is confirmed by statistics that show that 92% of the women between 15-49 years, believe that receiving a beating from their husbands is a justified act. In consequence, the inexistence of women's human rights is a reality.

### **2.3.3 Women's Rights**

Unfortunately, women's rights in Afghanistan have been intermittent during the last decades. Last August 2022 has been a year since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban regime, which has brought citizens' human rights violations including arbitrary detention, summary executions, and unlawful restrictions on their human rights, in particular affecting women and girls. Precisely, women were the most affected by the Taliban's return and the regime immediately rolled back women's rights advances and their autonomy as independent human beings. Indeed, violence against women and girls remained in the vast majority of cases and no action was taken against perpetrators.

Sadly, many cases of violence against women, including murders, beatings, harassment, forced prostitution, deprivation of alimony, and forced early marriages, remained the main manifestations of violence against women voiding any possibility of human rights respect. Unfortunately, the last recent efforts to recover their human rights through some positive changes that were done for Afghan women like their reincorporation at school and work were reversed under Taliban rule. Once again, rights to freedom of assembly and expression were drastically truncated (Amnesty International, 2022). As soon as the regime takeover any social and political opportunity for women, propelling in general for the country into a humanitarian crisis, forcing many Afghan citizens to flee the country.

## **2.4 Literary Analysis**

### **2.4.1 Feminist Approach Criticism**

This novel written by Hosseini is an emblematic novel that impeccably describes the daily life of two Afghan women whose lives pass trying to survive against a patriarchal society that destroys their lives. For readers, the novel themes surely will provoke emotions and spontaneous feelings when reading it, and here it is when the feminist criticism is applied to criticize and analyze the way the author reinforces and shows the social and psychological oppression of female characters within the novel. Likewise, it is considered relevant to compare both patriarchal societies; in other words, the one found in the book versus the current one to see how patriarchal behaviors and interests directly impact women's expressions and lives.

### **2.4.2 Novel Analysis**

In this literary analysis, the feminist approach will examine how female characters are portrayed in the novel, their treatment within the novel, their opportunities compared to male characters, and how the gender relationships between the characters are.

### **2.4.3 Title**

"One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs or the thousand splendid suns that hide behind her wall." These lines are taken from the poem 'Kabul' written by the Persian poet Saib-e-Tabrizi during the 17th century, describing the cultural wealth and beauty of Kabul (Donzel, 1994). Therefore, the title of this book is related to the mentioned poem; however, it is like a metaphor, represented by Afghan women that despite they are constantly beaten, humiliated, and minimized, they still hide behind their spirits hope, love, and an incredible resilience that help them every day to continue rising above from a passive resignation, especially Mariam.

### **2.4.4 Characters**

There are two female protagonists within the story and one male antagonist. Mariam is one of the protagonists. At the very beginning, she was introduced as a young girl living with her mother. Later, the novel took her into adulthood. Since she was young, she was marked as an illegitimate daughter and all its consequences according to the patriarchal society. When her mother died, she was forced to marry an elder man, Rasheed who later on destroyed her life. However, she was still able to love and sacrifice herself in order to help others.

Laila is the second protagonist and Rasheed's second wife. She came from a lovely family who loved her. She was introduced in the second part of the novel as a happy and

curious girl. She went to school and had good friends. Tragedy was always present in her life; however, she was a resilient woman who also made great love sacrifices.

Rasheed is the antagonist. He was older than his two wives and strongly marked with patriarchal and aggressive behaviors. He was a frustrated man due to a past tragedy with his first family, and later he took it out with Laila and Mariam. He was in favor of the Taliban regime and all its rules against women and citizens.

Nana was the mother of Mariam, who previously worked as a servant for Mariam's father Jalil. Mariam was born as a result of an affair between Jalil and Nana. She lived bittered because Jalil did not accept Maryam as a legitimate daughter and hid her from the rest of his three wives and siblings. Nana often talked about having a genius (jinn) inside her; however, it seemed like she was having mental health difficulties. One day when Mariam escaped from home to go to Jalil's house, and she hanged herself after Mariam refused to stay with her.

Tariq is a secondary character. He was Laila's best friend since childhood, his first and unique love. He was also Aziza's father, he had only one leg due to a land mine. He was a good man that loved Laila since they were children and at the end of the story, he came back looking for her and got married.

Mullah Faizullah was a spiritual guide who taught Mariam the Koran and supported her and Nana. He died of natural causes. Mariam loved him because she considered he was her only friend.

Hakim was Laila's father. He was an educated man who worked first as a teacher and then at a factory after the war. He loved his family. He was an extraordinary father. He was

progressive and wished that Laila could go to the University and make her own decisions in life. He was killed in a rocket explosion alongside his wife Fariba, while preparing to flee Kabul.

Fariba was Laila's mother. She had depression problems after her two sons, Ahmad and Noor, were killed in the Afghan-Soviet War. She spent her time in bed until the Mujahideen were victorious over the Soviets. She was later killed in a rocket explosion alongside her husband Hakim as they prepared to flee the city.

Aziza was the illegitimate daughter of Laila and Tariq. When her mother Laila knew that her father Tariq was dead, she married Rasheed in order to hide Aziza's illegitimacy, but Rasheed did not want her because she was a woman and he suspected that she was not her legitimate daughter. Later, she was taken to an orphanage temporarily, so she could be fed.

## **2.4.5 Setting**

### **2.4.5.1 Physical setting**

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is set in Afghanistan from the early 1960s to the early 2000s. At the very beginning, the action develops in Herat, and later on, the action develops in Kabul.

### **2.4.5.2 Psychological setting**

There are several psychological settings that represent in some ways the attitudes of some characters; for example, the burqa symbolizes control over women. Similarly, the Taliban regime represents destruction.

## **2.4.6 Other Elements**

### **2.4.6.1 Point of view**

The novel is written in a third person point of view from the perspective of an omniscient narrator.

### **2.4.6.2 Ending**

This story has a close ending, Mariam died sacrificing herself for the ones that she loves, and Laila finally achieved happiness.

## **2.4.7 Themes, Symbols, Motifs**

### **2.4.7.1 Themes**

When it comes to literature and its analysis, there are certain basic concepts that help us to prepare our critique or literary analysis, these are literary devices, for example, themes. Accordingly, a theme is the central idea of a story, novel, movie, or literary work. They can be conveyed through the characters, the plot, the setting, or the dialogues. In this novel, Afghanistan's history is a clear theme, which reflects the tumultuous history of the country throughout three decades, starting with the Soviet invasion, as well as their opposite, the Mujahideen in the civil war. Moreover, sorrow and determination join in distinct ways in most of the characters throughout the story where suffering takes different forms with the loss of beloved ones, but always with high perseverance of the characters trying to find happiness.

Apart from this, dishonor and reputation are clearly marked since the very beginning of the novel, where the birth of Mariam was pointed out as a sin, and later on, throughout the novel dishonor and shame are important parts of the suffering of some of the characters. Moreover, another theme are gender relations between men and women. They are highly reflected within patriarchal behaviors. The author emphasizes oppression and constraints of

women and how the power over women perseveres during the story. In addition, another theme is female bonds, suggesting that women have a strong ability to find strength and support among them. Furthermore, misogyny is a key theme because it takes on many different forms, from Rasheed's marked preference for sons to violence against women and the variety of restrictions placed on women by the Taliban.

#### **2.4.7.2 Symbols**

Moreover, literary analysis also includes symbols, which are not necessarily related or limited to the meaning itself. Symbols can represent something else either directly or indirectly. In general, symbols are in every corner of our daily life, and they have different meanings for people representing abstract ideas or concepts. Indeed, in art or literature, symbols can be an abstract idea conveyed through an object and are used to communicate a deeper meaning, to unite people and cultures or to promote traditions.

#### **2.4.7.3 Motifs**

Motifs are other type of literary device. They have a recurrence throughout the story having a highly emblematic significance. For example, in this novel, the kolba, which is a shack made of mud and clay, represents how Nana and Mariam were sent to exile out of the sight of Jalil to hide their shame. In addition, cigarettes are a motif that represents Rasheed's indifference to his wife.

#### **2.4.8 Author's Biography**

The author of the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is Khaled Hosseini. He was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965. His father was a diplomat and his mother a teacher. In 1976, due to business, the family was relocated to Paris. In 1980, the Hosseini family was ready to return to Kabul, but by then, their homeland was invaded by the Soviet Army; therefore, they sought asylum in the United States, and then they moved to California. Hosseini studied at Santa Clara University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in biology. Later, he earned a medical degree.

On March 2001, Hosseini began writing his first novel. Today, Khaled Hosseini is one of the most recognized and bestselling authors in the world. His book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* among others has been published in over seventy countries and has sold more than 40 million copies worldwide. In 2006, Khaled was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a Refugee Agency. Moreover, Hosseini was inspired by a trip he made to Afghanistan with the UNHCR, and he later established The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a nonprofit organization, which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. He lives in Northern California with his wife and two children (Hosseini, 2022).

#### **2.4.9 Plot**

The book is divided into three parts, the first one starts with Mariam. She was a nine-year-old girl who lived with her bitter mother Nana in the peripheries of Kabul, Afghanistan. Mariam was the result of an extramarital relationship between her mother and Jalil. Her mother was a servant at Jalil's house. Jalil was a wealthy businessman who had three wives and nine legitimate children. However, when Nana got pregnant, his wives did not permit

Nana and Maryam to stay in the house, so they had to go live in a small shack (kolba) outside of the city. Due to the improper extramarital relationship, Maryam was considered a sin (harami). Nana was a hostile woman who lived with hard feelings and frustration because of her life. She could not marry because she was supposed to have a genie (jinn) inside her. According to one Islamic concept and the western mythology, a jinn was a real creature part of another world, capable of causing physical and mental harm to human beings (Khalifa et al, 2005). Then, Nana lived with hard feelings about the mistreatment of Jalil to Maryam. Jalil visited them every Thursday for one or two hours only.

Some years later, when Maryam was fifteen, she asked her father to take her to see Pinocchio at a cinema that he owned and to introduce her to her siblings, whom she did not know. Jalil promised this trip to the cinema; however, he never showed up. Thus, Mariam escaped alone from her house and traveled to Herat to her father's house against her mother's will. When Mariam came to her father's house, she was not allowed to enter, and she was told that her father was on a business trip. However, she spent the night on the street waiting for his father. Nevertheless, she broke into the house's garden and saw that his father was at home. Then, her father's driver took her to her home and so, she found out that her mother died because she hanged herself. After the burial, Mariam stayed with Jalil for some days, but Jalil's wives found a suitor for her to get rid of her. Then, she rapidly was forced to marry Rasheed, a widowed shoemaker from Kabul thirty years older than her. They moved to Kabul. At first, Rasheed was kind to Mariam, but after she got becomes pregnant and miscarried six times during the next four years, their relationship got worst, and he became abusive to her over her inability to bear him a son.

Moreover, during the second part of the book, it appeared Laila, who was a nine-year-old girl. She was Maryam's neighbor. She grew up close to her father, Hakim a schoolteacher, but she was constantly worried about her mother, Fariba, who had some mental health problems due to the death of her two sons when fighting for the Mujahideen against the Soviets. Laila had a friend, Tariq, a local Pashtun boy with one leg as a result of stepping on a mine land. Some years later, they had a romance. Later, when Afghanistan entered the civil war and Kabul was bombarded by rocket attacks, Tariq's family decided to leave the city. Laila and Tariq had sex prior to his departure. Afterward, Laila's family decided also to leave the city, but before they could, a rocket hit their home, killing Laila's parents and hurting her so seriously that she had to stay with Mariam and Rasheed. Soon, when Laila got well from her injuries, Rasheed told her about his romantic interest in spite of Mariam's discouragement. Afterward, at the same time, Laila was informed that Tariq and his family died due to a bomb attack on their way to Pakistan.

As a result of their relationship with Tarik, she was pregnant from Aziza, and later she was pregnant again with a boy (Zalmai). She was forced to give birth via a caesarian without anesthesia due to the women's hospital did not have supplies. Rasheed was happy with his male son. Later, Rasheed lost his workshop in a fire; therefore, they did not have food, so Rasheed send Aziza to an orphanage. Laila had many problems every time the Taliban caught her traveling alone to attempt to visit Aziza when Rasheed refused to accompany her as her guardian.

Later, Tariq came back and visited Laila. He was not dead. However, when Rasheed came home from work, Zalmai told Rasheed that Laila had a male visitor. Suspicious of Laila

and Tariq's relationship and suspecting he was Aziza's real father, Rasheed beat Laila and attempted to strangle her. Then, Mariam attacked Rasheed with a shovel and killed him. She told Laila and Tariq to leave with Aziza and Zalmai, while she confessed to the Taliban for killing Rasheed, for which she was publicly executed.

Laila and Tariq left Afghanistan and moved to Pakistan, where they got married. After the fall of the Taliban, they decided to return to Kabul to be present for the rebuilding of Afghan society. They stopped in Herat, where Laila visited the village where Mariam was raised. She met with the son of the mullah who taught Mariam, who gave her a box that Jalil had given to him to care for and give to Mariam when she returned to Herat. The box contained a videotape of Pinocchio, a small sack of money, and a letter, in which Jalil expressed regrets for sending Mariam away, wishing he had fought for her and raised her as his legitimate child. The family returned to Kabul and used the money to repair the orphanage where Aziza was. Laila worked there as a teacher. She got pregnant with her third child, whom she would name Mariam, if it was a girl.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodological Framework**

Previously, information about the purpose and details of this research has been explained. In this chapter, the methodological framework will be the focus. In this section, the methods, procedures, and techniques in order to carry out the literary analysis from a feminist approach, are going to be explained.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

In this thesis, the feminist approach will be used to analyze the novel by using the qualitative method. In every investigation, there is a sequence of steps that investigators must follow to achieve a complete and successful investigation. That being so, the following information will contain the definitions, descriptions, and characteristics of the research method used for the current project. First, as per the information, the research methods are different from the research methodologies because they are the ways in which data will be collected for the research project. The best method for a project largely depends on the topic and the type of data the investigator will need, and the people or items from which the investigator will be collecting the data from. There are three research methods the quantitative, the qualitative, and the mixed.

