

Received: 24 December 2023, Accepted: 18 January 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9il.88>

Social Oppression and Othering: Modern Pakistani Women in Fata Region from the outlook of Muted Group Theory

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Abstract

The current research sought to examine social injustice and othering in the novel *Maraal* via the lens of Muted Group Theory. The current study intended to investigate the causes of social oppression in the modern sense, as well as to emphasize the sources of Othering in the Fata region. The current study is qualitative in nature. The researcher has used Muted Group Theory to analyze the novel's content. The novel's examination found that Sardar Khan Jani expertly emphasized the fundamental challenges of tribal societies. Since, patriarchy oppresses women, and their voices are muffled; they are unable to speak up for their rights. Even in contemporary times, women remain limited to home and domestic tasks and are unable to contribute to society. In their society, men do not share authority or wealth with women. Women are considered as Other, and are ignored, hushed, and silenced. Patriarchy structured both the personal and social worlds, with men holding most of positions to manipulate them. In patriarchal Fata society, men are in charge and set the rules, while women are supposed to stay at home and raise their children even in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Social oppression, othering, Fata region, modern time, authoritative measurement

Introduction

According to Ayres (2007) society represents men and women as separate identities, and the gender reality expands from the cradle to the last breath of human life. Stereotypes and traditions have adverse effects on any society, and they become a drawback in the progression of society. Generalizations and horrible qualities and goals in culture are continually instilling and

propagated in the personalities of the majority. Through the ages, these generalizations of male strength, self-love, power, haughtiness, and female enslavement and persecution are portrayed skillfully in the novel *Maraal*. The philosophies (set of thoughts and standards) fundamental to any local area and its design is closely influenced via life. The consistent reverse and provincial elements in way of life and their belief systems are building and developing society in a parallel nature. The male's mastery in every part of human existence has pushed the female to the fringe of society, considering them as inferiors and immaterial substances on the planet, even the correspondence arrangement of the very culture is overwhelming by manly language. Kramarae (2005) asserted that sexual orientation correspondence contrasts are not just a significant theme in the cutting-edge western world but have likewise remained a dubious discussion in the past. Lakoff (2004) focuses on the ways in which culture replicates social disparities and separates society into predominant and minimized classes. Khan (2016) states, "Underestimation is feebleness, while strength is an indication of effectiveness, essentially." Thus, these generalizations are outlining and moving these customs to different ages, which results in female mediocrity from one age to another. Female who has a place with the Eastern culture in *Maraal* have consistently been baffled in their privileges, as their way of life is exorbitantly rash and severe in that far identifies with females. The selected novel mirrors females as a ware to satisfy a man's desire and to keep her as a masterpiece in his home and bound them to patriarchal structure. The current study aims to examine and critically evaluate the fundamental reasons behind social oppression in tribal areas and its consequences with respect to modern sense. Moreover, the current study is an endeavor to highlight the oppressed segment of society in the context of their muted voices. Secondly, the current study also aims at highlighting the key concepts of othering and the reasons behind considering tribal women as Other. Furthermore, Othering and Alienation, as depicted in the selected novel, are the key concerns of this study. To be sure, the aims and objectives of this study center on the exploration of Oppression and Othering in terms of tribal context. The researcher employs Muted Group Theory as a theoretical framework to attain the above-mentioned objectives.

Social Oppression

Women in the world most settled social orders and essentially all class social orders have faced low status, abuse, persecution, and loss of self-assurance because of such oppressive behavior, and they have even been expelled from society and considered as Other. The white master violently treats socially degraded slaves and take cheap labor to create a kingdom of their own and rape women to please themselves. The cruel white masters exceed and force them to lift a single voice to declare democracy and equal rights, which are deemed fundamental to human society (Bilal, 2021). The same situation is reflected in Sardar Khan Jani's *Maraal*, in which social designs and the misogynist behavior of male characters create imbalances connected to sex, race, class, religion, ethnicity, and other differences. African Americans in the United States today are urged to accept that white men are dominant beings and society is organized around their necessities; the truth is seen from their viewpoints, their qualities are viewed as generally important and supportive, and they rule governmental issues and culture. Sociologists center on the social definition of gatherings. Sociological points of view on the social constructions and powers causing group-based disparities can assist us with seeing how the overall set of laws ought to react. Specifically, sociologists and (Others) working in the generally new field of masculinity.

Social oppression refers to oppression that is achieved through social means and it affects the whole gender of people. This kind of oppression includes systematic mistreatment, exploitation, and abuse of a group of people by another group. It occurs whenever one group holds power over another in society through the control of social institutions like education, government, and the judicial system, along with society's laws, customs, norms, and traditions. The controlling, or dominant group, benefits from oppression in the form of greater access to rights and resources, a better quality of life, and overall greater life chances. Those who experience the brunt of oppression have fewer rights, less access to resources, less political power, lower economic potential, worse health and higher mortality rates, and lower overall life chances.

Othering

According to Akawi (2016) Othering is the disregarding, essentializing, and denuding of the humanity of another culture, people, or geographical region. Beauvoir (1949) introduces the

concept of the other vividly in her book *The Second Sex*. The concept of othering is defined as a process in which entities are not set up in equal relationships. One entity is always powerful and dominant, while the rest of the entities are powerless. Being a female in a patriarchal society has established a relationship of dominance and subordination, which simply leads to defining a female as the other. Othering is a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group. It is an effect that influences how people perceive and treat those who are viewed as being part of the in-group versus those who are seen as being part of the out-group. It is an "us vs. them" way of thinking about human connections and relationships. This process essentially involves looking at others and saying, "They are not like me" or "They are not one of us." Othering can be thought of as an antonym of belonging. Where belonging implies acceptance and inclusion of all people, othering suggests intolerance and exclusion.

Problem Statement

- The central concerns of women's submissiveness in the Fata region in the twenty-first century are the subject of this study. In this contemporary world when men predominate in society, one of the most pressing challenges in Pakistan, and particularly in Fata, is the social oppression of women. In society, women are repressed and treated like everyone else. In the Fata region, they are seen with less regard and acceptance. In Sardar Khan Jani's novel *Maraal*, the researcher concentrates on the understudied topic of societal oppression and the Othering.

Research Question

- What are the dominant factors of social oppression, the motivation for othering, and a source of acceptability in the Fata region in this modern world?

Research Objectives

- To investigate the causes of social injustice, the impetus for othering, and a modern-day source of acceptability in the Fata region.

Research Significance

- The current study examines the idea of social exclusion and oppression in the context of MGT in the book *Maraal*. The purpose of this study is to identify the causes of gender and societal problems in the book, particularly social oppression, and Othering. Through fictional order, this research expands readers' understanding of inequities, inequality, and how women are treated. It benefits readers in general and literature students specifically. It is also helpful for the readers to understand how literature and gender-related societal concerns are interconnected. It draws attention to the core ideas of societal oppression and othering as they are portrayed.

Literature Review

According to Ardener (2008) the Muted Group Theory is a useful tool for examining and researching the oppressed social class to manage the issue of gender imbalance in the public sphere. A dominant class of society (males) expresses their opinions freely and suggests order over the musings and linguistic behavior of an underappreciated less dominant class (females). MGT manages the gendered correspondence framework, the sexual orientation linguistic uniqueness phenomenon, and the different aspects of gender disparity that vary between male and female class. The public perception of genders is influenced by the simultaneous division of society into dominant and subservient classes. Kramarae viewpoint is that “Individuals at the apex of a culture's progressive structure are privileged to characterize how it impacts women or other members of that culture.” (Jule, 2018)

Funderburke (2012) examined gender and social roles in dialogue in F. Scott Fitzgerald's American Classic the Great Gatsby. The researcher did a coding and rhetorical analysis to assess whether the novel contained aspects of muted group theory. Edwin and Shirley Ardener established the muted group theory after discovering that a culture's ideals and social structure

are expressed through rhetoric. According to this notion, power in particular groups prevent others from communicating successfully.

