



**WOMEN SUBORDINATION IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY IN  
*DEAR ZARI: THE SECRET LIVES OF THE WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN***

**THESIS**

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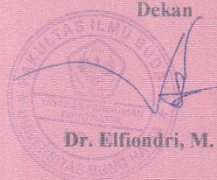
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ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

"I hereby declare that this Thesis is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial propotions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the Thesis"



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**Abstract**

In this paper, the writer analyzes about women subordination in patriarchal society in Afghanistan which describes in *Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan* by Zarghuna Kargar. The novel captures the patriarchal system in Afghanistan and the treatments experienced by women characters as subordinate position in Afghanistan. The analysis has two goals which are describing the patriarchal system and the women subordination. The writer uses Feminism theory. The technique that is applied by the writer is close reading to gain understanding of the structure of the novel. The result of the research is the patriarchal system has two form that experienced by women characters. The first is the domination of male. The domination of male happens in private sphere which male dominate women's life in several ways such as dominate in decision making, domination of inheritance by male, and control over women's life. The second form of patriarchal system is social construct on women. As the impact of the patriarchal system that applied in women's life is women subordination. The women subordination is manifest in several forms such as being discriminated through lack of educational opportunity and son preference, being disregarded, being insulted, being physically abused and being exploited. In conclusion, patriarchal system is being the cause of the emerge of the women subordination and women have to face the subordination and get the inequality in life.

**Keywords: feminism, patriarchal system, subordination, Afghan women**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Reason for Choosing the Topic

Afghanistan is a mountainous land-locked country located in central Asia. Afghanistan is heterogeneous nations which have many tribes settle in that country. In the big population of Afghanistan there are major tribes and minor tribes. The major tribes are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks. There are also the minor tribes in Afghanistan such as Nuristanis, Baluchis, Turkmen and Etc.

Behind the various tribe and big population Afghanistan has a bad reputation. The Guardian cited a 2011 survey by the Thomson Reuters Foundation which identified Afghanistan as the most dangerous place for women. NATO air strikes and cultural practices". UNIFEM says that 87% of women face abuse and violence in Afghanistan (Khan, 2). In daily life women in Afghanistan cannot live in a peace life, they have to face a hard life.

Afghanistan is one of the countries in the world that used patriarchal culture. Afghanistan is a **patriarchal society** consists of a male-dominated power structure throughout organized society and in individual relationships (Napikoski, 2017). The domination of the male creates a big effect to female. This system put women into subordinate position. This inequality in life brings women to face many difficulties in their life. The subordination gives the effect to women's life such as discrimination, violence, exploitation and etc.

In *Dear Zari*, it tells about various story of women in Afghanistan under the patriarchy culture who face the subordinate position. The novel revealed to the public about the secret story that mostly public do not know about. There are 13 story that pictured the condition of women in Afghanistan. The writer itself, Sharifa, Nasreen, Shereenjan, Samira, Ilaha, Anesa, Wazma, Janpary, Layla, Maghul, Bakhtawara and Ghutama are the character of the Novel. Every girl has different story of life. Sharifa, is a girl who has to face the reality of domination of men, where a son is much more praised than the daughter. Nasreen, the girl who cannot choose to marry the man she loved and she has to trap in an arranged marriage. Shereenjan is an unlucky girl who has to give away to settle dispute by her father. Samira is a girl who all of her life has to chained into the loom to weave the carpet. Ilaha is a girl who has to face a hard life only because she cannot prove her blood in first night of marriages. Anesa is a girl who being used as a human shield to cover her husband sin. Janpary is a girl who loses her right of inheritance because of her domination of brother. Layla is a girl who being widow in young age and being alienated by the society. Bakhtawara is a girl who has to accept her life to raise as a boy by her parents.

Zarghuna Kargar was born in Kabul 1982. Zarghuna is one of the women in Afghanistan. When the civil war happened in Afghanistan she and her family escape to Pakistan and there the first time she attends the journalism course that organized by BBC. In 2011, she and her family move to UK and started to work for BBC world service Pashtu section. She joined the program “Afghan Women’s Hour” as producer and presenter in 2004 until it was discontinued in 2010. “Afghan Women’s Hour” is a program that tells stories about women in

Afghanistan, there are so many variations of the story that send to the program. Mostly all about the life of women in Afghanistan.

*Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan* is a novel by Zarghuna Kargar. This novel about the compilation of the stories of the women in Afghanistan. Most of the issues of the story are about what the treatment that women get that not all the people knows, for example the issues of “exchange”, pressure women have to produce son, etc. Kargar decides to universalize and publish these inspiring and fascinating stories together into the form of novel *Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan*. All the stories in *Dear Zari* picture the suffering caused by deep rooted Afghan tradition and influence of Patriarchal system. The unique of this Zarguna Kargar’s work is a feminist work this novel feels interesting not only because of the theme of the story but also because the story based on the true story. It will make people who do not know about the tradition or anything that happen in Afghanistan will get new information about Afghan tradition.

According to the synopsis of the novel it can be seen that the suitable theory is feminism. According to Cuddon (315), feminist literary criticism is a way to analyze women’s lives and experiences which as portrayed in various kinds of literature –especially the novel, and, to a lesser extent, poetry and drama. It will examine the male domination within literature, the male image representation and also challenge women’s image that have been created by male writers. Feminism have many branches such as women’s movement, gender inequality, women image in society, women struggle, women’s attitude, women subordination, etc. The variation pictures of women subordination in the novel are interesting to

analyze and add more analysis in this literary works. This analysis will look carefully to sign women subordination in the *Dear Zari: the secret lives of women in Afghanistan*.

## **1.2. The Objective and Scope of the Study**

The object of this research is a novel *Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan* written by Zarghuna Kargar. The Objective of this research are to discuss about two parts, the first one about the patriarchal system in Afghanistan and the second about the subordination of women that pictured in *Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan* novel. This research will talk about the story mostly from Kabul and Jawzan, Nangarhar, Takhar, Balkh, Khost province and the time 1990s.

## **1.3. Formulation of the Problem**

The writer specifies his analysis into several matters that he thinks so important in this novel. In detail, the writer would like to focus his attention on two following aspects, and makes them into research questions as follows:

1. How is the Patriarchal system in Afghanistan as seen in *Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan* novel?
2. How is the women subordination as seen in *Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan* novel?

## **1.4. Review of Related Literature**

### **1.4.1. Previous Studies**

The discussion of “Dear Zari: the secret lives of women in Afghanistan” has been held by previous researcher like Nisha Thomji Varghese (2015) in her journal which has titled *Beyond the Veil: the Resilience of the Subservient Afghan Woman in Zarghuna Kargar’s Dear Zari* she uses the feminism approach and discuss about the oppression that Afghan women get and the untold voice in the stories because of the tribal culture and tradition and the fabrication of the society. There are various oppressions that women get. The result is it explore the portrays the passionate celebration of human resilience under unimaginable coercion.

The other research has been discussed about women subordination by Nina Katrin Johannsdottir which has title “*Patriarchy and the women subordination from a radical feminist point of view*” (2009). This research about the women’s traditional subordination from the beginning until nowadays and also talk about that patriarchy has had the effect of forcing women always to be one step behind men. It also discusses the suppression that women get, the connection to the pornography. The biggest women suppression such as prostitution and the trafficking of women and children.

Today, the writer analyzes the same book also with feminism approach but in the different topic of discussion to analyze the patriarchal system in Afghanistan and women subordination. This research different from the previous research because the previous research only discuss about the oppression but this research discuss the position of women because of the influence of the culture,

and the effect such as difficulties that women get because of the position of the women.

#### **1.4.2. Theoretical Framework**

To achieve a good analysis in appreciating literary work, the writer needs theories to analyze the literary work. Based on the topic of this research that focuses on analysis of women, the writer chooses the Feminism to analyze the *“Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of The Women of Afghanistan”* novel. According to Cuddon. J. A A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory

feminist literary criticism is an way to analyze women’s lives and experiences which as potrayed in various kinds of literature – especially the novel, and, to a lesser extent, poetry and drama. It will examine the male domination within literature, the male image representation and also challange women’s image that have been created by male writers (273)

From the theory, we can know that feminism is the theory that analyzes women’s life and experience in literary works. There are many women live in different culture but in this work writer will talk about women’s life under the patriarchal culture. Sultana said “patriarchy refers to male domination both in public and private spheres” (2). In addition, Sultana also said

Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that “men hold power in all the important

institution of society” and “women are deprived of access to such power” (3)

Patriarchal system happens not only in family but also in society. Men are dominant in both spheres. In Patriarchal system, it can be seen not only men who have the power and authority over many aspects in life but also women who place in the secondary position.