By definition, a qualitative method, according to Hennink (2020), is an approach that allows the examination of people's experiences using a set of research methods such as interviews, discussions, observations, content analysis, life histories, or biographies. In addition, when the research is about literature, the qualitative method is more suitable. It is

commonly used for different types of genres such as novels, short stories, and dramas.

Therefore, the qualitative research method involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, for example text, video, or audio, to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It is appropriate to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. In this project, as previously mentioned, the method applied is the qualitative one. Its usage will benefit the current investigation because it will help to analyze the patriarchal ideologies found in the book, as well as to compare the current women's situation in society versus the one found in the book.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This project is based on the Literary Analysis of the Patriarchal Ideology in the Description of the Relationship between the Literary Text and the Ideas about Historical and Sociological Gender Facts, Power, and Sexuality Found in the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The data collection will be performed by a detailed reading of the book and the investigation of historical and sociological current facts regarding the women's situation in Afghanistan. This thesis project is significant because, even though, the story told in the book is fiction, the author perfectly narrates all the desperate and difficult situations that women had to live under men's oppression during the earliest 70's. Therefore, the research aim is to show the historical and socio-political facts that throughout decades have been oppressing women and their human rights, as well as to demonstrate that there are many forms in which people can contribute to help these women from everywhere.

Furthermore, it is necessary to have sufficient awareness and education to fight together against these patriarchal ideologies that do not leave any valuable legacy. For this reason, the strategy to create awareness among people is making a comparison between the

patriarchal behaviors found in the book and nowadays. This data will be collected from the novel, history books, current official press information, as well as information handled by International Humanitarian Organisms. The information will be gathered in content tables in order to analyze the information and make comparisons.

### **3.3 Information Sources**

When it comes to literature, it is known that it forms sources of information. It could be any kind because literature is diverse. An Information Source is for somebody, i.e., anything that might inform a person about something to provide knowledge to somebody. Information sources may be observations, people speeches, documents, pictures, organizations, etc.

#### **3.3.1 Primary Sources**

The primary information sources of an investigation are the original creations, original thinking, raw data, report on new discoveries, or fresh information that has not been analyzed yet. In other words, the ones that already exist and are accessed directly, and importance lies on the fact that they serve as a basis for the development of an investigation. Examples of primary sources can be physical documents such as books, interviews, speeches, newspapers, research projects, scientific articles, videos, official documents from public or private institutions, technical or investigative reports, or electronic information. They all share common facts such as they are reliable sources that can be referred. It can be said that a primary source is when an institution publishes data collected by it (Gallaud, 2015). Moreover, Galaud states that a “source of statistical data means the origin of the information used in the study or analysis, that is, where the data comes from or was taken. The source can

be primary or secondary.” To summarize, primary sources are original material from which a study is sustained. To illustrate, a primary source used in this thesis is the book which is being analyzed *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

### **3.3.2 Secondary Sources**

The secondary sources include material that has already passed through the analysis of other people. These are facts and materials known or transmitted by others. It means that all the information is created from a primary source. For example, a speech can create written or audiovisual interpretations, which can be obtained from the first time the speech was given. To illustrate the topic of secondary sources, they are defined by Gallaud (2015) as

Material that has already gone through the analysis of other experts. They are facts and material known or transmitted by others. They are the books of criticism and, in general, the interpretations that of a subject have been made. In a study of Rubén Darío's poetry, his poems would be the primary source and all the books that have been written about them, the secondary ones. (p. 21).

Secondary sources are the ones created later by someone who did not experience first-hand or participate in the events or conditions related to the research. In addition, secondary sources are the ones that have already been published in any type of social media or public site, social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Emails, literary criticism, etc.

### **3.3.3 Tertiary Sources**

A tertiary source of information is another useful resource that researchers can consult to obtain more information to develop their investigation. Most of them review information

gathered from primary and secondary sources; however, they do not provide original interpretations or analysis. They can be physical or digital, such as bibliographies, surveys, or catalogs. This is not an overly important or useful distinction (Gallaud, E., 2015). The tertiary resources form a combination of primary and secondary resources.

### **3.4 Analysis Categories**

The analysis categories are a crucial part for the development of the research. These concepts have a conceptual definition, which can be understood without the need of having a vast knowledge on the developed area. The elaboration of analysis categories is executed to measure the object of study and generate descriptions in the investigation. For the purpose of the present research, there are three categories: sociopolitical gender facts, power, and sexuality.

#### **3.4.1 Sociopolitical Gender Facts**

Sociopolitical changes refer to changes in the political or economic context of a society that affect the vast majority of the population, associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as the relationships with each other; although, not necessarily in a uniform way.

#### **3.4.2 Power**

Within Patriarchal Society power is a social structure and a legitimate ideology in which men have more power and privilege than women. Therefore, unequal power relations exist when one individual of a couple or a group has more power or privileges compared to the rest of the individuals.

### **3.4.3 Sexuality**

The Patriarchal Ideologies are systems of male dominance in several aspects. One of them is the control of female sexuality; women do not have the right to choose anything related to their sexual behaviors, preferences, or the right to decide about their reproductive functions.

### **3.5 Data Collections Instruments**

When carrying out research of any kind, it is vital to understand the importance of the data that is required to do the research. This will determine the data collection instruments to use. Using instruments is crucial during the data collection process because these will collect and measure information on specific variables in order to provide answers to the research problem and to determine answers to generate findings. In addition, the instruments help to build criteria, hypotheses, and recommendations. According to the type of research, different instruments can be chosen as research methods such as questionnaires, interviews, forums, observations, rubrics surveys, and discussion groups, among others.

In a research, the data collection technique is the approach used by the researcher to produce and find responses from the participants. Bairagi (2019) mentioned that "the goal of data collection is to get quality evidence which will allow the researcher to analyze the formulation of convincing and credible answers to prove his/her hypothesis" (p.131). Therefore, when applying instruments, this creates an approach to the study case, as well as a productive collection of data. This makes the research precise and legitimate by adding confidence to the research and its readers.

For the purposes of this literary analysis, different instruments will be used to contrast the relationship between the Literary Text and the Ideas about Sociopolitical Gender Facts,

Power, and Sexuality Found in the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* compared to nowadays. One of the instrument will be data collection of statistical and report information. It consists of the analysis of formal statistics about the sociopolitical facts, which affect Afghan women in the last years and nowadays, in society.

Moreover, another instrument is the novel's literary review, which will be used to study the content of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. It will give information and details about the situation that women had to face in the novel regarding the power that men had over women and its consequences. In addition, another instrument will be the feminism and patriarchy documentation review. It consists of the study of historical facts about patriarchy, which have affected women's sexuality during the last decades.

### **3.5.1 Novel literary review**

As a data collection tool, the literature review in this research will be based on the literary analysis of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* from a feminist approach in order to analyze how Afghan women are portrayed in Afghan Society throughout the novel, plot, characters, themes, symbols, and motifs.

### **3.5.2 Feminism and patriarchy documentation review**

The document review is a way of collecting data through existing documents and books. This method will collect and analyze data from feminist movement topics in order to make certain deductions based on the feminist approach.

### **3.5.3 Data collection of statistical and reports information**

The data collection of statistical and information reports will be used to gather information from relevant sources to know more about women and girls' human rights in Afghanistan, as well as gender-specific indicators about the sociopolitical facts that have been

affecting women during the last decades in several fields such as the economic, social, and political and comparing these indicators with the ones found in the novel.

### **3.6 Collection data process and data analysis**

During an investigation, the instruments are used to obtain responses, criteria, points of view, information, and evidence required for the investigation topic. In order to obtain answers to this literary analysis of patriarchal ideology and its relationship with the novel, it will be explained how the data collection process and how the analysis, will be carried out.

As a first phase, reading the novel twice will be critical in order to achieve better retention and knowledge transfer to start the analysis of several elements. The first part will summarize the basic plot of the novel in order to connect it with the story. Moreover, to have a clear context of the story, research about the author's background and other works will help to have insight into the author's perspective and predisposition, as well as considering the narrator's personality and role in the story. In addition, in this phase, critical analysis of the story's setting regarding when and where the story takes place, it is crucial to find the depth of the story while considering where the author's story is placed and why the author made such decision.

On the other side, an analysis of the plot will be done to identify patterns and essential points in order to analyze, interpret, and explain the story. In addition, the analysis of the characters will drive us the behind stories, as both, major characters, and minor ones, will be analyzed to understand how the author uses them to broadcast his most important messages. Lastly, in this first phase, the themes of the story will be detailed because through these, the author lets the readers know about his immense ideas through context, setting, and characters.

As a second phase and due to this literary analysis will be done from a feminist approach perspective, collecting data about the feminist theories throughout recent literature books is part of this investigation. Data directly taken from books about the birth of global feminism, its history, and the struggles for equal rights will be collected and exposed. On the other side, data about patriarchy will be collected to understand its ideas and principles and how patriarchal theories have been affecting or not Afghan society and women. Having this resource information is crucial to give the readers and, especially, women a clear notion of their place in history due to feminist activists and their conquests, which have been less celebrated, published, and recognized.

During the third phase, statistical and information reports about women and girls' human rights in Afghanistan are going to be detailed and compared regarding education, restrictions, violence, and third-party interviews performed by relevant sources. An analysis of the treatment of women in Afghanistan will be collected through secondary data collection sources that exist and that organizations collected and published for some purpose. This phase consists of searching and exposing statistical information from Humanitarian Organizations, movements and government reports about statistics that can give us an idea of the real Afghan women's position nowadays in their country, the progress on women's rights, gender equality, inclusive development, social protection, political participation, freedom from violence, and stereotypes.

## Chapter IV

### Data Analysis

Carrying out the data analysis is crucial during an investigation in order to present accurate, relevant, and reliable data to contribute to the approach of the research topic and to facilitate the progress of any investigation. Therefore, the material and evidence provided within an investigation generates solid credibility according to the data produced from the applied instruments. In this chapter, the analysis of the applied instruments will help to answer the research question proposed in the first chapter, which is: What are the main causes of the Patriarchal Ideology in the Description of the Relationship between the Literary Text and the Ideas about Sociological Gender Facts, Power, and Sexuality Founded in the Book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by the Author Khaled Hosseini through the Feminist Approach?

#### 4.1 Analysis and Interpretations of the Results

This chapter of the research will evaluate the outcomes collected through the different instruments applied during the investigation. Therefore, the evidence and results obtained from the three instruments will support the conclusions of the research by analyzing the information to find possible answers to the research question. Consequently, the collected information obtained from each instrument is going to be discussed and analyzed, and therefore, suggestions for changes could be made.

##### 4.1.1 Novel literary review

The data collection process began with the double reading of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* to achieve a better retention and familiarity with the story and the analysis of the text. As a first step, a basic overview of the plot as shown in table 1.

**Table 1**

Plot summary by chapter of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

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**Chapters' Summary**

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A Thousand Splendid Suns is set in Afghanistan from the early 1960s to the early 2000. Its main focus is the lives of two women, Mariam, and Laila. It is divided in four parts with 51 chapters

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<p>The first part takes the readers through Mariam's youth and her marriage. Mariam was a young girl who grew up in Herat, a small city in Afghanistan. She lived with her mother. Her father was a successful businessman, and Mariam was his only illegitimate child. Mariam resented her limited place in her father's life; she wanted to live with him and to meet his wives and half-siblings. One day, Mariam escaped from her home and when she came back, she found out that her mother has died due to suicide. Later, her father forced her to marry an old man, a shoemaker from Kabul named Rasheed, after the tragedy.</p>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<p>The author moved to 20 years later. Here, Laila appeared. She had a family; she was an adolescent that was in love with her best friend Tarik, and she had a lovely father who took good care of the family.</p>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<p>Laila's family was killed in the war, and after that, she was forced to accept a marriage proposal from Mariam's husband. Later, Laila gave birth to a daughter, Aziza. Later on, they became friends and allies against Rasheed's abuse. Sometime later, Laila gave birth to her second son, Zalmai. Then, Tarik came back and found Laila. However, Rasheed found out about their meetings and beat brutally Laila, and so, Mariam while trying to stop him, she killed him with a shovel. Due to this,</p>

**Basic Plot**

#### Chapter 4

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Mariam tried to help Laila and her children, so she went with the Taliban's authorities and confessed the crime, being executed for it.

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Finally, in this last part, the book shifted from the past tense to the present tense, Laila got married again with Tariq and enjoyed a comfortable life with her children, and they started to live a happy life.

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*Table 1 shows a summary plot of the story by chapter. Source: Researcher's own creation.*

#### Table 2

##### Author's Background Information

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##### Information about Khaled Hosseini

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##### Biography summary

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965. He and his family went to live in Paris due to work reasons. When they tried to return to Kabul in 1980, Afghanistan was taken by the Soviet Army and therefore, he and his family asked for asylum in US. He studied in California and got a bachelor's degree in biology and medicine. In 2001, he began writing, and nowadays he is one of the most recognized and bestselling authors in the world

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##### At present

Khaled lives now in the US with his wife and children. He is a goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. He established the Khaled Hosseini Foundation (non-profit) which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

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##### Style

His writing style is very descriptive, creating very-well described sceneries to transport his readers, undoubtedly exactly where he wants them to be, making

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possible a great connection and bond with the characters. Through this novel, the author shows his sadness for those who have been beaten by war using two mayor literary devices: symbolism and imagery. According to Hosseini (2022), these two literary devices influence the readers by giving them a deeper insight and understanding of the pain and fear that these characters were forced into dealing with every day.

