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## **Gender Hegemony in Tehmina Durrani's Novel My Feudal Lord**

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**Abstract:**

*The paper aims to study the masculine hegemony and gender politics in the novel My Feudal Lord by Tehmina Durrani. The study is going to employ CDA for the exploration of target elements. It applies a three dimensional modal of CDA by Fairclough, for the analysis of the selected work. This model tends to focus on the text and the social processes of producing and interpreting a text with the help of socio-cultural context in which it is written. Bulks of examples are witnessed from the book My Feudal Lord that are showing male gender hegemony and violence. It highlights that how women live under socially restricted circumstances; where they suffer from disappointment, frustration, discouragement and taunting.*

**Keywords:** Gender hegemony, patriarchy, male chauvinism, suppression, CDA (fairclough model)

### **1. Introduction**

My Feudal Lord (1995) is an autobiographical novel written by Tehmina Durani. It is divided into three parts, Lion of the Punjab, Law of the jungle and Lioness in which she gives full detail of her second marriage with the Pakistan's most eminent political personality Ghulam Mustafa Khar (khar), a right hand man to Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan. It is a complete account of her life with Mr. Khar from their marriage to divorce. This autobiographical work, dramatically unfolds the dilemma of Ms. Durrani, she had to face after becoming the part of the feudal family of Mustafa Khar. My Feudal Lord has caused many debates among the male-dominant societies of Pakistan. This novel is giving various dimensions to see the things and to highlight the required aspects. Tehmina Durani's marriage with Mustafa Khar was not remained successful. He succeeded in cutting her off from the outside world. For fourteen years, Tehmina suffered alone in silence. When she decided to get divorce, the price she paid was extremely high. Her seeking for a divorce had made her lost all financial support and custody of her four children. It made her alienated from her friends. She was disowned by her parents. Her story provided an extraordinary insight into the vulnerable position of women in the male dominant societies of Pakistan. This book exposed that how she was physically beaten by Mr. Khar, when she disobeyed his orders. She further disclosed the treacheries against herself that was kidnapping of their children by Mustafa Khar and about his affair with her sibling Adila. It depicted the real portrayal of feudal landlords' power drunkenness and their inclinations to ever maintain their hold over the lives of their women. Gender Hegemony and male chauvinism are remained the important aspects of Durani's book. Mr. Khar, the central male character of this novel was not an autocrat by birth, but society taught him the art of autocracy against women. The dominant social positions of men, and the subordinate social position of women, explain that how men ever attempt to maintain dominance over the social roles of women. The term cultural hegemony coined by Antonio Gramsci analyzes the power relations among the social classes of a society. According to Barkty, "Women's oppression under male domination not only consists of solely in depriving women of political and legal rights but also extends into the structure of our society and the contents of our culture and permeates our consciousness". (Barkty, 1990, p.63). Historical study reveals that a lot of work has been done on the novel My Feudal Lord by Tehmina Durani. It deals with the major aspect of hegemonic masculinity (male domination). Fairclough borrowed Gramsci's concept of Hegemony (1971) which is not simply about dominating group but rather about integrating them through their consent to the moral, political and cultural values of the dominant group. According to this concept women are defined as opposite to men. Beauvoir (1949) claims that man has fabricated and constructed woman as The Other; the one who is not significant by one's self. Whatever characterizes men, in their own view is just because of the presence of feminine bodies in the society. Men believe that the insignificance and weakness of a woman must be socially acknowledged like men are strong and women are weak creatures. Men are good creature while women are not. In short all the negative traits are reserved for women in the perspective of men. (32) In the stratification system gender ranks, men above women of same class and race. Both could be different but equal. (Lorber, 1994, p.114) Nancy Jay defined, men and women separately. From individual point of view she used the term A and pure for men Not-a is necessarily impure. A is the principle of order that separates it from Not-A. But in society's point of view, however A gender is usually the touchstone, the dominant and the normal and Not-a is different, deviate and sub-ordinate. (Jay, 1994) Concerning language and its symbolic implications and meanings, Shree mentions that the men can express their feelings in a language easily but women cannot like that While concerning My Feudal Lord (1995), she argues that, this book opens the eyes of women regarding their status and gives awareness to mothers, sisters, wives and daughters (Shree, 2002, p.114). Khar is in fact the

product of the feudal society where women are no more than just material objects. He is a person possessed with absolute authority and power and that power is needed to be practiced to confirm its existence. He would beat up and punish the servants if the food was not hot enough, his wife if she was late after his first call, and his children if they threw a tantrum (Shree, 2002, p.121). At a place, talking about same phenomenon, Shree says, this behavior is universal and not restricted to Pakistan only (Shree, 2002, p.120). Sunday Times (cited in Durrani, 1995) wrote about Durrani's work in these words Durrani's tale gives an outstanding account of the vulnerable status of women clawed into the complex social webs. (N.P) Habib, Alvi, & Baseer, (2013) Argued that she discussed the status of women in a third world country where they are dispossessed of identity, name, social standing, right of choice and even progenies who are the extensions of their own selves indeed. Kristeva's feministic views (1980, 1983, 1986, 2008) have been employed by them to analyze and interpret the life of a woman in a male chauvinistic society, Pakistan ( Habib, Alvi, & Baseer, 2013). Ahmed says that Tehmina Durani is the survivor of a country where women are not considered human beings. She revealed the violence and cruelty she experienced at the hands of her feudal-politician husband. She has good looks and brain. She writes books, paints and sells her canvases to the rich in Lahore. He further talks about religious misuse which is also depicted in Durani's novel by using terms 'shariah' 'umraah' 'sunnah' e.t.c (Ahmad, 1998). Roy argues that eyes were opened to the reality of womanhood through Tehmina Durrani's My Feudal Lord. She argues that being the citizen of a patriarchal society where the cultural norm for women and to remain silent against oppression, is terrible. She sensed the stifling darkness of the corner she was pushed into, which led her to offer "spicy" details of her life for public consumption. (Roy, 2012)

## 2. Methodological Framework

This paper is based on Fairclough's model of CDA. It regards discourse as a form of social practice ( Fairclough and Wodak ,1997) . This model takes particular interest in relation between language, power and ideology. Fairclough (1992) has linked the three analytical stages to his definition of discourse. The premise underlying his analytical model is that language is social practice, or what he calls discourse. He identifies three ways in which language operates as discourse: (1) as text; (2) as the social processes of producing and interpreting a text, or the interaction and (3) as the social conditions for the production and interpretation of the text, or the social context. These dimensions of discourse link directly to the three-stage approach he advocates for analysis, namely description of the text and interpretation of the relationship between the text and the social processes of the interaction. It further deals with explanation of the relationship between the social processes and the social context This tri-focal approach commits the analyst to analyze the relationship between texts, processes, and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures. Central to Fairclough's framework is a dialectical view of discursive and non discursive facets of the social world. Such a framework, however, does not reduce social life to discourse (as in post-modern perspectives); rather it recognizes the interpenetration and over-determination of the multiple elements of the social (including discourse) on one another. Discourse is therefore posited as one "moment" among six others in social processes (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2004). In this sense, discourse becomes a form of power, a mode of formation of beliefs/values/desires, and institution, a mode of social relation and material practice. Conversely, power social relations, material practices, institutions, beliefs, etc, are in part discourse" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 6). The focal problem for CDA, then, is to untangle and explain how these "flows" take place. And, by demonstrating how things are and have come to be. CDA is also able to suggest how they could be different, and thereby that they can be changed (Hammerly, 2003). CDA is thus particularly useful in the context of socio-cultural practices, and Gramsci's concept of hegemony, borrowed by Fairclough throw light on socio-cultural condition of Pakistani male dominated society Fairclough's framework of CDA is three dimensional, focuses on analyzing any communicative event (Fairclough, 1995, p.59)

- Text (spoken or written)
- Discourse practice ( the process of production and consumption)
- Socio-cultural practice (social and cultural structures which give rise to the communicative event)

