UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

CONSTRUCTING A MATRIARCHAL SOCIETY THROUGH NEGO-FEMINISM IN THE WORKS OF ZAYNAB ALKALI

USMAN AMBU MUHAMMAD

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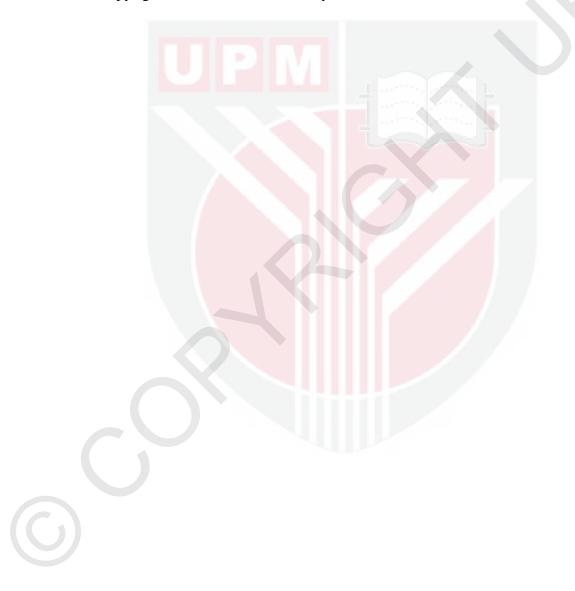
By

USMAN AMBU MUHAMMAD

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2018

DEDICATION

I dedicated this work to my beloved parents (late) Muhammad Usman (Ambu) and Maimunatu Usman. May Allah have mercy upon them and make the highest heaven their abode.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**CONSTRUCTING A MATRIARCHAL SOCIETY THROUGH
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December 2018

Chairman : **Manimangai Mani, PhD**
Faculty : **Modern Languages and Communication**

Women's discrimination has been a long and nagging issue pervading both Western
and African societies. Starting from the literary history of the West, covering the eras
of Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Simone de
Beauvoir to current feminists there have been many movements that aimed to eradicate
women's subjugation by patriarchal structures. The same problem exists in African
societies. Women in sub-Saharan Africa suffer human rights violations. Females
suffer sexual discrimination, violence, political marginalization and economic
deprivation. The objective of this research is to examine the condition and treatment
of women in the patriarchal society represented in the works of Zaynab Alkali.
Another objective is to show how Zaynab Alkali reconstructs the role of women
through negotiation in her novels. Finally, this research determined ways in which
nego-feminism can be used as a tool to bridge the gender gap that exists in the African
society in Zaynab Alkali's novels. The methodology utilised textual analyses of
Zaynab Alkali's novels. The analyses were carried out in relation to the tenets of nego-
feminism theory and cultural theory. The findings of this study show that the
construction of a matriarchal society played a significant role in uplifting the female
characters in Zaynab Alkali's novels. The findings also reveal that nego-feminism
could be used as a tool for bridging the gap between the sexes in the type of society
represented in Zaynab Alkali's novels., This study succeeded in discussing feminism
historically from both Western and African perspectives and the problems with these
perspectives vis-a-vis their associated achievements.

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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

MENYIASAT KONSEP MATRIARKI MELALUI NEGO-FEMINISM DALAM NOVEL-NOVEL TERPILIH ZAYNAB ALKALI

Oleh

USMAN AMBU MUHAMMAD

Disember 2018

Pengerusi   : **Manimangai Mani, PhD**
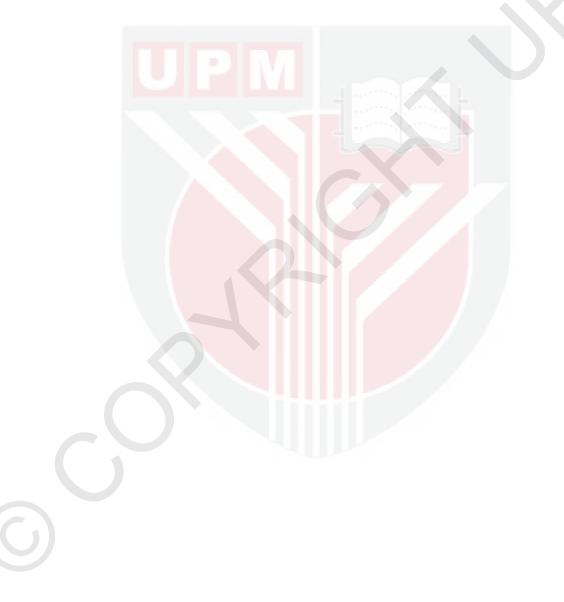Fakulti   : **Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi**

Kebanyakan kajian yang telah dijalankan terhadap hasil karya Zaynab Alkali berfokus kepada penguasaan terhadap wanita oleh struktur patriarki yang mengakibatkan mereka tertolak ke belakang. Sesetengah pengkaji telah meneliti dan menganalisis kerja-kerja Alkali dan merumuskan bahawa kaum wanita digambarkan sebagai golongan yang tiada kepentingan dan jantina yang rendah tarafnya berbanding dengna kaum lelaki serta tidak mempunyai sebarang identiti tersendiri. Kaum wanita juga biasanya diketepikan dalam bidang penulisan dan perkahwinan paksa atau perkahwinan bawah umur sering digalakkan. Hal ini seterusnya menafikan peluang sama rata kepada anak-anak perempuan berbanding dengan anak-anak lelaki. Kaum wanita di utara Nigeria dikatakan tidak memiliki suara dalam sebarang isu dan masa depan mereka bergantung kepada kaum lelaki yang menunjangi segala keputusan. Penulis-penulis lelaki Afrika pula dikenali dengan keengganan mereka untuk menyentuh isu kesengsaraan kaum wanita ini.

Sebagai respons kepada fenomena ini, Alkali telah memulakan perjuangan untuk menentang struktur patriarki yang mengakibatkan penindasan wanita ini dengan mewujudkan masyarakat matriarki dalam novel-novel terpilih. Alkali telah menghidupkan watak-watak wanita dengan kuasa pendidikan dan ekonomi yang seterusnya mengangkat status mereka .

Novel-novel terpilih Zaynab Alkali yakni *The Stillborn* (1984), *The Virtuous Woman* (1986), *The Descendents* (2005) dan *The Initiates* (2007) jelas merupakan satu bentuk wacana yang menunjukkan pemberontakan dengan pengurangan penguasaan kaum lelaki. Sebenarnya tidak terdapat sebarang kajian yang meninjau aspek ini dalam hasil karya Alkali. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengisi kekosongan tersebut dengan meneliti bagaiman Alkali telah membangunkan masyarkat matriarki dalam novel-novel

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terpilih. Pengkaji berhasrat untuk meneroka sejauh manakah pembentukan matriarki tersebut meninggalkan impak terhadap watak-waak lelaki dalam novel terpilih. Kajian ini juga menentukan kaedah bagaimana *nego-feminism* dan teori kebudayaan (*cultural theory*) akan digunakan sebagai perkakas untuk menutup jurang antara jantina.

Kaedah yang digunakan dalam kajian ini ialah analisis tekstual novel-novel terpilih dengan menggunakan *nego-feminism* dan teori kebudayaan sebagai perkakas untuk menganalisis dan memetik contoh sebagai bukti bagi menentukan bagaimana Alkali membina masyarakat matriarki dan juga setakat mana masyarakat tersebut meninggalkan impak terhadap watak-watak lelaki dalam novel-novel terpilih.

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I am indebted to my beloved parents (late) for their tireless efforts and possible best to bring me to the best position in life and nostalgically, they could not witness this great moment of mine. I pray to Allah to have mercy upon them and make the highest heaven their abode. I also thank my family for their tireless support in prayers, financial aspect and their patience for missing me. I also thank my brothers and sisters, relations, friends and colleagues, neighbours and all that have contributed in one way or the other in making my study a success. May Allah reward you all abundantly.

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Finally, I am grateful to my financier, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for greatly supporting me financially to go abroad and pursuit a PhD in Universiti Putra Malaysia. I am indebted to TETFund.

Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:
- this thesis is my original work;
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- this thesis has not been submitted previously or concurrently for any other degree at any institutions;
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Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) were adhered to.

Signature:	
Name of Chairman of Supervisory Committee:	Dr. Manimangai Mani

Signature:	
Name of Member of Supervisory Committee:	Associate Professor Dr. Rosli bin Talif

Signature:	
Name of Member of Supervisory Committee:	Dr. Hardev Kaur Jujar Singh

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INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

1.1.1   Brief History of Africa

Africa is said to be the first continent on earth where human beings lived. Early history shows that the African people were hunters and they led a nomadic life. Small communities were said to have settled in fertile areas and tried to depend on their territories. Many centuries onwards, expansive African kingdoms were established, and the people felt the need to control their lands and resources as Arab and European traders came to buy goods such as slaves and gold. A large area of North Africa came under the control of Islamic states, while a powerful Christian kingdom was formed around Ethiopia in the east (McCann 2).

In the 1800s, the European countries began to take control of the coastal areas in Africa. (e.g., French Algeria, the British Cape Colony in South Africa). During this time, only small areas of the African continent were under European control, but some years after, the whole of Africa was under the control of European powers. By 1913, the Europeans had drawn boundaries for their 40 new states or colonies, which formed many of the African nations we have today. After World War II, from the 1950s onward, many African countries gained their independence. The boundaries created by the Europeans often grouped together African peoples with very different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds (2-3).

1.1.2   African Culture

There is a need to know the concept of culture and its meaning so as to facilitate understanding of African culture. Edward B. Taylor first coined and defined culture in his book (1871) entitled *Primitive Culture* as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." This definition embraces the complete nature of culture such that one would have expected it to have one meaning. But many more definitions have emerged. For instance, Bello sees culture as "the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, aesthetic and religious norms, thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours" (189). Aziza refers to culture as "the totality of the pattern of behaviour of a particular group of people. It includes everything that makes them distinct from any other group of people for instance, their greeting habits, dressing, social norms and taboos, food, songs and dancing patterns, rites of passages from birth through marriage to death, traditional occupations, religions as well as philosophical beliefs" (31).

So, based on the few discussed definitions of culture, which distinguishes a people from others, one can now conclude that there are many cultures in Africa. Africa is inhabited by about 3000 distinct ethnic groups who speak approximately 2000 languages, have different modes of dressing, eating, dancing, and greeting. But despite their various cultures, Africans share some dominant features in their belief systems and have similar values that distinguish them from other people of the world. For instance, Nigerian culture is more similar to that of the Niger Republic's culture in certain aspects than it is to Western cultures. So, the culture of traditional African societies, together with their value systems and beliefs, are close, even though they vary slightly from one another (33).

1.1.3   Nigerian Society and Culture

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a wide area on the coast of the continent. It boarders the Federal Republic of Cameroon to the east, the Niger Republic to the north, the Benin Republic to the west, and the Republic of Chad to the north-east. The Gulf of Guinea coastline stretches from Badagry in the west to Calabar in the east and includes the Bight of Benin and Biafra. Nigeria now has thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja (CIA World Fact Book). Nigeria is physically, ethnically, and culturally diverse and inhibited by a large number of tribes that speak over four hundred languages. Islam and Christianity are the dominant religions in the country, and a small percentage of the population are identified with indigenous religions (Crowder, 1966). However, Nigerian's greatest diversity is in its people. These peoples have so much culture that it is necessary to narrate this history as it relates to their economic and political struggles. Sir Frederick Lugard, the royal governor of the protectorates amalgamated the Northern and Southern Nigerian protectorates of what is now Nigeria in 1914. The British first took over part of Nigeria as a colony and incorporated it into the West African Settlements, including Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast colony. The taking over of Lagos, a coastal town, led to the establishment of a Southern protectorate which later was amalgamated with the Northern protectorate as mentioned earlier to form what we have today as Nigeria.

Women in Nigeria before the coming of the colonialists (British) had equal work positions to men rather than subordinate (Crowder, 1966). This complementary position was used through socio-economic and political struggles. Nigerian women had participated in the private and public spheres and usually had independent access to resources. During the pre-colonial era, women participated effectively in the subsistence economy. They controlled such occupations as mat weaving, cooking and pottery. Among the Yoruba, women were major figures in long-distance trade with great chances of acquiring wealth and titles. Among the titles was the most prestigious title of the "Chieftaincy of Iyadole," which is a position of great privilege and honour (Crowder, 1966).

Oyeneye and Shoremi observed that Nigerian women are often expected to provide the means of sustenance for their children. Therefore, traditionally, women have to farm or sell home made products in the local markets to ensure that they can feed and

clothe their children (5). Generally, labour is divided in Nigerian societies along gender lines, and this division exists even within industries. For instance, the kinds of crops that women cultivate differ from those that men cultivate. In Igbo society, yams are seen as men's crops, while beans and cassava are seen as women's crops. Very few women are active in political and professional arenas. In labour areas, more women are seen in the professional workforce, but they are greatly outnumbered by their male counterparts. Women who manage to gain professional employment hardly make it into the high levels of management.

Marriage is another part of Nigerian culture. There are three types of marriages in Nigeria: religious marriage, civil marriage and traditional marriage. A Nigerian couple may decide to take part in one of these types of marriages. Religious marriages, usually among Christians and Muslims, are conducted according to the norms of the religious teachings and take place in churches or mosques. Christian men are allowed only one wife, while Muslim men can take up to four wives. Civil official weddings take place in a government registry office. Men are allowed only one wife under civil marriage law, regardless of religion. Traditional marriages usually are held at the bride's house and are performed according to the customs of the ethnic groups involved. Though customs vary from group to group, traditional weddings are often full of dancing and lively music. There is a lot of excitement and cultural displays. For instance, the Yoruba have a practice in which the bride and two or more other women come out covered from head to toe in white shrouds. It is the groom's job to identify his bride from among the shrouded women to show how well he knows her.

Divorce is also a common Nigerian custom. Marriage is said to be more of a social contract to ensure the continuation of family lines rather than a union based on love and emotional connections. It is common for a husband and wife to live in separate houses and to be independent of one another. In most ethnic groups, either the man or the woman can end the marriage. If the woman leaves her husband, she will often be taken as a second or third wife of another man. In this case, the new husband is responsible for repaying the bride price to the former husband. Children of a divorced woman are normally accepted into the new family, as well.

The domestic unit for most Nigerian families is very large, and many Nigerian men take more than one wife. In some ethnic groups, the higher the number of your children, the higher your position in the eyes of your peers. In polygamous families, each wife is responsible for feeding and caring for her children. The wives take turns in feeding their husband, and so, the cost of his food is equally shared among the wives. Husbands are the authority in the households, and they do not expect to be challenged by their wives. In most Nigerian cultures, the father has his crops to attend to, while his wives have their own jobs, such as processing palm oil or selling vegetables in the local market. The older boys will help the father with his work, while the girls and the younger boys will stay with their mother.

Inheritance is part of Nigerian culture. In many Nigerian ethnic groups, such as the Hausa and the Igbo, inheritance is basically a male affair. Though women have a legal

right to inheritance, they often receive nothing. Property and wealth are passed on to the sons, if they are old enough, or to other male relatives, such as brothers or uncles. Among the Fulani, if a man dies, his brother inherits his property and his wife. The wife usually returns to live with her family, but she may move in with her husband's brother and become his wife.

Another custom of Nigerian societies is childcare. New-borns are regarded with pride and considered as future representatives of a community and a family. The bond between the mother and the child is very strong. During the first few years, the mother is always with the child and never far away from him/her. Children who are too young to walk or get around on their own are carried on their mothers' back. Women carry their children on the back while they perform their daily chores or work in the fields. When children are four to five years of age, they are expected to start performing some household duties. Young men are expected to help their fathers in the fields, while young women help with cooking, fetching water, or doing the laundry. These tasks help the children to learn how to become productive members of their family and community. In many Nigerian ethnic groups, education of children is a community responsibility. For instance, in Igbo culture, the training of children is the work of both men and women within the family and from outside of it. Neighbours often look after youngsters while parents are busy with other chores. It is not strange to see a man discipline a child who is not his own.

Regarding education, all Nigerian children are supposed to have access to a local elementary school. While the government aims to provide universal education for both boys and girls, the number of girls in a class is usually much lower than the number of boys. To send every child in a family to school can put a lot of strain on a family. The family will lose the child's help around the house during school hours. If parents are forced to send all the children to school, many will choose to educate boys.

In the religious aspect of Nigerian culture, Islam and Christianity are the dominant religions along with a percentage of the population that are identified with indigenous religions (Crowder). Muslims can be found in most parts of Nigeria, but their strongholds are among the Hausa and Yoruba. The religion is based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which are outlined in the Holy Qur'an. Christianity, on the other hand, is most widespread in the southern part of Nigeria. The vast majority of Igbo and many Yoruba are Christians. The relationship between the Christians and Muslims is not always cordial. There were many clashes between the two that have led to the loss of thousands of lives. The northern city of Kaduna has been the centre for many of the riots. For instance, the attempt to introduce Shariah law in the region was met with demonstrations by the Christians.

1.1.4   Nigerian Society from Feminist Discourses

The consensus among the contemporary Nigerian writers is that Nigeria is a patriarchal society, as is apparent in the relative social statuses of men and women. It is a society where gender roles are distinct and clear, which places women in a subordinate role to men (Aina; Okome; Akintan; Abara; Makama). Patriarchy literary means "rule of father" (from Greek: *patria*, meaning father, and *arche*, meaning rule). It is the anthropological term used to define the sociological condition in which male members of a society predominate in positions of power. The more powerful the position, the more likely it is that a male will hold that position. Patriarchy as a concept has been defined by feminists in their quest to understand and analyse the origin of subordination of women by men. Feminists refer it as "a systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination" (Kamarae; Stacey; Aina). Sylvia defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women." Cynthia Cockburn explains it as a system in which leadership, authority, aggressiveness and responsibility reside in men and masculinity, while nurture, compliance, passivity and dependence are the part of women and femininity. A patriarchal society is therefore one which strengthens the "masculine feminine dichotomy" by favouring and perpetuating male domination, and as such, in all areas of society, structures are manipulated to maintain and foster this domination of women by men. According to Azodo and Eke, Nigeria, being one of the traditional African societies, sees women's place as home, where they are expected to serve in the performance of the domestic chores and bearing and rearing of children, whereas men roam about looking for adventure in work and war (3). In Nigerian society, gender is associated with sex from the very time a child is born. The male child is preferred to the female. If a child is born, the first thing to be done is to determine the sex: "is the child a boy or girl?" (Omoregie and Abraham 1). This is because it is believed that the boy will carry on his father's lineage and also be the heir to his father's property (Akintan; Omadjohwoefe). Omadjohwoefe expresses that throughout childhood and adolescence, boys and girls are treated differently, assigned different household chores and given different privileges. "The male child is allowed to wander farther, get involved in rough and tumble play, while the girl is highly restricted and closely monitored" (69). The female child is to stay at home and help her mother with household chores, and through this, she learns how to keep a home and take care of the young ones. The male child follows his father in farming or any other profession his father engaged in. The male child is taught to be a man and is sent on errands that require going outside the house, while movement of the female child is monitored (Akintan). As the children grow, their minds are set towards the roles each should perform.

In view of this discussion so far on the status of women and men in Nigerian society, one can conclude that Nigeria is a male dominated society. But this has not completely side-lined women for they have their own sphere of jurisdiction which is recognised and respected. As Nigerian society is made up of a large number of cultural groups with different cultures and practices, the forms of social structure and relationships that exist in respective societies may not be exactly the same as others. Dogo, in an article entitled "The Nigerian Patriarchy: When and How," says that even though

women in Nigerian society have held a complementary position with men, they are still under a patriarchal society. Rojas, in agreement with this view, says that the position of women in pre-colonial Nigeria differed in a large number of ethnic groups. According to her, the difference depended on the kinship structure and the role of women within the economic structure of the individual ethnic groups and societies. She says the common factors among the Nigerian women in the pre-colonial society, irrespective of the ethnic group, however, was "the domestic oriented jobs and the range of economic activities that the society reserved for women" (Rojas). These jobs include the care of the home and family and for economic activities, farming to feed the family and selling of the surplus produce. Rojas opines that women in pre-colonial Nigerian societies have held complementary positions to the men, although patrilineal and patriarchal kinship structures dominate the Nigerian society. Women in the southern part of Nigeria, which was made up of Igbo and Yoruba communities, are believed to have been more politically aware and active than those in the northern part of the country. According to Okonjo and Derrickson, women were not unimportant or trivial in the male dominated Igbo society. Derrickson posits that:

> […] while men's labor was widely considered to be more prestigious than women's labor, and while the practice of polygamy and patrilocal domicile (married women dwelling in their husbands' villages rather than in their own) secured men's power over women in general, Ibo women still wielded considerable influence both within their marriages and within the large community.

The Ibo women were well known for their better skill in the area of agriculture in the community. They also had exclusive control over management and activities of the village market, which was the commercial centre of the community. In pre-colonial Yoruba society, women were also known to occupy certain positions among the king-makers and council of elders who helped the Oba to rule (Akintan). In the north, however, after the introduction of Islam during the 15th and 18th centuries and the implementation of Shariah law, which advocates the practice of purdah (isolation of women from public life and activities), women did not participate much in public activities (Bergstrom). History, however, shows that women ruled in the Hausa society. For instance, Queen Amina of Zazzau (Zaria) ruled in the 16th century and Tawa of Gobir in the 18th century (Bergstrom). Bergstrom also says that the history of the Kano society in northern Nigeria shows that women acted as tax collectors, market administrators and religious leaders through the famous Bori Spirit Possession Cult. This traditional religion was regarded as a state religion in parts of Hausaland before the advent of Islam and colonialism. Although there are still traces of it today, it is no longer as popular as it used to be (Bergstrom; Dunbar; Masquelier). The establishment of Islam in northern Nigeria, therefore, ensured a deeply rooted patriarchal system which was further strengthened with the advent of colonialism.

However, it is clear that the activities of women within these societies in pre-colonial Nigeria were within recognized gender boundaries in a gender relations structure that perpetuated and legitimized male domination. According to Rojas, Okonjo, Okome

("African Women"), and Derrickson, the women's place in society was complementary to men's.

With the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, the gender relations changed. The introduction of cash crop farming, which supplied the raw materials needed by the colonialists, caused a change in the economic structures. Men focused on cash crops needed for the international market, while women were left for the food crops that brought little returns. According to Rojas, focusing on men, who comprised the cash crop farmers, and efforts to improve agriculture further encouraged the division of the economic roles of men and women that had earlier complemented each other. Derrickson quotes Mullings as saying that the change from subsistence farming to cash crop farming upset the power balance that existed between the sexes in the society.

In addition, the introduction of Western education and Christianity further changed the role of women in the society. Colonialism encouraged both men and women to pursue education. Special training programs for women from Nigeria and other African countries were introduced by Great Britain in 1949. Unfortunately, only few benefited from the program. The general education included Home Economics for females in which they learnt sewing, cooking, and housekeeping, ultimately preparing them to become good housewives (Guy). The school programmes were not designed to give women education that could facilitate their participation in governance or public life. Okome ("Domestic") stressed that colonial education emphasised the preparing of women for domestic rather than leadership roles in the society through their type of education and beliefs. According to Rojas, their idea of the "appropriate social role for women which included the assumption that women belonged in the home engaged in the child rearing, an exclusive female responsibility, and other domestic chores" helped to change the place of women in Nigerian societies to a subordinate one. With male dominant rule, it was expected that colonization would bring laws that would be to women's disadvantage. The power of males was intensified, and the plight of women increased during the colonial era.

Alkali's utmost concern in most of her literary works is on women's plight in a patriarchal society, and how men oppress women in patriarchal African settings and their struggle to break away from such shackles. Ojinmah and Egya say Alkali, in *The Stillborn*, explains how society encourages the socialisation of a female-child towards dependence on men for sustenance. Alkali goes on to add that this factor predisposes the female-child to view early marriage as an answer to their needs: "no woman within the culture is seen as fulfilled unless she is hanging on the arm of a man." Marriage therefore, assumes for the female-child the ultimate achievement in the society." "such limiting appraisal for women impedes her vision of the need for true self-expansion" (2). In view of this, Alkali sees education as a formidable weapon for the breaking of this circle of bondage. Apart from feminist movements, literary discourses and others, theories have also been formulated in the attempt to fight patriarchy in Nigerian societies. Such African feminist theories include womanism, stiwanism, and motherism, to mention a few.

1.2   Movement from Patriarchy to Matriarchy

Since the end of the colonial period and with the subsequent establishment of human rights, the equality of all humans has been well stated in Nigerian law. The Nigerian constitution prohibits discrimination based on ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion (Matera et al.). Therefore, women are expected to have equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, but the structural setting of the pre-colonial and colonial periods continues to prevent the eradication of discrimination against Nigerian women. Also, the cultural perception of the female as weak and subordinate and the male as superior and strong have denied women such equal rights and opportunities. As a result, there have been many protests against women's plight (Matera et. al.). The period has also witnessed many women's organisations pursuing activities in women's interest. The issues they have addressed include rape, sexual and reproductive rights, domestic abuse, political marginalization, early child marriage.

Politically, some prominent figures in Nigeria, including Fumilayo Ramsome-Kuti, Margaret Ekpo and Gabo Sawaba, fought for women's rights and the country's independence alongside Nigeria's founding fathers. They toured the country in order to mobilize women to be politically conscious and participate in political elections. This led to the formation of the National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), which was organised to be an umbrella organisation for women across Nigeria (Okeke- Ihejirika and Franceshet).

Also, Nigerian women's participation in the Beijing Conference of 1995 led to a strong voice for women in the political arena. The 4th Conference of Women, held in Beijing, China, had the theme "Equality Development and Peace Contriving Strategies," and aimed to achieve women's liberation and eradicate all forms of discrimination against women. As a result, political positions that were only held by men are now opened for contest by both men and women. