

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Children are the most beautiful gift given by God upon parents, a blessing that requires unconditional love and full responsibility. The development of a child's character and personality is greatly influenced by its parents, who serve as their primary educators. Children tend to imitate and emulate their parents' behaviors and their mindset, meaning that every action and attitude of parents will significantly impact the child's future. Therefore, parents are obligated to provide positive examples, create a loving environment, and avoid actions that may cause psychological harm. According to Santrock (2009:408), a lack of cooperation, warmth, or coordination between parents can place children at risk for various problems. It is emphasizing the importance of providing a stable and loving environment. Parenting is an important task that takes patience and commitment. Like students who need to understand a lesson before studying, parents also need to choose the right parenting style before raising their child (Arafah et al., 2020).

Family consists of individuals who share kinship or blood relations. Each member has specific roles to fulfill. Giving children a good learning environment and quality education can help them develop good character (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022). For instance, a father is expected to be the provider, caregiver, and role model for his children and wife. However, households that comply with traditional family or patriarchal norms believe that men have dominance over women, children, and property (Walby, 1990:20). In such households, men often feel entitled to treat their wives and children arbitrarily. This patriarchal dominance is frequently reinforced by local value structures, cultural customs, and moral standards that perpetuate male authority over women (Dobash & Dobash in Tanaya, 2020: 190).

A daughter's character can be significantly impacted by growing up in a patriarchal household with an abusive father. Cabrera et al. (2000:130) assert that fathers are essential to a child's growth and that a child's experiences with their father have an impact on their development as an adult, this is supported by her findings that fathers' emotional investment and involvement are linked to children's well-being and cognitive development, influencing their social competence and emotional regulation. "Father absence" refers to the loss of a father's position as a source of security and protection, even if the father is physically there but not psychologically.

Literature is an essential part of how human express themselves. It includes a wide variety of written and spoken works that capture important aspects of society, human experiences, and emotions. The existence of literature is viewed as a culturally human life (Sunardi, Arafah, & Salija, 2018). Literature serves as a medium to examine various perspectives on life, considering that humans have different notions and lead different lives. Although often depicted in fictional form, literature can also function as a powerful medium for raising awareness of social issues and experiences that shape human identity. As literature reflects real life situations from a specific time, it can bring various insights to its readers (Arafah et al., 2021). It is also can be used as lesson



because it has many benefits to the reader's life since the literary works are generally reflections of life at one period (Arafah, Abbas, & Hikmah, 2021).

According to Mariana, Arafah, and Abbas (2018), literature is sometimes said to as the mirror or reflection of society. Literary works are the author's reflection of life combined with the creative of imagination and personal experiences (Djojuroto, 2006:76). Literary works and social phenomena in society have something in common, including a reflection of the issues of violence, discrimination, injustice, even describe women and children experience in society. There are many kinds of literature, such as poetry, novels, drama, and short stories. Regardless of genre, include many useful lessons and are a dependable source of information about people's lives and values in society (Purwaningsih et al in Asriyanti et al, 2022). One of literary works reflecting woman and children experience is Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* novel. The novel describes how patriarchal culture treat woman and children unfairly. In fact, this can shape the identity of women who is oppressed because of the patriarchal culture. A literary work gains depth and meaning when its text is analyzed in its context, for example, by examining the cultural discourse (Arafah et al., 2020).

The novel *Woman at Point Zero* is a novel based on true story set in Egypt. It tells the life of Firdaus who awaiting execution for murdering a man, and is framed through her conversation with a female psychiatrist. Firdaus reveals her life story, starting from her childhood in a poor, oppressive family where she experiences profound neglect and abuse. Growing up in a traditional Egyptian household, Firdaus endures a childhood marked by emotional and physical hardship. Her father is emotionally distant, and her family environment is characterized by a strict, patriarchal structure that devalues women.

As she grows older, Firdaus seeks education and attempts to establish independence, but repeatedly encounters systemic barriers. Her attempts to find work are always thwarted by the male-dominated structure of society which limits women's opportunities. Firdaus eventually turned to sex work. Through this profession, she gained a sense of control and financial independence that she had not previously had. However, she continues to experience exploitation and violence from men who try to control and subdue her. The novel reaches its climax when Firdaus finally kills a man who tried to exploit her. In the end she just accepted the execution.