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*Table 2 shows a summary of the author's biography. Source: Khaled Hosseini Bio (2023)*

### **Table 3**

Setting: Detailed analysis of the story of when and where the story takes place

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#### **Story's Setting**

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**When** 1960's to 2000's

**Where** Country: Afghanistan / Pakistan

Cities: Herat, Gul Daman, Murree, Shahr-e-Sohak

**Herat:** where Miriam's father lived. Miriam and her mother lived in a hut on the outskirts of this place in the hills.

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**Kabul:** where Rasheed had a shoemaking business, and it was where Miriam went when she was married to him. It was also where Laila and Tariq lived and where the novel concluded, as Laila and Tariq returned there with their family after the wars were over.

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**Shahr-e-Sohak :** where two enormous Buddhas had been carved into the cliffs of the city. Laila had visited there with her father and Tariq, climbing to the top together to look out on the valley below.

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**Pakistan:** where Afghani refugees fled to escape from the wars in Afghanistan. Laila and Tariq lived there for a time before they returned to Kabul.

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*Table 3 shows detailed setting information about the novel. Source: A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini (2007)*

**Table 4**

Patterns found within the story.

<b>Different patterns found in the novel</b>	
<b>Love</b>	<p>This pattern was present during the whole story. Even though, it is not always the winner, it is a strong bond between the weak female characters. It is presented in all social classes and different ethnic groups.</p> <p><i>“A man’s heart is a wretched, wretched thing. It isn’t like a mother’s womb. It won’t bleed. It won’t stretch to make room for you.”</i></p> <p>To illustrate, in this quote, Mariam’s mother compared the man’s heart to with a woman’s womb. Her mother was trying to tell Mariam that a mother’s love could never be compared to a father’s love, referring to how Mariam’s father sent her far away to live in a village with her mother because Mariam represented a shame in his life due to, she was an illegitimate daughter. Therefore, he did not love her enough to stand up for her. In contrast, her mother always took care of her and was present in her life.</p> <hr/> <p><i>“Marriage can wait, education cannot.”</i></p> <p>To illustrate, in this quote, Laila’s father, Hakim was always stressing to Laila the importance of education. He loved Laila and he wanted her to be an educated and independent woman. He was constantly motivating her to study before thinking about marriage. This is a significant message, different from the patriarchal thinking of Afghan men’s, as it clearly represented his love for his daughter.</p> <hr/> <p><i>“Tariq tucked the gun into the waist of his denims. Then he said a thing both lovely and terrible. “For you,” he said. “I’d kill with it for you, Laila.”</i></p> <p>To illustrate, in this quote, Tariq’s love for Laila was represented. He carried a gun and was willing to kill for her. Tarik’s love was so great that</p>
	p.27
	p.114
	p. 176

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he was going to defend Mariam in case that any Taliban's men would pretend to perpetrate raping Mariam.

**Pain**

Pain was present from the beginning and almost to the end. Psychological and physical pain was present in most female characters.

*"...and Mariam caught a glimpse of what was beneath the tree: the straight-backed chair, overturned. The rope dropping from a high ranch . Nana dangling at the end of it."*

To illustrate, this quote represents the pain of Mariam's mother, as well as Mariam's. When Mariam ran away from her home in order to enjoy her birthday with her father, Nana, her mother thought that Mariam left the house forever to go live with her father. This broke her heart, so she committed suicide by hanging herself from a tree. Then, when Mariam saw the scene, she realized that it was her fault and for the rest of her life, Mariam lived with that pain in her heart.

p. 36

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*"Each snowflake was a sigh heard by an aggrieved woman somewhere in the world. All the sighs drifted up the sky, gathered into clouds, then broke into tiny pieces that fell silently on the people below. As a reminder of how women suffer."*

To illustrate, this quote refers to how Afghan women live their life with constant and extreme suffering, pain, and violence due to the patriarchal society, the way the men treated them and banned them from public spaces and society.

p. 91

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*"She understood then what Nana meant, that a harami was an unwanted thing: that she, Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as love, family, home, acceptance."*

To illustrate, this quote refers to when Mariam grew up and finally, understood the consequences of being an illegitimate daughter not born within a marriage. She understood that she would have to live her life like a living sin, always with shame and supporting all types of humiliations,

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p.4

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as well as how this condition took away from her the possibility of living a beautiful life.

**Conflict** This novel describes the war and social conflict in Afghanistan through the lens of women's oppression.

*"Nor was she old enough to appreciate the injustice, to see that it is the creators of the harami who are culpable, not the harami, whose only sin is being born."*

To illustrate, the quote refers to the repetitive conflict that Mariam had during her life since she was just a child, since during her early years her mother called her "harami," which meant sin. Then, injustice was always present in Mariam's life, facing conflicts because of her parent's mistakes. In some way, Mariam's mother was always remembering her that Mariam she ruined her life.

p.4

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*"Mariam heard of women who were killing themselves out of fear of being raped, and of men who, in the name of honor, would kill their wives or daughters if they'd been raped by the militia."*

To illustrate, the quote refers to the consequences that war brought to women in Afghanistan, where the Taliban regime was always violating their rights and making the citizens to take extreme decisions in order to protect their families.

p.252

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*"Out the words came, like blood gushing from an artery. Mariam told her about Bibi jo, Mullah Faizullah, the humiliating trek to Jalil's house, Nana's suicide. She told about Jalil's wives, and the hurried nikka with Rasheed, the trip to Kabul, her pregnancies, the endless cycles of hope and disappointment, Rasheed's turning on her."*

p.255

To illustrate, this quote refers to all the conflicts that Mariam had to face during her life, her most difficult moments. Once she realized that Laila was a good person and that they both could defend each other from

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Rasheed's abuses, she vented herself with Laila and talked about her most difficult moments.

### History

In this novel, the author emphasizes and exposes important events of Afghan history from the Soviet invasion, civil wars, and to the Taliban's take over. The novel describes a story of pains and struggles of the Afghanistan citizens and mostly the women who have been the more affected.

*"And that, ...is the story of our country, one invasion after another...Macedonians. Saddanians. Arabs. Mongols. Now the Soviets. But we're like those walls up there. Battered, and nothing pretty to look at, but still standing."*

p.146

To illustrate, the quote refers to the history of the war in Afghanistan, a country that has been hit by war and invasions during the time, but despite this, there are brave and good people waiting for better times.

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*"A month before that, Laila had learned that the Taliban had planted TNT in the crevices of the giant Buddhas in Bamiyan and blown them apart, calling them objects of idolatry and sin."*

p.313

To illustrate, the quote refers to how the city and the most precious country heritage like the "The Giant Bamiyan Buddhas" were destroyed by war.

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*"One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs,  
Or the thousand splendid suns that hide behind her walls."*

To illustrate, this quote is part of a real poem about the beauty of Kabul, which was written in the 17th-century by a Persian poet called Saib-e-Tabrizi. It was mentioned by Laila's father when he was sad about leaving Afghanistan. They left Kabul to go to Pakistan because they decided to emigrate to protect Laila and have a better and more secure life.

p.  
192,  
392

### War

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In this novel, war was emotionally linked to the whole story, from the Soviet Invasion, civil wars, the Taliban regime, and the arrival of the

p.395

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American troops. All these eras were linked to each character's background.

*“I’m sorry,” Laila says, marveling at how every Afghan story is marked by death and loss and unimaginable grief. And yet, she sees, people find a way to survive, to go on.”*

To illustrate, this quote refers to the fact that Afghan people are brave survivors of wars and invasions. Laila was listening to the story of a taxi driver full of sadness. Then, she remembered her most difficult moments; however, she was grateful that she could survive to the bomb that killed her family.

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*“You left when the Mujahideen began fighting, remember? I’m the one who stayed behind. Me. I know war. I lost my parents to war. My parents, Tariq. And now to hear you say that war is not so bad?”*

To illustrate, this quote refers to a discussion that Laila was having with Tariq, where once more Laila, as a woman, felt about the war consequences compared to men because with no doubt women were the most affected.

p.381

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*“The girl was extraordinarily lucky, Mariam thought, to escape with relatively minor injuries, considering the rocket had turned her house into smoking rubble. And so, slowly, the girl got better. She began to eat more, began to brush her own hair. She took baths on her own. She began taking her meals downstairs, with Mariam and Rasheed.”*

p.201-202

To illustrate, the quote refers to the war's consequences and how it destroyed families and lives. Because Laila lost her parents, she had to marry Rasheed and endure all his violent and abusive behavior.

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Marriage was important in the story. It represented how women could be judged by Afghan society. This means that married woman could have a man to defend her or that they could have a man that abused them within marriage. Therefore, marriage could bring protection or suffering to woman.

## **Marriage**

*"We'll all live together. Your father, me, Zalmai. And you, Aziza. You'll never, ever, have to be apart from me again. I promise." She smiles at her daughter. "Until the day you want to, that is. When you fall in love with some young man and want to marry him."*

In this quote, it is illustrated that, Laila was very happy with her new marriage because she felt secured; meaning that they as a family would never be apart ever again. She emphasized to her daughter that only if she found true love, she could leave the family to get married someday.

p.391

**Violence** In this novel, everything that happened was linked to violence in most of the characters; as they suffered psychological abuse by parents, family, and society. In addition, another form of direct violence was sexual and physical violence.

*"Learn this now and learn it well. Like a compass facing north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam."*

To illustrate, this quote refers to how men were always accusing women and finding a reason to beat them and punish them without any valid reason.

p.7

*"Rasheed didn't notice her coming back into the room. He was still on top of Laila, his eyes wide and crazy, his hands wrapped around her neck. Laila's face was turning blue now, and her eyes had rolled back. Mariam saw that she was no longer struggling."*

To illustrate, the quote refers to the type of violence that women in the story were facing, not only psychological violence, but extreme physical violence.

p.348

*"... and struck her with the belt again and again, the buckle slamming against her chest, her shoulder, her raised arms, her fingers, drawing blood wherever it struck"*  
*Rasheed swung the belt again."*

p.345

To illustrate, the quote refers to the cruel violence and the types of punishments that husbands were allowed to give to their wives.

**Sacrifice** Sacrifice was part of the story, especially women's. Female characters made a variety of sacrifices in their lives; always taking risks in many different forms, such as physical, emotional, and spiritual. Most of these sacrifices had to do with taking care of, providing for, and protecting their children.

*“she thought ruefully of Nana, of the sacrifices that she too had made. Nana, who could have given her away, or tossed her in a ditch somewhere and run. But she hadn't. Instead, Nana had endured the shame of bearing a harami...”*

To illustrate, the quote refers to how Mariam was remembering and valuing all the sacrifices that her mother made for her in the past... mostly because she was a single mother, which was highly discouraged in Afghan society.

p.287

*“Mariam thought, something that made him hedge. Maybe he saw some trace of all the self-denial, all the sacrifice, all the sheer exertion it had taken her to live with him for all these years, live with his continual condescension and violence, his faultfinding and meanness.”*

In this quote, after the fight between Mariam and Rasheed, Mariam was badly injured and then Rasheed stopped from beating her. Mariam thought that maybe he stopped because he felt pity for her and that finally was conscious about all her sacrifice living with him, being his wife, and accepting all his abuses.

p.348

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*Table 4 shows detailed setting information about the most common patterns found in the novel. Source: Researcher's own creation.*

### **Table 5**

Different plot key points founded in the novel.

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**Essential Plot Points**


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Women's rights were totally annulated in this story. Women's rights in Afghanistan are controlled by the government and the male family figures; therefore, women are treated as property by their husbands, and they are forbidden to take part in society.

*"The mullah gave a few blessings, said a few words about the importance of marriage. He asked Jalil if he had any objections to this union, and Jalil shook his head. Then the mullah asked Rasheed if he indeed wished to enter into a marriage contract with Mariam.*

*Rasheed said, "Yes." His harsh, raspy voice reminded Mariam of the sound of dry autumn leaves crushed underfoot."*

To illustrate, this quote refers to how Mariam's father forced her to marry to an old man, just a few days after her mother's suicide. She did not want to marry him and begged his father to cancel the wedding; however, her opinion did not count.

**Women's  
Rights**

p.52

In this novel, hope was present in the everyday of the female characters. Hope was always linked to strength, bravery, and resilience.

*"Laila lay there and listened, wishing Mammy would notice that she, Laila, hadn't become shaheed, that she was alive, here, in bed with her, that she had hopes and a future."*

p.142

In this quote, the author expressed how Laila hoped that her mother could recover from a severe depression that did not let them to develop a mother-daughter relationship.

**Hope**


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In this novel, the author stressed the concept of sacrifice, which was showed from the beginning of the novel and until the end, throughout the female qualities.

*"She knew that what she was doing was dishonorable. Dishonorable, disingenuous, and shameful. And spectacularly unfair to Mariam. But even though the baby inside her was no bigger than a mulberry, Laila already saw the sacrifices a mother had to make."* p.219

In this quote, the author detailed the sacrifice that Laila was doing for her unborn son. She had to marry an old man in order to have a father for her son; otherwise, she and her son would be killed or had to be homeless. Therefore, she decided to marry him knowing all violence that she would have to accept and support.

