

Resistance and Fight Against Oppression and Patriarchy: Investigating the Subjugated Voices of Subaltern in the Skyfall

Nayab Iqbal Shaikh¹ and Javed Mohsin Hashmi²

Abstract

The current study explores the plight, troubles, and struggle of subalterns and their endeavors to raise their voices against the injustice incurred upon them in the novel Skyfall by award-winning Pakistani author Saba Karim Khan. The current study focuses on subaltern studies and employs the theoretical framework of postcolonial theory. The study aims to indicate ways to fulfill two purposes in which subalterns, particularly female characters, are being marginalized and suppressed due to the power structure of social and cultural factors and the misappropriation of religious teachings, gender, and sexuality. Secondly, it identifies the resistance and fight against oppression and patriarchy. The study is qualitative and uses the text as a primary source of data collection, which is analyzed in the light of Gayatri Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Saba Karim Khan has beautifully interwoven themes of oppression, marginalization, gender, and sexuality in the text and portrayal of social, political, economic, and religious forces in shaping the power structure. Data analysis shows that oppression and marginalization are evident through the subaltern characters of protagonist Rania Mirza Kasturi, her mother Jahaan e Rumi, and her sister Ujala. On the other hand, textual evidence from the novel demonstrates that these characters do not always remain silent victims and raise their voices against tyrannical forces to acquire their identity as individuals.

Keywords: Subaltern, Marginalization, Oppression, Power Structure.

Introduction

Subaltern is considered "an operative research concept through the work of the Italian Marxist leader, Antonio Gramsci" (Zaib, 2015, p. 213). It is derived from the Latin word 'sub,' which means lower, and 'alter' means other, resulting in 'subaltern' (of lower status). It shows varying meanings for different disciplines. The term subaltern is broadly employed to denote the subordination of an individual in political, social, economic, and religious rankings as "a figure of exclusion, representing the specular opposite of the citizen" who "represents a lack of access to the institution of rights and obligations" (Thomas, 2018, p. 2). Silima (2013) asserts that subalterns were used on a broader level under the influence of nationalism, feminism, postcolonial theory, and Marxism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Silima (2013) calls subjugation or subordination the synonym of Subaltern. Awasthi (2022) states, "colonialism, classicism, casteism, and gender discrimination" (p. 77) have exploited this Subaltern. Spivak (2010) claims that subaltern men are less subjugated than subaltern women. Women in subaltern societies are misrepresented and do not have the opportunity to raise their voices against the turmoil they face regularly. Wagle (2023) asserts that this misrepresentation and plight of these subalterns is a significant concern of English literature written by writers in South Asian countries. Saba Karim, an Abu Dhabi Pakistani writer, has vividly depicted in her debut novel *Skyfall*.

¹ PhD Scholar, Institute of English Language & Literature, University of Sindh. Email: nayabshaikh484@gmail.com

² PhD Scholar, Institute of English Language & Literature, University of Sindh. Email: javed.mohsin81@gmail.com

This paper analyzed in-depth bond sharing of female characters subjugated and marginalized in the name of religion and patriarchy portrayed in Saba Karim's novel *Skyfall* (2021). The current study delineates these female characters' struggle for survival and the miserable journey of their life. Soraya (2015) identifies two aspects through which the community system defines men's and women's rights. One faction allocates equal rights and positions for both and treats them equally. At the same time, the other faction puts the role of women lower than men. This is evident through social-cultural realities, which are dominated by patriarchy and the misappropriation of religious beliefs. The countries and communities that follow strict religious ideology place/position women as inferior beings, classifying them as 'others' (Spivak, 1988).

Moreover, communities influenced by patriarchy hold women on the weaker side and force them to remain oppressed. They are entitled to acquire rights neither in the community nor in the family. Sugihastuti (2007) states that cultural construction promotes this notion in the community. They encounter exclusion, restriction, and oppression. This unbalanced relationship between men and women results in domination over the other (women) and causes women's subordination. They are expected to meet the needs of a patriarchal society owing to their weaker position in society.