The selection of *Woman at Point Zero* as the subject of the study was made for a number of reasons. Initially, the book tells readers about a woman's life. The difficulties faced by women living in patriarchal households are reflected in Firdaus' character. Second, the book can serve as a teaching and media tool to raise awareness of patriarchal households and the negative effects of abusive fathers on a person's personality and mental health, which still occurs in Indonesian families. Many patriarchy is a normal occurrence; even moms and women are victims of it.



of Nawal El Saadawi as the author in this study is based on her pioneering feminist writer, physician, and activist whose works have the systems and given voice to the struggles of women, especially women. Her writings though rooted in Egyptian culture and Arabic have gained international recognition and have been translated into

numerous languages, including English, making them accessible and relevant to global readers and scholars. This aligns with the general understanding that literature is a written form of artistic expression created by an individual author, often shaped by personal experience and sociocultural realities (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019).

Saadawi's work, particularly *Woman at Point Zero*, presents universal themes of gender inequality, abuse, trauma, and resistance issues that transcend national boundaries and cultural contexts. Her powerful portrayal of women's experiences under patriarchal oppression makes her work an essential subject of study not only in Middle Eastern or Arabic literature, but also within English literature. As Mutmainnah et al. (2022) explain, "the example of motion is the author's imagination that turns his thoughts and ideas into a literary work," emphasizing that literature is not merely fictional, but often a reflective creation rooted in the author's reality and perspective.

Therefore, this study focuses on the forms of the absent father and how it affects Firdaus' character in *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi. The aim is to show that paternal absence can occur not because there is no father in a family but because of a lack of contribution in raising children. This research also explain how abusive fathers and patriarchy can influence women's identity. The author uses a structuralism approach to deepen the meaning and character of the novel *Woman at Point Zero*.

Structuralism, originally developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, views language and literary works as systems of signs where meaning is created through the relationship between these signs. According to Saussure (1959:38), a sign consists of the *signifier* (the form of a word or image) and the *signified* (the concept or meaning behind it). This approach allows a deeper examination of the intrinsic elements of a literary work such as theme, plot, character, and setting by understanding how these elements are interconnected to form a coherent structure. By applying structuralism, this study aims to find the meaning of *Woman at Point Zero* and explore how the absence of the father figure and patriarchal elements shape Firdaus's character and identity.

1.2 Identification of Problem

The issue raised in Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* novel is patriarchal society which are experienced by the character Firdaus. Then the writer identified several problems that can be analyzed, as follows:

1. The absence and abusive father can significantly influence the psychological and character development of individuals.
2. Literary works record societal realities, such as the problem of sexual harassment as it is depicted in Saadawi's novel *Woman at Point Zero*.



ale character of *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus, experiences
h contributes to her sense of neglect and lack of familial support.
atriarchal culture may influence Firdaus' decision to become a

1.3 Scope of Problem

Based on identifying these problems, the analysis is limited to the narrative of *Woman at Point Zero*, focusing specifically on Firdaus' experiencing a patriarchal society and how the absence of father impacts Firdaus' characters. The structuralism approach is used to analyze this problem.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on identification of problems, the writer formulated the research questions as follows:

1. How is father absent reflected in Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*?
2. What are the impacts of absent father that Firdaus' experienced in the novel?

1.5 Objective of The Study

Based on the problems stated above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To identify how is the absent father reflected in Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*.
2. To analyze what are the impacts of absent father that Firdaus' experienced in the novel.

1.6 Benefits of The Study

Following the completion of this study, the writer expects to make several contributions and benefits to the academic and practical sphere, with hope such as:

- a Theoretical Benefits: This research intends to provide a constructive methodological framework that will assist future researchers in examining the complex family dynamics of the novel's protagonists, with special emphasis on the application of the structuralism approach.
- b Practical Benefits: This research aims to produce scientific insights that will serve as a valuable reference for future academic inquiry, contributing meaningful perspectives and enriching the broader landscape of literary scholarship.