### **Sacrifice**

*One of the most prominent plots in the novel, which are not presented because do not exist at all, only men have rights in the Afghan society. "Mariam lost count of how many times the belt cracked, how many pleading words she cried out to Rasheed, how many times she circled around..."*

*"Attention women:*

*You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a mahram, a male relative. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home.*

*You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten.*

*Cosmetics are forbidden.*

*Jewelry is forbidden.*

**Women's** *You will not wear charming clothes.*

**oppression** *You will not speak unless spoken to.*

*You will not make eye contact with men.  
 You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten.  
 You will not paint your nails. If you do, you will lose a finger.  
 Girls are forbidden from attending school. All schools for girls will be  
 closed immediately.  
 Women are forbidden from working."*

In this quote, the author revealed all the restrictions that Afghan women had to face in their lives. It is clear that they are banned from public spheres.

*Table 5 shows detailed information about the key plot points founded in the novel.  
 Source: Researcher's own research.*

## Table 6

Analysis of the main characters.

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### Main Characters Analysis

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**Mariam** One of the two main female characters. She was born in Herat and was an illegitimate child born out of marriage. Her father was a rich businessman (Jalil), and her mother was a housekeeper (Nana). She was a quiet, thoughtful child at the beginning of the book. The first thing that the author told us about her was that she was an illegitimate child. Mariam resented her mother's strict ways and the fact that she only saw her father once a week.

*"Nana, his mother calls her " a clumsy little harami " (p.4).*

This quote reflected on how Mariam felt as a sin, since she was a child. The word 'Harami' means the one who is born of a female slave. The author, Hosseini, made it clear that when Mariam was five years old, she did not understand why she was called like in that way; however, some years later, Mariam realized its meaning was "illegitimate person" and that she would never have any right to claim

things that others had, such as love, a family, a home, and everybody's acceptance. Therefore, being an illegitimate daughter would bring suffering and pain for the rest of her life.

However, in the first part of the novel, the author showed that her father treated her with some love. Mariam loved her father, and for her birthday she escaped from her house to visit her father.

Nevertheless, she was rejected by his father pretending that he was not at home and refused to let her get into his home.

*"The face was there for an instant, a flash, but long enough. Long enough to Mariam to see the eyes widen, the mouth open. Then it snapped away from view. A hand appeared and frantically pulled at a cord. The curtains fell shut"* (p.35)

To illustrate, this quote refers to how Mariam's father was ashamed of her because she was his illegitimate daughter, and in the moment that Mariam arrived at her father's house, he hid from her behind a window pretending that he was not at home, but Mariam saw him and realized that his father was embarrassed by her.

p.35

*"Mariam's shame at being an illegitimate daughter, makes her unable to be proud of her and to stand up for herself. During her childhood, Mariam is plagued by her father's adultery – "she was being sent away, because she was the walking, breathing embodiment of their shame"* (p.48).

This disgrace follows her into her marriage life when Rasheed kept mistreating her calling her "harami" who "grew up in a kolba made of mud outside the village"(p.222)

p.48,222

To illustrate, the previous quotes referred to how Mariam had been mistreated since she was a child. During her whole life, she had been humiliated by the people around her.

When her mother committed suicide after she ran away at age 15 in order to visit her father, Mariam was full of guilt, and this feeling was with her for the rest of her life, contributing to her tolerance at being married to her abusive husband Rasheed. Later on, when Mariam realized her inability to have children. This turned her into a resentful, bitter, and fearful woman.

Some years later, Mariam's life changed with the arrival of Laila, Rasheed's second wife. Through her love for Laila and Laila's children, Mariam was able to fulfill her wish to be a mother and to finally give and receive love.

*"As soon as she was in Mariam's arms, Aziza's thumb shot into her mouth, and she buried her face in Mariam's neck. Mariam bounced her stiffly, a half-bewildered, half-grateful smile on her lips. Mariam had never before been wanted like this. Love had never been declared to her so guilelessly, so unreservedly" (P.252)*

p.252

To illustrate, this quote referred to when Mariam was with Aziza, Laila's daughter, showing the bond between them. She developed a mother-daughter role, and for the first time in her life, Mariam felt the true love of someone.

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## **Laila**

She was the second female protagonist. She was the youngest child and only daughter of Hakim and Fariba. When the author introduced Laila, readers immediately could think that she would be a modern and intelligent woman with a high-level of independence and education. She was born in 1978 and had green eyes and blond curly hair.

At age 15, Laila fell in love with her best friend since childhood. Her two brothers were killed in war, and because of that, her mother fell in a severe depression.

Later on, a rocket killed Laila's parents and wounded her. Then, Rasheed and Mariam took care of her. Laila decided to marry Rasheed because she realized that she was pregnant with Tariq's baby. Upon becoming a mother, Laila was a great mother willing to accept limitations, abuses, and mistreatments in order to give her children a home. Despite she was an ambitious, proactive, and independent, the oppressive Taliban legislation, the war, and the Afghan society dragged her backwards. However, this did not stop her to always continue fighting for her rights by frequently standing up to Rasheed and planning to escape with her children.

*"She shuddered at what he would do if he found out that she had been stealing from him. Every week, since Aziza's birthday, she pried his wallet open when he was asleep" (p.241).*

To illustrate, this quote referred to that Laila was planning her escape; as a result, every night she stole some money from Rasheed in order to have savings for the great day she could run away.

**Rasheed** He was Mariam and Laila's husband. He was 45 at the most. He was an abusive and violent man with his wives. Rasheed was a widowed shoemaker whose first wife and son died many years ago. He was conservative and instructed Mariam on what he believed an ideal wife should be: subservient, obedient, and fertile.

*"He's a shoemaker," Khadija was saying now. "But not some kind of ordinary street-side moochi, no, no. He has his own shop, and he is one of the most sought-after shoemakers in Kabul. He makes them for diplomats, members of the presidential family—that class of people. So, you see, he will have no trouble providing for you." (p. 47)*

To illustrate, in this quote Rasheed was being described to Mariam, days before the marriage.

*Rashed is seen like a good suitor for Mariam*

p.214

p.47

p.47

*“Yes. But I’ve seen nine-year-old girls given to men twenty years older than your suitor, Mariam. We all have. What are you, fifteen? That’s a good, solid marrying age for a girl.” (p.47)*

To illustrate, Jali’s wife was trying to convince Mariam of accepting the marriage with Rasheed, as it was her only opportunity to have a better life.

Later on, Rasheed changed his temperament when he realized that Mariam was unable to have children. He lost his patience and abused her frequently, both physically and verbally, because he wanted to replace his dead son.

He was violent and controlling, and thus, subjected Mariam and Laila to years of domestic abuse. He considered them as machines designed to produce a male child. He frequently abused them both:

*“Downstairs, the beating began. To Laila, the sounds she heard were those of a methodical, familiar proceeding. There was no cursing, no screaming, no pleading, no surprised yelps, only the systematic business of beating and being beaten, the thump, thump of something solid repeatedly striking flesh, something, someone, hitting a wall with a thud, cloth ripping. Now and then, Laila heard running footsteps, a wordless chase, furniture turning over, glass shattering, then the thumping once more.”(p.268)*

p.268

To illustrate, the quotes described the brutal violence that Mariam received from Rasheed.

Years later, only when Laila’s second son Zalmai was born, Rasheed was patient, loving, kind, and because he finally had a male son.

However, Rasheed's affection for Zalmai did not include Laila's daughter, Aziza, or to his two wives. Rasheed's cruel, manipulative ways resulted in Mariam killing him in self-defense.

**Tariq** He was Laila's friend. He grew up near Laila in Kabul. He lost his leg because of a landmine when he is very young and, through the support of his kind parents, he never let this disability to slow him down. He and Laila were best friends since they were children and became lovers when teenagers.

*"and all Laila could think of was the fullness of Tariq's lips, the heat of his breath on her mouth, her own reflection in his hazel eyes. She'd kissed him twice more since the time beneath the tree, longer, more passionately, and, she thought, less clumsily. Both times, she'd met him secretly" ... (p.178)*

The quote illustrates the passionate love that existed between Tariq and Laila.

p.178

Tariq was forced to flee to Pakistan with his parents due to the war. Years later, he landed in prison for smuggling hashish. Despite the time, he returned to Kabul. He found Laila, and with this, he proved his loyalty and love for Laila. Later on, they got married and they moved to Pakistan. Tariq took care of Zalmai as if he was his own son. Like Laila, he shared her desire for justice and supported her decision to return to Kabul to help rebuild the city.

*"They have repainted both the exterior and the interior of the orphanage. Tariq and Zaman have repaired all the roof leaks, patched the walls, replaced the windows, carpeted the rooms where the children sleep and play. This past winter, Laila bought a few beds for the children's sleeping quarters, pillows too, and proper wool blankets. She had cast-iron stoves installed for the winter." p.411*

p.411

To illustrate, the quote referred to when Tariq and Laila returned to Kabul and rebuilt the orphanage in order to help more children.

*Table 6 shows detailed information about the most prevalent characteristics and descriptions of the principal characters, as well as*

*ie quotes found in the book to illustrate. Source: Researcher's own  
ation.*

## Table 7

Analysis of the secondary characters

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### Second Characters Analysis

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- Nana** Mariam's mother, she loved Mariam; however. she lived bitter and was very strict with Mariam. She got pregnant very young and did not have any opportunities. She was a maid in Jali's house, and when Jalil's wives knew that she was pregnant, they asked Jalil to send her away. They were sent to a Kolba and Jalil visited them-only once a week. Later, she committed suicides.
- Hakim** Laila's father was a good family man. He loved to read and was sensitive. He loved Laila and did his best to give Laila an education, stressing to her that women should have every opportunity that men have. He was always there for Laila and supported her when her mother was not feeling well. He always told Laila that marriage could wait, but education could not. He was a well-educated and progressive schoolteacher. He was killed in a rocket explosion along with his wife.
- Fariba** She was Laila's mother and she suffered from severe depression due to her sons' decision of going to war, where later they got killed. She was not a good mother; as she was very distant because she was always depressed thinking in her son's death, forgetting that Laila was still alive.
- Aziza** She was Laila's and Tariq's daughter. However, Rasheed thought that she was his daughter. He did not love her and forced Laila to send her to an orphanage.

- Zalmai** He was Rasheed and Laila's son. He was a spoiled boy; however, he was a sweet boy. His personality changed depending on who he was with. When he was with his father Rasheed, he copied his father's masculine air and behaved pretty bad when he did not have what he wanted. On the other hand, when he was with his mother, he was a sweet boy.
- Mullah** He was Mariam's Koran tutor when she was a child. He was a kind and
- Faizullah** loving presence in Mariam's difficult childhood.
- Abdul** He was a man hired by Rasheed to lie to Laila and to tell her lies about
- Sharif** Tariq. The man told Laila that Tariq was dead, then this helped Laila to make up her mind and to marry Rasheed.

*Table 7 shows detailed information about the most prevalent characteristics and descriptions of the second characters, as well as some quotes founded in the book to illustrate. Source: Researcher's own creation.*

## Table 8

Different themes found in the story

Themes	
<b>Suffering and Perseverance</b>	<p>In this novel, suffering is always present in the life of the characters in different ways, that is physical and emotional. Facts as such losing their beloved ones, or sufferings while being in the service of others. This is a kind of hierarchy of grief and suffering.</p> <p>The loss of Laila's brothers</p> <p>The loss of Mariam's mother</p> <p>The loss of Rasheed's son</p>
<b>Shame and reputation</b>	<p>One of the most common sufferings in this novel had to do with shame. This fact followed the characters for many years, and thus, it tended to increase their suffering, including the shame in a character's past, and in the past of others.</p>

Mariam's mother's suicide, after Mariam ran away to Jalil's house.

Laila felt her own sense of shame for having survived the bombing that killed her parents.

Mariam's shame to be a bastard and a "Harami" because of her mother's acts.

Many Taliban's laws, particularly the status of women, considering them as shameful creatures that must be banned from public spaces.

In this novel, love was not always the winner; however, it was a strong bond.

Love made most of the characters to act in irrational ways.

Laila believed that by marrying Rasheed and would save herself and Tariq's baby. She was loyal to him.

Mariam initially believed that marrying Rasheed would allow her to find the place where she could finally belong to.

**Love, Loyalty, and Belonging**

In this novel, the author exposed the perspective of two Afghan women regarding their lives, history, and suffering.

The novel emphasized the limitations imposed to women in general by the Taliban regime and the patriarchal society.

**Gender Relations**

Gender relations differed throughout the novel, depending on the times described within the novel, such the fact that the communist rules that were less restrictive compared to Taliban's rules against women.

Gender relations also depended on traditional or specific norms, such as the one imposed by her husband to wear a burqa before it became a Taliban rule.

**Female friendship** In similar way to gender relations, the female friendship was a constant theme in the novel. The relationship between Laila and Mariam was the heart of the story. The author revealed this in parts of the novel; for example, -part I was told from Mariam’s perspective, part II about Laila’s perspective and part III was a mix between them. Laila’s friendship with her classmates Giti and Hasina. Their constant fight against Rasheed’s abuses.

*Table 8 shows detailed information about the most prevalent themes found in the story to illustrate. Source: Researcher’s own creation.*

#### 4.1.2 Feminism and patriarchy documentation review

##### Table 9

Important time facts about the birth of Feminism

Year	Birth of Feminism
1700	In the book <i>Some Reflections on Marriage</i> by Mary Astell, she defended that God created women and men with souls, equally intelligent.
1734	The Swedish Civil Code granted certain rights to women, highlighting the prohibition to husbands from selling their wives’ properties without their consent.
1750	It was created by the debate group “Blue Sticking Society” for intellectual women, admitting the men’s participation, in Britain.
1765	In the US, it arose “The Daughters of Freedom” protest against the taxes and imports, as well as to back independence from Britain.
1790	In her essay, “On the Equality of the Sexes,” the US activist Judith Sargent defended women’s rights and stated that women are as intelligent as men.

