

## PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

### AIN'T SHE A SOUL: A CRITIQUE OF WOMEN OBJECTIFICATION IN MY FEUDAL LORD

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**Ayesha Akbar, Sidra Akbar Niazi, Abdul Basit, Mahnoor Fatima. Ain't She a Soul: A Critique of Women Objectification in My Feudal Lord-- Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology 19(3), 1237-1253. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Key Words: Commodification, Marxist Feminism, Sign-Exchange Value, Use- Value.**

#### **ABSTRACT:**

The present research is carried out to explore the commodification of women in the novel, with the Marxist Feminist perspective under the light of criticism made by Lois Tyson. This study has investigated the commodification of women, in Tehmina Durrani's famous novel; *My Feudal Lord*. This research is designed to figure out the elements, which cause women to be treated as a commodity in the capitalist societies where women are exploited under the control of men, due to the class and gender differences. The present study has highlighted the incidents of Commodification of women, when woman is used as a product of sign-exchange value, the decaying impact of this commodification on human relations and the reinforcement of the process of commodification by the protagonist in the selected novel. The text is subjected to close reading, to find out the process of commodification of women and for this purpose, Karl Marx concept of commodification is taken from his masterpiece *Das Capital*, in which he has defined the idea of commodities in the first chapter of the book. This Marxist philosophy paved way for the feminist thinkers to extend it for the rights of women, calling it Marxist Feminism; a viewpoint which is used to analyse the commodification of women, in the particular novel under the lens of Lois Tyson's criticism on Marxist theory.

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

In this study the researcher has explored the element of commodification of women in the text at various stages under different circumstances. This research highlights the commodification of women in Tehmina Durrani's

novel *My Feudal Lord* showcased through the various incidents and happenings of the story. The researcher has made an effort to explore and find the traces of Commodification of women at different levels in the hands of a man, named Mustafa Khar. This study has analysed the novel in deeper perspective to identify the events where women especially the protagonist of the story; Tehmina is dealt as a commodity by her own husband. This work includes the evidences where a woman is treated as a product of sign exchange value, a mere object to satisfy the needs of a man in the patriarchal society. Moreover, the impact of this commodification on the relationship of Tehmina and Khar is depicted through this work that how this commodification deteriorates their marital life as well as investigating the roles of women in reinforcing this commodification. The researcher has scrutinized several extracts from the text to portray the true image of feminine status; woman as a commodity in the male-dominant society.

### ***Marx's Concept of Commodification:***

Karl Marx (1818-1883) introduced the term commodity for the first time in his renowned book *Das Capital*, which mainly focused on the equal distribution of wealth criticizing the impact of capitalism in the society. Marx described the concept of commodities, explaining their use-value and exchange-value in his book *Das Capital* (1867) the idea of commodity, through which capitalism can be understood more clearly as his book is considered as the critique of Capitalism. According to Karl Marx:

***“A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside of us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether, for instance, they spring from the stomach or fancy, makes no difference. Neither are we concerned to know how the object satisfies these wants, whether directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production” (Capital. 1887, p.2, LL.4-8).***

The process of commodification in the beginning was just related to the economic aspect of the society as a product is considered commodity when it has some use-value or exchange-value. According to Marx, the exchange-value of a commodity is merely the proportion in which use-values of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort while use-value of a commodity is based on the physical properties and its utilization. However, it grew more intense with the passage of time, covering the various aspects of the society in it, including not only the material gains and benefits in fact this tells that how the class system has given rise to the gender differences, where women are being oppressed by men on the basis of socio-economic structure in the capitalist societies, causing a vast change in the psychological beliefs of people.

### ***Lois Tyson's Criticism on the Concept of Commodification***

Lois Tyson (2006), criticized the theory of Marxism; under which the concept of commodity is being inspected and examined in terms of human relations; giving a new direction to this approach, in her book *Critical Theory Today* as,

*“a commodity’s value lies not only in what it can do (use-value) but in the money or other commodities for which it can be traded (exchange-value) or in the social status, it confers on its owner (sign-exchange value).” (Tyson. L. 2006, p.62, LL. 15-18).*

Tyson further explains that how human beings are used as a commodity by others. According to her, Marxism gives awareness about the human behaviour, how they treat others, as commodities on the basis of use value or sign exchange value of humans just like objects whose main objective is to satisfy the needs and provide benefit to their owner. A product is considered commodity when it has some use-value or sign-exchange value on the basis of socio-economic structure. This criticism of Tyson paved way to study the human commodification and its effects on human relations. Through this criticism of Lois Tyson, researcher has analysed the commodification of womenfolk in the novel, at the backdrop of feudal system of Pakistan.

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE:**

The concept of commodity was introduced by the great German philosopher and economist; Karl Marx (1818-1883), in his famous book *Das Capital* (1867), which was the critique of capitalism. In the first chapter of book, Marx defined the idea of Commodities, as a product or thing which is not the part of a person but belongs to them and satisfies their needs and desires of almost all types. The main purpose of the commodity is to fulfil the demands and needs of the one who owns it no matter directly as a product of subsistence or indirectly as a mean of production. Capitalism can be understood easily through this book of Marx, as this book was meant to react against the capitalism. Commodity is generally considered as a useful or valuable product, thing, item or an object.

According to Karl Marx, commodity is the basic unit in the construction of Capitalist society. A thing or a product is considered a commodity only when it has some use-value or exchange-value. In *Das Capital*, use-value of the product is defined as the utilization of the product which is always bound to the physical properties of a product and it is always measurable. The term exchange-value is also explained by Marx, as a product has an exchange value in terms that it can be exchanged with the product of some other use, as it is not restricted to the utilization of a product only, the relation between the products of exchange-value keeps on changing in relevance to the time and space and it is immeasurable. In Marxist perspective, work force and labour vary in different tasks so the value and profit be set according to the work force being applied on the things or commodities. Ideas can also be taken as commodities, if they are of a use-value or exchange-value. Furthermore, if a product does not have a use-value, then it is not considered as a commodity. Likewise, use-value of a product is based on qualitative relations, whereas exchange-value of a product is based on quantitative relations.

This concept of commodities described the influence of capitalism on the society and helped people understanding its negative impact on them. The capitalism has given rise to the class system, dividing the society in to categories like a ruling class which owns the means of production and the

other one is labour; a working class of the society and this difference is the root cause of unequal distribution of wealth in the society.

*My Feudal Lord* is an autobiographical novel of Tehmina Durrani which talks about the unsteady and torturous relationship of Tehmina with her husband Mustafa Khar. In this novel she has revealed the true colors of feudal system and politics, describing her life with a feudal lord and great Pakistani politician; Ghulam Mustafa Khar. At the beginning, this novel appeared to be really controversial to a few of the people in Pakistan because of its subject, as Tehmina took a bold step of confronting about her abusive relationship with Khar, discussing all the detail in the novel whether it was of her sexual and physical abuse by Mustafa or about the unlawful affair of her sister; Adila with Khar. This whole novel is a journey of Tehmina Durrani from a feeble and miserable creature to a strong human being exploring her true identity while passing through the ordeals of married life with Mustafa Khar. Many of the researchers have worked on this novel from several perspectives exploring the exploitation of women in a male dominant society. The psychoanalytical studies of major characters are also done by some of the researchers. This story is being studied and explored in multiple ways however this particular research aims at studying this novel from Marxist Feminist perspective, where Karl Marx's concept of commodity is taken to analyse the female characters in the novel, particularly the protagonist of the book, under the light of criticism done by Lois Tyson in her book *Critical Theory Today* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), linking the idea of commodification with human psychology and emotions.

Najia Asrar Zaidi and Misbah Bibi Qureshi (2012) studied the medium of autobiography used in the novel which serves as a channel for women to communicate their feelings through giving them courage and agency to speak about the critical issues they are subjected to, in the male dominant, conservative societies. This work has studied the change in Durrani's life which she has depicted in the form of an autobiographical account.

Bushra Habib, Sofia Dildar Alvi and Abdul Baseer (2013), examined the novel from the feminist perspective, investigating the role of women in the male dominant society, implying Krestiva's feminist views on the text. According to Krestiva's view patriarchy designs social structure and defines the role of women in it as from the beginning of life child learns the language of father as submission to the masculine superiority over females just to get fit into the society.

Maria Noor and Munnzza Riaz (2014) studied Gender Hegemony in Tehmina Durrani's novel *My Feudal Lord*, applying CDA model by Fairclough for the analysis on the particular text. This study used CDA model, to analyse the text which regards discourse as a social practice based on text, social process of producing and interpreting the text and socio-cultural practices which gives rise to the communicative events.

Muhammad Ehsan, Rabia Tabassum and Syed Kazim Shah (2015), has explored the traces of violence and sexual harassment in the novel, *My Feudal Lord*. This research has used the feministic lens of a French Feminist; Julia

Krestiva to study the violence, sexual maltreatment, physical and emotional abuse that women face in the male dominant society.

Shivani Thakur (2016), has talked about the journey of Tehmina Durrani from self-effacement to the self-discovery, as portrayed in the novel *My Feudal Lord*. The researcher has explored the traces of oppression and subjugation of woman, in the maledominated society in the aforementioned work. This paper has highlighted the issues of gender inequality, violence and oppression faced by women in the patriarchal societies.

Ume Kalsoom Rind and Muhammad Khan Sangi (2016), examined the gender powers in Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*, under the light of Bourdieu's concept of „habitus“ (1977), which is the part of the theory of practice. According to Pierre Bourdieu, individual's habits start developing from the early years of life and gradually strengthens with the passage of time throughout the life. In the light of this approach, the research has made an effort to analyze and study the characters of Khar and Tehmina in the patriarchal society as a feudal lord and a woman respectively. This study has focused on the structuring of habitus under in the feudal cum patriarchal society, effecting the gender roles in various ways Rajpal Kaur (2016), has explored the theme of female identity in the novel *My Feudal Lord*, analyzing the problems experienced by women in third world countries under the influence of social system such as feudalism, religion, culture and patriarchy, dismantling the image of women as weak and subjugated being to the strong and independent individual as shown through Tehmina's transformation in the novel.

Satya Phani Kumari and Waheed Shafia (2016), published an article titled; *Inner Voice of the Insurgent Women in Patriarchal Ethnicity* in which they discussed about the heroic effort of Tehmina Durrani in writing such an explicit account of her martial relation with Mustafa Khar exposing the ugly side of male dominant society where women are not given equality and right to speak.

Dr. Shubhra Jamwal (2017), has investigated this novel from the feminist perspective, in which she has analysed the role of female in the conservative societies where women are not given equal rights on the grounds of lower social status as there is a vast difference between the social standing and respect of both the genders in male dominant societies. This paper also analyzed the change in feminine approach, as women are trying to get the equal positions in the society by working alongside males, making an attempt to change the conventionally constructed notions in spite of being discriminated.

Pinkish Zahra, Amara Javed and Sumaira Akhtar (2017), analysed the novel *My Feudal Lord* from the Anti -Feministic point of view. Although Feminism has won the attention of number of people in the Third World Countries but *My Feudal Lord* emerged as a striking reaction of a women upon her unsteady marriage with a prominent Political figure of that time.

Hassan Bin Zubair, Fehmida Aslam and Mashooq Ali Khawaja (2018), have identified the patriarchal pressures and struggle of Pakistani Women in the novel *My Feudal Lord*. This research paper talks about the oppression of women in conservative societies, discussing social differences and the role of agency in autobiographical writings. The research work has studied the issues under the political and patriarchal influence, faced by Muslim women which ultimately urges them to resist all this pressure, giving agency to females as Tehmina tried to present the true picture of women in male dominant society. Giri Kailash Baburao (2018), has investigated the struggle of women for freedom, through a comparative study of the selected novels of Betti Mehmoodi, Deborah Ellis and Tehmina Durrani. This research work has examined the different aspects of the exploitation of women and their quest for the self-identity. Tehmina's novels have been scrutinized by the researcher to study the victimization of women in the patriarchal societies, as presented in *My Feudal Lord*.

Dr. Anupama L. (2018), wrote a research paper entitled, *Quest for Self in Tehmina Durrani's, My Feudal Lord*. Inbisat Ali and Taimur Ali (2019), investigated the metaphorical representation of harem, a typical and quintessential signifier for the orientalist women in Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*, using the theoretical approach of Mernissi (1994). This research work has explored that how Pakistani women exercise agency when placed in the harem. This analysis has brought out the contrast between the orientalist representation of harem by the colonizers and the Neo-Colonial women writer's authentic representation of harem, that how Tehmina has challenged the patriarchal representation of Pakistani women in particular and Muslim women in general by re-inventing the women's private and public spaces.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

This research aims to meet the following objectives:

- 1) To deal with the study of Commodification of women as presented in the selected novel.
- 2) To identify the protagonist; Tehmina as a product of sign-exchange value

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

The aimed research will find out the answers of the following questions:

- 1) What are the particular instances of the commodification of women in the novel *My Feudal Lord*?
- 2) How is Tehmina treated as a product of sign-exchange value by Mustafa Khar?

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

The present study is qualitative research, in which Karl Marx concept of commodities is used with the view point of Marxist Feminism chiefly under the light of criticism drawn by Lois Tyson on the Marxist theory, which portrays how women are treated as commodities by the males and how relationships are constructed on the basis of material and personal benefits.

Marx has introduced the concept of Commodities, through which Capitalism can be understood properly. Marx defines commodity as

***“A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether, for instance, they spring from stomach or from fancy, makes no difference. Neither are we concerned to know how satisfies these wants, whether directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production.” (Capital. 1887, p2, LL.4-8).***

According to Marx commodity is the basic unit of capitalism and basic purpose of it a commodity is to serve and fulfil the needs of the owner no matter it is of financial, physical or emotional kind. The exchange value of the product is, what it can be traded or exchanged for and is immeasurable, fluctuates with time and place as it is not related to the use value of a product. Marx concept of commodities defined the importance of products on the basis of its use-value and exchange-value. Commodities can be of various sorts such as products of agriculture, tools, utensils, lands and ideas as well, in fact anything which has a use and exchange value is considered a commodity. Marxist Feminism analysis the ways in which capitalism effects the sex relations, where women are treated as an instrument of production only. *Fredrick Engels* in his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (1884)* introduced this dimension, introducing Marxist Feminism for the first time, in which he investigated the subjugation of women on the basis of private ownership and unpaid domestic labor as a main cause of social inequality.

***“Marxist Feminism talks about the role of Capitalism in the oppression of women in the patriarchal societies”.***

According the Marxist Feminists, Capitalism is the real hindrance on the way to women empowerment, as it has emasculated the female members of the society. In the view point of Marxist Feminists, Patriarchy is mainly responsible for the suffering and utilization of females, as this gives liberty to the males to exploit and control the women. This capitalist structure has created a gender stratification in the society, which the root cause of unequal distribution of wealth, power and prestige between men who owns the means of production and women, who are domestic labors only. In the light of Marxist Feminists, this unpaid labor of women has made them oppressed and inferior beings, which causes women face social discrimination at every level. Moreover, patriarchy demands strict fidelity and monogamy from women in order to transfer the legacy and surplus wealth to the coming generation whereas it allows males to practice bigamy as a part of culture.

***“the bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production...” (Marx and Engels, The Communist***

Talking about the capitalism, Marx discussed the economic effects of it on the society which further lead the analysis of its impact on human relations and attitude by the Marxist Feminists. The commodification of human beings leads

to the devastating consequences, leaving its effect on their minds for the longer period of time.

As mentioned by Lois Tyson in the *Literary Theory Today, for Marxism*,

***“A commodity’s value lies in what it can do (use-value) but in the money or other things for which it can be traded (exchange-value) or in the social status it confers on its owner (sign- exchange value) an object becomes commodity only when it has exchange value or sign-exchange value and both forms of value are determined by the society in which the object is exchanged. Commodification, then, the act relating to persons or things in terms of their exchange value or sign exchange value to the exclusion of the other considerations.” (Critical Theory Today, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pg. 79, L. 16-21).***

Lois Tyson as given the example of this commodification on material things as well, for instance if a person owns a book and read it then it is considered as the use-value of the book. Moreover, if the same book is sold or exchanged with another book by the owner, then it will be the exchange value of that book.

#### **DATA ANALYSIS:**

The present study is qualitative in nature, which includes the contextual analysis of the selected passages taken from the novel *My Feudal Lord*, investigating the commodification of women in the text, by finding answers to the research questions.

***“If a husband turned out to be a brute, it was the wife’s duty to persevere until she changed his character. A broken marriage was a reflection of woman’s failure” (Durrani, T.1995, p.29, LL. 3-6)***

The selected fragment from the novel, shows the high responsibility on women’s part to nourish and keep up the marital bond strong, even if she has to suffer through the brutality of her husband. This reference explicitly presents the role of women in male dominant societies, where they are expected to suffer and sacrifice for the smooth functioning of marriage, as they have to save their image in the eyes of people who never consider them equal to males. These lines are spoken by author when she was talking about her mother’s perspective towards marriage although their mother had divorced her first husband before marrying Tehmina’s father, yet she desired her daughters to behave such a way that they should carry on with their marriage no matter they get a reasonable match or not, as people count it as a failure on the part of woman if she gets divorced. This depicts that how woman is used to glue up the relationships as a product of use value, just for the survival in the male dominant world, a lifelong struggle of waiting for a brute to turn into a man of noble character, at the cost of herself. This struggle for the survival of marital relation under the pressure of society is just an effort to prolong the span of this bond, which is basically an utter disapproval of female’s existence in the so called male oriented society where in order to get acknowledgment from the counterpart she herself needs to strengthen this commodification against her. The broken image of women is not so essentially unacceptable to



the society; however, the way it looks at the broken marriage is simply the endorsement of commodification where women is a product of sign-exchange value to the male, she is associated with. Eventually taking away the happiness and beauty of married life from them.

***“He just loves you because you look good, „she charged. „You dress well. You’re good for his image. (Durrani, T. 1995, p. 80, LL. 2-4)***

These are the words of Tehmina’s friend, in order to advise her about the superficiality of Mustafa’s love for her. This happens, when Mustafa tripped over Tehmina’s good looks, started dating her. This chunk from the novel, is pointing towards the bond they shared, where Tehmina is more likely to be a product of sign-exchange value who is acceptable to Mustafa only when she looks good just to vaunt his social standing, as she represents the choice and standard of Khar in his social acquaintances. This extract is profoundly highlighting the fact that Tehmina was only good for image building of Mustafa’s social status, a good looking woman, a stunning piece to be taken along to the parties just to heighten his status in the social circle. These words, somehow describe the nature of Khar in the initial stages of their love affair, which later proved to be true although Tehmina remained blind to all this gradually strengthening her commodification in the hands of Mustafa.

***“He was comfortable with professional sex” (Durrani, T. 1995, p. 42, LL. 6)***

This line is spoken by the protagonist about Mustafa’s sexual relation with prostitutes, during a visit to Murree for some professional affair. This shows his approach towards women as well as his mind set being a feudal lord, as for him the only priority was his own satisfaction and sexual comfort and to suffice his sensual thirst, he was comfortable with professional sex. The only thing matters, was the personal comfort. He wanted women for bodily gains, this is how one can see the objectification of women in culture, where they are commodified at different levels in the society. The socioeconomic structure of society, has divided the world in to classes on the basis of capitalist system which has not only given power to the ruling class but also caused the gender differences in the society, where women are considered as domestic labour and in case they get out to face the world they do not get equality of rights, facing oppression at diverse levels. Likewise, Marxist Feminists are of view that, women are objectified on the basis of gender inequality and socio-economic pattern of the society.

***“I was an automatic pilot, responding as much as was important for him, but never feeling anything myself.”. (Durrani, T. 1995, p.107, LL. 5-7)***

The above cited passage is taken from the text, when Mustafa tortures his wife Tehmina for her previous marriage with Anees. This is one of the key features of Capitalist society, where men practice total control over their wives, seeking them as an object meant to quench their needs. Obvious description of this is given, just before the aforementioned extract when Tehmina highlights another darker side of Feudal system, where woman is destined to be an instrument of carnal pleasure for her feudal lord, with no status of her own in

the society which is frequently revealed by the Marxists Feminist thinkers in their writings. Furthermore, In the male dominant societies, men are allowed to practice polygamy just to seek satisfaction by all means, whereas women are supposed to remain loyal to a single man for the smooth transfer of wealth to the next generation, even at the cost of their lives. This objectification of women came into being after the development of Patriarchal structure, where men are given supremacy over the females.

Resultantly, this element of commodification is portrayed well in the selected text, as Tehmina was programmed by Khar, as an involuntary being whose purpose was to meet the needs of its owner as a product of use-value. Tehmina had to obey each and every order of Khar, as this was the custom of Feudal set up that woman is the property of her husband. This utter submission of Tehmina reveals the decaying impact of Commodification on their relationship, with no feelings of love and attachment. She was not even permitted to read the newspaper without consent of her husband, which shows the meagreness of woman's prestige in a man-controlled society.

***“A woman was like a man's land- „The Koran says so,” he said. This was a revealing simile. A feudal lord loves his land only in functional terms. He encloses it and protects it. If it is barren, he neglects it. Land is power, prestige and property.” (Durrani, T. 1995, p.107, LL. 19-22)***

Above mentioned textual extract, throws light on Mustafa's understanding of Koran and its teachings about women. Similarly, the selected lines reflect his thoughts on the position of a woman seeking protection in religion, which in fact gives the lesson of peace and equality in dealings contrary to Mustafa's crafted opinion. Feudal culture is itself an example of Capitalism, as land belongs to the owner as a private property which is measured useful only on the basis of fertility otherwise it has no worth. The very concept is applied on the human beings when it comes to the husband wife relationship, as woman is like a land, a property to her husband who is bound to live a life based on her husband's notions in the name of religion. A woman is a symbol of her husband's honor in a feudal culture, which turns a woman into a product of sign-exchange value, no matter what a man does but a woman has to keep his head high with the absolute obedience and fidelity. A landlord loves his land only in functional terms, likewise a husband treats his wife on the grounds of her use-value which is always a point of concern for the Marxist Feminists as they are of the opinion that to overthrow the capitalism is the only solution in this regard, the only way to empower the women in our society. As narrated in the selected lines, Land is a symbol of supremacy and respect a land owner, until its fertile else a barren land is of no value, the exact happens with Tehmina in the novel, as she was sexually assaulted many a times by Khar just to slake his physical needs with no consent of her own. She was a product of sign- exchange value, who was not permitted to share her sufferings with others as it was her responsibility to maintain the status and repute of her husband without thinking of herself once. This social inequality is propagated by the class system in the society ultimately forcing women to reinforce the commodification, as a method to survive in male-dominant society.

***“You dare not think of anything that I have forbidden you to think about”.***  
(Durrani, T. 1995, p.108, LL. 11-12)

These lines from the novel, are evident to showcase the emotional standing of Tehmina’s relation with Khar, as she was completely under his control. For instance, she was not even able to think freely which is practically the most involuntary action for a person to do. In fact, she needed an approval from her ideas, emotions and thoughts to propagate. According to Marx’s studies, ideas are also used as commodities when they are of some use- value or exchange-value. This commodification of ideas benefits the one who controls them, as Tehmina herself and her ideas were commodity of Khar. As stated in the above given lines, Tehmina was of the view that her brain was washed and bleached by Khar, it actually means that she was forced to fade away all her thoughts and remove all her memories keeping in mind only the instructions of her husband. This shows the peak of injustice and inequality in the roles of male and female in the society where men are supreme enough to manipulate the women in any ways including their thoughts and opinion. Mustafa wanted to cease the thought process of Tehmina, lest she think of raising voice for the equal rights. Tehmina was so afraid, that she was haunted continuously else she dreams something which is not accepted by Khar, which made her days’ peace less and nights twitchy. This passage reveals that, Tehmina herself strengthen Mustafa’s rule over her just taking everything on nerves and by pushing back her conscience ever since the beginning of their marriage. Furthermore, this commodification decays the bond between them as she was afraid of Khar all the time, although a husband is envisioned to be shelter and guard for a female.

***“A feudal lord understands the strength of blood ties, but he also understands the power of physical violence.”*** (Durrani, T. 1995, p.134, LL. 10-12)

The selected chunk from the novel, points out towards the feudal system and its set up that a land lord does understand the importance of blood relations however all this does not stop him from going violent as it is one of the traits of their cultural supremacy. At a certain point in the text, Tehmina started behaving a bit different, when a tiny flicker of revolt lit up in her heart. However, Mustafa knew better how to handle the change in Tehmina’s attitude, as per to his feudal mind set which never expected a woman to stand equal to him, as for the land lords women are also their property with the sole purpose of producing heirs for the smooth transfer of wealth. Although this truly trembled Mustafa at once, when he saw Tehmina, behaving like a living being instead of an object, an entity or a robot belonging to him yet his powerful position in the society made him tame down the rebel inside her.

***For too long now, Mustafa had pulled all my strings, like a puppet master, and now those strings were hopelessly, perhaps permanently entangled.”***  
(Durrani, T. 1995, p.153, LL. 28-32)

This passage is chosen from the second part of the novel, from the episode of Mustafa’s affair with Tehmina’s youngest sister Adila, who a was beautiful

teenager then. Mustafa cheated on his wife many times despite knowing the fact that she could sense his deceit. The reinforcement of commodification is truly vivid through the aforesaid extract as Tehmina already knew about the hidden relation of Mustafa and Adila, yet she preferred believing in his husband, betraying his consciousness about the serenity of the problem. This affair was indeed a serious thing to taken, in order to get rid of the brutality of Khar who was never a good husband as she did not want to accept the reality of her baseless bond, just under the responsibility of carrying a smooth marriage in the eyes of society. In the patriarchal societies" women are placed second to their men, as they are superior so the strings of women are in the hands of males, as in case of Tehmina. Over the years, she had turned a puppet with all her strings entangles so badly that she actually lost her self-identity, as she was no more a human being. The primary function of her, being commodity was to meet the needs of her master. Her importance was based on her utilization, with the duty of fulfilling her owner's sexual needs. The marital bond which tied under the strong feeling of love for Mustafa, made her life a living hell, distorting the beauty their relationship only because Mustafa and his dominating capitalist approach, which made him commodify his wife and every other in his life. Investing deeper into the matter, helps in comprehending the damaging impact of commodification on relationships that Tehmina was not willing to trust her own sister, she was not ready to give the margin of being younger, in fact she was so under the control of Mustafa that in spite of knowing about his reality and brutality she trusted him without even considering the intensity of his action. This manipulation of her, made it more convenient for Mustafa to suppress her as an object belonging to him.

***"My response was like a conditioned zombie, who could neither discern the whole truth of the matter nor deal with it." (Durrani, T. 1995, p.154, LL. 17-18)***

These words of Tehmina, highlight her commodification by Mustafa to the level that she was indeed like a robot working under his commands. This paragraph is selected from the text, when Mustafa caught involved in Tehmina's little sister Adila, using her to fulfil his lust. Instead of becoming strong enough to get away with the torturous rule of Mustafa, she ignores the reality despising the words of her sister Minoo, who actually wanted to open her eyes through delineating the hideous nature of Khar. This is really a noticeable trend in a male-dominant cultures that women are conditioned to the supremacy and authoritative nature of their males, where they lose their identity and individuality, as Tehmina became habitual of taking commands from Mustafa, reinforcing the commodification.

Capitalist social structure believes in the class system, which divides society into class, speculating this concept under the diverse interpretation makes it believable that this stratification is not only bound to the economics of a society, in fact is classifies the gender roles also. The role of women ins such Patriarchal societies is defined under the cultural distinction, where it is the ultimate responsibility of a women to be the sole responsible of her family and marriage with only job to fulfil the needs of her husband no matter emotional or physical whereas in return she is not allowed to think of any respect,

response or equality in return because the socio- economic pattern of society has simply objectified the women, regardless of their background. Tyson, in her criticism has profoundly, figured out the impact of commodification on human mind, that relationships are also built under the material objectives, likewise in the case of Tehmina, who was always used by Mustafa to fulfil his sexual desires, his political agendas being a right hand to him. Despite, moving side by side, helping him out in all the walks of life she was never treated like a living being, in fact the aforementioned lines are sufficient to describe her role as a zombie, who was programmed to need the instruction of Mustafa.

This commodification, snatched her confidence and ability to sort down the issues, in fact took over the responsibility of defending her brutal husband against his all wrong doings as she was a robot designed by Mustafa, no more a living being or the sister of Adila. This extract shows that commodification not only spoils their relationship, but also deteriorates the bond between sisters, causing a constant damage to Tehmina in her life.

***“From this moment forward, it would be nearly impossible for me to function as an individual. There was not one iota self-esteem left. The shame had burned it down to ashes. I was exposed as nothing”. (Durrani, T. 1995, p.165, LL. 9-13)***

Aforesaid passage, is an explicit example of the objectification of a woman as well as an absolute portrayal of the insane supremacy of a man, which is sufficiently enough to explore the commodification of Tehmina by Khar. The given text tells about the distorting impact of this commodification on her which utterly smashed her self-respect, leaving nothing with her to live peacefully ever after. This passage, is extracted from the second part of the text, when Tehmina got to know about the illegal affair between her husband and little sister; Adila. It was then she dared to confront Mustafa about the seriousness of this issue, keeping her loyalty and support in Mustafa’s favor, in order to save her marriage and family name. However, in response to that, Mustafa did the worse of all his previous torture and crossing all the limits of humanity he thrashed her savagely, forcing her to take off her clothes and make a phone to her mother to seek pardon for all what she said about Adila, taking blame on herself. This was the time, when Tehmina broke into pieces, with no self-confidence left to live the remaining life.

These lines portray the worthlessness of Tehmina, being a woman who is bound to obey each and every single order of her husband going beyond the limits of humanity. Likewise, she herself admits that after that she was unable to function as a human being, which means she was tormented to the degree that she turned into a commodity whose primary function was to meet the orders and demands of her husband, who had the ultimate control over her. This text, also provides the evident proof to the decay and damage of the commodification on humans and their relationships, as Tehmina’s self-confidence was plundered by her own husband, who was meant to be a strong support to her through each thick and thin, which he never was. In fact, this only happens when a man gives equal position to the woman he belongs to,

which is unfortunately a dream in the patriarchal societies where women are given an inferior place to their men, with sole purpose to meet the licentious desires of their males. Moreover, Mustafa ordered her to take back her words spoken about his illicit affair with Adila, as he did not want it to get exposed to anyone else, else it would cause him an epic embarrassment lowering down his status and respect in the eyes of Tehmina's family, which he could not afford, so he used Tehmian to protect his image in front of others, the way a commodity is used to increase the status of a person in the society; Mustafa used his wife.

***“I had reconstructed myself for him to demolish once more” (Durrani, T. 1995, p.219, LL.12-13).***

The aforementioned textual line, clearly portrays that how Tehmina reinforces the process of her own commodification by Khar, through constant denial of the reality and total subjugation to Mustafa's tyrant control. This line is taken from the text when Khar got exposed for having the illegitimate relationship with Adila, yet he tried to manipulate his wife; Tehmina to ignore the brutal reality and continue believing him as he had complete control over her mind. Here, the significantly contributing factor is the set up of our society that devises different roles for males and females, where males are considered superior in every situation and women are tend to obey and respect their males at every cost. Moreover, patriarchal society does not allow women to stand independently and particularly against their husbands, because the ultimate responsibility of family's honor and domestic tasks comes on the shoulders of women. Tehmina had the valid reason to give upon her relationship but she was afraid of facing the world after divorce, she was afraid of leaving her children as Mustafa had much power to deprive her of everything. The aforesaid textual line, vividly showcases that Tehmina was more like an object to Mustafa, whom he had broken many a times earlier and again she was ready to get demolished by him, to live under his tyrant control, to let him exercise complete ownership over her.

#### **CONCLUDING REMARKS:**

The present research is qualitative in nature and has succeeded in achieving the objectives of the thesis in highlighting the Commodification of women, their use as a product of sign-exchange value, reinforcement of the process of commodification by the protagonist and the decaying impact of commodification on human relations in the selected novel of Tehmin Durrani named; *My Feudal Lord*. The textual evidences and its analysis show the ways women are commodified by Mustafa Khar, in the particular text, under the back drop of feudal culture.

The term commodity was first defined by Karl Marx in his famous book *Das Capital*, in which he explained the term commodity along with the use-value and exchange-value of the commodities. This book was actually the critique of capitalism, which later opened the ways for feminist thinkers to use Marxist ideas for the liberation of women, and this gave rise to the new perspective for feminist thinkers, an extension to Marxism named as Marxist Feminism, which dealt with the issues of gender inequality in the capitalist system,

which the main reason of the emergence of patriarchal culture in the society. This class and gender stratification caused the oppression of women by men.

Tyson's criticism has made it clear that how women are commodified by men, when relationships are developed on socio-economic basis to gain individual benefits. This merging up of the Marx's concept of commodification with Marxist Feminist viewpoint under the light of Tyson's criticism is used as a research framework to identify and explore the commodification of women in the novel.

To conclude, the present work has successfully achieved its research objectives and has reached to the expected results. The researcher has bridged the existing gap between the former studies and this particular one. The researcher has also left new route to study the commodification of women in the society through variety of aspects. The present research will help the future aspiring researchers to study the feminist literature with the new perspective to trace out the elements of commodification of women, as a major cause of their exploitation.

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