

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, the research questions, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

As part of social institutions, marriage is viewed as a fundamental element that forms an integral part of everyday life. It has been practiced for centuries in various cultures and societies. Among different forms of marriage, arranged marriages are still common, especially in patriarchal societies. In such systems, parents typically choose their child's spouse most of the time. This normally occurs quickly, without prior consent or meetings between the bride and groom. This lack of agency reflects a form of domination, as women are denied the freedom to make personal choices about their partners. Although the purpose of arranged marriage is often claimed to allow couples to gradually build emotional bonds and closeness after the marriage, since they usually have little or no emotional connection before the wedding, it can also imply the subjugation of women's emotions and autonomy under patriarchal control.

According to Bloom and Reddy (1986), parents choose partners for their children based on their social status and economic circumstances. This involves factors such as ethnicity, caste, religion, and lineage. Additionally, characteristics such as education, occupation, age, physical appearance, and household skills are also taken into account. However, when very young girls are married, they usually start a new life with their husbands only when they are older, which further illustrates the control over women's bodies and lives from a young age. This lack of autonomy reflects the early stage of domination experienced by women, as they are denied the right to make decisions about their own lives and relationships. According to Jejeebhoy S.J (2022), the fact that marriages are generally arranged by families means that women are powerless when it comes to decision-making within the family and lack independence and freedom of movement in their

marriages compared to those who can choose their own partners. After marriage, the form of domination against women changes. Women are less controlled by their parents and more controlled by their husbands and families. In many traditional societies that follow the male line of descent, women's roles and identities are often determined through marriage and their relationship with their husbands. In other words, women are considered the property of their husband's family. Their identity and role are determined by their status as wives and their relationship with their husband's family. Although marriage is often considered a union between two individuals, in reality, marriage is merely a cover for the incorporation of women into their husband's family, with many social rules that must be obeyed. Titisari et al. (2024) argue that in marriage, women often experience a transfer of their social identity and responsibilities from their own family to their husband's family. This reinforces the gender hierarchy, leading to restrictions on women's roles within the household.

In this social structure, young women who are newly married must live in their husband's family home, follow existing rules, and are often supervised by their mother-in-law. This reinforces gender inequality, often limiting women's freedom and making it difficult for them to express resistance directly. Despite being in a stressful situation, through small acts of defiance, adaptation, and emotional resilience, women find subtle ways to fight back and maintain control over themselves in the midst of a system that dominates them. In marriage, the relationship between domination and resistance is closely related to the influence of social and cultural norms. These norms prioritize family interests over personal freedom.

According to Munshi (2014), in societies that allow individuals to choose their own partners or marry of their own free will, this is considered a form of power and resistance against traditional rules. However, as stated by Bowman and Dollahite (2013), in reality, in patriarchal societies, parents still play an important role in determining a partner. Women do not have much freedom and are required to obey their parents' orders, and then their husbands' after marriage. This shows that male power and patriarchal society are still strong in determining the role of women within it.

Harkness and Khaled (2014) explain that family interference in marriage often places women in a lower position. This is common in regions such as South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. This confirms how such control reinforces social norms that perpetuate the subordination of women. On the other hand, Hense and Schorch (2013) argue that when individual desires are considered less important than family interests, it suggests that the domination of women is normal and has become part of the social structure. However, even though women are trapped within these limitations, they can still fight back subtly by demonstrating emotional resilience, negotiation, and the search for self-expression within a system that dominates them. In various cultures, the dynamics of domination and resistance of women in marriage manifest themselves in various forms, but in fact have similar patterns. In patriarchal societies, supreme power is in the hands of men. This is particularly common in countries in Asia and Africa, such as Pakistan and Nigeria. In both Pakistan and Nigeria, marriage is a central social institution that not only binds two people in a relationship but is also a tool used to reinforce male dominance and oppress women.