- 1791** In the Right’s Women and Citizen Declaration, the French politic activist Olympe de Gouges defended equal citizen rights for women and men.
- 1792** In the vindication of women’s rights, the Britain writer Mary Wollstonecraft defended the women’s right to education.
- 1830** In the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria, Nana Asma’u created a women’s group, “The Jahis” as itinerant educators of other women.
- 1832** In France, Suzanne Voilquin edited the first feminist newspaper of the working class “ La Tribune des Femmes.”

*Table 9* shows a timeline of important facts that happened during the time and *the birth of feminism*. Source: *The Feminism Book* (2019)

**Table 10**

The Four Waves of Feminism

<b>Feminist Movement</b>			
<b>1st wave</b>	<b>2dn wave</b>	<b>3rd wave</b>	<b>4th wave</b>
It started the suffrage period. The focus was on securing voting and equal rights for women.	The focus was on the right to education, work, equal pay.	It challenged white-middle-class orientation. It broadened agendas for working class women and women of color.	It focuses on intersectional approaches of feminism, the empowerment of women, the use and impact of the internet and social media.

*Table 10* shows the principal focuses of the four feminism waves. Source: *The Feminism Book* (2019)

**Table 11**

Feminist Approaches

<b>Different Feminist Approaches</b>	
<b>Liberal Feminism</b>	An approach to improve the position of women in society by promoting equal opportunity through legislation, challenging the acceptance of gender inequality, and seeking equality.
<b>Radical Feminism</b>	An approach that focuses on men's power and privilege within the social system and seeks to promote women's organizations as separate social organizations focused on patriarchy, promoting separate women's structures in organizations and social life.
<b>Socialist or Marxist Feminism</b>	A perspective that sees women's oppression as the result of a class-based on social systems. Its activism focuses on structured inequality, especially in the reproduction of the workforce; promoting the understanding of the oppression determines which response to use. Oppression of women is said to be based on capitalist social and economic structures.
<b>Black Feminism</b>	A perspective about racial analysis that points to the diversity of women and their oppression. Focuses on racism and understanding women's diversity and various forms of oppression. Moreover, it focuses on including family experience in slavery, historic family, and social patterns.
<b>Postmodern Feminism</b>	An approach on how discourse in society creates social assumptions about how women should be treated. It acknowledges the complexity of social relations. Postmodern feminism makes significant contributions to social work and suggests a wide range of social forms and behaviors and argues against oppression based on patriarchy.

Table 11 shows the mains aspects of the different feminism approaches. Source: *The Feminism Book* (2019)

**Table 12**

Feminism struggles during time

<b>Feminist Struggles</b>	
<b>Workplace rights</b>	A critical point over the last years. A discussion around how much women earn compared to men. White women make less money than a white man in the same position. Regarding color women, their conditions are worst. It focuses on equal pay for equal work.
<b>Social Harrasment &amp; Legal Protections</b>	To give women full control and autonomy over their bodies. Feminists are fighting to ensure the individual rights of every woman, and to retain the options all women need.
<b>Taliban violating women’s rights</b>	Islamic restrictions on women and girls. Taliban regime prevents women and girls from exercising their basic rights to freedom of expression, liberty, education, forced marriages and rapes.

Table 12 shows the main struggles of global feminism during the time. Source: *The Feminism Book* (2019)

**Table 13**

Feminism Accomplishments

<b>Feminist Waves Accomplishments</b>	
<b>First-wave (19th-20th century)</b>	Women’s right to vote, property rights, freedom to stand for elections despite gender or marital status, broad sex discrimination legislation

<b>Second-wave ( 60's-80s)</b>	Abortion legislation acts, equal pay, employment protection, upgrade rape to a legal criminal offense, recognition of domestic abuse
<b>Third wave (1990-2010)</b>	Sexual liberation, particular emphasis for violence against women such rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment, individual empowerment, reproductive rights, racial discrimination
<b>Fourth wave (2017 - nowadays)</b>	Focus on women's empowerment, the use of internet tools, gender equality focused on gendered norms.

*Table 13 shows the most important accomplishments of the feminism waves during the time.  
Source: The Feminism Book (2019)*

## Table 14

Patriarchy

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### The Globalization of Patriarchy

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#### **Universal Masculine Domination**

There is no known society where women exercise the entire range of moral, political, and economic power.

#### **Definition**

A system of relationships, beliefs, and values embedded in political, social, and economic systems that structure gender inequality among women and men seeming inflexible and resistant to change.

Patriarchy supports men's power and women's subordination.

Men as a group oppress and exploit women as a group.

Forms of patriarchy can vary across societies, cultures, and history.

#### **System characteristics**

Violence against women by their male partners sustains patriarchal

family structures, creates a hierarchy of male domination, and maintains women in a position of subordination.

Domestic or intimate partner violence is the most universal form of violence against women around the world.

*Table 14 shows the main concepts and characteristics about patriarchy. The Feminism Book (2019)*

### **Table 15**

Patriarchy

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#### **Origins of Patriarchy**

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- The first evidence of patriarchal structures is placed deep in the human evolutionary past in the first signs of sexual division of labor which happened, about 2 million years ago.
- Evidence also suggests the origin of patriarchy can be traced back to the appearance of private property, men managing domestic production and controlling women to ensure the passing of family property to their own (male) offspring, while women were limited to household labor and bearing children.

*Table 15 shows two facts about evidence of the origins of patriarchy. The Feminism Book (2019)*

### **Table 16**

Patriarchy affecting Afghan women

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#### **How patriarchy affects Afghan women in society**

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**Patriarchal  
Social  
Structures**

- The Taliban regime initiated as an army of Pashtun men, raised in the refugee camps of Peshawar, Pakistan, during the 1980s. They adhered to a particularly orthodox brand of Islam, which nowadays opposed education for girls and employment for women. Moreover, it forces women to veiling.
- Severely affected, Afghanistan is situated under “the patriarchal belt,” and is an extreme case of “classic patriarchy.” Patriarchy is the central social unit, in which the senior man has authority over everyone else, including younger men. Women are subjected to forms of control and

subordination that include restrictive codes of behavior, gender segregation, and freedom of movement, expression, and action.

- Afghan women have been banned from participation and decision-making, and from the public space.
- Afghan women are forced to wear a burqa (which fully covers body and face), confined to their homes, denied the right to schooling, and excluded from any form of public decision-making.
- Afghan women cannot move freely without men's companion.

*Table 16 shows the main concepts and characteristics about patriarchy. Source: Patriarchy, the Taliban, and politics of public space in Afghanistan (2002)*

#### 4.1.3 Data collection of statistical and reports information

**Table 17**

Timeline Taliban takeover in Afghanistan 2022

<b>Taliban's take over timeline 2021</b>	
<b>aug-15</b>	The Taliban forces took control of Kabul.
	<b>aug-17</b> First Taliban Press Conference. The Taliban assured women of their rights.
<b>aug-26</b>	The Taliban released a statement on temporary restrictions on women due to security situations.
	<b>Aug 27</b> The Taliban advised women healthcare workers to return to home.

<b>Aug 30</b>	The US Troops completed their withdrawal from Afghanistan.	<b>Aug 31</b>	Statement: Executive Director of UN Women called on the Taliban leadership to include women in the upcoming governance entity. The Taliban took control of Kabul airport.
<b>sep-07</b>	The Taliban announced caretaker administration, which excluded women.	<b>sep-12</b>	The Taliban indicated women would be allowed to study at the University, but not alongside men. The Taliban also announced that a new dress code would be introduced and reviewed for the students. The Taliban announced opening of schools for boys.
<b>oct-27</b>	The Taliban allowed middle-and high school-aged girls back into the classrooms in some provinces of Afghanistan.	<b>nov-22</b>	The Taliban released a set of restrictions on Afghan media, including banning television dramas that included female actors and ordering women news presenters to wear "Islamic hijab."

<p><b>nov-25</b> UN called for concerned national efforts to end violence against women.</p>	
	<p><b>nov-27</b> The Taliban publicity said they had given women their rights, adding that they were working to improve the situation for girls' education.</p>
<p><b>Dec 3</b> The Taliban released a " special decree on women's rights," which set out the rules for governing, marriage, and property for women and instructions for implementation.</p>	

*Table 17 shows a series of dates and statements that took place after the Taliban's take over where clearly the patriarchal structure begins to set again all kind to women's oppression. Source: UNWomen Gender Alert No.1 (December 2021)*

#### **4.1.3 Data collection of statistical and reports information**

**Chart 1**

Ranking of Country Gender Development Index (2019)

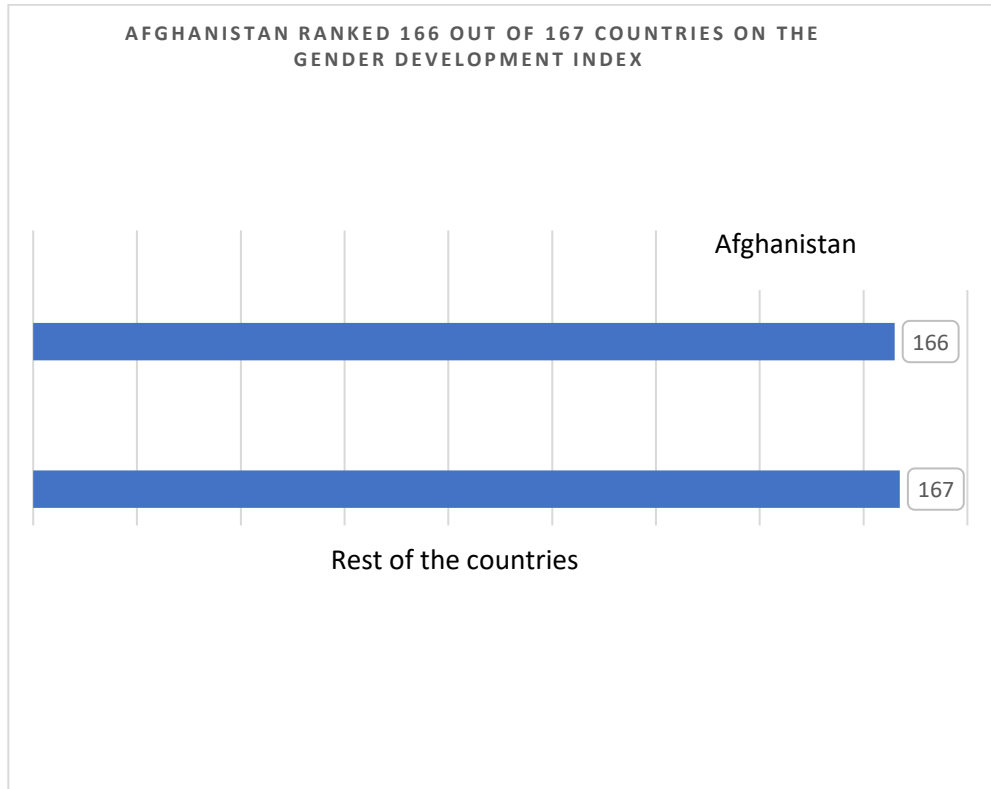


Chart 1 deals with the Gender Development Index where 167 countries were measured in 2019. Afghanistan has the penultimate position, which clearly shows the country's delay in Gender Equality. This is totally related to the currently situation and the women's oppression in the country. The report was made to document and analyze the impact of the Afghan context on women's rights and gender equality. Source: UNWomen Gender Alert No.1 (December 2021)

**Chart 2**

## Ranking of Global Women, Peace, and Security Index (2021)

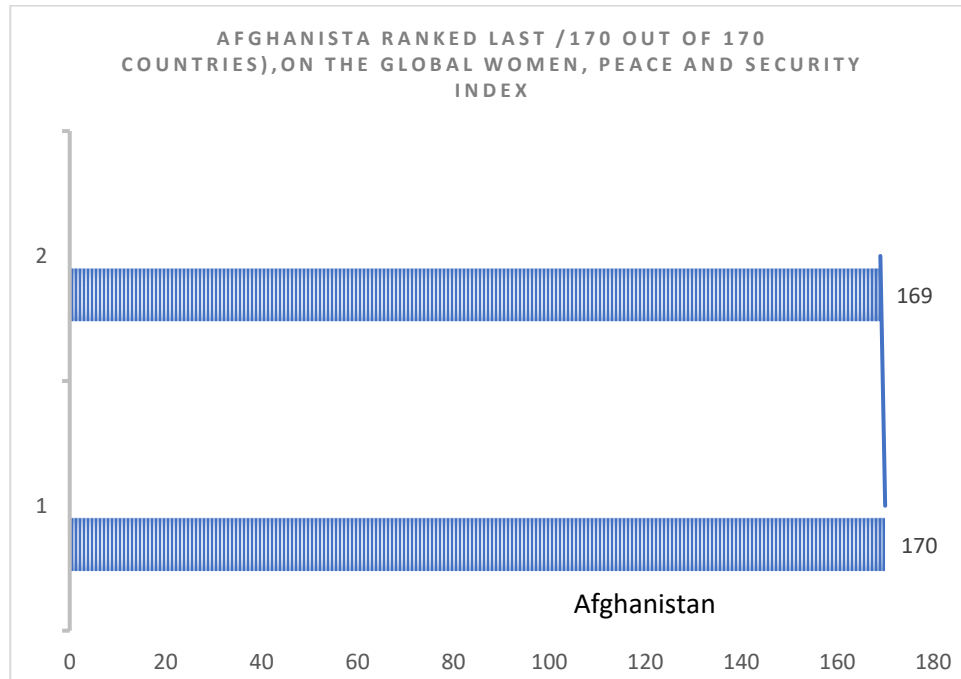


Chart 2 deals with the countries and index scores by rank regarding women, peace, and security. The statistic focuses on important insights into patterns, progress on women's status, and empowerment around the world. As shown above, Afghanistan has the last place compared with the rest of the countries, clearly showing the results of a patriarchal society, Islamic religion, and Taliban regime which have been oppressing their citizens. Source: GIWPS Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security (2021)

