



Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan: A Tale of Resistance and Resilience in the Face of Patriarchy and Misogyny-A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This Study applies FDA (Foucauldian discourse analysis) to study how female characters resist patriarchy and misogyny in the novel "Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan". This novel is suitable for exploring female subject's resistance because it is a true depiction of a typical patriarchal Pakistani society. This study focuses on the central ideas of FDA: power, resistance and agency. Throughout the novel protagonist Saba resists patriarchal power structures and female misogyny. She refuses to accept anything that male or female members chooses for her. She actively negotiates her position within her community. Through Saba's story, we see how both male and female misogynists can be equally damaging to women's progress, and the fight for equality. The protagonist journey is characterized by a strong sense autonomy, self-respect and self-reliance. She encounters gender based prejudices but resists actively to establish her point of view. It illustrates effectively that Pakistani women are capable of resisting repressive power structures. The findings support Foucault's view which suggests that power circulates within the society and a powerful subject is not all powerful, conversely a weak subject is not all powerless. Rather subjects negotiate their position in everyday interactions. The subjects who are at weak positions also exhibit power which they exert through resisting powerful structures.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)

This study employs Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to explore how female subjects negotiate their power position in the novel "Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan". While Foucault (1977) acknowledges the State's influence, he emphasizes that power flows through networks connected to state institutions and is more dispersed across society than traditionally understood. Rather than assuming that power in any institutional setting rests solely with the dominant figure, Foucault explores how people navigate and negotiate power in these relationships. This idea of resistance being inherent in all power relations has been particularly influential for feminist theorists. It has helped them to move away from earlier models that focused solely on oppressors and victims, broadening their understanding of power dynamics and enabling more nuanced discussions of dominance and resistance. It enables us to rethink the subject as an active participant who uses personal agency when necessary, rather than as a passive object of power. Foucault's subject is capable of negotiating and resisting power. The idea of power as proposed by Foucault (1972); Foucault (1977) provides a critical framework for comprehending the processes of resistance and agency in social institutions. Traditional, rigid, stable, and static ideas of power as belonging solely to the State or other dominant institutions are contested by Foucault. Rather, he views power as distributed, relational, and flexible. It circulates through

social networks and interactions. According to Foucault (1978); Foucault (1981), power is a dynamic field of relations that functions at all levels of social interaction rather than just being a top-down imposition. When examining how people fight oppressive systems like patriarchy and misogyny, Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) is very helpful to study these subjects. His focus on power as a relationship offers a lens to view how people negotiate their position in hierarchical systems.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Understanding Power-Resistance Relationship

Resistance doesn't emerge from an individual solely, however, it comes from an interaction of personal subjectivity, context, and social interactions. Foucault's famous statement "where there is power, there is resistance...and yet, rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978). The first part is observable in everyday resistance. We need to understand the later part to understand it deeply, which means resistance is always connected to the systems of power and is never exists outside the systems of power it opposes. They are entangled and interconnected to each other. Resistance is deeply embedded within power relations, however it challenges certain aspects of power. In contrast to organized or political resistance, everyday resistance is often habitual and semi-conscious. Unlike organized resistance, everyday resistance often lacks direct, confrontational nature. Often it works in indirect ways to undermine power without exposing the actor or the act itself.

2.2. Key Features of Everyday Resistance

2.2.1. Regular or Habitual

It is often done as part of daily routines. Subjects may not have explicit political intentions, but they are capable of challenging power either negotiating it verbally or resisting it by becoming silent. A subject may choose to exert his/her agency either by actively arguing or negotiating his/her position or register his/her unwillingness or disagreement by becoming silent.

2.2.2. Non-Political or Hidden

Everyday resistance often avoids confrontation and remains hidden or unnoticed unless very critical circumstances need subject to confront the situation openly. Therefore it is often labeled as non-political by dominant discourses.

2.2.3. Individual or small scale

These are unorganized and carried out without any leadership by individuals on informal groups on small scale. These are often influenced by shared subcultural attitudes or behaviors towards each other.

2.2.4. Connected to Power

Resistance is deeply connected to power and cannot be observed separately. It cannot exist outside the systems of power independently.

2.2.5. Intersectional in Nature

Resistance operates through multiple forms of power and intersection forces simultaneously, just as power interacts with various forces at a time.

2.2.6. Context Dependent

Everyday resistance is inconsistent, non-universal and have no uniform strategy. That's why it keeps changing from one situation to another situation based on the context. We are applying the model of everyday resistance to a novel because literature often acts as a mirror of society, reflecting its power dynamics and struggles. This novel, in particular, depicts incidents and interactions that closely resemble everyday acts of resistance, making it an ideal choice for exploring how resistance manifests in ordinary contexts and relationships.

2.3. The Role of Discourse in Resistance

Resistance is not just about acts of resistance but also about how it is interpreted and framed through discourse. This includes both the discourse of those resisting and the academic or scientific discourse about resistance. In order to explore the potential for social change within various forms of resistance, this research focuses on non-political forms of resistance. It aims to uncover hidden assumptions and power dynamics by using non-traditional approaches including different actors, intentions and contexts. It focuses on non-obvious forms of resistance i.e. that

could not be immediately recognized as resistance. In order to achieve this we need a flexible approach that goes beyond strong theories and methods. So that, it is open enough to include non-traditional and un-expected forms of resistance. In order to avoid being influenced by dominant power structures this approach uses the above mentioned conceptual frame work to study two female characters, 'Saba and Sara's (Meri zaat zara-e-Benishan) resistance in a non-political context. The central focus of this study is to capture the alternative forms of resistance that are often ignored, unnoticed or not recognized as 'resistance'.

2.4. Challenging Traditional Views on Resistance

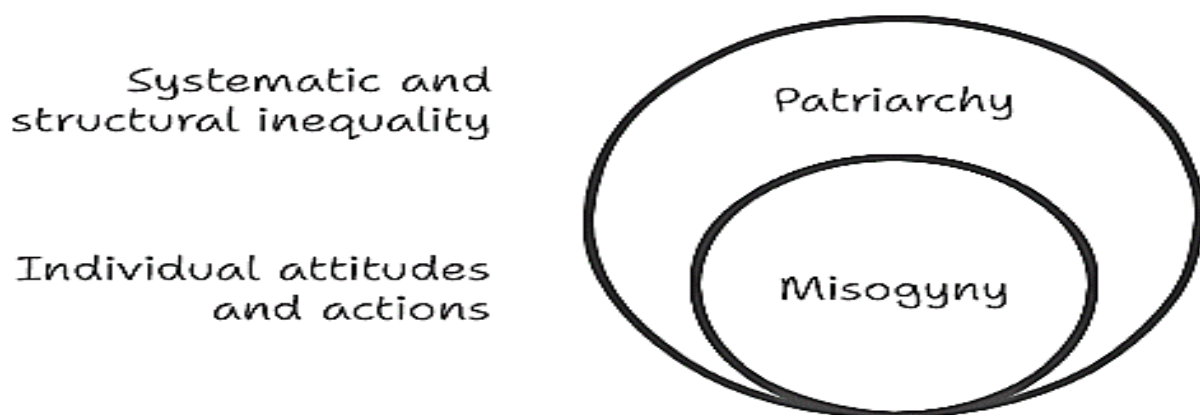
Everyday resistance contrasts with large scale political resistance. Social science often focus on visible, confrontational and political forms of resistance. Even when studying marginalized groups, researchers and dominant systems often focus on politically conscious forms of resistance. They neglect forms of resistance that do not fit traditional category of political action. For instance, resistance based on personal needs, emotions, and non-political goals is as significant in challenging power dynamics within a society as any political movement. In order to gain full picture of resistance, it is essential to include these less visible forms of resistance. This highlights a crucial issue, why certain forms of resistance are recognized while others are excluded from being considered as legitimate resistance. Overt political resistance is privileged over covert, non-political, everyday resistance. Expecting resistance to conform to traditional political frameworks imposed by researchers, elites or regimes may silence alternative forms of resistance.

2.5. Understanding Difference between Misogyny and Patriarchy

As this study aims to trace female characters 'Saba and Sara's resistance to patriarchy and misogyny, it is crucial to understand the difference between misogyny and patriarchy.