In Pakistan, marriage is not only a personal matter but also a cultural mechanism that enforces patriarchal control. Some communities in Pakistan believe that marrying their daughters as soon as they reach puberty is a moral and religious obligation (Anwar A, et al 2025). This belief reflects how systematically the social system completely controls control over women's bodies and lives. This means that women's obedience is considered a symbol of family honor. This has consequences for women's lives, where many young girls are forced into early marriage and then required to live with their husband's family. They must care for and serve their husband's family and perform domestic tasks within the household.

These conditions illustrate how women lose their identity and freedom. How patriarchal structures constrain them, limit their autonomy, and perpetuate gender inequality. Despite the various challenges, women do not completely accept their fate. They often find subtle ways to resist domination. This includes emotional resilience through exercising emotional containment, being silent yet firm, and adaptive negotiation to maintain their self-esteem and some control over their own lives in restrictive social conditions. In a society where the majority of the population is Muslim, Pakistan often justifies early marriage and arranged

marriages as a way to preserve women's honor and protect the family's reputation. In reality, this is a form of control over women. On the other hand, Shahbaz, Awan, and Ali (2021) explain that structural factors such as poverty and lack of access to education are key factors in maintaining the subordination of women, making it difficult for women to escape the system that dominates them and to fight against patriarchal norms.

In Nigeria, similar forms of domination also exist. Women face forms of domination rooted in cultural norms and gender hierarchies. In various communities in Nigeria, marriage is seen as a means to perpetuate male power. It serves as a framework where patriarchal authority is maintained through social norms that prioritize male dominance, with women expected to be obedient and submissive to their husbands. On the other hand, domination against women in this country is not only common but also influenced by social norms in each ethnic and religious group. According to Mobolaji et al. (2020), the practice of child marriage in Nigeria is influenced separately by ethnicity and religion. This shows that ways to prevent or reduce child marriage must address social norms that are closely related to culture and religion. This is because each of these groups has different rules, beliefs, and traditions. Therefore, efforts to prevent child marriage must take into account and be adapted to the cultural and religious context of each group.

This domination stems not only from social and cultural pressures but is also reinforced by Nigeria's diverse legal system and religious practices. In the cultural and religious context, Nigerian society believes that a girl's honor must be protected until she finds a life partner, that is, until she marries. Early marriage is seen as a solution to avoid extramarital relationships. This is reinforced by the belief in Islam that marriage at any age is permissible. Emmanuel (2023) states that the Nigerian legal system recognizes two basic types of marriage: customary marriage and statutory marriage. Marriage, according to statutory law, is monogamous and regulated by the Marriage Act. Customary law is divided into two types: traditional customary marriage and marriage according to Islamic law. While Islamic law is codified in written form, customary law is largely unwritten. Ethnic diversity results in marriage practices being governed by a wide variety of cultures.

Domination and resistance in marriage are also closely related to religious ideology. Some literature mentions that all major monotheistic religions that believe in only one God, as well as religions such as Hinduism, which believe in many gods, one God, or God who is one with the universe, are always fixated on patriarchal structures. Where male domination over women has become commonplace. Women have a lower social status than men, so women are often dominated in patriarchal societies (Prickett, Pamela J, 2015). In Hinduism, marriage is seen as something sacred. Marriage is considered a sacred obligation that can restrict divorce and inter-caste marriage. In Islam, Sharia law regulates gender behavior and family life (Kamali, 2008). This can reinforce male domination and limit women's freedom.

In patriarchal societies, marriage is not only a symbol of an individual's bond with another person, but also a medium. A medium used to maintain and reinforce socio-cultural norms that benefit men. On the other hand, women are often placed in a lower position, and their freedom of movement is restricted. Their rights and freedoms are ignored and often denied. This reflects the conditions experienced by women in the dynamics of domination in marriage.

In the context of marriage, women not only form personal relationships with their partners, but also relationships within a social system that subtly and overtly dominates them. This is reflected in two short stories from different countries: *Zemindar's Wife* by Qaisra Shahraz from Pakistan and *The Arrangers of Marriage* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie from Nigeria. Both short stories describe how women respond to the domination they experience, either through subtle or overt forms of resistance. Their resistance is one of their efforts to regain their autonomy despite a social system that constantly limits their freedom of movement. In addition, some of the stories describe how a wife's identity becomes tied to her husband after marriage, and her identity is not recognized. Their opinions and voices are often ignored and underrepresented in household decision-making.

