A Study Of Gender Discrimination In The Wandering Falcon

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Abstract: Human life is tasteless and incomplete without life partner. A man needs wife and a woman needs husband. This natural requirement does not make any one superior or inferior. Actually, it is a matter of responsibilities. In certain circumstances one is more responsible than other to run the business of life quite smoothly. But human beings believe in exercising power over each other and trigger to the philosophy of “might is right”. Resultantly, female gender is maltreated in certain societies even in the age of science and technology because of manmade traditions, norms, customs, notions, values etc. Present study has targeted “The Wandering Falcon” to highlight this gender discrimination in Pakistan. The analysis of the novel focusing on gender discrimination may help the readers understand the sorry state of women and avoid violence against them in terms of mutual respect for both the genders.

1. Introduction
In the ancient times, there was the rule of “might is right”. Those who were marginalized in terms of their resources and available means of power were supposed to be subservient, submissive and subordinates. The significant part of this usually exploited class was female gender. After a long expedition of improving the world by making new laws, inventing new things and changing manmade religious thoughts and considerations, women were all the while battling and voicing for their rights. Feminism has produced a continuous flow of debates, discussions and arguments everywhere throughout the world and it has come to take care of women's issues with the end goal of furnishing an end to their shameful treatment of patriarchal mentality. It was the voice of women in the occasions when they were not either ready to talk or to express their emotions and wishes. The expression "Woman's rights" has a long history; it speaks about women's issues and endurance notwithstanding their fantasies in equivalent social orders controlled by man i.e. his capacity, standards, wishes and requests. Women have customarily been dehumanized by a patriarchal society, which they call man or male dominated society; and that has been in every case better to take care of the social business. The term feminism has a history in English connected
with women activism from the late nineteenth century to the present, it is helpful to recognize women's activist thoughts or convictions from women's activist political developments, for even in periods where there has been no noteworthy political activism around women subordination, people have been worried and guessed about equality for women. In spite of the agonizing isolation and the hard disparity, women could stand up each time and they could talk and express their issues, sentiments and wishes. Likewise, women could spread it everywhere throughout the world, making an image of equality, and making all individuals trust that people merit uniformity in all chances.

The concept of feminism has changed with passage of time and different waves and types have been introduced for the need of time. There are different types of feminism such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, and black feminism. There were different waves introduced such as the first wave, second wave of feminism, third wave of feminism, and fourth wave of feminism. The similar string of thought is also reflected by Ahmad in his novel ‘The Wandering Falcon’.

Ahmad was a renowned writer specially known for 'The Wandering Falcon' a masterpiece written in English in 2011. Ahmad (1931-2014) was a civil servant, author and essayist born in United India. He worked in Swat Valley, Quetta, Chagh, Khyber and Malakand which helped him in his writing. Additionally, he served at the Pakistani consulate in Kabul in 1979 in the time of Soviet Union. He wedded Helga whom he met in London who endeavored his work. Among all his work, The Wandering Falcon recounts the tale of Tor Baz (the Black Falcon) and his adventure through the segregated remote area along Pakistan-Afghanistan border Durand line where he encountered the life of Pushtoons (Wasif, 2010). The novel experiences the strict set of principles of the Pushtoon known as Pashtunwali, the political agitation of the land where women are sold as stock, philanderer and insurgency, cutting out in the desert scene of Baloch. The book is divided into nine sections. Every section is managing the fortune of the hero and the enduring of women and additionally extraordinary characters and distinctive issues of Balochi tribes (Khalid & Liaquat, 2021). The novel explicitly portray the patriarchal hegemony in the Baloch culture (Safiullah, Naleem, & Khan, 2021).

The novel specifically talks about women's rights, popularly known as feminism in the modern world. The same has been analyzed in detail in this research. This is an explorative research based on interpretive textual analysis.

1.1 Research Objectives:

The objectives of this research are:

1) to increase awareness among men as well as women about the violation of women's rights as expressed in 'The Wandering Falcon' in terms of gender discrimination.

2) to examine the reflection of gender discrimination, and highlight its basic elements in The Wandering Falcon.

1.2 Research Questions

How is the gender discrimination reflected in terms of the violation of women's rights in The Wandering Falcon?
1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is meant to spread awareness among the readers all over the world. It also highlights the rights of women and the cruel attitudes of men towards women in Tribal Areas in specific. Therefore, it may encourage women of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to identify their rights and raise their voice for it. The study also highlights the harsh attitudes of men towards women and the violation of their rights in hierarchical society. Furthermore, this study is delimited to Ahmad novel ‘The Wandering Falcon’.

2. Literature Review

Pakistani writers have produced considerable amount of English literature and it has been appreciated by English speaking community all over the world. The feminist perspective of the society has been highlighted by some renowned writers in particular. Ahmad has made a stunning place in the field of Pakistani literature after his tremendous contribution by writing the novel “The Wandering Falcon”. This wonderful novel was written in the 1970s but there was no publisher to publish the novel. But after 9/11 the image of the globe was changed quite rapidly and the terrorists were targeted in tribal areas and people became aware of the existence of this region on the globe. The Wandering Falcon depicts the social problems of this specific region. It talks about the nature and hospitality of the people of this region (Ahmad, Tahir & Asif, 2009). Ahmad has lived with people of this tribal region for almost 18 years that eventually turned into his love for them. In the post 9/11 scenario this novel eventually got published in 2011 (Sattar et al, 2021). Due to his close affiliation the writer portrayed a true picture without exaggerations in the novel. This study is an attempt to discuss various features of this novel in the perspective of gender discrimination. According to Sattar et al (2021) even in the presence of various laws regarding gender discrimination women are suffering all over Pakistan. These laws also appear pitiless for the women on the globe (Walker, 1985).

Albania the writer of Leila’s book and Empire of the Indus, reviewed “The Wandering Falcon”. These nine tightly composed stories pursue the fortunes of the "The Wandering Falcon" with the title of – a Pakistani kid, Tor Baz. His story started in the 1950s, in Baluchistan desert, the account moves towards the north through the innate territories that fringe Afghanistan closing approximately two decades later, close to the mountains of Chitral. Ahmad focused more on the problems running there than the protagonist. The main reason by not portraying the protagonist quite attractively were the inhumane customs of offering women/girls by fathers and spouses as a matter of dealing in disputes of murders, and prostitution of women. The book consists of some fabulous stories and depictions of the common folks. His characters’ lives are cursed by appetite, government obstruction, impulse and destiny. Ahmad's vision is unremittingly hopeless. Yet, Ahmad is a deft storyteller and his thin structure has a solid charm (a review published in Ahmed, 2011).

In accordance with the views of Peer, “The Wandering Falcon” is a standout amongst the most wonderful accumulations of news from South Asia for quite a long time. It's anything but a book in
which a focal hero takes away and welcomes story telling in various domains of life all through his profession (a review published in Ahmed, 2014).

According to Inskeep (a review published in 2014), “The Wandering Falcon” may be tagged as a rich picture of forbidding place. The journey starts by following the way of a stranded kid wandering from west to east in a cruel and prohibited place of Pashtuns. Initially the book consisted of short stories but the plan to mess it up in a novel was a beautiful idea. However, throughout the novel, the characters, the stories, and the scenes are built with such a beautiful manner that one can easily appreciate and understand the true nature of the novel. The creator makes us travel with him. We feel just as we ourselves are with the hopeless officers posted in Pakistan's western desert, where a yearly dust storm endures 33% of the year. We are with the migrants who every year drive their clans over the universal outskirts, just to be bewildered and incensed when they take into the fringe. We are seeing the plans being made for an abduction in North Waziristan, a locale dominantly occupied by Afghan refugees. Afterwards, we can see a snow-capped mountain in the evening glow — and high on that inclined, the outlines of ice-cutters, who for a long time have been hacking endlessly at icy masses to conveysome refrigeration to the valleys beneath. The book offers a rich image of the "rocky, uncivilized ancestral regions' we have recently known locally originated for projectiles and bombs.

According to Mukherjee (a review published in Ahmed, 2014) writes about the plot construction, setting of “The Wandering Falcon” and the codes of Pashtuns. Its setting alone, in the barbarous and rebuffing good countries, deserts and rough heights (5000 meters at focus) where the outskirts of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran meet, merits the cost of confirmation. This strangely turns into the book's quality on the off chance that there is a focal character, it isn't Tor Baz, the kid who, at four years age, sees his folks executed in front of him as a major aspect of a respect slaughtering, runs like a discontinuous string through woof in a large portion of the parts of the novel. Rather than plot we have a progression of short stories, isolated essentially in time however joined unobtrusively yet questionably by someof the time through Tor Baz, and constantly by the scene and its people. There are stunning insights into Pashtun codes administering revenge (and clever methods for bypassing them) and the internecine contending of the different clans. He is likewise superb at burrowing under the surface of that startling term, 'respect code', to demonstrate the correct idea of lives lived under its shadow and how networks bound by such medieval and unforgiving codes of respect, custom and dependability can seem, by all accounts, to be without any standards or ethics. The best quality of “The Wandering Falcon” is in its capacity to transport a world and its codes, which have stayed inconspicuous and uncomprehend by pariahs, with such economy and sympathetic orientation. Shamsie (A review published in Ahmed, 2011) also furnished her views on “The Wandering Falcon”. It is viewed as fairly a book that gives a glimpse at the world. Strict guidelines and codes of Tribal Areas, where the individual is substantially less essential than the framework (Safdar, 2021).

According to Ninja (a review published in Ahmed, 2011), “The Wandering Falcon” is a story more about people and less about the protagonist. The protagonist is completely irrelevant and opposite
as compared to other protagonists which have basic function of moving the plot ahead and connecting the stories. Tor Baz is our unique principle character, however his essence in “The Wandering Falcon” does not weave the irregular stories together. This is a strategy like the one Gaiman utilized in The Sandman series. In Sandman, the lord of dreams makes an appearance in each and every story that includes a character envisioning (which is every one of them). In this unique situation, having the Sandman as a character of appearance, notwithstanding being the hero, bodes well. He is the master of dreams.

In the wandering Falcon, Tor Baz is just a man who has no polecat ambition or even any goal. He is literary, just a man. He is not trying to cure his suffering and weak wife, he is not looking for any warm affection, and he is not redeeming his country, and is just an observer. That is on the grounds that “The Wandering Falcon” is not a book about characters, or plot, or inward clash, or character development. It is a tale about the traveling individuals of the Middle East and Asia. It is an anecdote about Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and how their innate individuals are surviving through wars and living on fruitless mountains.

Civilized society trusts that pledging little girl is boorish and coldblooded. In “The Wandering Falcon”, a dad sells his little girl with the goal that the family can endure and purchase sustenance as well as sanctuary. On the off chance that the girl flees from her husband, the dad must restore the cash paid for her. This is a dreadful practice, however to the clans who live in the mountains, this was as basic as pulling back cash from an ATM.

The discussion may be finally concluded that the gaps that researchers have found in the already published literature on the selected novel is that these studies have talked about plot, post-colonialism, the identification of tribal areas, Pashtuns codes in general etc. The aspect of gender discrimination in particular is still not explored. It is one of the dominant perspectives which must be highlighted. In addition, the female characters may be specially focused in terms of their regionally originated reality and rights. Deprivation of women's rights have been a phenomenon since the time immemorial. Females are claimed to be disregarded in each field of life and particularly in the domain of personality development and grooming. A large part of the women has suffered because of this disparity of rights.

More specifically, this research may also refer to the fourth wave of feminism as a movement started in 2012. A key component was the use of social media to highlight and address inhuman concerns against females. The new wave arose amid several high-profile incidents. The core concept of that was the empowerment of women, focusing on the equality of women in the work field, choice of their engagement, seeking justice against assault, harassment and marginalization in different fields (Day & Wray, 2018).

But if we look into the history then "Me Too movement" may be found which was launched in 2006 in the United States by survivors of sexual violence, especially females (Regulska, 2018). That movement generated more incidents which evaporated different women's marches. In the presidential election of 2016 in the United States, Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton. During
his election campaigns he used a number of inflammatory remarks about women which fueled different strikes, and just after the election an old woman posted a call on Facebook for marching in Washington DC for social change especially in regards to gender inequality. It got much popularity overnight and later on it became a women march in which 4.6 million people participated from the United States and other countries of the World. The demonstration took place on January 12, 2017, the day after Trump inauguration. Therefore, it may be reiterated that this study have focused on the gender discriminatory perspective of the novel which may voice against the violence of woman rights and convince the patriarchal mentality that they should extend equal rights to women where and when applicable, and last but not the least may help minimizing the women sufferings in the current age of science and information technology by reducing gender discrimination that is based on stereotypical notions and convictions.

3. Research Methodology
Methodology determines the smooth and reliable conduct of research in all disciplines. For the present research in particular, a qualitative approach is applied because of its limited generalizability and inductive nature. The study is exploratory in nature and carryout interpretive textual analysis of the novel ‘The Wandering Falcon’. Because of the male harsh attitudes towards women, researchers have decided to work on it and highlights their drawbacks by applying feminist theory specifically fourth wave of feminism which explicitly talks about gender discrimination. The novel depicts the suffering of women which they have been bearing for centuries solely on the base of gender discrimination which is usually promoted on patriarchal consideration. While research entails unearthing information through interpretation, it is actually the textual analysis that may result into further questions which have been answered directly or indirectly in the analysis itself.

4. Textual Analysis
Since the time immemorial we are living in certain social hierarchy. Sometimes, it seems quite natural to be living in such circumstances. In the novel, Ahmad portrays a hierarchical society where women were considered the worst creatures of the universe. Where no rights were given for the women. They were just considered puppets of their husbands, fathers, brothers, families and the society. The novel starts with the representation of a tribal chief’s daughter who was married to a young man, she elopes with her father's servant and finds shelter in an isolated fort manned by a few dozen lonely soldiers. Ahmad portrays fear and desperation. A son is born, and they raise the child in a hidden corner for six years until the Siahpad, their tribe, sent men to chase them. The couple and their son run out but haunt down, and two stones are raised over their graves as a sign of revenge.

Women were always considered the inferior creature of the universe. In the tribal areas of Pakistan, people sell them like animals. People don’t respect them as shown in the old man tale to the
colonel, where he says that a young boy and a girl running away from their homes to find a new destination for their future but very soon they were captured by a group of rascals and they did much mischief with them and at end they were raped very harshly but the more harsh scenario was there for the girl to face her boyfriend abusing her for physical attachment with the rapist.

Bride price is the money which is given to the bride's father to prepare bride marriage architectures and arrangement of clothes and other needed things for the bride. It means that the father was not supposed to take care of the rights of his daughter. The same story is also portrayed in the seventh chapter of the novel “A pound of opium” where Sherakai is sold on the pound of opium to a prince. And in the eight and the nine chapter “the betrothal of Shah Zarina, and Sale” respectively are the same. Their husbands use them as just sex objects and not more than that. Shah Zarina was sold to a young man at a bride price. And they never tried to find her concern about the marriage. And in the ninth chapter, she was sold again for three thousand rupees only. These all are the bright examples of harassment of women as their choice were never asked while they were getting married and after a while sex seemed to them as a rape.

The fourth wave of feminism is reflected in Gul Jana character, where a soldier is staring at her and she feels that the soldier's sight is a voyeuristic one and tries to defend herself from harassment by calling her husband and then comparing the soldier with her husband in sexual terms. Gul Jana checked her camel slightly and straightened her back. ‘You were there!’ she put a hand to the side of her mouth. ‘You there, who has been staring at me for a long time. Here, again she creates a sexual comparison.