Figure 1: Illustrates the main difference between Patriarchy and Misogyny

Dynamics of Misogyny and Patriarchy



The figure 1 illustrates that Patriarchy is a broader structure that perpetuates gender inequality and it may thrive in absence of explicit misogyny. The terms misogyny and patriarchy are closely interrelated but are distinct from each other because each of them describes different aspects of gender inequality. Misogyny refers to the attitudes, behaviors against woman such as hostility, discrimination and devaluation. It denotes dislike, contempt or prejudice against woman. It includes emotional or psychological bias against woman. It is often expressed through language, action or societal norms that degrade woman. These are observed in daily life by noticing woman objectification on media or in speech; believing woman are inferior or incapable of as compared to men; societal attitudes targeting woman specifically; interpersonal attitudes using pejorative language for woman. On the other hand, patriarchy refers to a broader social system where men hold power, have authority, social privilege and control over woman. It is systematic and institutional by nature, deeply embedded in laws, traditions and cultural practices that favor men over woman. These attitudes are observed in daily life by noticing laws and customs that limit woman rights e.g. right to education, marriage, inheritance.

Figure 2: Illustrates the Key Aspects of Misogyny and Patriarchy Separately

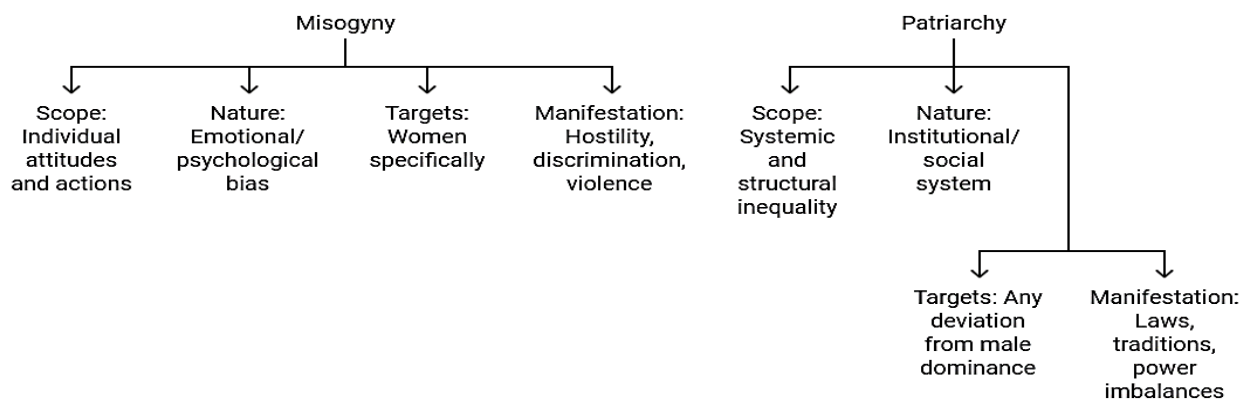


Figure 2. shows that misogyny focuses on individual attitudes and actions, on the other hand patriarchy focuses on systematic and structural inequalities. Misogyny is an emotional and psychological bias by nature, however, Patriarchy is an institutional and social system. Misogyny targets woman specifically and patriarchy is comprised of any deviations emerging from male dominance affecting woman mostly. Misogyny is often manifested as hostility, discrimination and violence against woman, in contrast Patriarchy is manifested in the form of laws, traditions, and power imbalances. After developing an understanding of theoretical framework and technical terms we proceed towards the next section to observe the phenomenon under discussion in literature, history and culture.

3. Women’s Historical and Cultural Resistance against Patriarchy and Oppression

In a patriarchal society males often exercise their authority over females to establish their superior power position. Male members of society frequently enforce these standards and ideals, which are meant to limit and control women and other gender identities. Basic freedoms and rights, as well as access to justice, are frequently denied to women and people of different gender identities. The legal system frequently discriminates against women and other gender identities, and laws and regulations frequently favor men over women. Because of this, it is challenging for women and people of different gender identities to obtain justice and have their rights upheld (for detail see Hegemonic Masculinity in Ghilzai, Khan and Mujeeb (2024)). Women face discrimination in the workplace and are frequently excluded from educational and career possibilities. Additionally, they are supposed to assume a subservient role in the home, with the major duties being caring for the kids and keeping the house in order. There are numerous facets of life where patriarchy has an impact. Access to jobs, education, and health care is frequently denied to women. They also frequently experience psychological, sexual, and physical abuse. Women are frequently required to conform to gender norms that are not only constrictive but also detrimental to their feeling of autonomy, self-worth, and self-esteem. (For detail see Patriarchy in Ghilzai, Khan and Mujeeb (2024)). To put it briefly, patriarchy is a system of male dominance and control over women and other gender identities that is well ingrained in Pakistan. Economic exclusion, cultural norms and beliefs, violence against women and other gender identities, and a biased judicial system are just a few of the numerous ways it can show up. Recognizing the systemic nature of the problem and working to change laws, policies, and attitudes to guarantee that women and other gender identities are treated with respect and dignity are crucial steps in addressing Pakistan's patriarchy issue. Contrarily, female misogyny describes the contempt and/or hostility that women encounter from other women.

This section shows how women have resisted patriarchy in diverse cultures historically through activism, literature and art. They have challenged gender inequality in every era. Women fought for "the right to vote" during the 20th-century American suffrage movement (Steinem, 1995). Similar to this, women like "Rosa Parks" and "Fannie Lou Hamer" (see Links) fought against racial segregation and promoted civil rights during other movements of the 1950s and 1960s, including the Civil Rights Movement. Survivors who have courageously spoken out against the abusers have been given a voice by the #MeToo movement, which has brought attention to the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault in recent years. Literature and art also

demonstrate resilience in the face of misogyny and patriarchy. Women have challenged the existing quo and expressed themselves via literature and the arts throughout history. Poets and Drama writers in the 16th century, poet (such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz) discussed the difficulties faced by women in a male-dominated culture. In the 19th century, the novels of Alcott (1875, 1877, 1881, 1886, 1969, 1994, 2021, 2023); Alcott and Terrel (1832) and Brontë (2001); Brontë et al. (1900) explored the oppression of women and the role of gender in society. In the 20th century, the works of authors such as Morrison (1999); Toni Morrison (2004); T. Morrison (2004) , Walker (2004, 2011a, 2011b), and Angelou (1995, 1997, 2003, 2009) challenged traditional gender roles and explored the plight of women in a patriarchal society. For ages, English literature has focused on female subjects resisting power and exhibiting resilience. Authors have used variety of ways to demonstrate individual resistance and agency from Jane Austin to modern authors. For instance, Austen's Elizabeth Bennet (*Pride and Prejudice*, 1813) maintains her identity by resisting to a blind submission of Mr. Collins in spite of social pressures. Austin also establishes Elinor Dashwood's resilience in sense and sensibility (1959) who faces poverty and death of her mother with dignity. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) demonstrates Jane's resistance and resilience in harsh circumstances e.g. lack of education, harsh relatives and poverty. She changes her path after leaving Thronfield hall's harsh environment and refuses to accept anything less than what she deserves. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1832) shows the same spirit by resisting against gender injustice and poverty. The sisters remains adamant and optimistic against challenges and resolve to pursue their goals.

Toni Morrison's *Sethe* (*Beloved*, 1987) the protagonist endure slavery but remains adamant to keep her children safe. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Olanna* (*Half of a Yellow Sun*, 2006) is a strong, self-reliant lady who challenges societal challenges and expectations and perseveringly pursues her goals in spite of all obstacles. For instance, when civil war breaks *Olanna* prefers to stay with her nation and fights for minority rights. Likewise, Harper Lee's *Scout Finch* (*To kill a Mockingbird*, 2010) reveals incredible resistance against prejudice, racism and injustice. Atkinson (2013) (*Life after Life*, 2013) is able to analyze the events of the 20th century that affected women's lives and the effects of gender violence on their extreme vulnerability by using the protagonist's lifespan. Interestingly, Atkinson challenges the idea of female resilience and locates it in the body rather than the intellect. She questions if cultural texts can accurately depict female resilience while demonstrating how women may withstand trauma through their psychological amnesia and bodily recollection. The main heroine, "Ursula Todd," is offered a chance to flee the harsh cruelties of life and disasters, which makes this novel very different from her earlier works. An insightful examination into the intricacies of women's resistance to gender abuse can be found in 'Life After Life' (Domínguez García, 2019). Literature frequently reflect women's bravery and strength all over the world in the face of patriarchy. Urdu Literature also shows very strong characters that exhibit resistance and negotiate their position. "Anarkali" from Mughal-e- Azam (1960) is a well-known narrative of female resistance who negotiates her position with a King. Anarkali was a courtesan in Emperor Akbar's court. Despite the emperor's orders, she decides to stay with the man she loves. Though, she was punished for disobeying the king. Similarly, Umrao Jaan Ada Ruswa (1905) resists and negotiates with power structures that confine her identity and agency. She was kidnapped, sold into a brothel and served as a courtesan. She escapes from Khanam Jaan's oppressive control and reclaims her subjectivity by living independently. Urdu Literature is replete with subjects who resist power structures. After gaining insights from history, culture and literature we proceed to next section to examine the resistance of female subjects in the novel "Meri-Zaat-Zarra-e-Benishan".