1.7 Sequence of Study

There are five chapters, in Chapter One contains background of study, identification of problem, scope of problem, questions of study, objective of study, significance of study, and sequence of chapters. Then, in Chapter Two mentions a number of prior researches relevant to the current research, the corresponding approach applied on the research, and the theoretical background of the research. Furthermore, in Chapter Three provides the methods the researcher had done in collecting and analyzing the data, in Chapter Four consists of findings and discussions regarding the research, and in Chapter Five summarizes the main points of the entire research and suggests several insights for future researchers.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Related Studies

The writer uses the previous study as a reference to enhance the theory and object employed in the research, and the previous study can provide further ideas to help the writer do this research effectively.

The first study was by Asmawir (2023), entitled *Representasi Hegemoni Patriarki Dalam Novel Perempuan di Titik Nol karya Nawal El Saadawi*. This study analyzes the representation of patriarchal hegemony in *Woman at Point Zero* and the forms of resistance shown by the female character. The researcher used a qualitative method and employed Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis theory as the main theoretical framework, which focuses on how women are positioned within discourse as subjects and objects. The results show that Firdaus's resistance stems from the ongoing patriarchal hegemony that subordinates and oppresses women. Her defiance is interpreted as an act of counter-hegemony against a system that consistently denies women's autonomy and voice.

The second study was by Sholihah (2023), entitled *The Oppression of Women in Maman Suherman's Re and Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero: A Comparative Study*. This study explores how patriarchal culture becomes the root cause of women's oppression in two different societies through the characters Re and Firdaus. The researcher used a qualitative method and applied Radical Feminist **Theory** to examine how gender-based oppression is manifested and sustained. The findings of this study reveal that both Re and Firdaus experience similar forms of oppression including a lack of autonomy over their lives, prohibition from fighting against injustice, and being commodified through prostitution regardless of their different cultural backgrounds. The study concludes that patriarchal systems universally contribute to the systemic subjugation of women, creating trauma and suffering that persist across cultures.

The third study was by Irmayani et al. (2024), entitled *Woman Struggle in "Woman at Point Zero" Novel by Nawal El Saadawi: Radical and Liberal Feminism Perspective*. This study aims to identify the feminist movements reflected in the novel through using Radical and Liberal Feminism theories. The research applies a descriptive method to examine how Firdaus, the main character, resists various forms of oppression. From the radical feminist perspective, Firdaus's oppression is rooted in patriarchal systems embedded in both family and education, where women are seen as morally and intellectually inferior and are pressured into traditional roles such as marriage and domesticity. Meanwhile, from the liberal feminist view, Firdaus is also seen as a victim of systemic injustice in accessing education, politics, and the economy. The study concludes that Firdaus's struggle represents both radical resistance against patriarchal control and liberal efforts to attain independence eventually gaining a form of economic freedom through prostitution, which paradoxically provides her with a sense of agency.



the writer's research to the previous studies discussed, there are the theories and approaches used, as well as the main focus or however, the similarity lies in the use of the same literary object, *ro* by Nawal El Saadawi. The first study analyzed patriarchal a Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis. The second study examined women through Radical Feminist Theory in a comparative analysis *Point Zero* and another novel. The third study explored Firdaus's

resistance through both Radical and Liberal Feminist perspectives. Thus, while the writer's study differs from the three in terms of theoretical framework, analytical focus, and research approach, all share the same object of analysis, the novel *Woman at Point Zero*.

2.2 Theoretical Approach

2.2.1 Structuralism Approach

Literature is an art of expressing meaning using beautiful language (Arafah, 2018). Approach is one of the important aspects in studying a literary work. Through a literary approach, writers can examine various perspectives from various literary works. One literary approach that is often used is structuralism. Structuralism originated in France and has influenced various disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, literature, and culture. Structuralism was developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, whose famous work *Course in General Linguistic (Cours de linguistique Générale)*. It was originally compiled and published posthumously in 1916 by his students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye. Then, it became the foundation for understanding language as a structured system. Saussure (1959:38) proposed that language comprises a set of signs, each consisting of a "signifier" (sound or written image) and a "signified" (concept or meaning). This notion of structured relationships within language became a model for analyzing other systems, including literature.

In the context of literature, structuralism endeavors to uncover the underlying structure of a text by focusing on its intrinsic elements. According to Semi (1985:44), the structuralist approach examines literature through its intrinsic elements, exploring such as theme, plot, setting, characterization, and language style harmoniously integrate form and content to create a literary work. This perspective reinforces the structuralist view of literature as an autonomous entity, regarding it as a self-contained system formed by interconnected elements like theme, plot, characters, and setting. These components collaborate to create a cohesive whole that defines the essence of a literary work. It is also can be used as lesson because it has many benefits to the reader's life since the literary works are generally reflections of life at one period (Arafah, Abbas, & Hikmah, 2021).

