

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter elaborates some theoretical foundations underpinning this study, to find the answer to the research questions in the previous chapter. It includes the theory of gender roles and stereotypes, power and patriarchy, in order to reveal the role of husband and wife and the ways of establishing spousal authority in the family.

#### 2.1 Gender Roles and Stereotypes

Gender is a cultural construction in which male and female differences are defined by dominant socio-cultural values (Connel, 2009). Wienclaw (2011) further defines gender or psychological, social, cultural, and behavioral characteristics are related to be female or male. Related to this, Wienclaw (2011) argues that gender is the interpretation of society in making cultural meaning of sex. In addition, gender learns a characteristic which is derived from one's gender identity and it also learns gender role (Wienclaw, 2011). Therefore, it indicates that gender is culturally constructed by socio-cultural aspects.

Moreover, the social construction of masculinity and femininity recognize about social functions, resistance forms, male dominations, desire of politics and body in such discipline as various as art, film, philosophy, psychoanalysis, history

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and sociology. “The difference only functions, only means something, in a particular context, one that’s both configured and made meaningful by the discourses in the society” (Nealon and Giroux, 2003). It means that the different function between male and female is constructed in the society itself. In addition, Wienclaw (2011) believes that female and male are born to be different but equal, they have unique role within society. Thus, society plays a role to construct men and women roles.

In addition, the biological distinction between men and women is shown as a crucial element of identity to be masculine and feminine which present the power for men and the powerless for women. In line with this, women are naturally nurturer and men are naturally leader, it clearly distinguishes gender based on social roles (Vogel et al, 2003 as cited in Flynn, 2011). It implies that the different treatment between men and women is derived from society, how men and women are expected to perform in society (Echols, 1983 as cited in Tong 2009). Thus, it shows that the ways of male and female perform are shaped by society itself.

From biological point of view, women are indicated as inferior to men in many aspects (Wienclaw, 2011). Wienclaw (2011: 19) further defines that there are three reasons why men are different from women “(1) Physical strength and fitness; (2) Susceptibility to occupational illness; (3) Fitness and reproduction”. She also states that women are the weakest sex and have to be protected by men. From Wienclaw’s definition, it can be seen from men’s perspective that women are

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considered as weak, gentle, and fearful. Thus, it shows that they are treated differently from the biological perspectives.

In line with this, biological difference demonstrates that men are responsible towards dominance which relates to aggression, independence, psychopath, and sensation-seeking while women are responsible towards submission which relates to defensive aggression, attachment and nurturance, anxiety and security-seeking (Symons, 1979 as cited in Egenderf, 2000). From Symons's definition, the roles between men and women are also derived from biological distinction. In relation to this, woman "is matter, waiting to be formed by the active male principle...Man consequently plays a major part in reproduction; the woman is merely the passive incubator of his seed." (Aristotle, n.d as cited in Bressler, 2007: 169). It points out that men always play major role while women get minor role in life. Thus, it indicates that women have gender roles and stereotypes to be passive and submissive to men.

Furthermore, traditionally, gender roles between women and men cannot be changed in society (Wienclaw, 2011). For instance, women have role as the keeper of the house because of their reproductive role while men have role as the protector and worker because of their size and strength. It shows that women have responsibilities to be a good wife, take care of their children, and stay at home. Therefore, it can be assumed that women and men have their own responsibilities in their life which cannot be changed. Gender roles also take part in a family life. Parsons (n.d as cited **Winni Aryani, 2012**

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in Flynn, 2011) divides family gender roles into expressive roles and instrumental roles. He states that women play expressive roles by taking care of the home and emotional life while men play instrumental roles by earning money in the family. It implies that a wife or mother is placed under men's domination. Female is shown as male's belonging that have to obedient to male's command. For this reason, traditional gender roles makes women are treated under patriarchy system.

In this relation, as proposed by Wienclaw (2011) gender stereotypes can be defined as attitudes and behaviors that are considered suitable for one gender but not the other. She further defines that gender stereotype tends to be the basic and it is not based on characteristics or abilities of the individual itself. In addition, gender stereotypes are beliefs about characteristics, and behaviors that are believed appropriate for men and women (Diekman and Eagle, 2000). For instance, the stereotype of women is that they should be obedient to their husband. As a result, gender roles and stereotypes between men and women are influenced by society and biological distinction.