Kellner (2010) said that male-dominated culture is characterized by the socially sanctioned dominance of men in families. This predominance of men is a result of culture and families, which are portrayed and seen in the public view through male ancestry. In a man-centered structure family, the father is granted authority; he is the head of the household. He should settle for the sake of all his kin. (Senzani, 2010)

Khan (2020) analyzed the hegemonic masculinity, muteness, and silence of the feminine voice in Khalid Hussein's "*A Thousand Splendid Suns*". Dominance and marginalization are mutually exclusive concepts. In connection to one other, they really either increase one or decrease another. Supremacy is a show of strength, while marginalization is a sign of impotence. In the Pashtun culture, man denotes supremacy and female denotes marginalization, to put it simply. Different methods are employed in society to conceptualize these words. The most effective tools men employ to oppress and rule women in society are tradition, linguistics, authoritarianism, and faith.

Staszak (2012) asserted that it is not so much the Other's difference from the perceiver that makes them other, but rather the perceiver's perspective and the discourse in which they are immersed. To adopt a criterion that divides humanity into Us, the Self, and Them, the Other, is to pick a group that represents the norm and whose identity is respected, and a group that is characterized by its flaws, devalued, and subject to discrimination. Only dominating groups (like the West during colonial times) have the power to impose their own categories on the situation. Labeling potential targets as "Others," "Barbarians," "Savages," or "People of Color" removes them from mainstream society and makes them easier to subjugate or destroy. (Kukkonen, J. 2020)

Rahman (2014) argued that "Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were viewed through, studied not as citizens or as persons, but as problems to be addressed or contained or as colonial powers openly sought their area taken over," thereby reducing the women to mere objects. All that's needed is a little bit of mutual effort to grasp one another. We need to look at the political and social conditions that foster stereotypes about Muslims, and especially Muslim women. My

research lends credence to the Orientalism theory that widespread and deep reform in the West is required for a new worldview to flourish. According to Van Dijk, analysts of the media must investigate the ways in which dominant conceptions about Muslim women and Islam shape the everyday actions and words of social actors such as media professionals.

Cerezo, A (2014) said that if we want to fully understand the shared and unique experiences of women as whole beings in their different roles and identities, we need to sort through the layers and levels of oppressions and privileges and understand them, without breaking them up into separate parts. We must also pay attention to the gaps that still exist between women along (and within) the constructed domains of class, race, and sexuality, as well as to the oppressive ideas of femininity and an essentialized womanhood that women internalize and reify. Some groups of women have enslaved other women, some women have cleaned for other groups of women, and some women have cared for and raised the children of other women. To claim that we have a shared experience of what it means to be a woman.

Drydyk (2021) said that the capability approach has a lot to teach us about oppression and how to see what's wrong with it. People who are oppressed are not only not free to live well, but they are also kept from living well. This idea of "second-order freedom to live well" captures the intuitive idea that being oppressed means being held captive in bad living conditions. But if we only show this in the capability space, we risk hiding not only what is unique and different about oppression in general, but also what is unique and different about the many kinds of oppression. Once women are labelled as women, they have less-options because of biases, role expectations, and job structures that recognize them as women.

Theoretical Framework

The current study is entirely qualitative, and the text is analyzed descriptively using Muted Group Theory. As a theoretical framework, MGT theory is used. MGT originated in the field of anthropology. The word "muted group theory" was invented by Edwin and Shirley Ardener in their 1975 book *Belief and the Problem of Women*.

The Muted Group Theory examines the factors that contribute to a subgroup of people's muteness, including social oppression, suppression, alienation, subordination, and othering,

especially among women. The concept upholds a gender paradigm that favors the male class. Women's opinions are suppressed when they speak. It is believed that women who rely on male breadwinners have more domineering attitudes.

Three assumptions underpin the Muted Group Theory. The primary idea is that varied social experiences shape women's perspective of the world. The second assumption is that men wield political power. They use this influence to stifle women's views and prevent them from acquiring popular acceptability. The third myth is that for women to be accepted in society, particularly in positions of leadership, they must speak and think in the same way as males.