According to Teeuw (1984: 135), the intrinsic elements of literary works such as characterization, plot, setting, and theme, are interconnected structures that have universal meaning. Supporting this perspective, Wellek (1956: 141) also argue that these structural components are to understanding the deeper meaning of a literary work. The approach also looks at the aesthetic aspects of literary works by the relationship between content and form. Two important it influence a literary work's beauty are language and plot. In plot is considered part of the form. Wellek and Warren explain ence between form and content in this context is not the same as



the traditional view. They state:

“This distinction is by no means a simple renaming of the old pair, content and form. It cuts right across the old boundary lines. ‘Material’ includes elements formerly considered part of the content, and part formerly considered formal. Structure is a concept including both content and form so far as they are organized for aesthetic purposes. The work of art is, then, considered as a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose” (Wellek & Warren, 1956:141).

The interconnectedness of these structural elements means that one can understand the meaning of a literary text by examining how these various components function and are bound to each other. In essence, each structural element plays its own role in revealing the broader meaning or aesthetics of a literary work.

Literary works should not be understood only on the surface, as they are linked to many other elements; therefore, readers are encouraged to explore them more deeply (Asri et al., 2023). In this study, the writer uses structuralism approach, which, based on the opinions of previous experts focuses mainly on the intrinsic elements of literary works. The main intrinsic elements include characters and characterization, plot, setting, and theme.

1. Characters and characterization

Characters are one of the fundamental things in the making of a novel. Without characters, a story loses an important element, making the plot that has been carefully crafted by the author empty and meaningless. As Abrams (1981:48) explains, “*Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action*”. Characters serve as a medium for the author to convey messages, ideas, and values to the reader. Literary work also can teach the readers character education values based on the cultural knowledge in the story (Arafah et al., 2024).

Through characters, authors can evoke emotions, create empathy, and draw readers' attention to issues that may exist in the real world. According to Kenney (1966: 27), “*Character is an imagined person who fills up the story. A character is obviously relevant too us*”, This is because characters in a story often represent or reflect human traits and experiences. However, it is important to understand that characters are not always limited to humans. As Irmawati & Arafah (2020) everyone must learn from anything

one including animals because whatever happens in the universe

er.
erature, characters can also take the form of objects, animals, or
tract entities. The uniqueness of these non-human characters lies
aracterization provided by the author, where objects or animals are
with certain traits, behaviors, and characteristics that make them
and relevant. As Abrams (1981:10) notes, one common example



is the beast fable, where animals are portrayed as speaking and behaving in ways that reflect the human archetypes they symbolize.

Characterization is an important aspect of character development, referring to the way authors establish the personality, traits, and behaviors of the characters they create. This process involves how characters speak, act, react to certain situations, and how their physical appearance is portrayed. According to Grolier (1977: 291), Characterization is a distinctive characteristic of fictional forms including plays, novels, short stories, and narrative poetry, claims. Good characterization allows readers to recognize, understand, and even feel connected to the characters in the story, as if they actually exist in the real world. Every detail chosen by the author, be it dialog, action, or description, contributes to building a character. In this way, the author opens the doors to unknown and invisible worlds, not only by stimulating emotions and feelings but also by helping readers discover the deeper meanings of life and existence (Floriani, Arafah, & Nur, 2020).

The complex nature of human beings gives authors ample room to create characters with a wide range of personalities and behaviors. There are characters who are kind, wise, and loving, but there are also those who are selfish, cunning, or even evil. These types of characters fall under the category divisions of protagonists and antagonists. The protagonist either meets the reader's expectations or exemplifies the values that the reader has generally adopted (Nurgiyantoro, 1995: 178-179), while the antagonist is reverse from this character.

The diversity of traits makes the story dynamic and interesting. Each character, whether protagonist or antagonist, is carefully designed to serve a specific purpose and support the storyline being developed. Characterization not only enriches the story, but also brings the plot to life and builds emotional depth that readers can feel.