Since the focus of the study is analyzing the relationship between husband and wife, the next section is going to elaborate the terms of power and family authority. Thus, these theories will be explained in the next section.

## **2.2 Power and Patriarchy**

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Power can be defined as the ability to influence consciously or unconsciously the emotions, attitudes, cognitions or behavior of other people (Komter, 1989 as cited in Pyke and Adams, 2010). In other words, power is the ability to control someone else. In this relation, as proposed by Lukes (2005, as cited in Pyke and Adams, 2010) there are three types of power. First, “one-dimensional view” suggests that power is given to people who are able to make decisions and control the decisions itself. The second is “two-dimensional view” suggests that the practice of power can be distinguished by keeping out of making the decision arena. Thirdly, “three-dimensional view” suggests that power can be involved by avoiding the conflict to prevent from having grievances because it has been shaped by social or ideological forces (Lukes, 2005 as cited in Pyke and Adams, 2010). This means that power is people ability to decide and to control the important thing. Therefore, power is able to influence someone else point of view.

Power also takes place in the family which at least consists of husband and wife. As proposed by Foucault (2003, as cited in Elden, 2006) family plays a role in the ways of thinking, specifically the power of the father. The power of father is influenced by patriarchy system. Patriarchy can be defined as the rules of the father (Wolfreys et al, 2006). It can be seen that husbands have ability to take control toward their wives. Gamble (1999: 3) further defines that patriarchy system is the power of men domination:

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The term 'patriarchal' refers to power relations in which women's interest are subordinated to the interest of men. These power relations take on many forms, from the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live. Patriarchal power rests on social meaning given to biological sexual difference.

From the definition above, it shows that husbands have authority to control their wives in many aspects in society. In line with this, husbands have more power than their wives in the family because of their gender where their traditional position as the head of the household, economic and physical power (Wearing, 1996 as cited in Collis, 1999). It makes wives are limited to express and manage themselves. It can be seen that wives have to depend on husbands rules. This situation creates gender inequality in which men are superior to women.

In addition, the patriarchal society uses gender system to support that men are active in which they tend to be strong, ambitious, and aggressive while women are weak, sentimental, and good where they tend to be passive (Cohen and Orbuch, 1990). It illustrates that wives are considered worthless viewed from their husband's perspective. Patriarchal ideas underline that wives are in domestic domain, it means that they should take care of their children and stay at home. Meanwhile, husbands are in public domain, it indicates that they should earn money for their wives and children (Tong, 2009). It emphasizes wives or women's stereotype that are, they should be obedient to their husband and taking care of their children. Tong (2009) also argues that the patriarchal society underlines on biological difference between

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male and female and it affirms that men have major role while women have minor role. It points out that wives are treated unfairly. As a result, wives get the oppression psychically and psychologically, for examples oppression and abuse, particularly domestic abuse.

Abuse can be defined as treating somebody cruelly or violently (Alberta, 2008). The result of abuse is in physical, sexual or psychological or suffering to women such as act, oppress and lack of liberty in public or in private life (United Nations General Assembly, 1993 as cited in Haarr, 2007). For instance, in the family, a husband abuses his wife because he wants to control his wife's life. Therefore, it makes women suffer physically and psychologically.

There are three types of abuse which are physical abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse. The first is physical abuse where it causes pain or physical injury to the victim's body such as kicking, punching, slapping, strangling, etc. The second is psychological abuse where it causes emotional or mental pain to the victim such as bullying, humiliating, threatening, etc. The third is sexual abuse where it causes both physical and psychological abuse such as rape, unwanted sexual contact, force sex, etc (Alberta, 2008). These types of abuse cause suffering to the victim, particularly women.