The work can be explored from various viewpoints, including diaspora, migration, family dynamics, religious righteousness, etc. However, the study focuses on the miserable predicament of women characters, who are always directly or indirectly prejudiced by the ideology of Pakistan's dominant class. Furthermore, the paper portrays women as a subaltern group and investigates how they have been suppressed in light of the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the paper investigates how subalterns withstand pain in response to crime and injustice perpetrated upon them.

Research Questions

The study aims to ensure to answer the following research questions:

1. In which ways are the subalterns marginalized and their voices suppressed in *Skyfall* by Saba Karim Khan?
2. To what extent do the subaltern characters challenge and resist societal norms and power structure?

Significance of the Study

For several reasons, investigating subaltern voices in Saba Karim's novel *Skyfall* holds profound academic and societal importance. It attempts to allow the unheard voices of subalterns to be heard and to allow marginalized groups to be identified and understood. Therefore, it helps subalterns to achieve their identity. Exploration of subaltern voices and their marginalized status promotes social justice. It contributes to discussing social justice issues and sheds light on prevailing inequality, discrimination, and oppression. Such discussions lead towards advocacy and policy change.

Kashikar (2021) argues that the theory of Subaltern still has practical application in addressing the sufferings of marginalized people in the name of gender, religion, and sexuality. Thus, the current study appreciates the resistance and refusal of subalterns to be considered as 'others' and encourages them to resume their lost identity.

The Novel

The *Skyfall* is a debut novel published in 2021 by Pakistani novelist Saba Karim Khan, an award-winning documentary filmmaker and author of the anthology *Ways of Being: Creative Non-fiction*

by *Pakistani Women*. The novel is set in Heera Mandi, a famous district of Lahore, Pakistan. The novel presents the story of a tour guide girl named Rania Mirza Kasturi, her sister Ujala, who was brutally mutilated and murdered by his father for being homosexual; her mother Jahaan e Rumi, who is involved in pleasing other men against her will by his father, Sherji. Rania, her sister, and her mother are not only sent out night after night to dance and sing for elites to earn money but also engage themselves in prostitution forcibly by their brutal and 'honor' conscious father. Sherji runs a Madrassa who seems to preach Islamic teachings but is an accomplice in training young boys to spread terror and violence. Rania, who works as a tour guide at the time and is interested in singing, meets an Indian tourist boy, Asher, with whom she falls in love. The story presents themes of oppression, marginalization, patriarchy, and domestic violence. Saba Karim Khan skillfully represents Rania's struggle to free her sister, her mother, and herself from the pains and misery caused by her father by participating in a local singing competition.

Sharma (2022) states that this tale shows that revolt always begins at home. He further argues that no one can stop a person once they decide to step against injustice and dehumanizing behavior, even if it is your near or dear one. This novel depicts hope and human resilience while revealing society's spiteful realities. Kazi (2021) argues that the story sheds light on the dilemma of disregarded residents across society, whether in Pakistan, India, Kashmir, or New York, a bright first-world city. Khan pointed out various forms of injustice confronted by marginalized individuals, particularly women, in Pakistani society. The novel takes readers through time in Lahore and then in New York by telling a solid and influential story. It tackles issues of homosexuality, miscegenation, sexuality, and prostitution (Danial, 2022). In an interview with Nitish Raj, Khan revealed the significance of the novel's title, *Skyfall*, which points out the last shot to stand against outnumbered people. The title signifies a spirit that keeps someone alive and something burning inside, which makes him/her firm to stand against stacked odds, eventually crystallizing the world she has shaped in the novel (Khan, 2022). Though the novel was published recently, it has received critical acclaim in Pakistan, India, and South Asian regions owing to the universal themes embedded in it.

Literature Review

This paper explores marginalized women's dilemmas and troubles and their eventual struggle to resist brutality and oppression. Marginalized and suppressed individuals are termed as Subalterns. However, women in our society are double marginalized, whose voices can never be heard. As McLeod (2010) argued, "A double colonization refers to the fact that women are twice colonized-by colonist realities and representations and by patriarchal ones too" (p. 175). Guha (1998) asserts that "the concept of subaltern intends to promote the discussion of oppressed themes. It helps to resolve the biasness towards oppressed groups." (p. 42). He defines subalterns as "a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society" (p. 161), generally related to sex, race, and background. Young (2001) claims that the social status of subalterns does not allow them to live with agency; hence, they are usually devoid of chances or stage to raise their voice as "hegemony forces them to believe that the dominants are their mouthpieces" (Ghafoor & Farooq, 2021, p. 30)