According to Ray “Patriarchy literally means rule of the father in a male-dominated family. It is a social and ideological construct which considers men (who are the patriarchs) as superior to women” (1). It means that patriarchal system also the social construct that considers men as superior to women.

Patriarchal system not only describe as the ideological and social construct about men as the superior to women but also patriarchal system related to the concept of gender. According to Boundless “The origins of patriarchy are closely related to the concept of gender roles or the set of social and behavioral norms that are considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex”. It means that the genders are also the origin of patriarchal system or patriarchal system can be seen through the gender roles in society.

Based on the theory, the origin of patriarchal system is related to the gender role concept. According to Kate Millet in Charles E. Bressler book

A female is born and a woman is created. In other words, one’s sex, be that male or female, is determined at birth. One’s gender, however is a social construct, being created by cultural ideals and norms consciously or unconsciously women and men conform to the cultural ideas established for them by society (183)



It means that genders are socially constructed. So, patriarchal system is related to the gender and it implies that patriarchal system also can be seen by the constructed of the gender in the society.

According to WHO “Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women”. The human being is “made” into a girl or woman or a boy or man in a complex process of rearing and education, social norms and values, stereotypes, identification, images and traditions. In patriarchal system, because of the existence of the gender characteristic, it makes women get position who get limitation in their live. Everything that women do is limited by the gender rule and norms.

Sultana also said that “men are superior to women and women are part of men’s property, so women should be controlled by men and this produces women subordination (8). From the theory, we can see that patriarchal system give men power to control over the women and automatically it creates the subordination to women.

According to Sultana “Subordination is the situation in which one is forced to stay under the control of other. So, women’s subordination means the social situation in which women are forced to stay under the control of men” (8). Subordination in women make they have to be under control of men in social life and daily life. Women keep subordinate in daily life in many ways, like sultana said

The subordination that we experience at a daily level, regardless of the class we might belong to, takes various forms – discrimination,

disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work, in society. (7)

Sultana also said “Subordination not only on the various form above but also “The feeling of powerlessness, discrimination and experience of limited self-esteem and self-confidence jointly contribute to the subordination of women” (7). Sultana describe the discrimination into the more specific form such as

The Specific form of discrimination and a particular aspect of patriarchy. . . Such as, son preference, discrimination against girls in food distribution, burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, lack of freedom and mobility for girls, wife battering, male control over women and girls, sexual harassment at workplace, lack of inheritance or property rights for women, male control over women’s bodies and sexuality, no control over fertility or reproductive rights (7-8)

From the theory, it can be seen that Sultana divide the specific form of the discrimination and there are several kinds of the form of discrimination.

### **1.5. Method of the Research**

The research is conducted by applying close-reading method based on Jacobus (1995). According to Jacobus the method is that the researcher notes specific uses of language, such as imaginary, symbols, repeated terms, pattern of expression, the tone of speakers, and the main idea of the writer introduces.

In this research, the note of the elements is based on the feminism approach (Abeda Sultana, 2011) with the focus on the patriarchal system and women

subordination. Women are get discrimination in Afghanistan as seen in *Dear Zary: The secret lives of women in Afghanistan*. The elements are examined in details to understand how the patriarchal system in Afghanistan and how it creates women subordination in Afghanistan's society through examine the discrimination which they get as women in Afghanistan society

To be detailed based on Robert (1998) in his book "Writing Literature", the patriarchal system and women subordination can be known through the character way of speech, dialogue, and action, comment by other character and through setting. To do the method writer do this following step First the writer read the novel and analyzes the part of the story in novel that pictures the patriarchal system and women subordination. Second the writer took notes and highlighted the data which were related to patriarchal system and women subordination. Third, the writer sorted and classified the data to get more relevant data and get the specified data into the right classification. Fourth, the data are process to analyze from theoretical point of view. Fifth the writer wrote the categorized data in a table of data collection and classification. Sixth, the writer also searches and read the source and journal that any other people who has been analyze the same novel for previous study, so writer will know if the analyzing would be same as the other person and build the differentiate among another. Based on the method it will be known and found the patriarchal system and women subordination in Afghanistan.