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Women in the relationship tend to use their weakness and powerlessness such as crying, acting ill or helpless. Meanwhile, men in the relationship tend to use their strength such as bullying, threatening, insulting, or asserting authority (Howard et al, 1986 as cited in Collis, 1999). In this relation, Johnson (2006 as cited in Wood, 2009) states that men and women have their own way in doing violence to their partners. Women often use verbal abuse or physical abuse where the purpose is to self-defense. Meanwhile, men often use physical aggression where the purpose is to gain self-esteem to get the respect from others and to maintain control over people and situations. This attribute shows that men have more power to oppress and abuse women. As proposed by Harr (2007) men demonstrate their power, control, and authority in the family by controlling the women. They are often use violence to gain obedience, uphold power and control in the family. Thus, it makes husbands dominate wives in many aspects of their life.

Patriarchal makes wives are often being oppressed and abused by their husband where the oppression and abuse are illegal. According to Aristotle (n.d, as cited in Bressler, 2007) man is naturally superior while woman is naturally inferior, the one rules and the other is ruled. It means that men have more authority to control women. Beauvoir (1949) adds that men are responsible for their superiority toward women economically and socially. From this definition, it depicts that men want to

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show that they are superior in many aspects. Therefore, the oppression and abuse demonstrate the discrimination in which women get second position under the men.

Most important, patriarchal system creates a lot of discrimination where men who have authority in society. Most of countries have patriarchy system as well as in Afghanistan. In Afghan, women can be defined as honor or virtue that is very vulnerable to be injured by outsider (Shakib, 2010). They should be obedient to their father or husband. Thus, it creates limitation and discrimination for women.

In Afghan culture and tradition, women are forced to marry in young age by the family itself where husbands have a large age difference than their wives. In this relation, Presser (1975, as cited in Pyke and Adams, 2010) states that husband who is older than his wife is expected to convey more income and have more power in his marriage than same-age husband. Thus, this situation causes inferiority of women and domination of husband.

A larger age difference between husbands and their wives is associated with women's lower level of decision-making power, fewer economic opportunities in the paid workplace, and less control over their fertility (Barbieri & Hertrich, 2005; International Center for Research on Women, 2005).

By its definition, women are still strict to the men's rules which have power and authority in society. Consequently, in Afghanistan, the roles of husband and wife depend on patriarchy system in which a wife has responsibilities to be a good wife, take care of their children, and stay at home while men have responsibilities to earn

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money and protect their family. It demonstrates that women cannot get privilege to behave the same as men. It causes gender inequality in which women are treated inferior to men.

It can be concluded that in Afghanistan, the relationship between husband and wife is determined by patriarchal kinship arrangements. These relationships are derived from family traditions where men have power over women (Ghosh, 2003). Afghan women's lives are determined by history, politics, society, economy, and religion. As a result, women have to depend on men authority in many areas of society.

Since the focus of this study is analyzing women inferiority in Afghanistan, the next section elaborates the term of women, culture, and tradition in Afghanistan.

#### **2.4 Woman, Culture, and Tradition**

In one nation, there are many groups of races and ethnicities which create the diversity of culture and tradition. The diversity of culture and tradition in one nation also makes the experience of women and men is different from the others. This situation is influenced by patriarchy system. Okin (1999, as cited in Saharso, 2008) asserts that most of cultures have patriarchy system where there are several cultural minorities which are more patriarchal than others. However, most of countries have

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patriarchy system as well as in Afghanistan. It makes the gap between men and women. For this reason, it indicates that patriarchy system makes women the one who are treated differently.

Since this study takes Afghanistan women as the research object, a brief explanation of Afghanistan's women is provided. Afghanistan is one of Moslem country with Kabul as its capital city. Since the country is controlled by Taliban, it has become a common issue that there are gaps between men and women. It causes male domination and authority toward women in Afghanistan. There are several aspects why women are treated differently in society, culture, politic, religion, and government. It can be seen from the common issue that is often be informed which are: women do not have rights in education, they are restricted to the private area, and they are held by cultural and tribal practices that are intended to keep them dominated by men (Emadi, 2002 as cited in Adam 2004: 39). It relates to the interpretation that women are restricted by patriarchal culture and tradition in Afghanistan.