Spivak (1985), in her essay '*Can the Subaltern Speak?*' Transcribes: "The Subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with women as pious. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribe task which she must not disown with a flourish" (p. 308). Her work raises the voice of the subalterns in postcolonial settings. It is evident in postcolonial literature that women belonging to either class are suffering from the agony of being

oppressed and marginalized. Various studies have been conducted on postcolonial literature, considering the issues of injustice and dehumanizing behavior towards minorities and people classified as others. Feminist writers and critics are essential in postcolonial literature, related explicitly to subaltern literature. These writers showcase marginalized and suppressed women's issues and make their unheard voices to be heard.

Young (2012) concentrates her research on women. She seeks to analyze the unseen Subaltern voices that need to be heard. She interviewed some South Asian authors for this purpose. All of those writers have personal motives for speaking out. As a result, she determined that all of these writers had personal subordinates.

Maji (2015) examines *The Subaltern Can Speak: A study of Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger* investigated the treatment of social outcasts. His research focuses on the struggle of marginalized individuals to survive in a society like India. Nimni (2016) examined Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* from the standpoint of a subaltern. She admired Roy's novels for giving voice to the unheard.

Wagle (2023) studied Khalid Hossaini's *The Kite Runner* and explored the hardships faced by Hazaras, a minority group in Afghanistan. The study analyzed how these people were treated as subalterns and faced suppression in the form of verbal and physical abuse, slavery, and slaughter. The study concluded that subalterns cannot speak and can never be heard.

Bhawar (2021) in his study titled *Bertha Mason 'The Mad Woman in the Attic': A Subaltern Voice*, investigates the means and effects of voice and quietness in the life of a female character. Bertha Mason, recognized as the 'Mad Woman,' is a characteristic symbol of a lady as a victim of patriarchy and imperialism. This study aimed to examine the mediums and effects of voice and silence in the life of a female character in the well-known Victorian novel *Jane Eyre*. This minor character has been described as 'mad,' 'crazy,' and 'aggressive,' and although crucial to the plot, has no representation of her own. This analytical and descriptive study seeks to investigate Bertha's inequitable representation by rethinking her not as a madwoman but as a victim and finally realizing the fullness of her insanity.

Spivak (1985) asserts that her work of postcolonial feminist critique has made the concept of subaltern more intricate. Men in postcolonial settings, according to her, have no ears to listen to the voice of subaltern women because these women lack conceptual language to express their worries. However, this does not endorse that women cannot communicate precisely; colonial discourse lacks subject position, which could have allowed women to express themselves as people. Spivak summarizes her stimulating query as the Subaltern is unable to speak. Finally, she concludes that if a subaltern dares to speak, he or she does not become a subaltern. The novel under the current study is rich in the themes of oppression, marginalization, violence, and eventual resistance and rebellion. It has not been analyzed from the perspective of a subaltern point of view. Thus, it invites the researcher to look at the story from the lens of the postcolonial theory of subalterns.

Research Methodology

This study aims to answer the research questions: In which ways are the subalterns marginalized, and their voices suppressed, and to what extent do these subaltern characters challenge and resist societal norms and power structure? Saba Karim Khan's *The Skyfall* is the primary source of information for the study. The study gathered data from both print and online sources. The study also relies on secondary sources such as critical books, reviews, and journal articles. This study applied a textual analysis approach (McKee, 2001) to investigate the chosen book within the

theoretical framework of subaltern studies pioneered by Antonio Gramsci, Ranajit Guha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The themes of subaltern characters' suppression and resistance were identified by closely reading the novel's text. Once the novel's text relevant to marginalization, oppression, and resistance was recognized, it was presented and discussed critically in the data analysis section. The textual evidence identified in this study was centered on its relevance to South Asian society, particularly in the Pakistani context. Additionally, as presented in the discussion about the novel, it is evident that the current novel is rich in offering the themes of female Subaltern's oppression and their resistance to stop this vicious cycle. The theoretical framework establishes an important part of the methodology in textual works and is, therefore, defined in detail below.