3.1. Aim

This study aims to explore the concept of female subject's resistance to patriarchy and misogyny. It explores how female characters negotiate their position by resisting power structures. The novel "Meri-Zaat-Zarra-e-Benishan" is a perfect illustration of a Patriarchal society. We can trace how female subject's attempts to subvert power structures to reclaim their individuality and identity.

3.2. Research Question

- How Subjects interact their power positions in a patriarchal society.
- How female subjects negotiate their position in *Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan*.
- It explores whether female subjects are passive recipients of power or exercise their agency to overcome oppression and misogyny.

- It aims to trace resistance and resilience exhibited by female characters in *Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan*.

4. Methodology

This study employs Foucauldian Discourse Analysis Foucault (1972); Foucault (1977); Foucault (1978); Foucault (1981) to analyze female character's resistance to power authority and misogyny of other dominant and powerful subjects. This study examines central ideas of FDA power, resistance and agency in a patriarchal Pakistani society. It attempts to just examine Foucault's view that powerful subjects are not all powerful. It's not a kind of master-slave relationship that powerful subject exercise their power on powerless subjects and powerless subjects accept it passively. Instead, subject's resist through daily interactions and sometimes exert their individual agency through actions, decision making and choosing their own path. The following steps will be applied in order to analyze the data: In order to determine which major discourses in the novel represent power dynamics and how they relate to social identities and structures, the novel's extracts are first examined. Lastly, a number of suggestions are made to address the problem of male and female misogyny in society.

4.1. Analysis

This study explores the complex power dynamics in male-dominated Pakistan society depicted in *Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan*. The protagonist Saba's life and her resistance to gender injustice are the main focus of this novel. Ahmed vividly illustrates how patriarchal culture impacts women's life. The novel begins with Sara a twenty year old girl who is visiting her Uncle after the death of her mother Saba. She doesn't know anything about her mother's background or relatives. Later on, she finds out about her mother Saba's story. Saba, had come from a middle-class Pakistani family where gender roles were rigidly enforced. Men were given more freedom and respect because they were seen as the head of the house. While women were supposed to be dutiful and subservient. In the absence of her father, Saba's uncle served as her guardian. He was a very conservative person who demands that his niece follow his rules. As the story goes on, it becomes clear that Saba frequently faces consequences for her disobedient actions on account of her attempts to question the established status quo. Saba faces challenges related to gender inequity. Instead of pursuing her academic goals, she is expected to stay at home and assist her mother with household responsibilities. Despite her uncle's disapproval, Saba's will to fight for her right to seek further education demonstrates her resistance.

She is prepared to question her society's traditional views on women staying at home and not going to college, as well as the patriarchy. She is vocal, enthusiastic, and unafraid to persevere in her quest for knowledge. To get access to higher education, she is prepared to challenge gender norms and pose challenging questions. "So for what reason is your dad against young women education? He sends his child to the extent USA for advanced education however won't permit me to get out of the house" (Translation: Ahmed (1999). Since she will be staying at home and the degree will be useless, Afreen questions why she is so adamant about attending the university. He explains that since he would be providing for his family financially, he is a guy who needs a better education; "I need advanced education to have the option to procure more" (Translation: Ahmed, 1999, p. 25). She persuades her husband Arfeen, though, and is accepted to a university. *Purdah*, another symbol of patriarchal culture used to confine and control women, was still the subject of discussions. Despite all the limitations, Saba's response to these arguments demonstrates her strong character:

I am joining the University to gain an education, and I am aware of my self-respect and honor. I will not go unveiled; instead I will wear a chador. My head and body will remain covered, but I will not wear a traditional burka. Do you want to force me to wear the traditional burka, only for me to remove it once I enter the University and roam unveiled? Would that kind of veil protect my honor or our family honor? (Translation: Ahmed, 1999, p. 28).