The comparative perspective is used to understand more about how domination and resistance are represented in various contexts, both through culture and literature. In literary studies, comparative literature arises from the critical analysis and juxtaposition of two or more literary works from different cultures,

languages, or societies. Its main purpose is to explore and contrast in a specific context. As cited in Salahuddin Mohd. Shamsuddin (2022), comparative literature is a field of study that understands how literary works from different cultures can be interrelated, influence each other, or show similar patterns. This can be in terms of form, ideas, or ways of describing society. This approach allows us to understand how the influence and interpretation of literary works themselves shape the societies in which they emerge.

This study uses a comparative literature approach to analyze two short stories: *Zemindar's Wife* by Qaisra Shahraz and *The Arrangers of Marriage* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Although the two short stories come from different cultural backgrounds, they share a similar theme and focus on the dynamics of domination and resistance of women in patriarchal societies. By comparing the two short stories, this study explores how different cultural contexts influence women's experiences in marriage and how they struggle to develop strategies of awareness and resistance in the face of domination

The short story *Zemindar's Wife* by Qaisra Shahraz depicts how the patriarchal system in Pakistan constrains the main character's existence. She was trapped in a marriage that she never wanted. Her role as a wife is ignored; she is trapped in a traditional role with less power. She lacks control over her own life. In this short story, the main character is seen as a mere accessory to her husband. Furthermore, she is often excluded from household decision-making, demonstrating how patriarchy functions to stifle women's freedom and autonomy. Nevertheless, Noor had a strong determination to free herself from her shackles and obtain her rights as a human being. Her marriage to Zemindar was never based on personal choice or love on both sides, but rather occurred because of an arrangement between two powerful families. This is evidenced by her husband's statement that “*even inherited some from my parents as part of my dowry, when we were married two years ago.*” This demonstrates that their marriage was arranged by the family. Therefore, Noor's marriage reflects the common practice of arranged marriages in feudal societies, where women are treated as part of the family bond to maintain status and honor.

On the other hand, *The Arrangers of Marriage* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie depicts identity conflict and inequality in marriage. The female character

feels shackled when she has to deal with a marriage that her uncle and aunt have arranged without any personal choice; she must follow her husband to move to America, where she is accustomed to the life of her country. The text explicitly mentions that “*they arranged your marriage*” and that her uncle “*told me that the perfect husband had been found for me,*” showing that the female character’s marriage was organized entirely by her relatives and her husband’s family. Her husband always imposes his wishes, including changing her name, abandoning her Nigerian identity, and adopting American culture in her life. Despite attempts to conform to societal expectations, the main character feels depressed and alienated in her marriage and life. Despite this, she has a strong desire within her to free herself from the shackles that ensnare her and gain her rights as a human being.

Although the two stories come from different cultures, they both illustrate how deeply rooted patriarchy in society greatly influences women's daily lives. The dominant patriarchal culture always positions women to respect and obey all orders from men, whether they are husbands, fathers, or older brothers. By applying the feminist theory proposed by Simone De Beauvoir, especially in her work *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir, 1956), Simone explains how women have historically and socially been positioned as the Other. In the context of a patriarchal society, it can be seen how existing social structures and cultural norms often oppress women and limit their rights and freedoms.

This theory also provides a framework for analysis to better understand how women are always placed in a position lower than men. This study aims to analyze how the two short stories describe the phenomenon of domination and resistance experienced by women in patriarchal societies and how women's resistance strategies against patriarchal structures affect their lives. Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory is used to analyze these stories. Through Simone's theory, this approach helps reveal how women are portrayed in the stories *Zemindar's Wife* and *The Arrangers of Marriage*, where they are treated as inferior beings in the eyes of men, and how they try to find their own identity and freedom in a dominant context.