The first analytical focus of Fairclough model is Text. Analysis of text involves linguistic analysis in term of vocabulary words, grammar and semantics ( Fairclough, 1995, p.57). According to Fairclough (1995) this dimension has two facets: institutional process (e.g editorial procedures and media discourse ), and discourse processes( changes the text go through in production and consumption). "Discourse practice straddles the division between society and culture on one hand and discourse, language and text on the other. In discourse practice Fairclough develops an analytical framework (Fairclough, 1992a, 1995). Drawing on the concepts of hegemony (the predominance in and the dominance of political, ideological and cultural domains of a society) (Fairclough, 1995). In socio-cultural practice, Fairclough discussed cultural issues of values. Fairclough and other analysts such as Hackett (1991), following Gramsci used the concept of hegemony, emphasized the importance of ideology in achieving and maintaining relations of domination . According to Fairclough and Chouliaraki(1999), Hegemony is relations of domination based upon consent rather than coercion, involving the naturalization of practices and their social relations as well as relations between practices. This analytical framework informs the present study in the following ways. First, the multi-layered analysis incorporates textual, vocabulary used by an author. Second, text is at the core of the analysis. The selected text is thus, analyzed according to socio-cultural condition. Tehmina Durani's book 'My Feudal Lord' revolves around her own horrible and traumatic marriage with imperialist, conservative and typical feudal lord Ghulam Mustafa Khar. This very account of Tehmina's second marriage creates a terrific and eye-opening view of a woman's life in a conventionally designed feudal setup. Tehmina's act of leaving her innocent first husband Anees and to marry with honorable former chief minister of Pakistan 'Mustafa' soon turned into a nightmare. She left her child (Tanya) with Anees. Her autobiography takes the reader on a journey in a repressive society. She openly expressed the pathetic details of her life like, how her husband behaved her and his cheap relationship with her younger sister (Adila) while

they were married, which had driven her mad, due to the psychological torture. Through a very tough trail full of agony she realized the hollowness and bareness of her relationship with her second husband. In her book she used some terms to illustrate her frustration like no power, no rights and no will. The selected words show the women's position in our Pakistani society, particularly in remote cultures and in feudal system. She only has to do what her male folk dictates. She does not have her own free-will and mind set. Her will power is killed with the specified traditional tools of male hegemony i.e beating and cursing women all the time. Durrani has divided her book into three parts: Lion of the Punjab, Law of the Jungle and Lioness. Lion of the Punjab is the title she has given to her cruel husband Mustafa, who belongs to traditional, conservative and feudal background of Kot Addu. The very chapter depicts that how he roars and how he destroys the lives of simple and innocent women without any hesitation. He has remained the former chief minister of Punjab. Apparently, he is presented as a supporter of democracy and liberalism; while in the personal affairs of his life he is portrayed as no more than a wife-abuser. Tehmina Durrani was sixth lady, who came in Mustafa's life. He used to take the women as an artificial doll, he ought to use them and throw them away. As Durrani stated: "women entered Mustafa's life speedily and left just as quickly" (Durrani, 1995, p.44). She further argued about the betrayed tendencies of her second husband Mr. Khar in these words: "He plucked Safia from the sky and locked her in a cage. His formerly modern bride went behind the veil, banished to the oblivion of his home village of Kot Addu." (Durrani, 1995, p.45). Mustafa was not a common Pakistani man. He was presented as an honorable politician and strict feudal, who used to pluck women whenever and from wherever he wanted and put them into the cage of restrictions and conventions. Women in this novel are reflected as showpieces for the male hegemonic emblem. They are considered more of a decoration piece than a living body. .."Mustafa met Naubahar, a professional dancing girl who used her face and her body to ensnare the young politician. Mustafa rented a house in Lahore and installed Naubahar there as his mistress" (Durrani, 1995, p. 49). The third woman came in Mustafa's life was a dancing girl. The word installed, she used in the novel; reflected the insignificance of a woman in the lives of feudal lords. The verbs used by Mustafa in Tehmina's novel showed Mustafa's hard nature and hegemonic masculinity. He used to pluck and install the women in his life. Tehmina had to suffer for the cruelty and betrayal of her husband and it was no doubt against the norms of Islam. But in contrast to Islamic law and order, women in the novel are presented always suffering from disappointment, disillusionment and frustration which arouse from social restrictions and hegemonic policies of feudal systems. Throughout the novel Tehmina remained an oppressed women. Mustafa was no more than a wild animal, unable to understand women's feelings. He took the advantage of his male gender to exploit female gender through violence and power. He called himself a Shikari. "I am a Shikari." (Durrani, 1995, p.41) Hunting (shikaar) endowed Mustafa with courage, endurance and patience to control his prey, trickily. Through hunting he learned how to lure, entice and entrap. Tehmina Durrani was snubbed and ridiculed throughout her life and was not allowed to go against the social and cultural order. Whenever she tried to come out of it she was beaten by her husband. Durrani states, "Later, in our bedroom, my insolence was punished with yet another sharp slap. He called me an exhibitionist, a woman without shame" (Durrani, 1995, page.216) Mustafa's commanding and threatening words, exhibitionist which he put over his wife enables the reader to understand gender domination in Pakistani Feudal lord society. It also exposes the inhumanity against women in such setups. These bitter, hard and cruel words 'Mustafa' learnt from his own environment and presented his social and cultural identity with such words. These words enable the non native readers to understand about the socio-cultural, ethnic and psychological framework of feudal land lords. It also clarifies the status and position of women in the hegemonic societies of Pakistan. The selected text gives a clear difference between males and females in Pakistani society. Tehmina's work shows the real picture of women in third world countries on one hand while on other hand it depicts ruling of patriarchy. This illustrates that in third world countries like Pakistan, women are taken as personal properties of men since men control every sphere of the lives of women even their behavior e.t.c. Men have the right and full command to make decisions for women and women have to follow and obey their husbands. Feudal lord Khar did not allow Tehmina to talk to her own brother. Once, she talked to her brother Asim on the phone. He shouted "Why did you speak to him for so long" he growled, "Is he your brother or your lover?" (Durrani, 1995, page.133) She looked at her violent husband and replied in astonishing manner, "He is my brother, Mustafa, really". On her reply, he became crueller "Are you answering me back?" (Durrani, 1995, p.133). Mustafa's behavior and ordering utterances make Tehmina's life miserable and torn her into pieces. He took her as his property and used her in cruel manner. Relationship between married couple is always based on love, care and understanding but Mustafa took his wife as a toy, played with her and when got angry, thrown her away. According to feudal lord traditions, a wife is honor-bound to live her life according to her husband's whims. A woman is considered like a man's property and land. Mustafa Khar performed the true role of a patriarch, feudal lord and masculine power in treating his wife. He did, whatever he learnt from his society, from his culture, he himself said: "I was the product of powerful, privileged class." (Durrani, 1995, p.58) Durrani admitted it in the text by saying "Feudal law allows a man to act in such manner, but for a wife to betray a husband is the supreme sin" (Durrani, 1995, page. 51) The vocabulary items used by Tehmina in her book depicted Mustafa's power and dominancy over Tehmina. Mustafa called himself 'powerful' and 'privileged', it was his right to maintain power over his wives, as he was the product of a culture that had taught him from birth that Feudal lords had every right to do whatever they wanted to. It also taught him that females were silent creatures they were not made to speak. Tehmina was the victim of her second husband, she suffered too much silently. Mustafa put her into the cage and cut her from outside world. She was not allowed to laugh with her sisters, to go outside from home without her husband's permission. Even she was not allowed to read a newspaper and she was supposed to obey her male folk as a slave. She argued as:

*"Mustafa told me one day that I was not allowed to read a newspaper. I obeyed without a squeak of protest. When he found me in a room that contained newspaper, I felt caught and prayed that he would not think that I had actually attempted to read one of them, my prayers usually went unanswered. He was likely to ask, did you read a newspaper? I would answer, trembling 'No'. Invariably he raged 'dont lie to me. His fists did the talking'" (Durrani, 1995, page. 106).*