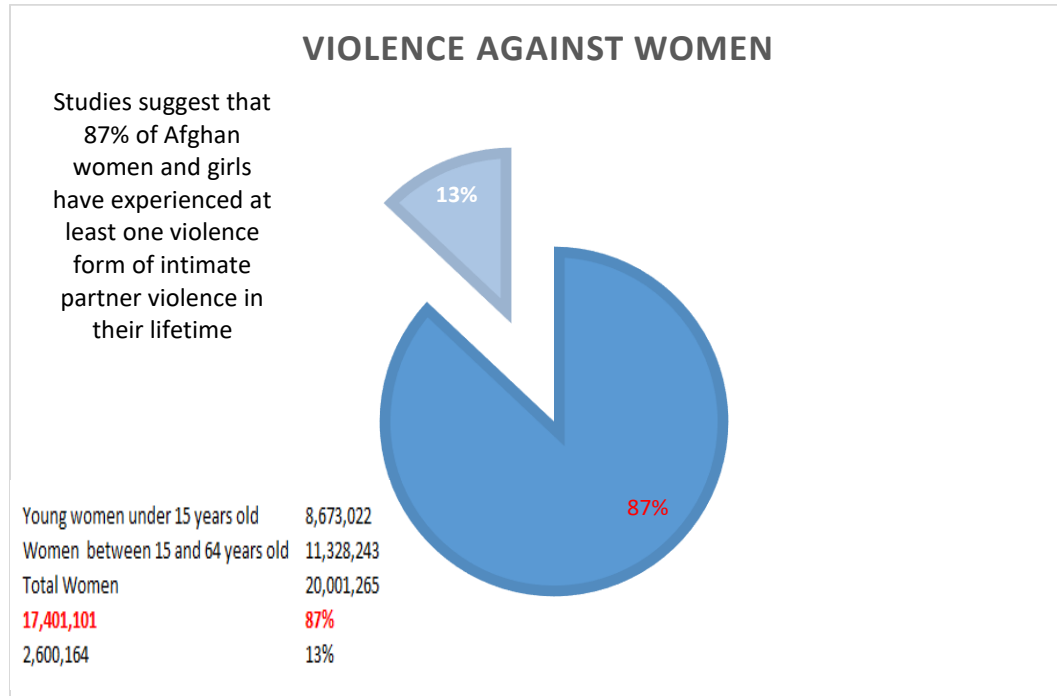
**Chart 3****Violence Against Women in Afghanistan**

Chart 3 shows that 87% of Afghan women have experienced at least one violence form from their partners, which is a high rate that confirms the patriarchal ideology of the country and the mistreatments to female population. Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division

**Chart 4**

## Afghan Women Early Marriage

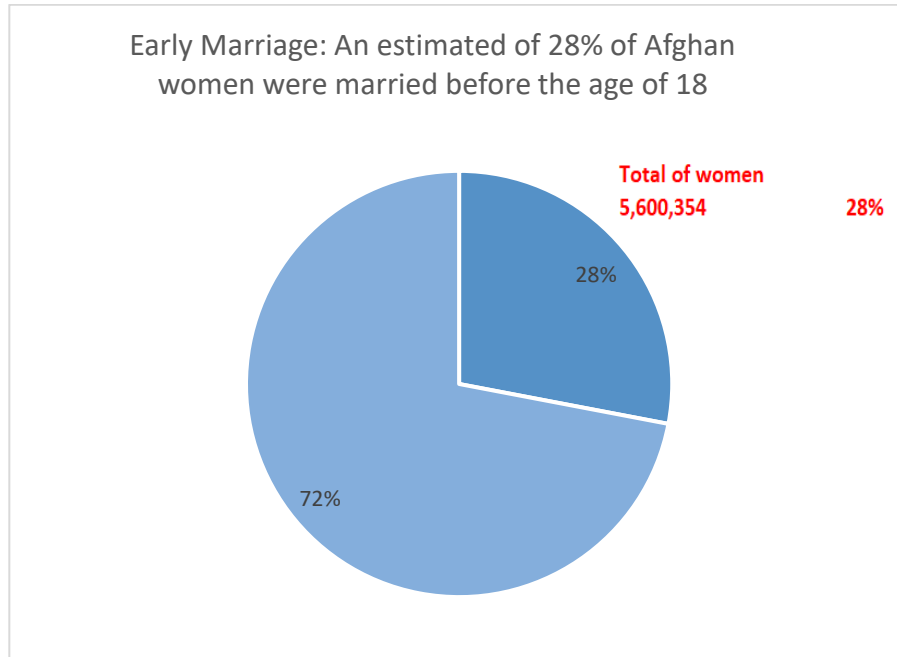


Chart 4 shows the estimated percent of early marriages before 18 in Afghanistan women, which clearly leads to these girls to be less likely to remain in school and more likely to experience domestic violence, discrimination, abuse, and poor mental health. They are also more vulnerable to complications in pregnancy and childbirth.

Source: UNICEF for every child (2021)

**Chart 5**

Afghan children out of school by gender

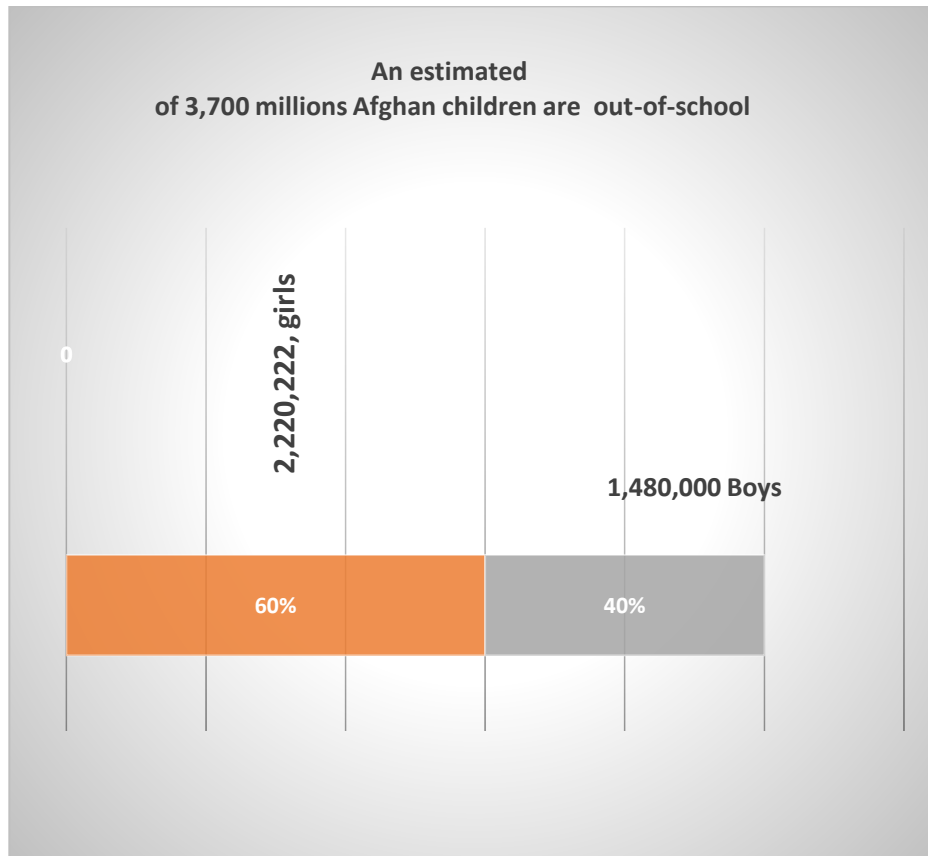


Chart 5 shows the percentage of children that are out-of-school in Afghanistan. In general, it is a high number. Children are facing extreme hunger, exploitation, and a loss of their education, particularly girls. Afghan children's future is at risk, as many of them have been transformed from students into child laborers. Source: Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2018)

**Chart 6**

Resolution of Reported Crimes Against Afghan Women of 303 cases under investigation.

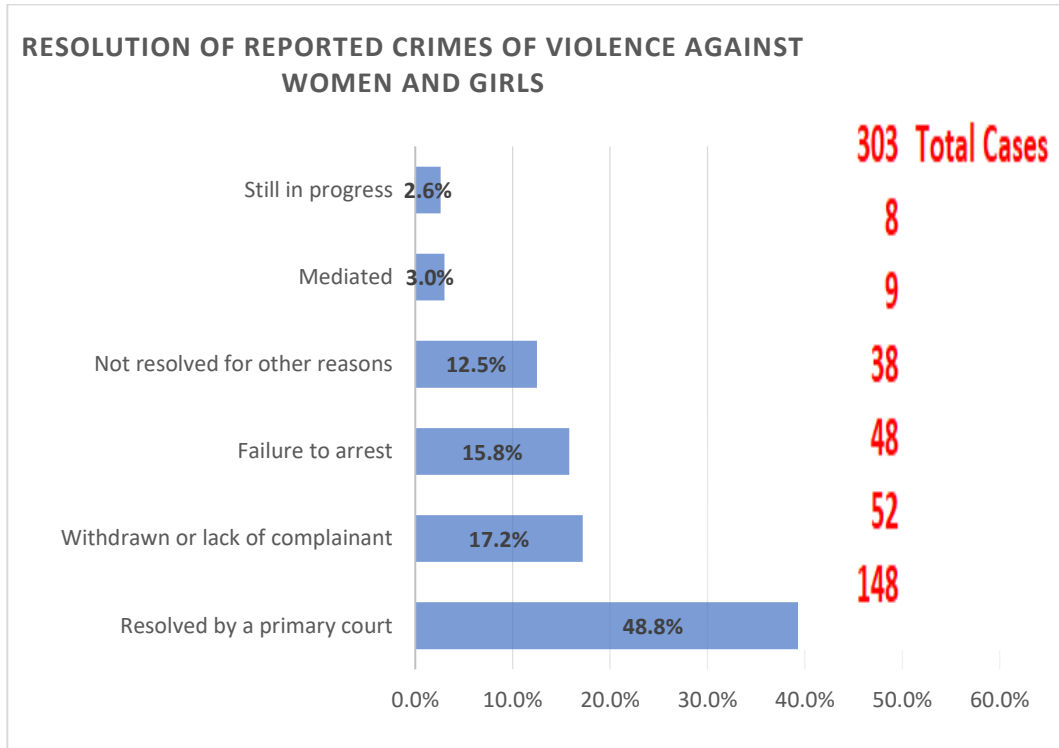


Chart 6 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crimes cases of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, it is clear that the laws for women are not enough and are not well applied by courts. Therefore, it has to be stated that Afghanistan needs a better justice system for women. The chart shows the country’s monitoring carried out regarding the response to these cases. Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

**Chart 7**

## Conviction Rates for Documented Crimes against Afghan Women

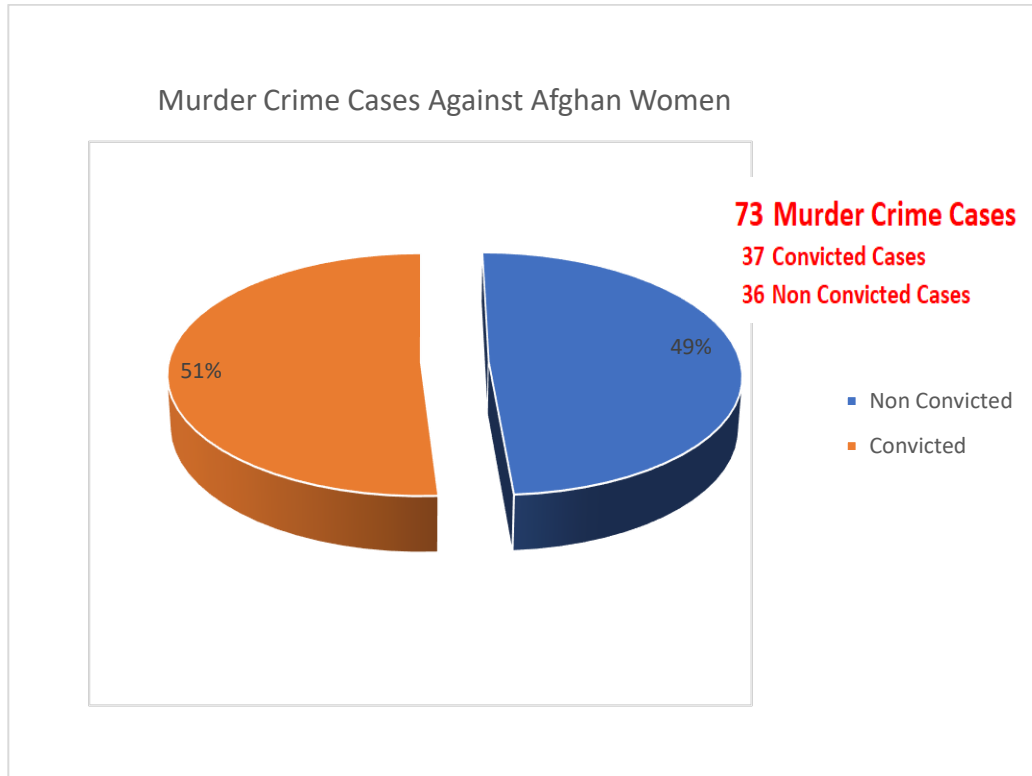


Chart 7 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crimes cases of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The chart shows the monitored progress of reported murder crimes against women and girls. Source: UNAMA United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