2. Plot

Apart from characters, the plot is also a crucial element in a story. The plot is a sequence of events interconnected by cause-and-effect relationships, forming a cohesive link between one event and another. According to Abrams (1981:293), "*The "plot" (which Aristotle termed the mythos) in a dramatic or narrative work is constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effects*". In essence, the plot portrays the progression of events or conflicts experienced by the characters as they strive to achieve their goals or the challenges they face.

According to Stanton (1965:14), a plot is a story that includes a series of events, but each episode is solely related in terms of cause and effect, such that one event that resulted in or caused the occurrence of later events. It is the clarity of a plot plays a crucial role in ensuring that a story is easy to understand. A plot that is overly complex or fails to establish clear cause-and-effect relationships between events can make the narrative



difficult for readers to follow.

Additionally, Abrams (1981:227) grouped the plot's components into five categories based on Freytag's pyramid: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

3. Setting

In literature, setting refers to the time and place in which a story takes place, including not only physical locations but also the cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape the narrative. Setting is an important component in fiction because it establishes the framework in which characters interact and events occur Abrams (1981:362). The setting can range from a specific location, such as a single room or city, to a broader environment, such as an entire world or historical era. To ensure proper understanding, cultural values must be communicated clearly within a system of signs and symbols to prevent confusion or misinterpretation (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023).

There are several types of settings, Place setting refers to a real, geographical environment, including landscapes, buildings, and weather conditions. The time setting indicates the time period, which can range from historical eras to futuristic timelines. The cultural setting reflects the social and ideological context, such as norms, traditions, and belief systems. There's also setting of atmosphere refers to the emotional tone or feeling created by the environment in a literary work. Authors build atmosphere through descriptive language, imagery, weather, light/darkness, and sensory details to evoke emotions in the. In addition, there are also symbolic settings that represent abstract ideas, which often give the story a deeper meaning.

The importance of setting lies in its ability to influence character, mood, and plot development. A setting can build the story, inform character actions, and reinforce themes. Additionally, the setting helps readers contextualize events and connect with the narrative on an emotional level.

4. Theme

In literature, theme refers to the central idea or main message that author is trying to convey. According to Abrams (1981:230), a theme is often a universal concept or insight into human nature, society, or life that transcends the specific events in a story. Theme is not just about what is told in a story, but what the story ultimately reveals about the human nature. Themes are embedded in the narrative, expressed through actions, dialog, and conflict, and are often revealed gradually as progresses.

Themes can be broad or specific and can develop as the story progresses. Some works may focus on a single theme, such as the fight for freedom or the nature of good and evil, while others may explore several themes simultaneously. Themes in literature can reveal



how the writer experienced and understood the world, which can be found by studying repeated patterns of imagery (Eagleton, 1996:51). Theme is not limited to plot; it emerges through symbolism, character development, and narrative resolution.

Understanding theme is essential in literary analysis because it helps readers understand the deeper meaning of a work. Theme allows critics and readers to engage with the text beyond the surface level of plot and character, encouraging reflection on larger social or existential questions. As stated by Frye (1957:52), the term *dianoia*, which refers to the "thought" or "theme" of a literary work. This concept encompasses the ideas and messages that the author seeks to convey through the narrative. By analyzing themes, one can gain insight into the author's perspective and the broader context in which the work was created. Therefore, identifying and interpreting themes is essential to understanding the purpose and impact of a literary work.

2.3 Pertinent Ideas

2.3.1 Concept of Absent father

Absent is "the state of being away from a place or person ... the nonexistence or lack," according to the Oxford English Dictionary. Even if the father is physically there, his emotional absence is also considered absence (Schwartz, 2020:5). It means the concept of an "absent father" goes beyond the physical absence of a father, but also includes the absence of a father's active role in nurturing, guiding and emotionally supporting children.

According to East et al. (2006:285), the concept of father absence is complex and encompasses various situations, such as fathers who are completely absent from their child's life due to reasons like death, divorce, or family conflict, as well as fathers who are physically present but emotionally or psychologically detached.

As Schwartz (2020:xiii) highlights, "*the presence of the father's absence affects a daughter's body, mind and soul*," emphasizing the profound psychological and emotional impact of an absent father. This absence of paternal involvement can be seen in the form of neglect, emotional absence, or lack of active participation in the child's development.