Boldly exposing the ruthlessness she had to face, Durrani made us realize the gender politics of feudal classes. For Durrani a feudal is only got with an education of a Feudal lord, which makes him hard hearted. Feudal law teaches them gender difference and gives them the degree of power and hegemony. Men in feudal societies are tended to remain Men, even if it is the matter of their mothers. Quoted another example of gender hegemony Durrani told that at the dinner table, Mustafa used to command his mother, "Eat up." (Durani, 1995, p.41). His mother began to eat. Tehmina thinks: "A feudal lord was an absolute ruler who could justify any action" (Durani, 1995, p.41). My Feudal Lord created a true picture of gender exploitation, man power and women's repressed condition in a Pakistani patriarchal society. This novel has been specifically written in Pakistani context where the cultural norm for women is to remain silent against oppression. In village (Kot Addu), a woman (Ayesha) from lower class was a married woman who had fallen in love with another man-also married. Being a lord of his village Mustafa responsibility was to give punishment to the character-less woman. As a punishment Mustafa made Ayesha nanny, in his house because she was her husband's property. But in his own personal affairs, he developed relationship with a married woman Tehmina and ordered her to get divorce from Anees. "Tina, I'm dying to see you, Mustafa's voice pleaded. I can't live without you. I want to give up everything and be with you." (Durrani, 1995, p.74). This exposed Mustafa's deceptive nature. His laws were only for middle class people but everything was right for him. In reality, he trapped women, but apparently talked about falling in love and getting sentimental. Another example of gender hegemony was witnessed in the novel, regarding Mustafa's treatment with his children, especially with his daughter Naseeba. Mustafa never showed his devotion towards his children. He behaved rudely with everyone. One day he treated his daughter (Naseeba) badly, she was in the bathroom with him and played with water, the bubbles in water ceased to fascinate her. Tehmina states:

*"The moment I heard her whimper, 'I rushed in and said, 'I'd better take her out. She's tired'. 'No,' Mustafa said calmly, 'Leave her there'. But she's tired. 'You can't take her out. I've ordered her to stay there'. 'Ordered? But, Mustafa, she is only a year and a half' 'So what? She'd better learn to obey from this age' (Durrani, 1995, p.142)*

Tehmina lived a worse life after her second marriage. She was beaten, suspected and humiliated by her feudal lord husband Mustafa Khar. She told about some wired things, she had to suffer for. Like reading the newspaper, laughing and talking with her siblings on the phone was banned to her.

*"Mustafa's obsessions took perverse forms. Whenever he saw me laughing or joking with my parents, his mood darkened, and I knew that the next moment we were alone he would find a pretext for an argument that would lead to violence. "I apologized for whatever supposed outrages I had committed, 'are you really sorry? He would Goad. 'Yes' 'Are you sincerely sorry' 'yes', 'yes' Your tone is wrong. You don't sound as if you are sorry. 'I replied, 'Mustafa, I'm exhausted. please believe me I am sorry.' 'But you d'nt really feel that you did something' 'But I do, I do'. 'two hours ago you were explaining your position. you were defending yourself'. 'I thought' \_thought? thought? You thought you could justify your actions. Do you still think? No you have proved that I was wrong to think?" (Durani, 1995, p.159)*

Mustafa's affair with Tehmina's sister (Adila) drove Tehmina almost mad out of panic in the second part of the book Law of the Jungle. He trapped her younger sister, when Tehmina resisted and challenged him to get separated. Mustafa could never allow her to leave him because he thought that she was the only skylark that can amuse him while he is tired. Using a woman for pleasure only was twice disgusting and humiliating, Durrani had to face this but it enabled her to courageously write and to expose the situations of the women in purely feudal and patriarchal societies. Tehmina Durrani's work gives various examples of patriarchal society. It highlights masculine power and hegemony through the character of 'Mustafa Khar' (the feudal lord). By applying Fairclough's model, it is explored that the words used by Mustafa in his utterances depict his dominancy, violence and cruel nature. It further probes in the context of Pakistani feudal society. Almost every woman faces harsh realities of life, but only a few remain courageous to raise the voice against it. Tehmina shows courage by writing about the male-centeredness of feudal society and hence attempted to protest against it. The researchers intend to bring the issue of women's oppression and male domination into the limelight in the conventionally conservative patriarchal societies of Pakistan. Moreover it shows how Men take the advantage of gender, by physically and mentally abusing the women in such remote societies of Pakistan. The paper attempts to contribute into the Pakistani feminist perspective by developing awareness in the society about females' sacrifices and the troubles they have to face in the feudal patriarchal culture

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