In the family, women are forbidden to go outside without men's relative and they have to wear *Burqa*. Saharso (2008) states that every culture has identity which is different from others, it can be seen from the ways women dress and act. Therefore, Afghan's women have suffered from cruelty and restriction that appear in every aspect of their life. During the Taliban era, they did not have rights to work, to go outside without a close male relative, to get education, and to participate in public

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area (Ellis, 2000 as cited in Sheriff, 2006). It shows that husband or father has a power to control women just like his property. It can be said that women are seen as victim of men domination. For this reason, restriction of women's life becomes a main problem that should be eliminated. Maletta (1998:5) states that women are limited by culture and tradition.

The [1964] Constitution enfranchised women and guaranteed them the right to education and freedom to work. ... Nevertheless, family pressures, traditional attitudes and religious opposition continued to impose constraints which limited the degree to which women could find self-expression and control their lives. (USLC, 1997: Chapter 3, 'Gender Roles')

From this definition, Afghan's tradition is still strict to the men's rules which have power and authority toward women in society. It relates to the interpretation that women inferiority cause suffers both psychologically and physically.

However, traditional gender roles and stereotypes, and family authority exist in Afghanistan. As proposed by Wienclaw (2011), culture and society have part in gender role acquisition where male tend to be strong, fast, aggressive, and dominant whereas female tend to be sensitive, intuitive, passive, emotional, and weak. Besides, cultural prescriptions restrict women's life to maintain the cultural minority (Saharso, 2008). Thus, this cultural group is allowed to treat women unfairly and freely. It indicates most of Afghan women or wives experience discrimination, domestic abuse, kidnap, rape, trafficking, and forced marriage. It can be said that culture and society

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have important role in which women are treated differently. For this reason, Most Afghan women have experienced terrible situation as reflection of the high illiteracy, poor school registration, short life expectancy and frightening maternal mortality rate (Wylie, 2003). The synopsis of the novel is provided to give an overview for this present study.

## **2.5 The synopsis of A Thousand Splendid Suns**

The story portrayed the life of an Afghan wife. The main female character is Mariam who experienced a complicated life in which there were invasion of the Soviet army and Taliban in her country. The story began in 1974, when Mariam is 15 years old. She lived with her mother Nana at the *Kolba* an isolated place outside Herat. Jalil is Mariam's father but he didn't live with her. Her mother was a housekeeper in Jalil's home, she got pregnant by Jalil but he never offered to marry Mariam's mother. Jalil had three wives and nine children, nine legitimate children, and they were stranger to Mariam. He was one of Herat's wealthiest men. He had a cinema, which Mariam had never seen. She just knew the story of her father. Instead, Jalil and his sons, Farhad and Muhsin, built the small *kolba* where Mariam would live the first fifteen years of her life with Nana in the clearing out of Herat. He came to visit Mariam once a week. Mariam's mother was fully aware that Jalil would betray Mariam because it just his idea of penance. When her mother died Jalil took Mariam

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into his home. Then, she was forced to marry Rasheed 40 years old by her father and step mothers. Her future husband was Rasheed, a successful shoemaker in Kabul. He was a big man and his size frightens Mariam when she met him for the first time. Before she left her father's side, Mariam swore she would never speak to him for not allowing her to stay in his house.

At the first time of her marriage, Rasheed looked so nice and take care of her well. He believed that a man should rule his wife. He did not allow Mariam to go outside without him and she must also wear a *burqa* whenever they left home. When Mariam was pregnant, he was very happy. He prepared everything that was needed. However, Rasheed's character changed after she had a miscarriage and failed several times to have a child. Rasheed became crueller and more distant. He talked to Mariam only when he needed something. She was often beaten without any reason.

After that Rasheed got married with Laila, and yet, Mariam did not want to accept this arrangement. Rasheed threatened her so that she permitted him to marry Laila. Time goes by, Mariam and Laila became friend like a mother and daughter who protected to each other. One day, Tariq returned to Kabul he was Laila's close friend. When Rasheed figured out that Tariq was back and in his house, he beat Laila and he tried to strangle her. Mariam hit Rasheed in the head with a shovel then killed him. In order to save Laila who might be involved in the murder, Mariam turned

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herself over to the Taliban then she was executed. Mariam was a stronger woman who fought for her terrible life in Afghanistan.



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