Social Oppression and Othering in FATA Region

The most notable female character in Sardar Khan's novel is Maraal. Sardar Khan Jani presents her as a skeptic as well as the most socially oppressed individual in the story. In terms of social oppression and othering, her presence considers an authentic tribal color. Maraal is a socially background, simple, modest, and noble woman with low social expectations. By including a character like Maraal in his story, Sardar Khan Jani seeks to emphasize and oppress the role of women in the FATA region's social arena. Debarbieux(2012) opined that only dominating groups have the power to impose their own categories on the situation. The same case occurred in the novel because Maraal enters the ring of social oppression due to the lack of encouragement while knowing the dominancy of male-dominated groups, so, she became a victim of patriarchal hegemony. Maraal is a multidimensional character, but in tribal society she is considered a burden. She demonstrates a variety of responses on different occasions. The patriarchal structure of the tribal social system muted her voice, and she lacks the ability to control her mental and emotional states. Maraal is a vibrant, all-encompassing, creative, and confident character, but her qualities are rendered useless by social oppression.

As a matter of fact, the novel focuses on how the community of FATA improves as its citizens choose to learn from their mistakes and stop resorting to violence. Throughout this story in the novel MaraalSardar Khan Jani demonstrates the deplorable treatment of women in the FATA region. According to Kissack (2012) the extensive superiority of men and the inferiority of women is the practical shape of oppression because women are prohibited from creating their

opinions in languages. As the following lines indicate all the public places such as bazaars and parks were thorough occupied by men segment of the tribal societies.

“Bazaars in FATA present a deserted look because of the total absence of women folk, music, and other entertainment facilities. The shopkeepers open their shops - mostly single -storied - at the first streak of sunrise and close them at twilight.”

(Maraal, 2011, p. 29)

To be sure, the above-mentioned lines are evident to the oppressed situation of FATA’s women because the absence of women and children, as well as any form of amusement, gives FATA's bazaars a desolate appearance. Women also wish to go to bazaars, but they cannot express their wishes because their voice are muted. The markets and the shops of the bazaars open their shutters at the initial glimmer of dawn and closed them again during evening because of the fear of women mingling with men. According to the writer, among the indigenous communities, women are seen as little more than objects to be taken by men. Not all women are aware of the legal protections to which they are entitled. Sardar khan raises topics in the narrative that relate to the enslavement of women and the construction of Othering, both of which are major themes for Sardar khan. Maraal, the novel's main character, is a young girl. The cultural tyranny she has undergone has left her deeply scared. As the extract clearly depict the oppressed scenario of women in FATA region.

“It is a rare phenomenon when a woman - accompanied by a male and totally veiled in a burqa happens to walk in a bazaar. And it too happens out of sheer unavailability. Their bazaars seem to have been sign boarded by “Gents Only”.

There are, however, some liberal families too, who allow their women adopting teaching profession in their vicinity.” (Maraal, 2011, p.30)

Here the term “gents only” refers to the patriarchal structure associated with the idea of oppression and othering. As the writer claimed that when a lady, accompanied by a guy and wearing a full hijab or burqa, is seen strolling through a bazaar, it is a remarkable sight. As a matter of fact, it is an inevitable part of life as well as in FATA. On the other hand, the discourse that developed against women in FATA is highlighted by the author in terms of the complete dominancy of men over women. As it has been mentioned the term gents only appear to have

been instituted in their marketplaces to consider women as other and oppressed them thoroughly. Moreles (2008) is of the views, women who are oppressed are not only free to live well, but they are also kept living near to death. The same concept is also highlighted in the selected novel. A few numbers of liberal kind of families, he is saying that they are giving rights to the women. However, there are also some more tolerant households in the area, whose female members are welcome to pursue best for their women.

“Majority of them are against girl's education mainly because of the misperceived intrinsic factor spreading vulgarities and immoralities among the youngsters resulting in the spiritual death of a wholesome society. As it is said, “Da khazey da para kor dey yagoor” (women are meant to be either in home or in grave)”. (Maraal, 2011, p.30)

In many tribal societies, girls and young women do not have the same access to educational opportunities as their male counterparts. When women have access to education, they gain independence. The tribal order discourages women from gaining independence. The patriarchal system's do efforts to block women from achieving educational parity while males are motivated only by a desire to oppress them and mute their vices and freedom of speech. Furthermore, most of the tribal chiefs and even laymen are opposed to girls receiving an education because they by mistake believe that it would lead to the development of immorality and vulgarity among children and adults and the eventual decline of a moral society. This seems to be their lame excuse. According to their stances, as the saying goes, a woman fits at home or in the tomb. By asserting such kinds of sayings their only intention is to keep them silent and deprive them of one of the basic rights of education.

“For God's sake! Save me! Or I'll go mad; save me! I'll "die; I'll hang myself; I'll run away from home; he's a stranger to me; much older than me; I hate him; he's neither my love nor my "Hold your tongue! Shut up, you just shut up! What nonsense is it?" “For God's sake! Sir! Save me! I won't live without you...it's impossible...unthinkable marrying somebody else; no-never! I will elope with you. "I choked her, and silenced her thus, made her sit in a chair, and after a minute or so she let me know”. (Maraal, 2011, p.110)

Oppression and the status as Other of the main characters is the main concern of the above lines. She was oppressed and her language was muted to the highest extent, this is why she is crying throughout the novel. As the above lines indicate, she is going to utter each word for protection as well as for saving her love and life. For God's sake, stop me, before, I lose my mind, I am going to run away, I am going to hang myself and I am not coming back home, all these lines show her utter disturbance, her futile efforts of her muted voice and oppressed psychological situation. As a matter of marriage and honor in FATA, she proclaimed that he is much older than her. She despises him that he is neither her love nor her choice but her status of being a woman as other and oppressed was her fate. As her statements revealed, never in a million years would she consider marrying anybody else; she cannot imagine her life without her loved one. In that case, she was ready to run away with her loved one. But her destiny was not to achieve her love life rather she was killed by her cruel tribal family.

Furthermore, in this scenario Afzal Khan, a materialist, interferes with her connection with Rahat, a mentor she hires to assist her in schoolwork. His leading drug smuggler daughter Maraal was given away by him. After the couple tied the knot, she was treated like property and made fun of because of her father's excessive wealth. His unfortunate death in a vehicle crash left her a widow. Several months later, Rahat meets Maraal by coincidence at his student Gulab Shah's marriage in the village. Rahat fulfils his pledge to marry the widow within three days of locating her. Rahat goes to meet her father to receive him for a second marriage. Afzal Khan tells him that the Jirga will decide tomorrow. The next day it was arranged to look like Maraal had taken poison the night before and died. To think that Maraal would take his own life is completely baffling. Because of the intersection of fate and social norms, she is inevitably crushed. Her family decided that she must be killed instead of marrying with the one whom she loved because marrying again that too, with the loved one was something against their so-called honor and tradition.

“Since FATA is an extremely male dominant society that's why women are but simply puppets in the hands of men, and the puppeteers are experienced enough to move them in any direction”. (Maraal, 2011, p.100)

As indicated by Sardar Khan Jani in the above statement, the only responsible factor for considering women in FATA as other and oppressed is the male supremacy. The novel also sheds light on the concept of economic deprivation of women in FATA by picking insights from Marxist theory. FATA is a male-dominated society, women there are little more than puppets, their voices are muted and the males who control them are skilled actors as asserted by Sardar Khan Jani. As a matter of oppression, this is hardly surprising that women make less than men do because they are overrepresented in low-paying positions and lower-status employment in higher-paying fields. Majority of the men take benefit of being conservative and not allowing their women to work because of the widespread belief that certain nonstandard jobs that are doable by men but not by women throughout the FATA region. This is partly due to a religious misinterpretation that posits that men should work, and women should care for the home and the children. Men and women are still not treated equally in the workplace because of the inherent differences between soft vocations and harsh positions. The same concept is discussed by Morles (2008), he said that if we want to fully understand the shared and socially oppressed experiences of women as whole in their different roles and identities, we need to sort through the layers and levels of oppressions. When women in FATA are pressured into marriage as depicted in Maraal novel, their spouses often take away their freedom and their ability to make career decisions. The freedom to work and the chance to contribute equally are themselves expressions of respect for women's rights. Such economic exploitation of women further fuels the oppressed state of women and further give rise to consider women as others, which depict the devastated situation of women.

“The next day, I noticed the same girl - come from Godar last evening - with devastating eyes and grim ashen face in the procession who would stare back at Gulab. She looked upset due to rejection and dejection, perhaps. A melancholy angry mood had descended on her.” (Maraal, 2011, p.136)

It reflects a dejected and oppressed state of women. The following day, while watching the procession, the narrator saw a girl who had been staring back at Gulab with those heartbreaking eyes a terrible dark colored face which clearly reveal that violence was made against her physically as well as psychologically and her lips were sealed with

forced muteness. As a matter of violence, her expression reflected her feelings of rejection and dejection which further confined her in the same society as Other. The plot of the story further portrays that she had fallen into a gloomy rage out of violence and oppression. From the lines of the story, physical assault against women is shockingly widespread throughout FATA's regions. However, the most heinous and barbaric forms of physical abuse against women are depicted in the novel, including scorching, trying to poison, hacking with a dagger, or attacking with weapons, and even chopping off the head of women in FATA. The victim may die as a result, in many instances or trying to commit a suicide as Maraal tried. Honor killings are a horrifying practice of physical abuse against women that often ends in their deaths as portrayed by Sardar Khan Jani in Maraal. It is deeply disturbing that incidences of physical violence against women, such as beatings, kicking, slapping, and stone-throwing and abolish their voices have been witnessed at such a high rate, especially because such violence is the most obvious and severe kind of abuse that women face. The physical as well as psychological violence and muteness of voices of women is evident to the fact of women position as "other" in FATA. In following lines Sardar Khan has depicted that how women are oppressed through abuse and social work.

"Money makes a man powerful...but in my money; your brothers are stupid family is stupid; money makes a manpower everything; it was money I bought you with no more to me than a purchased commodity. Your status: don't meddle in our family affair you're ordered! "And whenever I'd get over-exhausted with work like sweeping, washing, cleaning, making dung cakes, and cutting grass for the cattle, and who ask for mercy to rest, they wouldn't allow me. And whenever I'd refuse, they'd beat me like a stubborn mule. Nobody cared about me; everyone would damn me, would abuse me, would unclot me with their vulgar words. Not only would they, but their children also treat me the same way. Except... except the twin boys who never harmed me." (Maraal, 2011, p.150)

The focus is on the shift of power through money. Sardar Khan highlighted the core issues regarding tribal societies. It is indicated that women are oppressed because of patriarchal

practices and hence their voices are muted, and they cannot utter a single word against male. Naseer (2015) opined that there are still no representational or empowering mechanisms in place for the 150 million Pakistani women who live in the FATA. This is true in the context of the novel because women are prevented from reaching their full potential as individuals and as contributors to society within patriarchal contexts. What is considered feminine or uniquely female is devalued, muted, and silenced. The personal and social realms are both structured by patriarchal relations as depicted in the novel, with men holding most positions of power in both. In a patriarchal culture like that of FATA, men are in charge and set the norms, while women are expected to stay at home and raise their families and make dung cakes as shown in the novel. As a result, they can arm themselves for protection, and the physically superior males hold the most influence. Property began to be transmitted through male lines, fathers, sons, uncles, and grandfathers moved in with each other, and women's independence is hampered as a result, it is led to the rise of patriarchy.

Moreover, in the context of FATA as presented in *Maraal*, this is true that money can buy you anything, including the respect of your peers and the admiration of the people in authority, but when it comes to women in FATA, they do not have money this is why they are oppressed, and their voices are muted by those who have money (men). As the analysis of the text revealed that when *Maraal* and other women in the selected novel would be so worn out from sweeping, washing, cleaning, and mowing lawns for the animals that they would beg for forgiveness to rest, they would never grant it. As asserted in the above lines, when they put up resistance against their oppression and violence, they would beat them like a donkey. They would all curse them out, call them dirty filthy names, and strip them naked with their vulgarity, and no one cared for them because their voices are muted, their minds are oppressed, and they are victims to the state of othering in tribal social system. Not only would they treat women badly, but so would their kids too.

“You know, very rarely a woman goes twice for marriage in our Pakhtoon society, and that too under inevitable circumstances. Our women are beautiful but modest and when they go for marriage they are also, like every other woman, happy and excited in their hearts. They shed tears out of their modesty and out of

their inner happiness. But I don't feel like that. I don't feel married, rather I feel being slaughtered. My fate has made me see this day. I'm very shocked over what I'm going to do. I don't understand it.” (Maraal, 2011, p.123)

One of the main causes regarding the oppression and othering of women is highlighted by Sardar Khan Jani. As far the character of Maraal is concerned, she was prone to the forced marriage system in FATA. In this way, her discourse was muted by the tribal clans and her status of being a human was snatched. As the novel reveals pathetically, she is feeling at all about her forced marriage. That was not like being married to someone, but rather like being butchered. As she stated that day would be written in her destiny. What she is about to undertake her in complete disbelief. The overall scenario of forced marriage was beyond her comprehension. Furthermore, she asserted that you should be aware that in our Pashtun culture, a lady only marries twice if she absolutely must. Our ladies are lovely but humble, and they are just as thrilled and overjoyed as any other bride is to be. Tears of humility and contentment rolled down their cheeks.

Khan (2016) asserted his views regarding the force marriage and the exploitation of women. He said that dominance of men and marginalization of women are mutually exclusive concepts. As a matter of oppression, it is an old Pashtun custom known as "Ghag" gives a man the authority to compel his proposal of marriage on a woman. Ghag, which literally means a supreme authority over women which has a wide range of possible results, none of which are positive for the woman who has invoked it. It was the situation like Ghag in the novel with Maraal, as she can't resist but simply to embrace her fate. By asserting such words by men like Ghag, the words of women are silenced and muted. Then she cannot raise her voice because of the muteness which further leads to alienation and othering in society. Moreover, she could be married off against her will, remain a spinster for the rest of her life, or watch her loved ones dragged into a hazardous, protracted dispute. Hence, such horrible practices against women in novel have evolved their muted voices into nothingness and they have shunned by the tribal system as others and inferior.

“No, you can't get me that way now. It's too late; now, it'll be of no use because I know my father. When I tried, for the first time ever, to disobey him, he beat me black and blue. When I asked him, 'Is it not my Islamic right to choose to marry?' He beat me more severely. And when I threatened him, I'll elope. He threatened

me, 'I'll shoot you and as ever, my uncles and brothers couldn't open their mouths against him. My poor mother with her silent tears consoled me to obey him. That was all I vainly tried to resist. You'd better not try it." (Maraal, 2011, p.119)

This is another instance of oppression and othering in terms of forced marriage in *Maraal*. It was not only the case with daughters or young girls but with their mothers too. As Maraal use the words "my poor mother" which clearly indicate that her mother too was oppressed, considered as other and her discourse in favor of her rights was thoroughly muted by her husband. The above lines clearly reflect that the violence against women in terms of forced marriages of women increased the value of oppression in FATA. She asserted that no one would be able to convince her that she would survive any longer. Because she was familiar with her father and his oppressive behavior. It is too late for that to help because her father hit her until she was blue in the face and violently beaten when she disobeyed him for the first time. As a matter of fact, she raised an issue with him about her right to marry whomever she wanted under Islamic law. He started beating her harder. She threatened him, and then she ran away but all these was in vain because her raised voice was muted by beating and even death. As usual, her relatives and siblings were also muted and oppressed as he warned her that he would murder her. With her silent tears, her poor and oppressed mother comforted her into submission because there was only way and that was to submit her will to oppression and remain muted and accept her status as Other. That was the extent of her futile efforts to fight and raised her voice. The oppressed and muted situation of FATA's women is further drawn:

"Otherwise, continuous fight against existence, rampant brutality, and oppression without any prospect in sight to win or end, leads a man to a state of utter disappointment and misanthropy where one wistfully wishes death to come to rescue. And you know your Sahar never wished death ---and you know, each day, your Sahar went through, was worse than the previous one and that went on and on ---but your Sahar never wished death, rather your Sahar began believing in tomorrow for good, but every tomorrow deceived your Sahar, every tomorrow disillusioned your Sahar of her stupidity and complacency of future. Time didn't let Sahar see the Sahar of her life. As you know we get chance to live but once

Time once elapsed can't be..." Her voice trailed away to nothing." (Maraal, 2011, p.141)

It highlights the core concepts regarding the sufferings of the character of Sahar. Persistent struggle over survival, widespread otherness, oppression, and muteness of women in FATA with no hope of victory or relief induces a state of total despondency and hatefulness in which women desire for death to save their lives. The text further reveals that everyone is aware that each day that Sahar endured is more painful than the preceding one, and that this went on indefinitely; however, the character of Sahar never wished for death; rather, she began to believe in tomorrow for great future and accepted her oppressed and muted status. But each tomorrow deceived her and disillusioned her with her foolishness and boredom regarding the future because no one is there to save her from oppression and in this way, she remained oppressed and other throughout the story. Everyone has a chance to live, but after time has passed, we cannot have that chance. In the last line of the above-mentioned text indicates that her muted voice dwindled to nothingness because of her oppressed situation and her state of being other.

Conclusion

In the FATA region, it is quite unusual to see a woman strolling the marketplace with a male by her side and fully covered by a burqa or hijab. It is also an essential part of being in FATA. Nonetheless, the author draws attention to the fact that men predominately voiced the criticism of women in FATA. It appears that the phrase "gentlemen" is used in their marketplaces to cruelly oppress and treat women differently. The subject of the preceding line is the oppressed, while the primary character is an outsider. She is suppressed and has had her voice as muted as possible, which is why she sobs throughout the story. As the words before them have demonstrated, she says every word to defend herself, her love, and her life. The study revealed her absolute agony, the futility of her mute voice, and her emotionally tortured situation. When discussing marriage and dignity in FATA, she said that he is significantly older than her. She despises him not because she chose him or because she is in love with him, but because she is a woman who will always be oppressed and different.

The novel *Maraal*'s textual analysis also reveals that the FATA districts have a startlingly high rate of physical abuse against women. The most horrifying and severe physical abuse inflicted on women in FATA is depicted, including poisoning, burning, knife hacking, hitting with weapons, and even head-chopping. The victim may die as a result, as is the case with *Maraal*, who is killed by her family. As *Sardar Khan Jani* in *Maraal* demonstrates, honor killings are a horrible tradition of physical abuse against women that often results in their lives. Being the most obvious and severe kind of abuse that women experience, the high incidence of physical violence incidents against them—beatings, kicking, slapping, stone-throwing, and voice suppression—is extremely alarming. Women's voices are silenced in FATA and are subjected to psychological and physical abuse, which reflects their status as "others." It is also true that, in the context of FATA, money can buy you everything, even the respect and admiration of those in positions of power. *Sardar Khan Jani* uses a character like *Maraal* in his story to try and emphasize the place of women in the FATA region's social arena in the contemporary world. Because they are impoverished, women in FATA face oppression and are thus silenced by those in positions of authority. *Maraal* gives up her schooling in the face of patriarchal tyranny and enters the world of social oppression after finding no support. Despite her intricacy, *Maraal* is regarded badly in tribal society. She reacts differently depending on the situation. FATA's bazaars appear lonely due to a lack of women, children, and entertainment. Women want to go to bazaars as well, but they can't because their voices aren't heard.

- *Maraal* and other women in the selected novel were so exhausted from sweeping, washing, cleaning, and cutting lawns for the animals that they never received permission to rest when they requested for it. They suffered severe beatings for defying their brutality and persecution. They suffered from the condition of othering within the tribal social structure; no one gave them any attention, their voices were silenced, and their thoughts were limited.

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