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TREATING VIOLENCE NON-VIOLENTLY; APPLYING NON-VIOLENT STRATEGIES TO NADEEM ASLAM'S THE BLIND MAN'S GARDEN

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Nadeem Aslam's novel "The Blind Man's Garden" and highlights "Non-Violence Strategies to counter Terrorism alluding Nadeem Aslam's novel." The novel fictionalizes the tale of ordinary people and the domain of war in the Pakistan and Afghanistan. Dominant Characters in the novel acted as non-violently where as the novel is full of violence. Therefore, this thesis investigates into how and how these characters act non-violently in the face of violence, and what is its insignificance in the wake of war/terror and peace. No significant research has been carried on the subject at present, especially in relation to The Blind Man's Garden. The thesis is essentially qualitative in nature. The analysis of the passages is done through Textual analysis of Stuart Hall. However George Lakey theory is mainly adopted.

INTRODUCTION

Violence has been a part of human society since the inception. In the Pre-historic era it has been confirmed by the injuries on human skeleton present in the fossils. In the recorded history, there are myriad of examples of violence throughout various cultures. The Sumerian Epic of *Gilgamesh*, the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, and the story of Cain and Abel in the Bible give us earliest traces of violence in human societies. This is one of the major reasons that has led many thinkers and philosophers in every era to raise questions about human nature and relationship with violence. One of these major questions is that whether humans are good or evil by nature.

While Sigmund Freud held the view that kids are born with a "Blank Slate," Aristotle described people as "Amoral creatures" and thought that morality is something that is learnt through society. In this field, Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712) are the two most well-known detractors. Hobbes (1588) called people "Nasty" (p. 84), 'Brutish' and self centered who can go to any extreme to fulfil their own desires and wishes. Rousseau criticized Hobbes and described humans as purely corrupted by the imposed system of our society. However, it will be naive to confirm to any of these beliefs as human nature is complex and multidimensional. Irrespective of its origin or reason for violence, it is still one of the greatest menaces of human society which is yet to be dealt with and abolished on many fronts as it has harmed humans being very much.

War is a major thing that inflicts violence physically, psychologically, economically, politically, and so on. Generation through generation humans have fought with each other for religion, land, resources and many other reasons and every war has been deadly. One of the most prominent and deadly wars is the Afghan war. This war has affected the lives of many human beings and is a serious issue of early 21st century. It has affected the lives of Afghans, Americans and Pakistanis.

In every era, Literature has been used to treat violence non-violently. It is a very effective way of reducing war and terror. It demonstrates how violence, war, and terror can affect humans and multiple dimensions of their lives. It takes us to war struck areas, battlegrounds, the life of war widows and orphans, prisons, life of murderers and criminals, where we can see the wretchedness of warfare, violent behavior, and conflict. Majority of the Pakistani contemporary novels often addresses the theme of war and peace, honor killing, oppression, violence, extremism, and freedom like the novels of Mohsin Hamid, Khalid Husseini and Nadeem Aslam.

The *Blind Man's Garden*, a book written by Pakistani-English author Nadeem Aslam, details the circumstances of three separate countries—Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the United States—that have participated in the American-led fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. The effects of war on people are a major theme of the novel. The conflict between love and honour, war and peace, faith and responsibility, and religion and humanity is also explored in the novel. It explores how individuals are connected to one another, their various affiliations like marriage and kinship, their duties, and who and what matters to them.

“Every human is born completely innocent and without sin but they get corrupted and become evil by the society they live in.” (Golding, 1954)

In our contemporary society, there are several interests that affect a person, including those that are political, economic, religious, and so on. Humans' capacity for free choice is stripped away by a corrupt society in order to wage war and cause damage. War and violence have been very serious problems since a long time and it is important to put an end to this as they have done a serious damage to humanity. Therefore, it is important to use non-violent strategies to counter war and violence in order to save humanity.

The novel, *The Blind Man's Garden*, is mainly based on the post 9/11 war in Afghanistan as this war has resulted in major destruction and mass massacre. The purpose of this study is to explore war and violence and their effects on human beings. The research also seeks to educate the people on the evils of violence, unrest, and war in order to promote peace via nonviolence. The focus of this study is on people making moral judgments in a peaceful manner and the repercussions of such behaviour on society. It explores the strategies that aid in enhancing peace and in reduction of societal violence. This paper also seeks to understand the value of peace and how it affects people's lives. Therefore, this research probes into the following questions: What roles are played by the non-violent characters in countering terrorism in *Blind Man's Garden*? and To what extent the non-violent strategies of the characters are successful in countering terrorism in *The Blind Man's Garden*?

From the very beginning of human existence, the fight between good and evil goes on in this world. Wars emerge due to different reasons in the world and causes different chaotic situations in society. These violent and traumatic situations have engulfed many human lives and cost too much to human's society. This study is a step to counters violence, war and terror through non-violent strategies. It will also help in promoting peace in our society and all over the world.

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

The previous researches pertaining to the novel *The Blind Man's Garden* are discussed in this chapter. The word "non-violent" and how it is defined and used in various researches are critically discussed here. Because of their strong stance on non-violent techniques for the promotion of peace, the work of George Lakey is the major emphasis, and the aforementioned issue is based on their theorization. With their efforts and concepts for preventing terrorism and fostering peace to stabilise the global environment, they have motivated a lot of people.

Defining Violence

Violence is a psychological and physical activity that causes harm to an entity. WHO has defined violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation". Hurting someone

physically is not the only kind of violence but inequitable social status, denying someone of a decent position, and keeping a person in poverty are all examples of structural violence.

Defining Non-Violence

Non-violence or Peace is an action that resembles a positive side of the human psyche and it keeps balance in the society. It is a perspective propagating of not harming any liveable thing by any means. Wikipedia defines it "Nonviolence is the personal practice of not causing harm to others under any condition. It may come from the belief that hurting people, animals and/or the environment is unnecessary to achieve an outcome and it may refer to a general philosophy of abstention from violence."

Only when all human beings are given their due right properly, the dream of a sustainable society can be realized. Peaceful coexistence may be made possible by accepting differences in culture, religion, race, and colour, among other things.

Previous Views

Since the tragedy of 9/11, when four (4) planes were hijacked and crashed in various locations around the United States, the world's atmosphere has altered. After reading the headlines "hijacked plans terminate twin towers and hit Pentagon on the day of terror" (BBC, 11 September 2001) and "US declares war on terror" (The New York Times, vol. cl 51,574), America associated the attacks with Al-Qaeda, an Islamic and Afghani force. America has started a war in Afghanistan in an effort to avenge or put a stop to the terror.

Since the United States of America is composed of up of both Muslims and non-Muslims from many various nations, including continents like Asia, Africa, and Arab countries, the conflict has had an impact on both the lives of Afghans and Americans who identify as Muslims. Despite the multiplicity of their nationalities, they were unable to protect themselves from the American objective. Muslims from many continents and nations were attacked because the attack was related to their identity. According to a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) assessment, hate crimes and attacks against Muslim populations have grown by around five times since before 9/11. They added that because of the vicious assaults, criminality and hatred have increased and are still on the rise since the incident in 2001. Al-Jazeera News gave a similar viewpoint, citing Hussam Ayloush. "Muslims continue to be the target of hate, bullying, and discrimination as a result of the stereotypes that were perpetuated by Islamophobes and the media in the years following the 9/11 attacks." (Al - Jazeera, 2022)

The Bush administration became aware of the negative effects of the situation as it was spiraling out of control following the attack and the high number of crimes and acts of hatred committed against the Muslim community. The American administration said that our response to the war is not a war against any school of thought or faith. Despite the administration's high-level targeting of Muslims, it is not a war on Islam. In his paper "Trends: Arab and Muslim

Americans and Islam in the Aftermath of 9/11," Post as Panagopoulos, an American political analyst, pointed to Bush's views that minimized the atrocities against the Muslim population. Panagopoulos claims that during his speech to the country during a moment of great mourning, President Bush insisted on not doing and denounced anti-Muslim acts. Addressing a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, George Bush commanded "his nation, means American that they must push back their anti-Islam and anti-Muslim itches" (Postas Panagopoulos, 2006).

Pakistan suffered from internal warfare, terrorism, human displacement, Talibanization, religious extremism, and other problems as a Muslim nation sharing borders with Afghanistan, which served as the battlefield following the 9/11 attacks.

An article published by Dr. Tughral Yamin with the title "Examining Pakistan's Strategic Decision to Support the US War on Terror" stated that America wanted to know whether the Pakistani government is with us or against us. The most famous of the seven requests made by the US to Musharraf was that he permit the US and its allies to utilise Pakistani territory and stop supporting the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. "All demands were accepted without any conditions," Tughral added. The envoy was notified by General Musharraf that his corps commanders had arrived. Although sites were made available to the US military for purposes other than logistical support and aircraft recovery, Musharraf claims he had qualms about the second and third requests. Privately, Pakistani officials acknowledge that small parties of US Special Forces were permitted to conduct counter-insurgency operations in Waziristan and to utilise the Tareeka Air Base for military operations. (Yamin, 2016)

Many refugees fled to Pakistan following the invasion on Afghanistan by the United States of America and its NATO allies. The country's economy and resources have been severely impacted by the high population. Islam was linked to terrorism, which led to the concept of extremism emerging in the nation. Due to internal terrorism, Pakistan's security, stability, national interest, and peace were seriously threatened both internally and externally. Due to 9/11, two sides were separated in the global war on terror, just like in the previous two global conflicts.

Despite the fact that our neighbouring country was not a supporter of the US and was a close ally of the recently dismantled USSR, Pakistan by siding with the US has dug a significant hole for itself, and as a result of the alliance, the nation's internal peace and stability have become worrisome. This is clearly discussed by John F. Kerry in his speech as he stated;

"Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are names well known to Americans. But other groups are actively plotting, actively killing, every day. The Haqqani network has expanded its reach beyond North Waziristan in Pakistan and provides sanctuary to al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. The Tehrik-i-Taliban, otherwise known as the Pakistani Taliban, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi systematically work to undermine the Government of Pakistan. Lashkar-e-Taiba and

Jaish-e-Mohammed continue to launch attacks that risk sparking war between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan.” (Kerry, 2011)

A study documenting the refugee and mortality crisis in Afghanistan was released by Brown University's Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs in November 2018 under the title "Human Cost of the Post-9/11 Wars: Lethality and the Need for Transparency" by Neta C. Crawford. The investigation looked into the unambiguous statistics of Americans and Afghans. The individuals who left the nation were likewise exonerated as of the date. Approximately 147,124 individuals perished in Afghanistan as a result of the American war, of whom 2401 were American military personnel and 1141 were members of the Allies. The remaining individuals were Afghani civilians, police, soldiers, journalists, contractors, and other people going about their normal lives. The burden of war did not end there; rather, 4.78 million Afghans fled to nearby nations like Iran and Pakistan, and some of them went to Europe, mostly to the United States, England, Italy, and Canada, as well as to the Arabian Peninsula. The image of seven Afghan children under the age of six who were murdered by an American airstrike in Kunar province in 2013 is featured in a study titled "Costs of War" that was released by the same institution.

Pakistan, the principal combatant in the conflict, has endured great losses and a great deal of hardship as a result of their participation. Pakistan has made untold sacrifices as a key battleground and frontline state. Despite the fact that it has been amply demonstrated that no Pakistani was involved in the 9/11 incident, the US administration has pushed Pakistan into the heart of terrorism. Pakistan has lost between 70,000 and 80,000 civilians and 8,000 armed military, and due to western propaganda, the nation is considered a state sponsor of terrorism.

Great vision and the capacity to foresee the future are qualities shared by great writers. Nadeem Aslam is one of them and has made several predictions about Pakistan and the disastrous effects of the 9/11 assault on the nation, with the APS attack being one of those implications. The second point is one that Nadeem Aslam alluded to in his fourth book about the Pakistan-Afghanistan war and how it affected Pakistani households. Banerji endorsed the idea that the Pak-Afghan War was reflected in Nadeem Aslam's work. (Banerji, 2013)

The work is a mirror of both Pakistani and Afghani society. It depicts the various facets of Afghani culture, including their laws and regulations, their values, and even how they treat women. Razeshta Sethna's review addresses this topic. "*Book review: The Blind Man's Garden*" is the title of her review in the Dawn newspaper. She stated that “thematic threads — militancy and terrorism, conservative attitudes towards women, religious justifications of honor crimes — have appeared in most of Aslam’s novels, evidence of his understanding of how the world works, how women are forced to suffer patriarchal traditions and the effects war leaves in its wake”. The author's point is not restricted to Afghanistan alone but it is also about other regions of the world, how the world functions, and how dominating positions attempt to repress the inferior for some type of interest, .

The purpose of the current study is to understand how non-violent counterterrorism tactics are deployed. This method deserves scholarly consideration because it has not yet been investigated in relation to the book *The Blind Man's Garden*. Future research in this field may be greatly influenced by the findings of this study. The novel is examined using the close reading method.

The research is exploratory in nature and qualitative methodology has been adopted for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data at different stages. Qualitative research is defined as “A research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2008).

In terms of design, qualitative research in its design can be flexible, adaptable, evolving over time and can also be emerging. It is usually appropriate when trying to understand a phenomenon, analyzing experience, perspective, opinions or meaning.

Any research has a theoretical framework, which is a more general phenomena. It is the foundation for all of the study's analyses. It also acts as the basis for further study. Without a theoretical foundation, research is unquestionably regarded as meaningless.

The War on Terror, post-9/11 literature, and produced literature in the wake of the 9/11 attack are the key topics of this thesis. A novel (fiction) is essentially chosen for the study while also restricting the area. The *Blind Man's Garden* was chosen for this study because it confronts the issue of war, notably the War on Terror and the 9/11 catastrophe. This book discusses both implicitly and overtly the current issues that resulted from the conflict. The severe effects of 9/11 on the Muslim world, particularly Pakistani society, are among the study's top contemporary concerns. threats to one's life, identification issues, problems with missing persons, etc.

The novel may be studied from a variety of angles, much like any other literary work, however for this research, George Lakey's methods are used. These eight methods are for nonviolently fighting violence. For the textual study of literature, Stuart Hall's "Theory of Reception" or "The Reception Theory" is used.

The "Reception Theory" of Stuart Hall is used for the textual analysis of the book. The Reception theory is a type of reader reaction theory or reader reception theory that assesses how the reader encodes, decodes, and interprets a literary text, as well as how the reader comes to a conclusion about what the text means and whether or not the reader connects it to their internal reality. Harkin has commented about this as “Reader-response was a part of two moments; the (elitist) theory boom of the 1970s and the (Populist) political moments of the 1960s and 1970s (Harkin, 2005)

The process of interpretation is different from person to person or culture to culture and it is not certain that every person will interpret a single text in the

same way. Although in a broader area, when people belong to the same culture then their interpretation will have much similarity. Stuart Hall has given in his 'Culture Studies Reader' his views about the perception and interpretation of any literary piece, as he stated "The Object of these practices its meaning and of communication or language, though the operation of codes within the syntactic chain of discourse. The apparatus, relations, and practices of production thus an issue at a certain moment (the moment of producing/circulation) in the form of symbolic relics continued with the rules of language." (Hall, 1980)

Stuart Hall's Reception theory is selected for the analysis of different passages within the text and symbolism in the text and its associations and linkages with some other historical aspects which are presented in our life in a different context. Characters, places, and events have linkages with ideas from different cultures, languages, religions, and literary facts. Mecca house, for example, is the sacred house to the Muslims, presenting spirituality, Baghdad house which is also hinting at the golden age of the Islamic era and as Baghdad was the center of knowledge, peace, and prosperity. Mikal looks like Mikail, a sacred and one of the four great angles of Islamic ideology. Sofia seems the symbol of wisdom, greatness, protection and has a linkage with Sofie's character as was a philosopher and intellectual. Rohan reflects Pashto ward Rokhan, resembling light in the darkness, as Rohan becomes blind in the novel, while his spirituality and vision increase and becomes a light in the darkness. Yasmin - a flower named Jasmine, which fragrance can attract people from distance.

George Lakey's Eight Strategies to Defend Against Terror:
What are the eight techniques?

1. Ally-building and the infrastructure of economic development
2. Reducing cultural marginalization
3. Nonviolent protest/campaigns among the defenders, plus unarmed civilian peacekeeping
4. Pro-conflict education and training
5. Post-terror recovery programs
6. Police as peace officers: the infrastructure of norms and laws
7. Policy changes and the concept of reckless behavior
8. Negotiation

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of *The Blind Man's Garden* is done under Lakey's 'theory of non-violence' for the purpose of promoting peace and educating masse. Due to the great loss, the post-recovery program of 9/11 as post-terror recovery and pro-conflict education and training can be a lot of help if it is taken under consideration. The war of 9/11 has a great impact on the masses because as a result of this attack a large amount of racial discrimination, hatred from others and a sense of revenge emerged. The most dangerous thing is that some Western people are looking to every Muslim as a terrorist and Western people have developed their insecurities pertaining to Muslims. To eliminate all these problems, a proper educational guidance as a non-violent tool could be a parallel institution that can cure all the hurts.

In *The Blind Man's Garden*, the character Rohan has presented the idea of hatred as his views about western people's dress. He imposed this hatred upon himself in his bad comments about trousers as he thinks that even their pockets are not on the right place as he might be comparing his own could be the best. He thinks that one cannot keep his food in the pocket as in the right place or one should not shake his hands if it is pulled from the front or back of his trousers. The cure and prevent destructive events, George Lakey's strategies as 'Parallel Institutions' can be 100% beneficial. The second idea that is more dangerous than simple hate, which can cause the taking of lives of many people mostly innocent, is the misuse of the concept of Jihad. Most of them are teenagers and they become blind for their garden as the very name of the novel suggests, and all of them become suicide bombers, the most destructive weapons and killing not only guilty but huge numbers of innocent people. Their age is between fifteen to thirty as they are blind for their garden, at this age, one must decide his/her future through golden words or ideas.

"There is nothing worth to die in the modern war. Soldiers for Politicians and their desire to get richer. Refusing to fight for what someone thinks is right is not an act of cowardice. It is the realization that wars are pointless. Let there be peace" (Nicholson, 2021)

The war between the tri nations, that is, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and America, resulted, a chaotic market, for many lords to get benefits as much as they can. Major Kyra who was an extremist warlord and a military officer, has taken many advantages of the *War On Terror* by using the youth around the world especially, and then their brain has washed and a sense of hate emerged between West and East. Apart from this, physical relations with young boys were common among the warlords as this has been seen since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and was also at its peak during the American era while considered a symbol of power as they took many of them through kidnapping or through will, seduced some of them and some were also trafficked from and into the different parts of world, mostly South Asia.

The Ardent Spirit And APS As a Lakey's Concept of Negotiation

Throughout history, peacekeepers have condemned every war. Earlier, wars were fought in the name of honor and religion but modern wars have political, economical, national, geological, and psychological, etc. Interests. Therefore, modern wars are not only fought with iron weapons but with many different methods like bio-chemicals, online hacking, psychological subjugating, internal conflict, etc.

Attack on the Ardent Spirit is the misuse of youth as at that age they are not mature enough to differentiate between good and bad. Therefore, people usually takes advantage of this and try instil hate and various other ideas in their mind for various selfish and violent purposes. In the same way, the minds of Ardent Spirit's students were injected with the ideas of extremist - Major Kyra. This concept is also shown by the writer metaphorically through the bird partner, who snares in the Rohan house to capture birds for the purpose of forgiving sins. This is a very wise representation of how the boys are tricked and trapped like

the innocent birds. During the Afghan war youth were trapped and convinced for the Afghan war and they were sent to fight in practical battlegrounds either with guns in their hands or as suicide bombers. Once a boy is convinced, then his vanishing was certain because he was like a bird for those warriors who were working for this cause, as Aslam narrates;

“Once a bird has become trapped in the initial knot, a series of further knots will be activated instantly, to hold the entire body in place, to stop it from thrashing and harming itself.” (Aslam, p10)

The attack on the Army Public School has been foreseen in the novel in the form of Ardent Spirit which was attacked by young militants believing that they are taking revenge on the Western countries who has attacked Afghanistan and has killed innocent civilians and school kids. The attack on the Christian school has much similarity with APS which was attacked on 16 December 2014, by the similar ideology and presents the similar situation as it was in the Christian school.

“Six or seven people walking class-to-class and opening fire on children. At least 141 people, most of them children (132), died when Taliban gunmen attacked the school in the morning. The overwhelming majority of the victims were students at the school, which has children and teenagers in grades 1-10.” (Dawn, 2014)

It is the astonishing visionary power of Nedeem Aslam who predicted the consequences of war correctly. In the same way, he even predicted the incident of APS where the similar number of terrorists with the similar plan attacked a school of kids and killed many innocent kids just like Ardent Spirit. Even their weapons had some similarities with those of Ardent Spirit. Killing Pakistani innocents and bombing kids' educational institutes, was believed to be an act of revenge on the Pakistani military and the US army who had bombarded Afghanistan while the Pakistani army has helped them.

“Pakistan decided to support the U.S. policy of war on terrorism and this meant Pakistan officially went to war against the Taliban. Pakistan's goal is to see a stable Afghanistan, but if the U.S. would withdraw its forces, elements in Pakistan might once again be tempted to favor the Pastuns in the governance of Afghanistan.” (Akhtar, N. 2008)

Fighting violence and barbarism with violence has rarely yielded is positive results. American government had invaded Afghanistan and pushed Pakistan into battle. Pakistan also went into battle with the militants in order to abolish them. In the same way, they used force to cope Ahmad - a fighter, extremist and a warlord, in the Ardent Spirit and it lead to deadly situation. Thus it is proved that violence has always resulted in bloodshed and mayhem. Therefore, we need some non-violent strategies to cope with such situations. George Lakey's Concept of Negotiation can be worth of fruit here. The bloody event might not have happened if there had been negotiations between the two sides in the conflict of the Ardent Spirit and those of Army Public school.

Rohan - The Saviour as the Embodiment of Non-Violent Protest Campaigns

Rohan - owner of the garden, has always sought, throughout the novel, to prevent any kind of distress using peaceful strategies. He is presented by the writer like Jinnah of Pakistan. Although Jinnah fought for the protection of Pakistan, Rohan fought, non-violently, for the Garden. Rohan's political and religious approach was like Jinnah. He created the very foundations of the country with the propagation of the spirit of Islam in Pakistan during the partition. He believed that Muslims and Hindus cannot live together and thus it creates violence. So there should be a separate state for Muslims where there should be no violence and people should live in peace. "Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literary traditions. They neither intermarry nor eat together, and indeed they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions." (Kermani, 2017) Rohan does the same when he started The Ardent Spirit. He added Islam words to the writing which was written on the Arc. His belief about Islam as a peaceful religion compelled him to add a spirit of Islam to the Arc by not spreading the sense of chaos in the area where the roots of the people like Ahmad the Moth and Kyra whose extremist visions were only in favor of war. Rohan's sense of sympathy proved him as a savior rather cataclysmal of humanity by adding just words to the school, Aslam narrated ;

"The arch had read Education is the basis of law and order. Soon the word Islamic was added before Education, by Rohan himself, apparently against his wife's wishes. Over the years it has been amended further, going from Islamic education is the basis of law and order to Islam is the basis of law and then to Islam is the purpose of life." (Aslam, p.25)

After handing over the school by Ahmad the Moth to Major Kyra, Rohan was forced to expel from school because he was against violence and those who promoted it. He criticized Major Kyra for converting the school into a warriors training center and letting those boys be sent to war for taking personal revenge. He felt the pain of losing his sons in war as Jeo was killed in Afghanistan and Mikal (Rohan's foster son) becomes a prisoner of a warlord when he was in search of his brother in Afghanistan. This great tragedy spilled on Rohan caused him to lose his sight and the whole family was impacted by the war. This made him aware of the brutality and negative impacts of war and he tried all in his powers to prevent violence. Rohan with all his providence was aware of the situation and predicted that it will lead to worse consequences. Therefore, he criticized Kyra for his violent methods of ending the war as Rohan said to Kyra; "You promised me again and again that nothing to do with jihad would occur at this school," Rohan said. "You gave me your word." (Aslam, p27)

Rohan had become blind in the novel and war affected his life in many ways. He lost his beloved son and the war ended but a son, a brother and a husband did not come back from the war. Personally, he chose non-violent campaign but was not supported by the powerful. He was non-violent among the protesters. He had hold the school as a place of enlightenment and his method of education has great worth as compare to Ahmad the Moth, his brother and Kyra. People like

Rohan and his campaign of non-violence are still needed to prevent violence and destruction in our society.

Mikal - The Prisoner as an Embodiment of Policy Change and Reckless Behaviour.

As an adopted son of Rohan and Sofia, Mikal was deprived of his basic life needs. His search for his brother, unfortunately, pushed him to face the situation of life and death as he tragically kills a US soldier in self-defense.

When he was interrogated by the US interrogation team, he was silent most of the time and had fear of disclosing his true identity. He thought that the Americans will go for his loved one and kinship and will hurt them along with many other innocent people. During his interrogation, he was made to believe that he will not be treated like the Taliban treating their prisoners as Taliban treats their prisoners according to the code of Islam, "*Sharia*". Mikal was asked by an interrogation officer David;

"Let me tell you something," David says. "The reason the United States isn't torturing you, hooking you up to electricity or drilling holes in your bones, as some countries in the world do, is not that torture doesn't work. Torture most definitely does work. But we don't do it because we believe it is wrong and uncivilized." (Aslam, p.164)

But the truth is far from reality. Mikal was tortured and was not offered any negotiations as Lakey would suggest. He was kept alone in a dark room. He was beaten by the Policeman until he used to lose his consciousness. "The Military Policeman had become uncontrollable and beaten him savagely." (Aslam, p.164) In reality, along with his physical torture, he was psychologically intimidated by showing shadows and telling hatred words which might help in breaking Mikal's silence and compel him to say something about the US that may show that he hates the Americans as Aslam narrates "Say something. At least tell me we infidels will never win against the likes of you because we love life while you love death." (Aslam, p.161)

Mikal was alone in his darkroom. He faced many psychological problems as he was not let to sleep for many days. The dark room was now a hallucinating chamber for Mikal. His soliloquy in the novel shows that he was forcing his mind to remember and understand that why he is here, why he is facing all these sufferings? He was asked about his secret affair with Naheed and about his journey with and for Jeo but he was not willing to reveal anything because of his fear for the sake of his countrymen. Due to his condition, Mikal was not sure that whether the figure who is asking question is imaginary or real. Thus, we know that despite their pretence of being civilized, they are actually no different from those they have been demonizing as being uncivilized, as it is shown by the interrogator's statement;

"He wonders if the man is real, despite the fact that his laugh is continuing to swell in the air of the room, roaring like a giant wave getting louder as it encircles his head. He remembers how after they had interrogated a prisoner for twenty-nine consecutive hours he was brought back to the cage hallucinating, was seeing people and things that were not there. And then suddenly the light goes off and the laughter stops, nothing in the room but his own breathing. The pain in his arms is so intense it is screaming at him in a real voice, using human words." (Aslam, pp.169-170)

Mikal was imprisoned and tortured. When he was released, he killed two American soldiers and this happened because of the reckless and inhuman behaviour of the interrogative officers. Instead of dealing with him properly and through negotiation, as Lakey would suggest, they treated him in an inhuman way and eventually made him a beast. Mikal might not have killed anyone, if the method of the invaders was peaceful. A deep change in policy is needed while dealing with situations like that of Mikal and in other interrogation centers to prevent such catastrophic results.

Naheed - The freedom fighter as an Embodiment of Post-Terror Recovery Program

Naheed holds a strong position throughout the novel and the story moves along with her presence. Her husband, Jeo with whom she was in love, her devotion and loyalty towards him were unquestionable. Jeo was killed in Afghanistan despite of his good intentions of helping the victims of war. She always sought freedom in every aspect of her life, but her mother, Tara did not let her do so. She was in favor of keeping the child of Jeo when the news of his death was confirmed but Tara forced her to abort the child. Tara - a widow, forced her daughter Naheed not to keep the identity of her lost object or lost love because she had fear that her daughter will face the same fate, being a widow, as she faced in her life. Naheed breaks the fear and norms of society and criticized her mother as;

"I am tired of being afraid all the time—'
The world is a dangerous place.

Let me finish, Mother. It was wrong of you to frighten me into destroying my child. It was wrong of you to frighten Mikal away. I don't care what you have been through, but you should never ever frighten those younger than you with your own fears. Caution is one thing, but you filled me with terror. Just leave me alone please. Just take this world of yours and go away with it somewhere and leave us alone." (Aslam, p.188)

After the death of Jeo, Naheed becomes a burden for the family and they all get worried about her future. Tara is trying to convince Rohan for finding a suitable person for her, while Basie is trying to bind her to the norms. Despite Naheed's own existence, she was treated as an object and her will was negated as; "Naheed's future? As long as I am alive, sister-ji, the girl will be provided for. This remains her home.' Basie, sitting beside her, assents too. No! She shakes her head. 'I want her to marry again. We'll find a good man for her,' Basie says.

‘Let’s allow a period of time to pass, and then we’ll begin to look.’ (Aslam, pp.80-81)

Naheed is too bound to society and that is why her mother feels fear that no one will take her responsibility again if she has the child of her lost love. They fear she will be facing the same situation as they were in poverty-stricken families. The fate of the family is now in the hand of others like Rohan and then Sharif Sharif and Naheed is used as a tool for survival. Sharif Sharif, as his name, resembles the Arabic ‘The Innocent one’, while he is taking benefit from Tara’s family. “Sharif Sharif used Tara for a few years after she was widowed and then threw her aside.” (Aslam, p.93) And now after the death of Jeo Sharif Sharif trying to convince Rohan for marrying Naheed as he asked from Rohan “I am willing to marry Naheed to put an end to your worries and her widowhood.” (Aslam, p.142)

Mikal is a recovery object. He resembles the lost love of Naheed. She, in search of her lost love (Jeo), starts a journey to find an object that might console her. She is delighted when she finds out that Mikal is not dead and he will return and will cancel her forced marriage with Sharif Sharif. She criticizes her mother for not letting Mikal marry her. “Yes you did. He didn’t say anything but I think he came here to ask for my hand. You must have made him feel like a worthless beggar.” (Aslam, p.95)

Naheed’s life gets better when she finds that Mikal is alive and her thoughts keep changing about the keepsake of her love. She is now trying to give the place of Jeo to Mikal by aborting his legitimate child and taking the illegitimate son of Mikal.

Along with Naheed, Mikal’s mentality also changed after realizing his guilt and the same love as Naheed was searching for; “That’s another good thing to say to me. And you might want to rethink some of the guilt you’ve been carrying around about shooting those Americans. I’ll try. The men I killed had mothers, fathers, probably wives, and children. I killed them and must pay for the crime.” (Aslam, p.292). Naheed became a recovery object for Mikal. She became his safe heaven which made him fall in love with peace and non-violence. He was slowly becoming a changed person and the new environment has a very positive impact on him. Now the life of Naheed and Mikal along with Basie and Yasmin recovers and Aslam has narrated them all living happily in their daily lives. Naheed watches the boy - the son of Mikal and predicts him to be a good man in his personality, manner, and mood as Aslam narrated;

“Naheed stands beside them and turns her head to see the two children playing with the toy truck. Mikal’s son and that of Basie and Yasmin. She imagines what the boys will be like as young men—reserved in manner on the whole, but with a component of laughing wildness in the personality, revealing itself occasionally.” (Aslam, p.366)

Thus, it can be concluded from the positive recovery of the characters when they were put in a peaceful and healthy situation that Lakey’s Post-Terror recovery program can be very beneficial for war victims and all the people who

are affected by war in one way or another. Their mentality can be changed by engaging them in a program where they divert their minds from terror and adopt a manner of peace. They can have a very nice recovery environment with the help of educational programs like Access and English Work as well as other NGO programs.

CONCLUSION

As a representative of peace, Aslam ruled over non-violent individuals throughout the novel and utilized the power of the pen to paint the true portrait of the Pakistani mind. In addition to telling the tale of Rohan's family's involvement in the Afghan War, the novel also provides readers with a new perspective on the world.

The research reveals the brutality of forced war on ordinary people's life and their fight to survive in the face of bullets, like in the cases of Naheed, Mikal, and Jeo. Naheed is a regular Pakistani youngster whose stability has been threatened by the forced conflict. Aslam depicts the typical Pakistani folks in *The Blind Man's Garden* through Jeo and Mikal's trek to Afghanistan to aid the victims.

This research finds out that violence in every form is harmful and destructive. War is one of the worse kind of violence which destroys human lives in many ways. Therefore, strategies to avoid wars should be adopted. This research find out that George Lakey's of Negotitation, Recless behaviour, Post-Terror Recovery Programe and Pro-conflict Educational Training can be used as very useful tools against war and violence.

Due to the fact that Pakistan served as both a Taliban haven and an American military facility (Badaber Airbase), it was forced into an awkward position during the Afghan War. The amount of literature that has been produced is really little and remains untapped by educational institutions. Pakistani authors discussed 9/11 from a sophisticated viewpoint and looked at several angles of the occurrences. However, the most of material is not taught in English literary classes. It's feasible that books like *The Blind Man's Garden* will be used as a counter-terrorism instructional tool if they are included in our educational system.

The Blind Man's Garden acts as a mental injection and parallel institution technique to alter the aggressive mindset. This study may be useful in raising public awareness and developing a rehabilitation strategy. English literature should include *The Blind Man's Garden* so that students may learn how to deal with such tragic events in a confident manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study provided fresh insight into *The Blind Man's Garden* and paved the door for further investigation. Additional research could benefit the general population and reveal a fresh strategy for promoting peace.

Taking into account Lakey's techniques and their proven effectiveness because they were developed as a result of prior experience with various initiatives in

nations like Burma. In regard to *The Blind Mind's Garden* and other works of literature, these tactics proved to be effective in combating violence and terrorism. It is further recommended to check these strategies in other novels like *Shadow of Cursed Man*, *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Maps of lost Lovers* etc. In the present era, when many audiences exist with interests spread across several spheres of existence. For instance, some people enjoy reading, while others enjoy playing games or watching films. Compared to reading, there are far more people who watch videos, which we refer to as "screen time." Approximately 66% of people in the globe, according to Terry Stancheva, spend their free time watching videos on platform forms. (Stancheva, 2023)

Due to the Screen Time Era, it is highly recommended that *The Blind Man's Garden* be adapted for the stage and turned into a local language film. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the general populace.

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