She was a strong enough woman and knew how to combat harassment and misogyny. Guncha Gul the Subedar of soldiers also believed that women are strong enough to retaliate as he contemplates that a small mistake can lead the soldiers to a big blunder. “He decided not to commiserate with the soldiers. That gesture might hurt him all the more and, in any case, it was better for the boy to suffer the jolt of the ribaldry and boisterous humor of the Pawindah women before he made any serious mistakes” (Ahmad, 2011).

Here a comparison happens between both genders and the women are portrayed much stronger than men as Maya Angeleu did in her poem Still I Rise. Maya Angeleu compares women with dust and warns men that she can hurt them too. The old man story "To the Camel" is also the representation of the rise of voice to avoid misogynistic. The raped girl replied to her beloved after her raping that he is also equally responsible as the following lines mentioned, and he does not has power of retaliation as she has. Both were raped but there was no resistance from her boyfriend but she did.

Well, the girl spoke thus, “My love, she said, “you are right. My body has been violated, but think of one thing. My body has been fashioned by nature for this very purpose. What was done to me was indeed wrong, but truly speaking, it is, as it were, only what nature had intended for me
when it created me. Now look at yourself, you are a man. You were not made to be used the way these rascals used you. Yet, you did not resist them. You allowed yourself to be violated just as I did. What reason do you offer? (Ahmad, 2011).

Shah Zarina was a daughter of a Mullah in the novel. She left her husband's home because of her husband's rude behavior. Her husband kept her on his second priority and his animal on the first priority. She could not understand why the bear had a room and they could not (Ahmad, 2011). Shah Zarina was a bright mind and a liberal type of woman. She needed all the facilities and freedoms which men have. Therefore, she was demanding for her own room. Otherwise, women still exist in tribal areas in this 21st century who are spending the same life which is portrayed by Ahmad in “The Wandering Falcon”. In the initial days Shah Zarina was agreeing and tried to adjust herself with that life which was given by her husband but could not because she had her own goals in her life. She liked to do a job as she ran away at the end of the novel for employment to avoid her physical attachment with her husband. “As the months passed, Shah Zarina’s dislike for the bear grew into a dark and sullen hatred. She did realize that she should also consider the bear to be important, but a part of her jealousy at the thought of being considered second to the animal” (Ahmad, 2011).

The fourth wave can also be applicable on the character of Shah Zarina and Sharakei. When there is no equal affection and love then the relationship becomes impossible and physical attachment as harassment. The same thing happened with both Shah Zarina and Sharakei. When Shah Zarina’s husband gave full attention to animals and considered them the first priority and Shah Zarina second, then she realized to do physical attachment with him as not less than harassment that is why she preferred to her father home than her husband. And at the end, she found no word to thank Afzal Khan when she observed the true affection in Tor Baz’s eyes.

The story of the Sharakei was also the same. She also found herself in harassment, when there was no love remaining between her and her husband. There are traditions in Tribal Areas, such as if a husband is married to another woman, then the old woman needs to remain in her husband’s home forever rather than marry someone else. And they both were also fed up with the customs and traditions of the society. They both do not like those customs and traditions where a woman can be sold for a small amount of money, or they can stay forever waiting for their husband’s mercy. Therefore, they ran away and did not look for divorces and for the next marriage as well.

5. Conclusion

In view of the abovementioned discussion it is therefore, may be concluded that The Wandering Falcon reflect the unacceptable and inhumane treatment of the women in tribal areas. The sorry state of the women is reflected in terms of negative attitude towards them and their sexual harassment. We found these all elements in different characters in the novel, like the running away from their homes, the old man tale, the character of Shah Zarina and Sherakei, these all show that “The Wandering Falcon” reflects the gender discrimination to a greater extent. Ahmad has a
sympathy with womanhood that is why he portrayed those things which really existed in tribal areas. There were no rights for women even the right of education was restricted to men. They used to think women are only suitable to be housewives.

6. References


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