Revolutionary/Passive Resistance to Patriarchy: A Comparative Reading of Selected Novels by Muslim Female Authors (2023), researched by Mohamed Abdulhasan, examines four novels by Muslim female authors from various countries, including India, Egypt, Sudan, and Iraq, which have been translated into

English using a Muslim feminist approach. This study emphasizes the religious aspect of women's struggles, which is often overlooked by Western feminist studies. This study aims to compare the Muslim feminist awareness and resistance shown through the female characters in these novels. Each author employs feminist thinking that is grounded in Islamic values rather than Western feminism. The goal is to oppose patriarchy and show that Islam actually guarantees women's welfare when understood correctly. The results of the study show that the social and political backgrounds of the authors influence their work. Although all authors are Muslim, their writing styles are quite different. Additionally, they have their own methods of resisting patriarchy and advocating for women's rights.

The second previous study is “How South Asian Muslim Women Negotiate During Arranged Marriage Processes” by Syeda Zaynab Mahmood (2021). This study analyzes how South Asian Muslim women living outside their home countries attempt to negotiate power and consent during the matchmaking process. Using Lila Abu-Lughod's framework, this study examines how cultural and religious expectations influence women's choices and perceptions of consent and coercion. The results show that the concepts of consent and coercion are complex and closely related to social and religious norms.

On the other hand, previous studies have explored the oppression and resistance of women from various perspectives. However, neither study specifically analyzed how the domination and resistance of women are represented in literary works. Therefore, this study fills that gap by providing a comparative literature analysis of two short stories from different cultural backgrounds, namely Pakistan and Nigeria, using Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory. This study aims to examine how the characters depicted in these stories deal with the phenomenon of domination and their responses to domination that is deeply rooted in patriarchal societies.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do the two short stories portray the phenomenon of dominance in marriage through the story?
2. How do the women characters respond to domination in marriage in the stories?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore and examine the domination experienced by women in two short stories: *Zemindar's Wife* and *The Arrangers of Marriage*. This study also aims to examine how women characters respond and act against the domination they face in a patriarchal society. This study uses Simone de Beauvoir's theory to analyze the two short stories. Through Beauvoir's theory, this approach helps to understand and reveal how women experience and resist domination within the social structure of a patriarchal society. Additionally, this study reveals the strategies employed by female characters to resist or adapt to this domination. The actions and behaviors of female characters will be explored in this regard. How they fight for their voices, reclaim their rights, control their lives, or even challenge existing norms.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study in literary studies offers deeper insight into Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory, particularly regarding the concept of *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir, 1956). This concept elucidates that the foundation of discrimination against women is rooted in social constructs rather than inherent causes. Applying Simone de Beauvoir's theory, this study highlights how powerfully the patriarchal system operates within the institution of marriage, influencing women's identities, autonomy, and reactions to the domination they experience, as depicted in two short stories.

Practically, this study highlights the various forms of domination that women experience. This includes the loss of their individual freedom and identity. On the other hand, through literary analysis, this study can serve as a reference for readers, educators, and gender studies activists on how patriarchal culture restrains and dominates women in patriarchal societies and how women can fight back to regain their autonomy. Furthermore, this study can also serve to understand the role of literature as a medium for criticism and social transformation.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

- Scope

This study focuses on a textual analysis of two short stories: *Zemindar's Wife*, which originates from Pakistan, and *The Arrangers of Marriage* from Nigeria. This study emphasizes the representation of women's experiences and forms of resistance in the face of domination in patriarchal societies. Furthermore,

Simone de Beauvoir's theory is used to analyze the forms of domination that occur to women in marriage, highlighting the various ways in which the women in both short stories face these challenges. They try to survive or attempt to reclaim their autonomy in a system that limits their rights and freedoms.

- Limitation

This study is limited to two literary works. The analysis focuses on Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory, which helps to understand how women are portrayed in the two short stories and how they respond to the domination they experience alongside the social norms that restrict them.