The aforementioned passage demonstrates Saba's agency as she challenges her uncle and defends her right to wear the veil of her choice. Saba's conversation with her uncle is a perfect example of the power relations between them as well as the ways in which language is employed to establish and maintain gender norms. The dialogue's phrasing further emphasizes the underlying ideologies—namely, the notion of honor and respect connected to women's attire—that underlie the novel's portrayal of women. Because she is adamant about choosing her own clothes and refusing to wear the conventional burka, the discussion also demonstrates the

protagonist's sense of individuality and self-realization. Saba's maternal uncle Akhtar's personality further exemplifies Pakistan's patriarchal culture. Saba is considered a "wild woman" because she is determined to gain higher education. Her uncle, who has the ultimate say in family matters, is a strict man who marries off his daughters very young. However, he chooses to send his only son, Arfeen Abbas, abroad to study. When Saba's father left for America, her uncle stepped in to act as the head of the family. Saba attempts to gain approval from her uncle to attend a university, but her enthusiasm and ambition makes her unwelcomed in Arfeen's family. Saba's mother-in-law is a classic illustration of female misogyny in Pakistani society. Afreen's mother is a traditional woman, who believes that an ideal woman must be devoted to her family, husband and her children. She is intolerant of any woman who does not meet her standards of a 'good woman'. Her only mission in life is to ensure that all women conform to her ideal. She often disciplines women who do not meet her expectations, as she believes it is her duty to keep them on the "right path". She tries to dominate Saba's life by demeaning and insulting her. It demonstrates how Pakistani society frequently ignores female misogyny. It establishes that these are not just the males who try to control and oppress women. In an attempt to bring her into disrepute, Saba's mother-in-law engages in domestic abuse. In order to kill her character, she brings Saba and her cousin Adeel to the same room simultaneously at a marriage ceremony and locks them there. The following excerpt exposes the misogyny of women:

"You wanton, witch, liar of a woman. Why would I send you to this room? You shameless, brazen woman! How dare you carry out your evil act in my son's room? How could we even think of taking such a woman as our daughter-in-law? (Translation: Ahmed, 1999, p. 52).

The novel's passage above shows how commonplace female misogyny is in Pakistani culture. As she establishes her authority over Saba, Saba's mother-in-law uses language that conveys a sense of control and power. Furthermore, by accusing Saba of being a "wanton" and "brazen" lady who has broken social conventions by simply being seen in the same room as her cousin Adeel, she demonstrates a strong belief in traditional gender roles. Because Saba is not given the opportunity to defend herself or provide an explanation for her conduct, the language used in this scenario also contributes to a broader discourse of oppression and authority. The fact that none of Saba's family members are prepared to defend her and prefer to listen to the taunts directed at her serves to further reinforce this discourse of oppression and authority. This scene demonstrates how gender roles and power dynamics in Pakistani society may be created and maintained through language. Being a man, Adeel just runs away from the circumstance. But Saba was held responsible because she was a girl. Her family and the local elders did not trust her, even though she tried to be honest with them. In the courtyard, children eagerly observed her uncle pushing her to the ground and dragging her by her hair. After that, he removed his shoes and began hitting her head repeatedly. Saba attempted to grasp his hand. He was only made angrier by this. 'No uncle! Please stop! Don't hit me like this, not here in front of all the people. If you want to kill me just shoot me' uncle continued and Saba raised her head for the last time to look at the people watching her (Ahmed, 1999, p. 55). The power relationships between Adeel, Saba, and the village elders are depicted in this passage from *Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan*. While Saba is held responsible and severely beaten by her uncle in front of the entire community, Adeel is shown to be able to get away from the situation. This reinforces the social hierarchy of power and gender norms, which demand that women be docile and subservient while males are free to act whenever they like. The episode also illustrates the pervasive misogyny in Pakistani society, where women are attacked rather than trusted, even when they speak the truth. It demonstrates even further how marginalized and oppressed women are in our society, as well as how powerless they are to challenge male authority. The novel also emphasizes that patriarchal culture can have detrimental effects on women's lives. The crowd verbally and physically abuses Saba and her husband immediately files for divorce which further reinforces the social norms that establish male superiority. Her self-control allows her to survive. Furthermore, Saba's mother's remarks are full of criticism and blame, whereas Saba's statements are full of resistance and resiliency, demonstrating the power dynamics between Saba and her family. This instance demonstrates the need for a more balanced power structure between the sexes and the pervasiveness of female misogyny in Pakistani society.

[Saba's Mother] What have you come here for, after audaciously darkening your face? You bold lady! Proceed to suffocate yourself to death. Saba, you have ended up being a harmful

snake for my family. For what reason didn't I choke you to death when you were conceived? (Translation: Ahmed, 1999, p. 62).

Saba's reply to her mother:

I have not disgraced myself mother. You have all consolidated to disgrace me. I have accepted a lot of shame. Presently the ball is in your court, this family, and each individual who has unjustifiably blamed me". (Translation: Ahmed, 1999, p. 63).