Theoretical Framework

The novel can be analyzed from the point of view of various themes such as sexuality, prostitution, family relationships, religious righteousness, and many others. However, the current study serves the objective of exploring women's oppression and their resistance to fight against injustice. The theoretical framework, therefore, for the current study is Gayatri Spivak's essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak's Subaltern refers to the society's marginalized layers at the mercy of vital discourses. She claims that women are the actual demonstration of Subaltern because they are in "deep dark shadows." (Spivak, 1985).

Showalter (1982) claims that postcolonial writers pen down subalterns at the international level, mainly from England, America, and France. They have exposed through numerous ways the exploitation of women in every society. Postcolonial theory is based on the concept of otherness. This concept of otherness is discussed by prominent postcolonial writers like Edward Said who talks about the Orient and Occident in his work *Orientalism* (1978); Frantz Fanon focuses on the act of decolonization through violence in his book *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), whereas, Homi K. Bhabha stretches the model of hybridity and mimicry in his *Location of Culture* (1994). They all contribute in different ways, which collectively bring to light the colonized's (others') fear, suffering, and identity crisis.

Spivak addressed the issue of subalterns' voice and its significance in her essay *Can the Subalterns Speak?* Therefore, in light of all models, the study chose to apply Spivak's theoretical framework to conduct the current study as it aptly addresses subalterns' voices to highlight their oppression and resistance.

Data Analysis

Oppression and Marginalization

The novel portrays the theme of oppression and marginalization of women based on social, religious, and cultural discrimination. Furthermore, the story highlights rigid patriarchal practices, forced prostitution, and the quest for freedom side by side. The book is divided into three sections: Nightfall, Day, and Dawn. Nightfall symbolizes darkness, cruelty, and gloom, whereas day and dawn represent struggle, rebellion, and freedom. Rania, the protagonist of the story, faces innumerable challenges at home and outside; therefore, she is doubly marginalized. On the one hand, she belongs to an area in Lahore that is notorious for sex work and other illegal activities, and on the other hand, her father, Sherji, practices stern patriarchal norms in the guise of religion and acts as an authority. Moreover, she, along with her family, also suffers from being poor. As stated by the author, "We were misfits – Ujala, Marzi, I – victims of a dangerous stereotype of non-cerebral silliness that gets attached to being poor and working for sex" (Khan, 2021, p. 49).

