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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Pakistan, History, Instability, Writ, Failure, Rights and Responsibility</p>	<p>Pakistan's history is evidence of the fact that it has failed to achieve stability and growth since its founding. Political instability started in the early years and continues to this day thereby leaving the state institutions crippled and inefficient. The political and economic problems have also weakened the state's writ and the combination of these varied factors has pushed the state towards failure. This research studies novel, <i>Nobody Killed Her</i>, to analyze the state failure in the novel. The characters in the novel suffer because of the lawlessness of the state and not given their fundamental human rights. Qualitative content analysis technique is used to carry out this research. The study comes to conclusion that state responsibilities are not fully executed by the government institution in the selected novel. The results of study offer significant information in reaching the conclusion and making the desired and leading decisions about phenomena. It further establishes link between hybrid regimes and failed states, as well as the dire predicament that failed states place their population.</p> <p> 2023 Journal of Social Sciences Development</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Nobody Killed Her (Javeri, 2017) tells the story of two women, Rani Shah and Nazo. Rani Shah is the daughter of a former prime minister who was deposed and hanged after a military coup. The story is about Rani Shah's struggle to win back her political legacy and to fulfill her social and political agenda. She meets Nazo while in exile and makes her a part of her journey. Nazo is ambitious woman who is dedicated to Rani Shah but does not shy away from achieving her own goals along the way. The novel portrays a misogynistic society which finds it difficult to accept leadership of a woman. It further depicts a power structure where personal and political get mixed up. Rani Shah finds her

lofty ideals slipping away as she is caught amid feudal, mullahs, generals, and her husband Balgodi. A parallel narrative runs throughout the novel telling events of a court room drama regarding Rani Shah's assassination with Nazo in dock for being the prime suspect (Qazi, 2013). *Nobody Killed Her* is a tale of political machinations, friendship, love, intrigue, loyalty, and deception. The title of this political thriller "Nobody Killed Her" encapsulates a very terse and pointed message by answering the question, who killed her?

On the one hand it simply implies that Rani Shah was not assassinated at all, and it was Nazo who got killed in the bomb blast as the ending lines of the novel suggest. But on the other hand, it also entails that such questions seldom find conclusive answers in society where everything is marred by lack of justice and rule of law. Even if Rani Shah were murdered it would have made no difference as, "in this land, rulers are born, not chosen" (p.429). Politics runs in blood in the society depicted in the novel. Even if Rani Shah had died, she would have continued to live in her progeny. Besides, her sacrifice would have breathed new life into her party's political stature. Thus, nobody could have killed her anyway as the political system that she is part of is meant only for the political elite and common aspirants like Nazo can only dream about replacing these family-owned power structures. The novel in this sense is a masterpiece firstly, because it very skillfully highlights the minutest possible socio/political issues associated with a state that lacks rule of law, where the elite govern and do not serve, and where human rights are trampled under the feet of those in power. Secondly, it brings to fore the unflinching political struggle of two courageous women who refuse to bow down to the dominant patriarchal structures and continue to fight for their own ambitions despite all the abuse and torture hurled at them.

Additionally, her sacrifice would have given her party's political prestige a boost. Since political system she is a part of is solely intended for the political elite and common hopefuls like Nazo can only dream of changing these family-owned power structures, nobody could have murdered her in any case. First and foremost, novel is a masterpiece in this regard because it deftly draws attention to the most minute socio-political problems related to a society without rule of law, where the elite dominate and do not serve, and where those in authority trample on human rights. Lastly, because it turns scathing sarcastic light on protagonist herself who turns out to be just another shrewd and deceptive politician who has a skill of survival. Who despite all her personal struggles proves to be a member of a political family which will keep producing leaders in times to come not because they deserve to be but because that are born to be? All these issues are analyzed with the help of the following framework. A state, according to Finer (1970), is organization with a defined territory that includes every person, has sole use of force, and is subject to government. This definition, which asserts that a state must have a territory it can control and exercise exclusive authority over, makes clear the requirements of a state.

All the citizens must be treated equally, and there must be several people who are willing to use violence to further their goals "resulting in loss of physical control of territory, and/or the monopoly over the legitimate use of force" (Taylor, 2013, p.1). Like this, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, a state is considered to have failed "when it cannot project authority over its territory and peoples, and it cannot protect its national boundaries." According to this view, a state can also disintegrate

when its institutions, including military, legislative branch, executive branch, court, bureaucracy, and legislative branch, stop working correctly and lose effectiveness. Such a state is incapable of providing, among public goods and services, infrastructure, health, education, economic progress, or general human wellbeing. Politics runs in blood in society depicted in novel. Even if Rani Shah had died, she would have continued to live in her progeny. A collapsing state cannot guarantee the safety, wealth, or political stability of its population. Power over legal use of force is lost when a state collapses. It cannot protect vital human rights and civil liberties. The final stage of state breakdown, which is a spectrum, is total collapse.