A father's role is not only to provide materially, but also to contribute to a child's emotional, psychological, and moral development. As Rohner and East et al, (2006:284), father love is as important as mother love. Father's powerful influence on child health, cognitive development and social relationships. Father absence in this broader sense can have profound effects on a child's self-esteem, emotional security, and ability to form relationships.



John Ernst's *Who Am I in The Native American Father's Parenting Style* in John Ernst *The Pearl* (Sunyoto et al, 2022) describes the following aspects of

the roles of the father in the development of children:

- a. A Provider. The father must provide the facilities to support the child's growth and development.
- b. A Protector. The father is trying to bring a sense of security and an atmosphere of protection to his child from the environment that can interfere with or physically damage him/her.
- c. A Decision-Maker. The father is a leader in the family and suggests taking and providing decisions that are considered best for the development of their children.
- d. An Educator. The father acts as an educator in providing knowledge and insight into the development of their children, especially in the environment of social interaction.
- e. A Nurtured Mother. The supporters of the roles of mothers in the development of their children. A father's involvement in parenting ultimately means more emphasis on fulfilling materials for his child.

The concept of an "absent father" encompasses more than just the physical absence of a father figure; it also includes fathers who, while physically present, are not involved in the care of their children. This lack of involvement may manifest as emotional unavailability, neglect, or failure to actively participate in the child's development. Such absence can have a profound impact on children's emotional and psychological well-being (McLanahan et al. 2013:6).

The absence of an involved father figure has been associated with negative outcomes in children's social-emotional development. Father absence may increase externalizing behaviors in children, such as aggression and defiance, and may also lead to higher involvement in risky behaviors during adolescence. In contrast, active father involvement has been associated with positive developmental outcomes. Fathers who care for, nurture and play with their children contribute to higher IQ and better language and cognitive abilities in their children (Yoon et al. 2021:1-17). The quality of father-child interactions plays an important role in shaping children's cognitive and emotional development, underscoring the importance of father involvement beyond just physical presence.

2.3.2 Concept of Patriarchy

The word "Patriarchy" which comes from the Greek πατριάρχης (patriarkhēs), meaning 'father who rules over a family,' naturally connotes ideas of familial relationships, and social hierarchy. In general, patriarchy is a social system that places men in power so that they can aspects of life. In the book *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Walby (1990:20) patriarchy as a social structure and practice in which men hold exercise control, and exploit women.

Walby also (1993:3) explains patriarchy as a term that refers to male the power dynamics men use to maintain control over women, and



the systemic structures that ensure women remain subordinate in various ways. These definitions show that patriarchy is a system that is detrimental to women and has certainly been deeply rooted around the sphere of women's lives.

In past generations, women were constantly discriminated against because of the perception that they were weak. Discrimination was used to portray the women as inferior (Afiah et al, 2020). This incident made women to be treated unequally by men (Arafah et al., 2024).

Historically, patriarchy has been established and reinforced through cultural, religious, and legal institutions, ensuring that male dominance is both normalized and institutionalized across society. As Lerner (1986:102) stated, *"In the law codes under discussion we see a great deal of attention focused on the legal regulation of sexual behavior, with women being restricted much more severely than men."* The law codes Lerner refers to are the Code of Hammurabi, the Middle Assyrian Laws, and the Hittite laws, which explicitly place women in subordinate roles.

Men are the primary beneficiaries of patriarchy, as societal norms often reinforce their perceived superiority and their right to dominate women. This perceived entitlement provides men with social, political and economic advantages that are systematically denied to women. Hooks (2000:ix) suggests that to maintain these privileges, men actively enforce patriarchal norms by dominating, exploiting and oppressing women, even using violence when necessary.

From a feminist perspective, patriarchy is not only a social order, but also the root of gender inequality and oppression. Feminists criticize patriarchy as a system that privileges men and devalues women, limiting their rights, autonomy, and opportunities. If patriarchy persists it can invariably lead to various forms of discrimination, including domestic roles, in the workplace, and cultural representations that objectify or stereotype women. As emphasized by Suleman et al (2021:2206), traditional values and gender expectations often place women in a dilemma, forcing them to choose between personal achievement and the social roles demanded of them. This, in turn, limits their recognition and autonomy in both public and private spaces.