This illustrates the challenges women encounter while attempting to flee oppressive patriarchal systems. The intricacies of a patriarchal society in modern-day Pakistan are examined in the text. Ahmed vividly illustrates the ways in which this culture permeates society through the characters in the novel. Saba chooses to resist actively, instead of accepting her family allegations silently. Despite this, Arfeen is still skeptical of her claims and she pleads with him to believe her. Unfortunately, the evidence is against her and Ahmad highlights the difficulties that women face when trying to prove their innocence in relation to matters of sexuality. The power dynamics in Pakistani society, where women are seen as commodities to be purchased, sold, and married off, are further exposed by the analysis. Saba's story showcases the how women are controlled in a patriarchal society that limit their choices. Even the male members of their family are bent upon choosing their life partners. When Afreen divorces her, her own family refuses to accept her and she lacks support from her own family. She is not economically independent yet she didn't request for any kind of support from people who disowned her. She prefers to work as a factory worker or a housemaid to maintain her dignity and self-respect. This refusal to accept support from people who didn't believe her is also a form of resistance. She is able to survive on her own and manages to take lead of her life. She chooses to survive independently instead accepting aid from her family and living her life as a puppet. At the start of the novel, Sara, a nineteen year old girl, is visiting her Uncle's house for the first time in her life. She is unsure of her mother's past life and her relatives, and is thus bewildered. Despite the fact that Saba chooses to disguise her-self and her serious past from her daughter and people around her, Sara is determined to find out about her distant family. Saba's silence about her past creates a lack of communication between her and her daughter. Sara wants her mother to open up and share her past experiences with her, hoping for conversations, cuddles and fun banter with her. Saba had been entrenched in a deep silence that had prevented any kind of bond or connection from forming between her and her daughter, Sara. As the day drew to a close, the two engaged in a heated exchange, with Saba attempting to escape the memories of her past and Sara determined to uncover the secrets of her mother's past. Sara mistakenly believed that her mother's silence was a result of guilt over eloping with her father. She even made up an explanation for why her family had disowned her. Caught in confusion, she struggled to fully grasp her mother's true identity.

When Sara discovers the reason behind her mother's grief and silence, she decided firmly that she would never marry Afreen's son. She quickly left Afreen's house and moved to a woman guest house. They eventually managed to locate her after a lot of effort. Initially, they were unsuccessful in convincing her to return home with them. After many unsuccessful attempts, finally they managed to convince her to return home. Finally, Sara was enlightened with the fact that Afreen's mother had confessed about her wrongdoings, and so the search for Saba began. After locating her, they pleaded for her forgiveness and urged her to come stay with them in their home. This demonstrates that Sara is able to negotiate her position with Afreen and her family. Three months later her aunt made a confession that she had took a false oath on the Holy book. She victimized Saba deliberately through this plot. (Meri Zaat Zara-e- Beneshan: 89) Ahmad's Saba is a strong and determined woman who is determined to never give up. Despite facing adversity and judgement from the society in which she lives, she stands her ground and refuses to compromise her self-respect or dignity. She is dedicated to living and surviving alone, no matter what the cost. She is a role model of resilience and strength, never wavering in her beliefs and values, and never wavering in her commitment to standing up for herself. In a world where women are often judged and treated unfairly, she stands as a beacon of light, showing that it is possible to stand strong in the face of adversity and be true to oneself. She is an inspiration to all who seek courage and strength in the face of difficult circumstances. Uncle says] Saba, Don't go anywhere, please come back to your home and stay with us. The youngest uncle tried to stop her. [Saba says] Uncle, I don't need a home to live but just a place, I have that one. She did not stop, then everybody tried to stop her. Uncle followed her to door but she didn't

stop. She went back with the same quietness and peace with which she came. (Meri Zaat Zara-e- Beneshan: 99).