The world outside her area treats women residing in Heera Mandi as toys, unaffected or just an item of lust. Their pains multiply with the harsh treatment of their family men and society at the same time. Rania, her sister Ujala, and her mother, Jahaan e Rumi, encounter severe oppression. They are being subjugated by the man of their family who acts as 'west' and treats the women of her family as 'east.' Thus, supporting postcolonial ideology as purported by Said (1978). Khan (2021) shows Sherji as a firm believer in Islamic teachings and portrays him as a practicing Muslim following the Quran and Sunnah. He runs Madarassa (an Islamic teaching institute) and preaches Islam at day time, and performs the duty of a pimp at night, which surprises readers. He is a hypocritical man who not only arranges other women and girls for supplying them as commodities for dancing, singing, and performing sex work in private parties of the elite class but also forces his wife and daughters to become part of this detestable practice as well. He does so by force, oppression, and violence. Khan reveals his monstrous and violent behavior by stating, "his livelihood hinged upon controlling women's bodies and minds, so when confronted with a desperate need to defend his masculinity among colleagues and clients, he felt lost. His only options were withdrawal or wrath, and he always preferred the latter" (Khan, 2021, p. 43). This shows that these women are subjected to verbal and corporeal nuisances if they raise their voices against injustice and corrupt practices. Sherji's treatment of her daughters was unequal and the same for a reason. The cause of this unequal treatment was revealed in the story that Ujala was not the biological daughter of Sherji. Rather, she was the child of one of her mother's clients. He would have forced Jahaan e Rumi to abort this child, but he did not do so because it could have demolished his character as a religious and practicing Muslim. Silima (2013) also identifies that "in fact, it is commonplace across various nations and cultures although the most stringent form of subjugation of women folk is a norm in a religion dominated countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Saudi Arabia" (p. 459). Anyone becomes a scapegoat at the hands of a superior group if he or she raises questions or challenges religious norms. Sherji becomes more revengeful, and his conduct is more lethal, ferocious, and tormenting towards Ujala. He tortured her to earn money for him by pleasing the customers he brought. Ujala's refusal makes him wild, "I watched as Sherji's legs collided with her ribs, the way one might wallop a football. She was completely still, and I wondered if she was alive" (Khan, 2021, p. 44). Her stillness signifies subalterns voicelessness. Rania's mother acts according to the commands of her father, not owing to her consent towards this nasty trade but to protect her daughters from falling into this abyss as Jahaan e Rumi expresses her concerns, "I have become accustomed to it, like any other job. But it pains me to see my girls this way" (Khan, 2021, p. 107). Subalterns do not prefer to remain voiceless, but they bury their voices to guard their loved ones, as in the case of Rania's mother. Both sisters try to get rid of their father's wicked plans. Ujala finds her solace by establishing her homosexual relationship with another girl. Upon discovery of this affiliation, Sherji becomes violent and gets murdered, mutilated, and hung up on a post. This shows how women are being subjugated and face harsh treatment by the authorities if they rebel. It is evident in the words of Sherji, which he utters before Rania, "Now do you understand? This is what you get for having dreams and an independent mind" (Khan, 2021, p. 151). Rania tries to escape the suffering by participating in a local singing competition against her father's will. She somehow manages to win the competition that opens her way to obtain training for singing and education in New York. However, Rania encounters another postcolonial survival threat as her visa application was rejected on the spot, and she "later found out that the Mohalla was blocked by the Americans" (Khan, 2021, p. 142). Louai (2012) asserts that such practices hinder these groups from participating in historical and cultural opportunities, whereas other citizens enjoy their rights. However, Rania justifies her

position before the interviewer by stating the truth about her life and the ill practices of her father. The interviewer considers her explanation because she, too, belongs to the African community and is a victim of subjugation, hatred, and racial discrimination. Rania takes a risk of her life by opposing his father just to save her mother and her beloved sister, but Ujala is murdered immediately after she leaves for the airport because she is the most expedient scapegoat for the ethically corrupt Sherji. Ujala's murder implies the fact that subalterns come across severe consequences, even losing their lives if they attempt to rebel for freedom. Ilyas (2019) points out that "by creating the categories of the powerful and the weak through coercion and violence and consequently generate resistance and rebellion" (p. 1924). Necessity of freedom, however, enables subjugated people to raise their voices; once they speak for their rights, they no longer remain subaltern.

Resistance, Rebellion and Freedom

Khan (2021) has pointed out another powerful theme of freedom through resistance and rebellion in *Skyfall*. People who are socially, culturally, and economically marginalized and classified as subalterns have their voices, which keep them agitating until and unless they start resisting and rebelling against societal and patriarchal pressures. Soraya (2015) asserts that "As women who experience multiple oppressions from the authority and their husband, these women decide to voice their opposition" (p. 84). Jahaaan e Rumi accepted her fate for the sake of their daughters. She does not resist openly, but she teaches her daughters in a way that may help them develop the ability to fight for themselves. Jahan e Rumi tells Rania that people who oppress and subjugate you call you a 'troublemaker.' She makes a prophecy that Rania will do something remarkable one day to get rid of the prostitution den located in Heera Mandi, as Khan (2021) writes in her novel when Rania recalls her mother's words, "I may cross the seven-mile bridge still and escape this murky neighborhood" (p. 93). It points out that every human being strives to be free.

Rebellion exists constantly, whether in silence or voices. Using the lens of the postcolonial approach by Spivak (1985), text analysis shows that Rania and Ujala raise their voice against the oppression of Sherji and his misappropriate religious practices. Both sisters and their mothers act variedly and endure the enormities differently. Victims always rebuke the unfairness, brutality, and dread imposed upon them in several ways. Some tend to remain silent, but inside, they reprimand the whole process of humiliation and dehumanizing conduct of the powerful. At the same time, others raise their voice to be heard and try to break the chain of wrongdoing and maltreatment. Khan (2021) supports this argument through Rania's voice when she argues with Sherji about her singing and his service of being a pimp, "How is my singing worse than selling sex to strangers? Ujala and my mother had always surrendered without a fight, and I had decided to lead a different life" (p. 140). The relationship between subalterns and their masters is between the 'colonized' and 'colonizer,' where the colonizer considers them the least powerful group who cannot speak. Subalterns can only get rid of this suppression when they oppose their colonizers and react to their tyrannical moves. It involves courage and sometimes violent behavior, too. Fanon (1961) asserts that decolonization is not worth considering without resistance and violence and bearing the acrimonious consequences. Subalterns, when speaking for their rights, actually decolonize themselves.