**Chart 8**

## Conviction Rates for Documented Crimes against Afghan Women

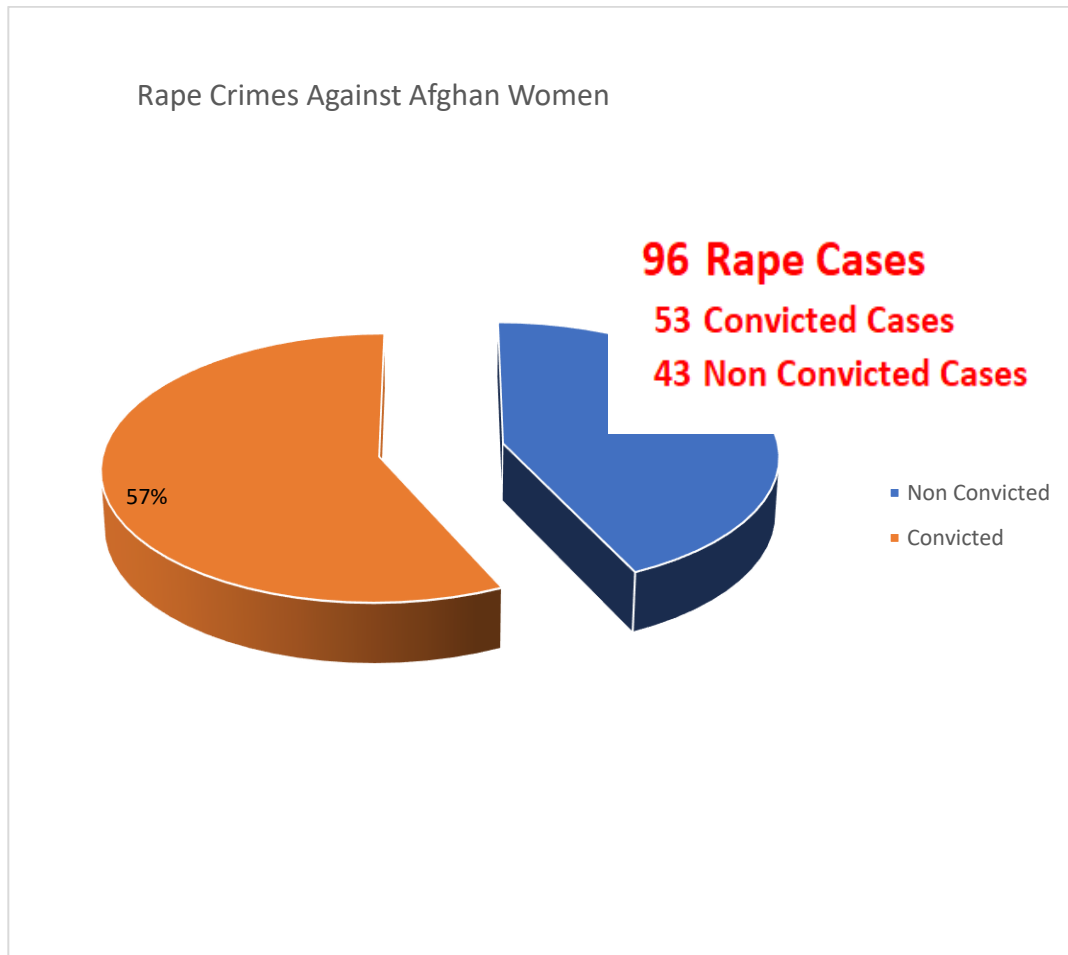


Chart 8 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crimes of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The chart shows the monitored progress of reported rape crimes against women and girls. Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

**Chart 9**

## Conviction Rates for Documented Crimes against Afghan Women

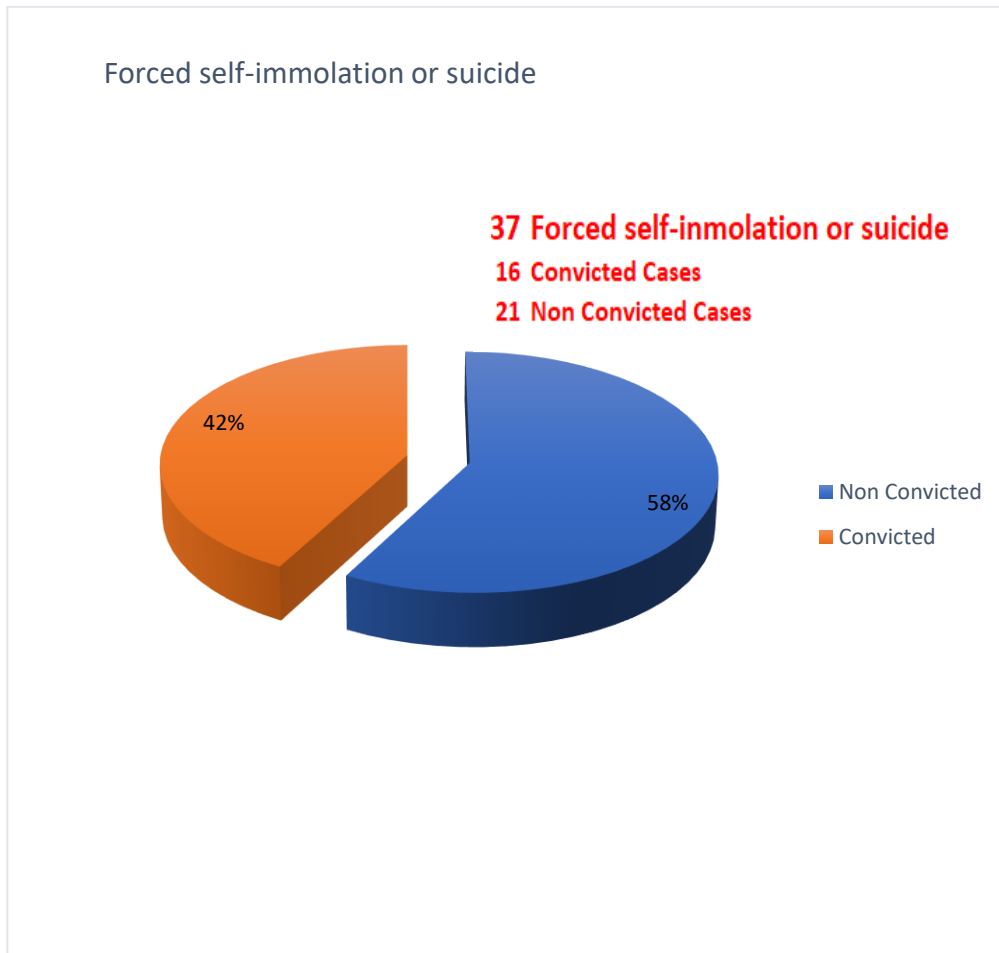


Chart 9 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crime cases of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The chart shows the monitored progress of reported Forced self-immolation or suicide crimes against women and girls. Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

**Chart 10**

## Conviction Rates for Documented Crimes against Afghan Women

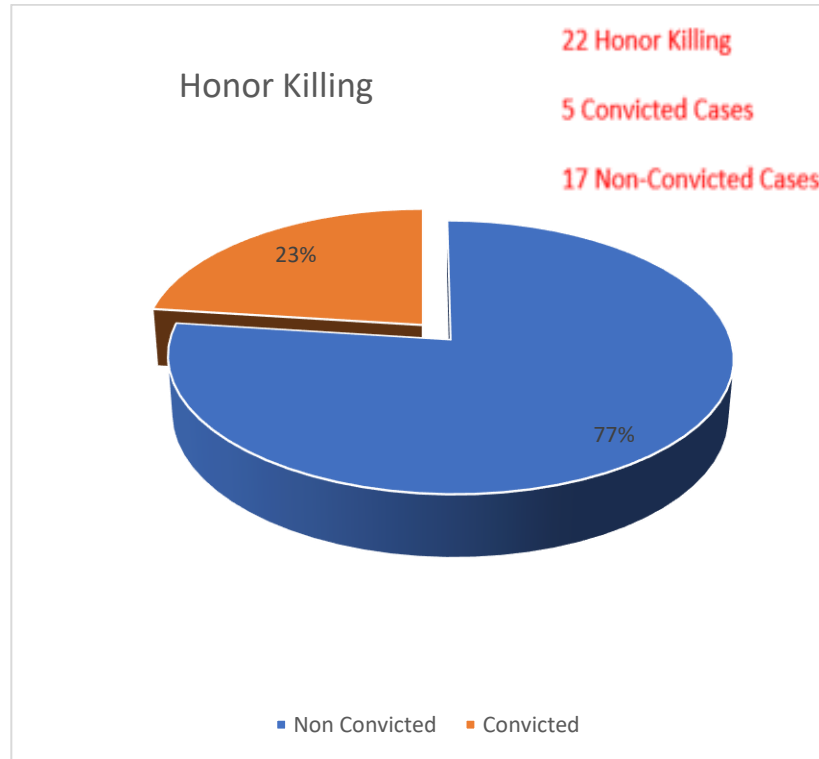


Chart 10 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crime cases of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The chart shows the monitored progress of reported honor killing crimes against women and girls. Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

**Chart 11**

## Conviction Rates for Documented Crimes against Afghan Women

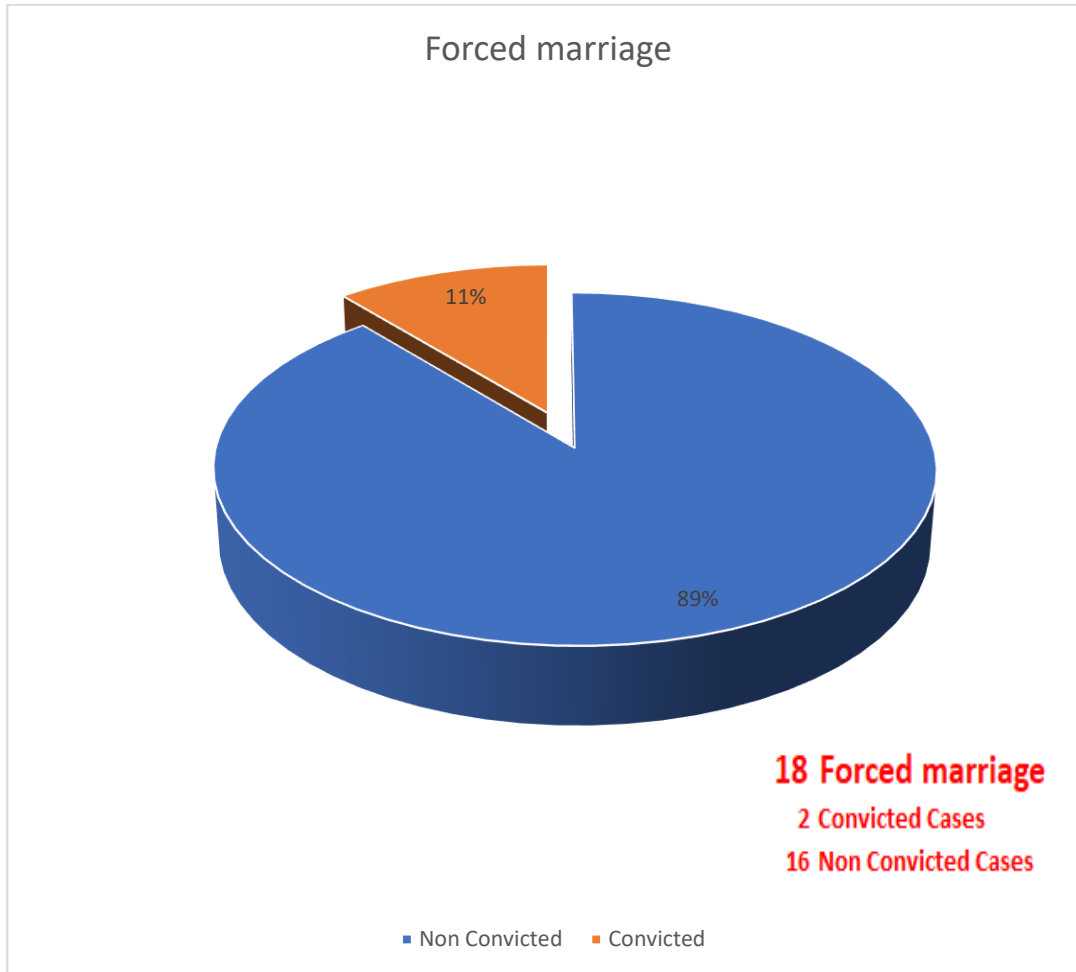


Chart 10 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crime cases of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The chart shows the monitored progress of reported forced marriage cases against women and girls. Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

**Chart 12**

## Conviction Rates for Documented Crimes against Afghan Women

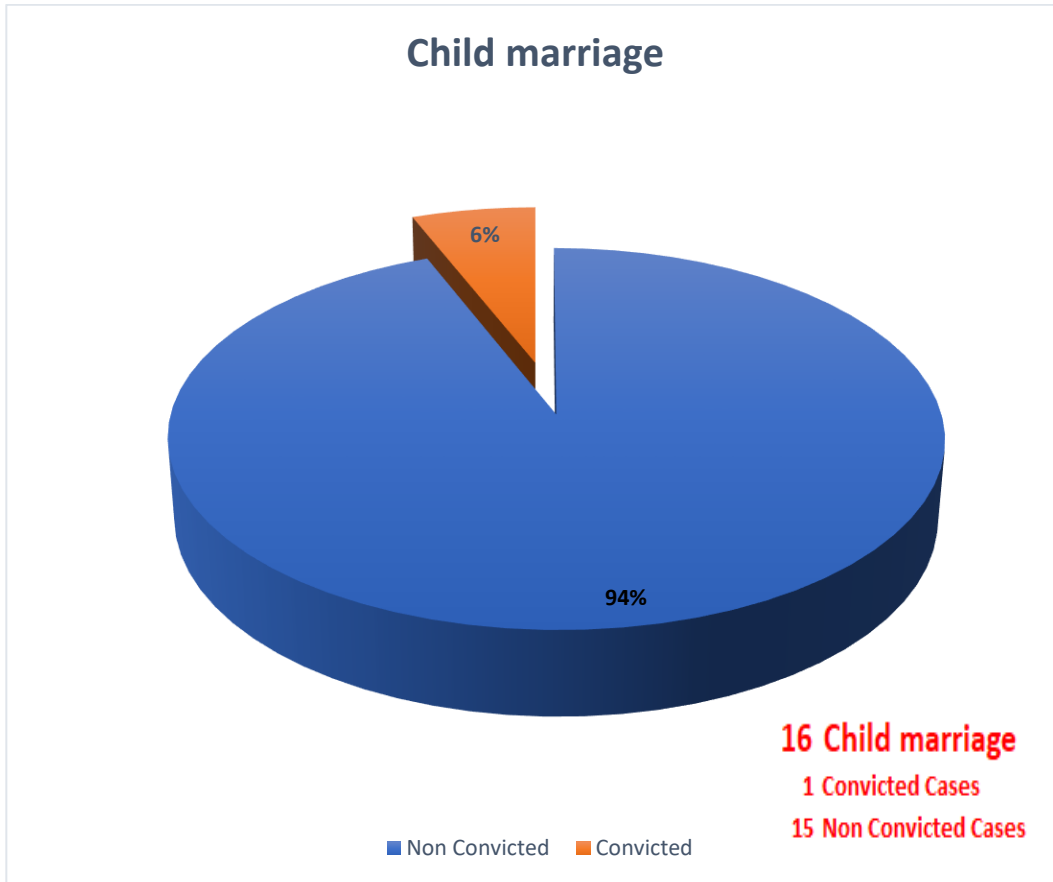


Chart 11 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crime cases of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The chart shows the monitored progress of reported child marriage cases. Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

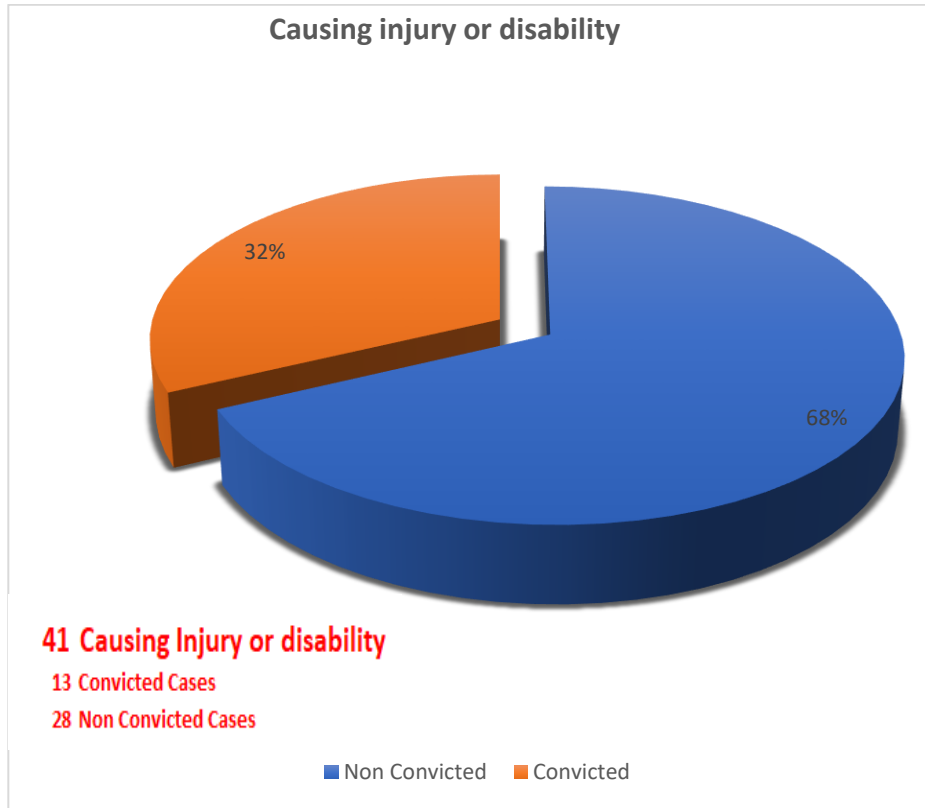
**Chart 13*****Conviction Rates for Documented Crimes against Afghan Women***

Chart 12 states that from September 2018 to February 2020, UNAMA documented a total of 303 crime cases of violence against women and girls across 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The chart shows the monitored progress of reported cases that caused injury or disability against girls. Source: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (December 2020)

**Table 18**

Demographic facts about Afghanistan

<b>Quick Facts about Afghan Population</b>	
<b>Current population</b>	42,295,369
<b>Population rank</b>	37 (0.52% of world population)
<b>Sex ratio</b>	1.07 (22,294,104 men to 20,001,265 women)
<b>Life expectancy</b>	45.0 years (44.8 - men, 45.3 - women)
<b>Demographics</b>	1,454,950 live births
<b>Literacy</b>	38.2% ( 9,325,733 aged 15 years and above)
<b>Literacy rate for adult female population</b>	24.15% (2,865,593 persons). 8,998,744 are illiterate
<b>Religion (Islam)</b>	99.9 % (42,253)
<b>Religion (Christianity)</b>	0.1% (42,295)

*Chart 13. These population figures are estimates based on the latest United Nations data.*

It is clear that Afghanistan has a high population, where almost half of it are women, and therefore, it is important that women's workforce gets enabled again soon because this will help the country's economy by incrementing the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), that is the total value of all the goods and services produced by Afghanistan. The low life expectancy clearly is due to the lack of basic health care and malnutrition that contributes to early high death rates. On the other side, the literacy rate is low due to a lack of education, livelihoods, and access to basic services that contribute to Afghan poverty and people's literacy. Finally, Islam religion has also affected the country's development. Unfortunately, the majority of the population is being forced to live according to an ultraconservative single

religion, and this affects mostly women and girls that are subjected to severe violations of their basic human rights. Source Country Meters Info (2023).

## Chapter V

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

To conclude this research about the literary analysis of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the investigator will create recommendations, opinions, and points of view. In addition, she will provide specific facts that have been found throughout the investigation process. These conclusions will be created after collecting various data, which will generate information that can help other research demonstrating positive and negative outcomes by using figures and tables. The recommendations and conclusions are intended to provide future and significant information about how the patriarchal ideologies are affecting Afghan women within the novel compared to today's Afghan women's situation.

#### 5.2 Conclusions

The information in this section will respond to the three objectives proposed at the beginning of this research in the introductory chapter. Moreover, the most relevant data collected through the literary analysis of the novel, characters, and themes, will be highlighted. The researcher provided an analysis of the Afghan women's role found in the book and then, she compared to nowadays. In addition, it was made an analysis of the position of men over woman in the Afghan society, its principal consequences and how all these factors have been affecting women in regards to their human rights. Therefore, each objective will be explained separately, and interpretations will be exposed to respond each one.

### **5.2.1 To examine the Afghan woman role found in the book versus today.**

In this investigation, the researcher was able to read the novel and expose the Afghan women's role found in the novel compared to the Afghan women's role nowadays. In the story, it was found that women in general, have a submissive and obedient role which clearly reflects the status of women. Afghan women are prepared since children to become the perfect wife, with the only purpose of satisfying their husbands. Afghan girls from an early age are subjected to obey their male figures and to accept that they are inferior to men. Their role is to satisfy their husband's needs and pleasure them. In addition, their role is a reproduction figure; in other words, only to bear children. In some case, it seems like their role is pretty close to be slaves of their fathers, husbands, and elder brothers. In their role as women, they have unique duties and characteristics such as always be silent and obedient. Their role in the Afghan society is structured to rely on men and obey.

On the other side, it was found that the current role of the Afghan women does not differ from the one found in the novel. With the Taliban's takeover back in 2021, the country stepped back on its advances on this matter. Nowadays, the role of the Afghan woman is totally nulled from society and public spaces. According to table16 (Chapter 4), patriarchal social structures in Afghanistan and the Taliban regime have restructured again women's subordination with restrictive codes of behavior, gender segregation, freedom of movement, expression, and action.

### **5.2.2 To analyze the position of men over women in Afghanistan and its consequences.**

Nowadays, Afghanistan is facing difficult times with the Taliban's takeover since 2021, for example, many civil deaths, poverty, human rights violations. Nevertheless, above all, women are the most affected. Since Afghanistan is a country with a deep patriarchal

structure based on the Islam religion, clear particular ideologies have set a traditional patriarchal gender hierarchy that prevails throughout all. Nowadays, the men's position over women is clearly marked between both genders, where the eldest male in each family has the highest authority and decision-making power to control the family. Every decision has to be approved by the husband or father. Men are responsible for the economic weight of the family. Husbands in Afghanistan have the responsibility to earn enough money to support himself, his wife, his children, and any parent or in-law living within the nuclear family. Brothers and sons must also help to economically support the family, protect the family's honor, and discipline any misbehavior. Clearly, this patriarchal ideology leaves a poor opportunity for the development of women, where their only opportunity are domestic chores, cooking, raising the children, entertaining guests, and attending the needs of the man of the house.

### **5.2.3 To compare the Afghan society found in the book with nowadays society.**

Within this novel, the author developed and set a marked patriarchal and despot society. The society showed in the story is unfair, and women are highly discriminated and marginalized. In addition, they do not have any human rights, which results in a deteriorating socio-economic situation for the women in the areas controlled by Taliban. A beaten society is found in the book. This society has endured a Russian invasion, civil wars, mujahideen rebel groups, and the Taliban regime, and all of these have undoubtedly contributed to deteriorate the country and its economy. A society full of restrictions mostly for women as detailed on table 5 "Women's Oppression" (Chapter 4).

On the other side, compared to nowadays Afghanistan society, it was found that there is not much difference between them. Today, Afghanistan has a multi-ethnic society with an Islamic Republic Government and Islamic values, concepts, and practices. Having said this, according to the table 12 (Chapter 4), Afghan society still keeps a patriarchal society led by the Taliban regime, preventing women and girls from having their basic rights to education, freedom, and expression. In addition, as detailed in table 16 (Chapter 4), patriarchal societies support men's power and women's subordination. Particularly, in Afghanistan, at the present time, it is clear that the society has banned their women from public spaces, too.

### **5.3 Restatement of the Research Question**

The problem raised by the researcher at the beginning of the investigation was: "What are the main causes of the Patriarchal Ideology in the Description of the Relationship between the Literary Text and the Ideas about Sociological Gender Facts, Power, and sexuality Found in the Book " *A Thousand Splendid Suns*" by the Author Khaled Hosseini through the Feminist Approach? Then, to respond to the previous question, the researcher worked with some instruments for collecting data to understand the origins of patriarchy, the novel analysis, statistical information about women's human rights in Afghanistan, and feminism. Therefore, the response to the question was, in a certain way, a known answer. However, at the same time, it was shocking, since it is quite hard to believe that such human rights violations are happening in the twenty-one century. As the main causes of the patriarchal ideology, from a Feminist perspective and its relationship with the novel, it is clear that within the novel, the Afghan society is strongly marked by gender differences making huge distinctions between the roles of women and men. Moreover, this is a patriarchal and paternalistic society, which is impregnated with masculine characteristics such as honor,

justice, control, and punishment. Nevertheless, the roles assigned to women limit their rights to exist, to be, to act, and to express.

The Taliban regime's takeover was the principal cause found in the story. This exacerbated the extreme situation of the main female characters. This rebel group was recognized for its misogyny and violence against women. In addition, Islam's support of patriarchal values is robust too, allowing and encouraging the position of men as providers and the position of women as supporters, where women should be obedient and serve their husbands. Consequently, they have to keep their virginity, and after marriage, they are supposed to be loyal, chaste, and have a complete dedication to their husbands. These are prerequisite for securing a good life.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

From the collected experience during this investigation, it is necessary to point out that it is essential to protect and comply with the human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against them. It seems like a fact that the country will keep to be managed by the Taliban's regime in the future, so the dialogue with them must be constant by the Human Rights Commissions and Organizations. As much as possible, it must be allowed the entrance of United Nations Agencies to deliver humanitarian aid to help affected children and women. On the other side, it will be a huge step to re-open schools for girls and put in place valid legislations to address all forms of violence against women and girls.

### **5.4.1 Methodological recommendations**

It is suggested to apply other types of data collection, expanding the variety of the instruments. For example, the investigation can be taken to other levels to retrieve firsthand information directly from Afghan women who are willing to give their opinion in a confidential interview, according to their experiences and from their personal witness. Furthermore, future researchers can make an interview and thus, get the male point of view, in order to know better these patriarchal behaviors, as well as its roots and the parenting that they have had. In addition, future researchers can gather information through an interview directly from any ONG personnel with experience in receiving Afghan women refugees that can share their experience with the rehabilitation of women victims into society.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations for future investigations**

It is recommended a deeper research regarding Islam political movement and the Islam doctrines, to analyze details about how it exacerbates patriarchal societies against women's rights. In addition, within a delicate investigation research like this one, it is always wished that it can contribute to improving the lives of these Afghan women; therefore, it is recommended to the readers that have a major interest in this topic.

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