This scene shows Saba's self-respect, self-awareness. She strongly believes in her own capabilities and stands her ground in a society that puts her down and judges her. She does not compromise on her self-respect and refuses to go back to the home of her uncles. Saba keeps up her poise and does not let anyone dictate her life. Despite all the difficulties she faces, Saba is able to maintain her optimism and resiliency. This is a testament to her strong will and self-esteem. Saba's strength of character and high morale are inspiring. Finally Saba's perseverance made her establish her truth and dignity over her family and at the end they are seeking for forgiveness that is evident in the excerpt below:

I forgave you, I have nothing in my heart against you. She stood up, her aunt started weeping like a child. Her uncle came forward saying "I have been very cruel to you. Saba" interrupted him, I forgave you as well. I forgave everybody. She picked up her daughter and moved towards the door. (Meri Zaat Zara-e- Beneshan on page 99)

Saba's resistance and self-reliance is truly remarkable in the novel Meri Zaat Zara-e-Beneshan. Women are born into a society that is heavily biased towards them, and as a result, experience unfairness, inequity, and mistreatment from the wider population. Saba is an incredibly strong character, who never gives up hope in the face of adversity. She keeps her past life a secret from her daughter and continues to nurture her, even in the toughest of times. Sara's journey began in uncertain uncertainty and ended in unwavering confidence. Throughout the novel, Ahmad weaves the story of a mother and daughter, Sara and Saba, as they battle to make their voices heard. Despite the opposition they face, Saba's strength and determination remain unwavering. She represents a woman's quest for empowerment, advocating for the rights of women in Pakistani society. Throughout her struggles, from her abuse to her confrontation with the male-dominated society, Saba never backs down, displaying remarkable courage and conviction in her fight for freedom and acceptance. She ultimately succeeds in her mission and is rewarded with the acceptance of her own independent life as a self-empowered woman.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Through a Foucauldian discourse analysis (1972, 1978), this essay has examined the Pakistani novel Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan's portrayal of female resistance against female misogyny in a patriarchal society. Ahmad speaks out for the rights of women and how they are often controlled to follow the rules that are created by men. This control of women by men turns the body of a woman into a battlefield where a conflict between the sexes takes place. The men, who are in power, wish to treat the female body as their own possession and feel superior by forcing their will on women. The women, however, have to take part in this battle, whether willingly or unwillingly to meet the expectations of the men and to fulfill their duties as obedient wives. Women have an inborn inclination to defy the standards set against them. The standards and rules that have been established become a hindrance between them and the things that they aspire for. They yearn to be able to pick their own life partners, to pursue educational opportunities, and to be treated with respect and equality, without any kind of prejudice. Foucault emphasizes the significance of resistance in the power struggle, claiming that it's not the powerful subjects who possess power solely, rather subjects without power are capable of negotiating power position through resistance. For him, power is a form of control and resistance is the reaction against it. As Foucault states, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (1997: 95). It implies that power is never fixed and absolute and it is always challenged by resistance. Resistance is an attempt to subvert power structures. It is essential to change status quo. Saba's story is a perfect example of subverting patriarchal power structures. Saba did not allow Afreen and his family to subjugate her, instead she to challenged them through various forms of resistance. These range from negotiating her position and refusing to wear burka and accepting undignified status, to successfully getting admission at university. Saba was able to shake power structures and relations to achieve her goals. Saba's story illustrates the idea that resistance is a form of power and Saba holds this power by refusing to accept her parents' home a place where she was judged and humiliated. Instead, she chooses to leave her parents' home to maintain her sense of pride. She is able to assert her identity and find a way to remain true to herself. By the end of the story, Afreen and her family bowed before her daughter. Saba was successful in overthrowing power structure.

Overall, Foucault's idea that power and resistance are inseparable and are closely linked together can be observed clearly in everyday incidents and resistance. There are countless examples available throughout the history, literature and everyday life for further observation and research. Female misogyny is a serious issue that needs to be addressed in order to ensure that women are treated with respect and dignity. It is important to recognize the ways in which female misogyny manifests itself. This study suggests following steps to combat it. It includes raising awareness of the issue, speaking out against it, and supporting initiatives that promote gender equality. Additionally, it is important to foster supportive relationships between women, in order to create a more positive atmosphere and to create opportunities for women to reach their full potential. Female resilience against female misogyny in a patriarchal society like Pakistan can be achieved through a number of strategies. Firstly, it is important to recognize that female misogyny is a form of gender based violence and should be addressed as such. It is important to foster meaningful dialogues between women and men to deconstruct the myths and stereotypes that are used to perpetuate misogyny. Secondly, it is important to provide safe spaces for women to share their experiences and support one another. This can be done through creating support groups, workshops, and mentorship programs which can empower and equip women with the necessary skills to challenge and speak out against female misogyny. Thirdly, it is important to advocate for legal remedies and protective laws that are gender-specific and designed to protect women from gender-based violence. Lastly, it is essential to increase understanding and instruct the public about the need to challenge and resist gender-based stereotypes and misogyny.

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