Rania chooses to become a tour guide because this could prevent her from falling into the detesting occupation of prostitution. She is also fond of music and singing and participates in local singing competitions. She meets an Indian filmmaker named Asher, who visits Pakistan as a tour guide with whom she falls in love unconditionally who is a Hindu boy. Rania's involvement with him

portrays another instance of rebellion because she knows that her father is a strict follower of Islam and will never allow her to marry Asher, yet maintains her relationship with him. With Asher's sincere love and proper support, she wins a singing competition, opening her way to another world. She does whatever she can to resist and safeguard her mother, sister, and herself from the malignant designs of Sherji. "That night, I decided I would choose differently. It could be explosive but I needed to make some change in my life" (Khan, 2021, p. 26). Rania decides to risk her life, but she must rebel to bring good change and for the protection and ease of her family's women. He does so when Sherji's reality is discovered before her how much wrong he can do to the women of his family just to accumulate money, which he utilizes in Madarassa to train his subjects to bring terror upon infidels. The consequences of resistance and rebellion are not purely favorable. She loses her sister Ujala's life, and her mother dies in an old home where she admits her while going to New York. He was mentally traumatized in her own country as well as abroad due to Sherji's evil designs. She gets arrested for being the daughter of Sherji, who was an accomplice in designing and executing a suicide attack in New York.

Ujala protested in her way, and she maintained a homosexual relationship with a bureaucrat's daughter. She detests Sherji's hypocritical nature, who stresses practicing Islamic teaching for others, and he performs either way. Khan (2021) showcases the resistance and rebellious voice of Ujala by quoting, "Fuck behind closed doors. Strangers, repeat clients, whoever. Get paid for it. And in public, watch your honor" (p. 65) in response to Sherji's address to his family, "Control your women and their bodies, regulate how they dress, monitor where they go, whom they meet. Always chase purity. Protect purity. Eventually, every *mard* will be accountable for the deeds of his woman" (p. 23). Her resistance to the ways her father treats her brings destruction to her life, and she meets a painful death.

Subalterns suffer from deep agitation inside, and they put effort into being listened to by others. Spivak's essay explores "how the subaltern woman is portrayed as detached, dumb, or unheard" (Jambhulkar & Joshi, 2022, p. 523). Rania was treated acutely when she performed her first *Mujra*. She displays her anger in her first performance by slapping a man of the upper class who tried to misbehave and touch her unethically. Her action of slapping an elite got a reaction of high magnitude as she was beaten by the crowd so harshly. Though she encounters several threats and losses, she continues her struggle and fights against her father. She fights for justice for her sister, who was murdered and mutilated by no other than her father. Eventually, she wins the case. Her journey to attain justice was not smooth and harmonious, but with Asher's love and endless support, "'You have nothing to lose by staying in. Maybe you will not win, that is all,' Asher said when I thought about quitting. 'Use fear to stay alert, not to give up'" (Khan, 2021, p. 127). With solidarity among subaltern characters and their mutual support for one another, she wins her battle not for herself only but for all.

Conclusion

The present study attempted to analyze Saba Karim Khan's *Skyfall* using Spivak's (1985) essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* as a theoretical framework to explore the characters that reflect the accurate picture of subalterns and the researcher inquired whether subalterns can speak or not. The novel vividly represents various characters that neatly fit the definition of subalterns and depicts themes of marginality, suppression, oppression, and injustice endured by these characters. Various social, cultural, and economic factors influence their endurance. Among these factors, patriarchy and misappropriation of religious teachings come to the top. Through the characters of Rania, Ujala, and Jahaan e Rumi, Khan (2021) informs us that subalterns have their voices, which they

raise for their rights; however, they have to face severe violence and life threats when they start resisting and rebelling against all the cruelties, but they still make efforts to speak out and display their concerns. The study shows that characters possess roaring voices echoing inside them that must be ventilated out and heard. They possess voices and can speak and express their sufferings but are usually controlled by powerful discourses. Furthermore, the study will help explore and analyze other literary works from the perspective of subalterns and their unheard and heard voices to understand the concept of subalterns.