Problem Statement

Given the serious ramifications for populace, there is urgent need to carefully assess and scrutinize the current condition of things in nation. The conundrum of hybrid regimes and resulting difficulties are reflected in modern Pakistani literature as a mirror of the society in which it is created. *Nobody Killed Her* weaves its story around different themes reflective of socio-economic issues of Pakistan. This study aims to highlight one such issue that often evades even a keen academic eye and tries to prove that *Nobody Killed Her* portrays many socio-political problems, but state failure is implicit idea that needs to be brought to light.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations that gauge state fragility list Pakistan among states with varying degrees of failure. Pakistan is one of most fragile countries, according to the [FFP Fragile States Index Annual Report \(2019\)](#). Eight categories make up this indication in total: very sustainable, sustainable, more stable, warning, raised warning, high warning, alert, high alert, as well as extremely high alert. The security apparatus, factionalized elites, group grievances, economic decline, uneven growth, the brain drain, human flight, public service, human rights and the rule of law, demographic pressure, refugees and IDPs, and foreign involvement are among the twelve primary variables that influences the scores. Pakistan is listed as the 155th country in the "Alert" category out of 178 countries. Pakistan ranks as the 23rd most vulnerable nation in 2019 according to this rating. Pakistan is categorized as a failing state in another research by [Graf \(2012\)](#). The ability to use force; the capacity to produce sufficient revenue to support operations; the effectiveness with which operations are managed; the capacity to control civil society through the provision of public goods; and the capacity to compel legitimacy are the five factors used in this study to evaluate state capacity. Pakistan is ranked 159th out of 172 states and is considered a failing state by this assessment. Like that, the 2019 Freedom House Report rates Pakistan as "somewhat free".

According to this study, Pakistan holds regular elections, however despite this, military significantly affects many elements of national policy. It also highlights the ways in which the government has curtailed civil liberties. Pakistan is included among the states with varied degrees of the failure by organizations that measure state fragility. According to the [FFP Fragile States Index Annual Report \(2019\)](#), Pakistan is one of the most fragile nations. This indicator has a total of eight categories: highly sustainable, sustainable, more stable, warning, raised warning, high warning, alert, high alert, and high alert. Scores are based on twelve key indicators, including security apparatus, factionalized elites, group grievances, economic decline, uneven development, brain drain, legitimacy of state,

public service, human rights, and rule of law, and pressure on population, refugees, and IDPs, and external intervention. There are several examples from 2018 that highlight how precarious status is. Irregularities were seen during the 2018 elections. In environment before election, PTI was preferred. Media faced increased restrictions. A state must have authority over its whole area, its institutions must be running at peak efficiency, and its citizens must enjoy both internal and external security, civic amenities, and political stability.

The hybrid governments perform worse on all of these fronts than both liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes, and as a result, they are more likely to fail. Pakistan is one of states that fails the most, even if it hasn't completely disintegrated. Corruption is rife, and government activity is not entirely transparent. According to this study, Pakistan has a strong media industry, but it is not entirely free since newspapers and TV networks are subject to laws and because some themes are forbidden and cannot be discussed. Religious freedom is also not fully guaranteed because of the numerous allegations of discrimination made by minorities. Evaluations of freedom of expression in this study are not uniform. Rule of law is key module of political stability. Because of politicization of the court and the general legal system's problems with corruption, a backlog of cases, and low conviction rates, Freedom House assigns this category low grade. Due process of law is the concern brought up by this report since it claims that law enforcement agencies are behaving arbitrarily. Study draws attention to several legal and extra-legal impediments, including inheritance laws and land grabbing, that may obstruct individual liberties including freedom of movement and property ownership, among other things.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Citing all the research just helps to highlight how inadequately the Pakistani government has maintained the civil liberties, freedom of expression, individual freedoms, and other fundamental rights of its citizens. Regarding the indicators, all these assessments provide the comparable scores. Qualitative research is based on identifying an issue and then moving to systematically interpret the data to provide an analysis that sheds light on the said issue (Tracy, 2013, p.2). Data gathering came next after sample selection procedure. Inductive methodology used in qualitative content analysis gives the researcher the freedom to go back and forth between different stages of inquiry, questions, data collecting, and analysis. As result, information from sample was gathered at various stages of the research, and questions were shaped accordingly. The actual data was made up of text quotations that matched the requirements of the research goals. The process of creating descriptive codes resulted from this. The present research identifies the issue of state failure and then moves on to analyze selected data. Qualitative content analysis uses an inductive approach which allows the researcher with liberty to move back and forth between various stages of research, questions, data collection and analysis.

RESULTS OF STUDY

It has obvious that Nobody Killed Her depicts the state where law is constantly broken, state's authority is challenged, and the perpetrators of the crimes roam free. The way these institutions are portrayed in the book merely reflects the reality of the nation, where one just needs to look at the

financial allocations to see how significant government deems these two organizations to be. Very early in the novel, future Prime Minister, Rani Shah plans to return home with hopes of dislodging the General from power, but her mode of achieving this goal depicts the level of degradation her native country's institutions have fallen to. The fundamental human rights of people are inevitably violated as a result of governmental failure. Because governmental institutions are powerless to defend Rani Shah and because she is forced to run her election campaign under pressure, Rani Shah herself becomes a victim. Jihadists openly threaten her, yet she is unable to stop them. She must also put up with Balgodi's domestic abuse and endure the torture since she depends on him to maintain the stability of her dictatorship. Like how Nazo stumbles from one trial to next, she is let down by state judicial system. Balgodi and Jihadists sexually attack her, and state institutions are powerless to stop them since they are conscious of their own invincibility. It is observed that state is unable to execute laws and regulations and seems to fail to implement and ensure human rights to common people of the country.

DISCUSSION

The Jihadists, the landlords and the ordinary thugs challenge the writ of state with impunity. Rani Shah, who is living in exile in the US before returning to her native country, strives for the rights of her people back home by running a campaign against the General from her apartment. She is an avid enthusiast of women's rights, particularly their right to education. She plans to bring women at par with men, to build schools for them, and repeal discriminatory laws against them once she comes to power. Her words inspire women, and some decide to challenge the established discriminatory structures. A young girl shows her resistance simply by going to school despite the Jihadists threat. She pays the price with her life. "A teenage girl had been shot in the head for going to the school" (Javeri, 2017, p. 16). The state is unable to provide protection to the young girl and fails to impose its writ as the Jihadists challenge it blatantly. The existence of the Jihadists in the first place is the symptom of state's writ being weak. Secondly, the Jihadists do not obey the laws of the land. They usurp the state's sole right of legitimate use of force and use it at will. Even after she is killed, state remains indifferent and uninterested to make its presence felt and challenge the elements that encroach upon its writ.

Rani Shah and her comrades believe that she will be able to change this situation once she gets back home and remove General's regime which seemed compliant to Jihadists. "But perhaps all that change after your return" (p.36). While loitering in New York, Nazo reminisces about her time there as she encounters some youngsters with tattoos on their arms. "The purplish tattoo on the arms" (p.36). The Jihadists make their own laws and enforce them as well, which is an affront to legitimate laws of state. A liberal democratic state makes laws that protect fundamental rights of its citizens and ensures enforcement and application of those laws in letter and spirit. An IHCCD, as located in novel, on other hand, fails to stop a parallel system of justice from functioning in broad daylight. Rule of law is one of the important differences between so-called developed and underdeveloped countries. Comparison with USA is apt since degree to which rule of law exists in a state determines great deal of its prosperity. Use of force in any way by non-state entities for any purpose whatsoever

goes against the spirit of a state because the monopoly of use of force rests only with the state with the exclusion of all other factors.

Rani Shah decides to go back and change all this. Her dream is to create a true democracy where the state's writ stands supreme. However, her return is also fraught with danger and uncertainty because the forces that are enjoying the fruits of weak writ of the state are not going to allow anyone from destabilizing the status quo. Her friend Yasmin advises her not to return. "They will kill you as soon as you land. It's lawless there" (p.38). Yasmin's words say it all. Lawlessness is a big problem in her native country. Elections that are organized by general in charge and are held under influence of an outside force can scarcely be considered free and fair. As they give the populace a forum to actively engage in the political activities of state, political parties serve as the foundation of every contemporary democracy. To manage elected members of parliament and establish authoritarian governments with a democratic veneer, generals frequently arrange the party-free elections. Even though her close friend Yasmin recommends against it citing threats, Rani Shah decides to return to her homeland and start her election campaign while being totally enraged by The General's choice. The General having killed her father, who was an elected prime minister, feels no qualms about doing the same to her.

If he does not do it, the Jihadists will gladly wear the mantle as they find the prospect of a female prime minister very daunting. Rani, however, does return home only to find the proof of her friend's ominous words. As she lands and is welcomed by cheers of a joyous crowd a man attacks her with a knife, only to be protected by Nazo who takes the hit, "I took the sharp twist of the knife in my back" (p.45). The state fails to protect her even though it was evident that she will be a target for the Jihadists. This state seems to be completely devoid of any form of order and discipline "There are a lot of factions within the General's party. The cracks are beginning to show" (p.57). When Rani Shah manages to escape attempt on her life, the assassin is not apprehended and taken into custody by the state institutions, rather he is lynched by the crowd. More evidence to prove the weak writ of the state. In an ideal democracy state makes every effort to protect life and property of its citizens and it also makes sure that perpetrators of crime are captured and dealt with according to the laws of the land. A state with a weak writ leaves space open for everyone to transgress the limits imposed by the law. Nazo and her attacker both become victims of the lawlessness that abounds in the state as portrayed in the novel.

Rani Shah is part of the elite herself and is no common citizen. It does not mean that ordinary people should be treated any differently than the elite but that is the case in Pakistan of the novel. If Rani Shah's life is always at risk and the state is unable to protect her then ordinary citizens can forget about this luxury because the state's resources are too minuscule to be spent to protect the lives of its citizens. They often die in bomb blasts, target killings, natural disasters etc. and all the state can do is to publish numbers of the dead in the media and console the grieving families sometimes with a bonus of some money. The General himself falls prey to this situation. He had come to power by a coup. Being in power he had made use of his absolute authority to persecute his political opponents and had made laws that discriminated against women. But the tables turn finally as a system that does not respect the writ of the state turns on him as various elements begin to lay down a plan for

his removal. "Later that day, I placed a list of names and numbers of breakaway Jihadist's factions, disgruntled army colleagues, political enemies who all had one thing in common. They too wanted to see General dead" (p.70). Nobody is safe in lawless state. Every creature is fair game, be it schoolgirl, a politician or a general.

When writ is enforced across board, it ensures that monopoly over use of force is limited to the state. The General weakens this writ by orchestrating a coup and then allowing the Jihadists to become partners in the use of force, thus compromising the very founding principle of a state's apparatus. In the absence of a system that ensures rule of law, the powerful General begins to lose his grip over power until his plane crashes under mysterious circumstances. He falls prey to the very system he erects which is closer to a barbaric wilderness than to a liberal democracy. References to Darwin are unmistakable in text. "It's survival of the fittest" (p.71). In state with weak writ, it certainly helps to be fittest. The General rules until he is the most powerful, but as his political might wanes he is devoured by more powerful players. Rani Shah believes that she can be a player in this wild game and prove her fitness. Rani's mother, however, realizes danger she faces in state with weak writ and warns her, "Leave this jungle of a place" (p.116). Jungle does not protect weak nor hold accountable. It is place where wild animals roam free and devour any weak creature that comes into sight. Rani's mother warns her that these dogs "will rip you to shreds" (p.116). The state as portrayed in the novel also does not protect the weak.

Its law stands by as a spectator while people sort their matters out between themselves according to their place in social and political hierarchy. What better example can the researcher give than is already present in the text as quoted above? Reference to Darwin explains everything explicitly that jungle might have law, but this law always favors the mighty. Rule of law in a state on the other hand ensures equal implementation of the law on all without exceptions. Writ of the state rules supreme and everyone serves its will or at least that is theory, but the state of Pakistan as presented in the novel may not yet be anarchy but is close to a system that can best be described in Darwinian terms. The text is full of other instances of weak writ of the state. Balgodi's threat to Nazo at one point in the novel says a lot about feudal elite's exclusive writ in the villages. "Do you know what we do with people in our villages whose tongues grow too long?" (p.197). Feudal lords slight the writ of the state anyway, but they hold absolute sway in their strongholds, the countryside. The poor and destitute peasants work through generations for the landed elite and are subject, not to the laws of the state, but the laws made by landlords. A state within a state where laws are made and enforced by the feudal lords.

The state remains an irrelevant thing in such territories as its institutions stay away from interfering in the private fiefdoms. In the absence of state institutions, Justice is dispensed by the tribunals of elders, a parallel system of justice, which blatantly displays erosion of the writ of the state. The text narrates the tale of Mai Mumtaz, who is gang-raped at the orders of such a tribunal in a remote village. This incident clearly highlights the impotence of a state that is unable to enforce its writ across its territory. Areas that fall inside the boundaries of a state are supposed to be within its jurisdiction, no matter how remote. Legitimate use of force is the sole prerogative of the state, not of some Jihadist tribunal or a feudal lord. But the state depicted in the novel seems to be indifferent

to the existence of such illegitimate centers of power who challenge its writ. Balgodi symbolizes the helplessness of state as he and people like him seem to exist in a separate sphere where they reign supreme. He cannot be touched no matter what he does, and it is his will that can bring the law to its knees and make it bow before him. He knows it and his arrogance emanates a sense of certainty that the state seems to lack. Ironically, instead of the state, Nazo decides to challenge the might of these pockets of power.

Her attempts fail miserably as she is picked up in broad day light by Jihadists and raped. “We will make an example out of you” (p.335). She does become an example, but more vividly a blot on face of the state that never even tries to challenge the authority of these Jihadists. They burn down girl’s schools without any state reprisal and treat women like cattle in regions under their control. “Even goats get more respect in the Jihadist regions” (p.326). The term Jihadist regions hints at territory within the state where state’s writ is non-existent. It is a region carved out by the Jihadists just like fiefdoms maintained under feudal rule. Laws are broken everywhere in world; difference, however, comes when the comparison is made between reactions of states after law has been challenged and measures that states have taken that there is no repeat of such an act. Rape is a crime that jolts very fabric of society therefore it is not just a crime against a person but against state and society itself just like murder. Nazo like Mai Mumtaz finds out insignificance of individuals if not overarching power that protects all. Jihadis are a self-proclaimed band of righteous who are fighting for a higher cause, but their actions speak for themselves as burning schools and raping women are not righteous in any ideology.

However, the question is not about ideologies but about the writ of state in this research right now. The state is either complicit or unable to challenge their authority is beyond the point as it is not discussed in the novel but reality that it does not seem to do anything about it is astounding. The weak writ of the state is not only evident in the remote corners of state, the big cities also regularly become victims of the state’s failure to enforce its writ. “There was blood in the streets as ethnic rivals battled it out in city” (p.215). The text refers to the seeds of this ethnic violence being sown by the General who was head of state. Instead of defeating already present challengers to state authority, new monsters are created by rulers themselves, thus compounding the problems of a fragile state. Turf wars between rivals in the biggest city of Pakistan have long been a serious threat to economic, political stability of country. Political rivalry is a healthy activity in democracy unless it is limited to peaceful means of debate and protest. But in case of this city, it borders civil war as members of political parties make militant wings and use to win political dominance. Police and law execution agencies try in vain to keep law and order and protect lives of innocent citizens who become victims of these turf wars.

If the General plays his part in eroding the writ of the state so, do politicians. The oppositions leader being an elected member of the parliament must uphold the ideals of true democracy and raise his legitimate concerns regarding the corruption of the government within the parliament, but he too chooses to trample the laws of the land under his political influence as he raids the house of the prime minister with a mob and threatens to let them loose. “He says if Balgodi Sahib does not come out, he’ll let the mobs loose on us” (p.248). Rani Shah by the end of the novel is campaigning again for

the office of prime minister but her efforts are once more fraught with danger as she is threatened by phone calls to, "Stay at home. A woman's place is at home" (p.405). A democratic government is the product of an electoral process where elections are free and fair. The political leaders must have ample opportunity to run their campaigns without any coercion or threat. In this linking, Rani Shah, however, dares to lead an election campaign despite the threats and is ready to pay the ultimate price for it. She escapes one bomb attack then another "A gunshot, followed by the blast. The blood everywhere" (p.423).

But these threats and attacks lay bare the undeniable weakness of the writ of the state as it fails to provide protection not only to ordinary citizens but even to political elite. All-important characters in novel, Rani Shah, Nazo, and the President thus turn out to be the victims of weak writ of the state. It means that the writ of the state is a protecting force not only for weak but also for the mighty as it puts a civilizing lid on an otherwise chaotic mess that can burn everything and everyone that comes in its way. Novel thus depicts state where Jihadists roam free and carve out territory for themselves, the political elite uses its power to increase its own political influence, military remains involved in the political affairs, ethnic groups turn cities into war zones, the feudal lords create parallel systems of justice, and all this adds up to weaken the writ of the state. This incident clearly highlights the impotence of a state that is unable to enforce its writ across its territory. It is a region carved out by Jihadists just like fiefdoms maintained under feudal rule. Instead of annihilating already present challengers to state authority, new monsters are created by rulers themselves, thus compounding the problems of a fragile state.

State Failure in Nobody Killed Her (Failure of state institutions)

In Nobody Killed Her, state institutions like judiciary, parliament, police, executive, and the military fail to serve the people of the country. The office of the prime minister itself is depicted as a source of corruption. A state functions through its vital institutions which exist to provide services and work for the welfare of its citizens. The state institutions as portrayed in the novel, however, seem to exist only to make the lives of the people more miserable. The judiciary does not dispense justice, police fail to protect the lives, colleges fail to give admissions to the deserving, parliament fails to change draconian laws, the prime minister fails to implement any policy and the military interferes in politics. It is evident from this sentiment of hers that it is the Americans and not the state institutions who get to choose the next ruler of her country. The General himself is an affront to the integrity of state institutions. He is the head of a state institution, the military, and instead of serving in his position according to the laws of the land, decides to hang the elected prime minister and take over the reins of the country himself. "He hung the only legally elected prime minister the country had ever had" (p.39). The argument might be made that an individual's actions must not be projected on the institution.

This might be a valid argument if the institution immediately realizes such an action to be against the constitution and takes action against such an individual but if the institution decides to support him in his decisions and accepts his unlawful actions then it also will be liable to blame. His failure in this case to uphold the law of the land will become the failure of his institution. Besides if such an unlawful action is a rare anomaly in an otherwise disciplined institution that upholds the law of the

land a case can be made in its favor but if same law is broken again and again without consequences for such individuals then it becomes difficult to give the institution a clean chit. Rani Shah plans to make amends once she comes to power and promises to revitalize the ailing system. She laments the absolute lack of civic facilities for people and promises to work for welfare of common folk if voted for her. "Vote for Shah and soon there will be food, shelter, work and education for every one of you" (p.168). She realizes that every single state institution needs revamping as illiteracy, injustice, corruption and lack of accountability. She singles out lack of literacy as key factor in broken system of state and lays down a plan. But once she does come to power, the promises are either forgotten or become too idealistic dreams.

Institutions continue to fail as before, and she herself becomes part of the broken system, she had come to mend. Institutions related to education, health and justice remain as useless as before as she gets busy fighting her own political battles and ideals of civic duty are superseded by expediency of power politics. The cabinet is prime institution in any modern state as it makes and implements the policies concerning all affairs of state. Other institutions are subservient and look to guidance towards this pillar of the state. Rani Shah's cabinet is divided and utterly rudderless as the prime minister, the head of the cabinet, fails to convince the members on any policy matters. Her ideal of literacy for all is trashed by the members as they show her the impossibility of achieving such goals. Maulana urges her to focus on the Islamic education and spend on madrassas, whereas the District in charge laments that in his jurisdiction, "the feudal will never allow the villagers to go to schools" (p.212). The Cabinet fails to come to any consensus regarding the education policy as the different members' point to the limitations of their authority. This episode in the text centers on the failure of the prime state institute as members themselves accept their failure to implement the proposals of the prime minister.

Instead, they seem to be more focused upon dividing among themselves the lucrative ministerial portfolios. Rani Shah's cabinet meeting becomes a, "booty war as men divided up portfolios while you sat back and watched" (p.213). The cabinet, guiding force in the state system, is presented in the novel as a company of pirates who are more interested in booty than in making and implementing policies for the welfare of poverty-stricken masses. The Prime Minister's cabinet, the elite institution that is responsible for welfare of every aspect of a state's affairs, is reduced to status of a group of greedy and selfish individuals whose sole purpose is to launder state's resources and enrich their own coffers. There might have been some very honorable ministers in the history of the country, but institution of cabinet generally is found to be corrupt and inefficient. Most of its members seldom have any expertise in the area that they are heading. This is how Rani Shah's cabinet is presented in novel. The office of the prime minister is extremely important facet of a state. Rani Shah's office, however like other institutions depicted in novel fails to work for betterment of people, instead it becomes involved in corrupt practices.

Financial corruption is the bane of any state institution as it devours the entire state structure like a termite, but if the highest office itself becomes stricken with this disease, then the state can expect nothing less than failure. Rani Shah's corruption is exposed by newspapers as accused of buying a huge mansion in Scotland, named, "Star Abbey" (p.256). Her financial corruption is further exposed

when bridge collapses. “An central bridge, newly built by one of your contractors, had collapsed” (p.311). Her office begins to grant contracts not by following the procedures but by nepotism and exchange of bribes. Balgodi, makes full use of his status as husband of the prime minister to make business deals and take commission for granting contracts. At one point in novel he openly admits, brags taking bribes. “Do you know why they call me commissioner? Not because I commission, but as I take it! I take the cut” (p.302). The office of the prime minister thus becomes a din of corruption and Rani Shah forgets about all worthy ideals she had dreamed about before coming to power. Instead, she becomes apathetic to the plight of country and sympathetic to erratic desires of her corrupt husband. He enters talks with China to build a dam and she gives her surreptitious support despite misgivings of opposition.

He wants to build a stud farm and asks her for money, and instead of questioning his infantile request, she asks, “How much” (p.233). The office of the prime minister, the supreme institution of the state miserably fails to fulfill its duties and to work for the welfare of the people. The state’s resources are squandered on private palaces, farms, and flimsy schemes thus eroding the economic foundations of the country. Again, a case can be made that Rani Shah is an individual and she must not be used to portray an entire institution as a failure. This would have been the case if there was a system of checks and balances and an individual was held responsible for his/her actions as is the case in some liberal democracies, but one Prime Minister after another is accused to corruption and every time system of checks and ant corruption fails to prove anything and this process continues unabated. Police and judiciary are also important state institutions that ensure the rule of law and dissemination of justice, irrespective of the political, social, or economic distinction amongst the citizens. But both these institutions as depicted in the novel fail to establish rule of law and deliver justice to the people. Police is meek when it comes to seizing the mighty and is indifferent when ordinary citizens need protection.

The occasion of Balgodi’s arrest paints a pathetic picture of the police which has been reduced to a handmaiden of the elite as it arrests him with, “their heads bowed, certain that when he was released, they would all lose their jobs” (p.250). As it turns out, he is released from prison after a while and he finds himself bragging, “not even the strongest jail can keep me in for long” (p.262). This incident is not just a failure of an individual officer but of the entire institution. Police as an institution fails to enforce and implement law on all equally and makes the mockery of itself. This failure has a lasting effect on people in the general as they become more aware of their helplessness and hopelessness. The same police fail to act when Mai Mumtaz is raped on the orders of the Jihadist Tribunal. She shows great courage to report the case, but the police and judiciary display utter indifference in the case citing it to be a matter of tradition. Goons turn out to be a better alternative to the police and judiciary, the irony is obvious. “Police and judiciary all turned a blind eye” (p.323). The two most important state institutions meant for protecting the weak show no urgency when it comes to doing their job.

This incident reflects countless such cases in Pakistan where the victims have to make peace with the assailants or have to suffer even more because the judicial system’s complicated procedures seldom provide swift justice and more importantly if the assailant is a powerful person or a group,

as is the case presented in the novel, the police's investigation and prosecution makes it almost impossible for the judges to provide justice. The court's lengthy procedures and delayed justice is mentioned in the text when Nazo talks about helping a retired schoolteacher get possession of her house by using goons instead of police. If she had gone to the court, she would have to pay hefty bribes and wait for many years to get possession as "the government chain of command would take years for the thing to be corrected legally" (p.275). Thus, goons turn out to be a better alternative to the police and judiciary, the irony is obvious. This is a common scene in our everyday lives that is depicted in the novel. It sounds pathetic and grotesque while people find it easier to plead their case with a Robin Hood like character than the law enforcement agencies because they know the economic cost of going to a court of law would alone be too heavy to bear, let alone the physical and psychological cost.

Judiciary's failure to do its job is further highlighted in the novel when Rehmat Fatima Azizullah cannot get admission to a prestigious college and her father decides to file a case against admissions committee. But his case is thrown out because he "did not have money to bribe a hearing" (p.280). This incident clearly hints at rampant corruption in the courts of law and the resulting mistrust of people in the judicial system of country. A goon would have come in handy on this occasion and the girl would have admission without much fuss or girl's father would have himself been a goon that would have been a sight worthy of look/two. When Nazo is raped and she suggests pressing charges against the rapists, Rani Shah advises her against it. "Going to court and telling people all about how you were raped by three men is not going to help you" (p.338). It is not helpful because the courts do not dispense justice and it is hopeless to expect any succor from them. Nazo here seems a bit desperate because she herself is part of powerful elite and knows very well that her opponents must be more powerful than her and the idea of pressing charges is nothing more than an illusion or her hope was that her dear leader Rani Shah would come to her help and make a call or two to make her case worthy of police's time.

But Rani Shah's reply makes it clear that she has no interest in pressing charges for Nazo. It can therefore be assumed that before expecting help from the police and justice from the judiciary one must have people in important places to make some important phone calls otherwise it is better to lick one's wounds and weep one's heart out. Parliament also fails to enact laws that benefit the people. The General, during his rule had made certain rape laws that made it mandatory for the victim to produce four witnesses in the court of law to prove crime. In the absence of such evidence victim herself was to be punished for fornication. In an ignominious case a girl was jailed because "she was too blind to look for any voyeurs who might be standing around, watching?" (p.72). This incident in the novel refers to similar incident during the time of General Zia-ul-Haq when a girl could not produce evidence to prove rape and was herself sentenced for the adultery. The elected governments that came to power afterwards were unable to review or amend the law. Parliament represents the people of the state and is chosen by them to enact laws that make their lives easier. But the parliament depicted in the novel seems helpless when it comes to changing the draconian laws made by the General.

When Nazo exhorts Rani Shah to change the rape laws because she has majority in the parliament, she shows her helplessness, “It’s not easy to change these laws...” (p.325). It is not easy for parliament to change such laws but it is always easy for it to make and change laws that have consequences for its own worthy members. Article 58 2(b) of the constitution that gave the President power to dissolve the parliament was swiftly removed from the constitution during the rule of Nawaz Sharif. Many similar laws can be quoted here to prove the point. But laws that might be of urgent help to the common people cannot be changed by their own representatives. Women like Mai Mumtaz and Nazo keep suffering as “The General’s Rape Law remained unchanged, and the Jihadists thrived” (p.327). The parliament, the vanguard of democracy, is represented as a powerless and irrelevant institution that can do nothing to protect the people it is supposed to represent. It seems more like a debating society where the elite gather to discuss their own problems and to find appropriate solutions for them. Thus, when Rani Shah visits the villages for her election campaign, the villagers lament about lack of basic utilities in their area. “We have no medicine. We have no electricity. No drinking water” (p.167).

The State is supposed to provide these necessities to citizens as it is one of its prime responsibilities but the state institutions that are responsible for the provision of these fundamental needs are plagued by the menace of corruption. Rani Shah fails to make any changes even when she does come to power because she is unable to purge the scourge of the middlemen. “There were so many middlemen between you and the Nation that even a cynic like me was taken aback” (p.274). Until these middlemen receive their cuts, different state departments cannot move forward with the projects and thus the entire system remains plagued with delays and the derailments. Hundreds of departments thus remain stuck and dysfunctional as people continue to suffer. One episode in the novel particularly captures the way state institutions function in this country. Azizullah wants his daughter to study in the National Engineering College and gets a loan to pay the expenses, but he must spend so much money to pay the bribes that the entire loan is spent before the admission can be secured. Consequently, the girl cannot get admission for two years even though she passes the entrance exam, and finally when government promises funds, “they found her seat had been sold to someone else” (p.279).

CONCLUSION

Based on the evidence discussed above it is safe to say that the novel, Nobody Killed Her clearly centers state failure. The novel is full of instances where different groups have taken over control of the state’s territory. Similarly, state’s writ is challenged in remote regions and urban centers alike. Other state institutions are also depicted in the novel as corrupt and dysfunctional as they take hefty bribes to provide their services. It was found that the military, the courts, the police, and the office of the prime minister had all suffered from wrong priorities. Health and education are two institutions in any modern state that are pivotal to its progress and prosperity. The best healthcare facilities that are easily available to all citizens on their doorsteps give the individual peace of mind and a sense of calm. In this connection, society as whole therefore becomes a healthy society with potential to progress in life. Education has always been and will always be the key to success for an individual and society.

Current situation of health and education in Pakistan is not encouraging to say the least. In *Nobody Killed Her*, Rani Shah Because her rallies were bombed, she was unable to exercise her right to an unrestricted right to vote. Her spouse forced her to experience domestic abuse. Additionally, she was forced to resign much of her authority once deep state forced her to secede. The prime minister was more focused on keeping his position of power and misusing it to further his own financial gain. It was uncovered that the military generals were taking part in political maneuvering and Game of Thrones. It was found that the judiciary was dismissed as having little bearing on ensuring that the people were treated fairly. It was implied that the police were little more than a powerless body incapable of carrying out governmental orders. The criminals and jihadists commit heinous crimes and state is unable to challenge them. State institutions responsible for enforcing rule of law and providing justice and security to the people lie paralyzed hence it is safe to say that novel *Nobody Killed Her* depicts state failure.

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