References

- Awasthi, P. K. (2022). Politics of Subaltern Consciousness: The Substantive Representation of the Margins in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. *Literary Studies*, 35(1), 77-87.
- Bhawar, P. (2021). Bertha Mason 'The Mad Woman in the Attic': A Subaltern Voice. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, 6(5).
- Danial, S. (2022). 7 South Asian Authors We're Reading Right Now! Fuchsia Magazine. <https://www.fuchsiamagazine.com/7-south-asian-authors-were-reading-right-now/>
- Ghafoor, S., & Farooq, U. (2020). Can subaltern be heard: an analysis of the kite runner and the thousand splendid suns by Khalid Hosseini: can subaltern be heard. *International Review of Literary Studies*, 2(1), 29-38.
- Guha, R., & Spivak, G. C. (Eds.). (1988). *Selected subaltern studies*. Oxford University Press.
- Ilyas, S. (2019). The Subaltern Voice in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things': A Postcolonial Approach. *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*.
- Jambhulkar, Prashant, & Vivek V. J. (2022). Subaltern Theory: Delineating Voices of the Victims in Literature. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 10(5), 524-30.
- Kashikar, Y. S. (2021). Contours of Subaltern Theory: An Investigating Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's Essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?". *An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal*, 1(02), 1-11.
- Kazi, S. (2021). *Stigma and society: a closer look at saba karim khan;s debut novel*. The Friday Times. Retrieved September 16, 2023, from <https://thefridaytimes.com/12-Feb-2021/stigma-and-society-a-closer-look-at-saba-karim-khan-s-debut-novel>
- Khan, S. K. (2021). *Skyfall*. India: Bloomsbury.
- Khan, S. K. (2022). *An Exclusive Interview With Saba Karim Khan, The Noted Author & Award-Winning Filmmaker*. (N. Raj, Interviewer) Retrieved September 17, 2023, from <https://theliterarymirror.in/an-exclusive-interview-with-saba-karim-khan-the-noted-author-award-winning-filmmaker/>
- Louai, E. H. (2012). Retracing The Concept of The Subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak: Historical Developments and New Applications. *African Journal of History and Culture*, 4(1), 4-8.
- Maji, S. (2015). The subaltern can speak: A study of Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. *IJAR*, 1(8), 351-352.
- McKee, A. (2001). A beginner's guide to textual analysis. *Metro Magazine*, 127, 138- 149.
- McLeod, J. (2010). *Beginning Postcolonialism* (2nd ed.). Manchester University Press.

- Nimni, I. J. (2016). The God of Small Things: Speaking subaltern. *OISR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHHS)*, 21(2), 21-26.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism: Western concepts of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon.
- Sharma, Y. (2022). *I Read, I Write*. Retrieved September 16, 2023, from <https://dontbignorant.in/book-review-skyfall-by-saba-karim-khan/>
- Showalter, E. (1999). *A literature of their own: British women novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton University Press.
- Silima, N. (2013). Subjugation: A study of the women characters in Khalid Hosseini's and Arundhati Roy's novels. *International Journal of English and Literature*, 4(10), 456-461.
- Spivak, G. (1985). "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. London: Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberge.
- Sugihastuti, I. H. S. (2007). *Gender & Inferioritas Perempuan*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Wagle, P. (2023). The Echoes of Subaltern's Misery in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. *The Outlook. Journal of English Studies*, 14, 100-106.
- Young, L. (2012). *Speaking with the Subaltern: An Exploration of the Voices of South Asian Women in Literature and Film* (Doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University).
- Zaib, S. (2015). Subaltern Studies. *Quality of Life, Macau, East-West Institute for Advanced Studies*, 2015, 213-23.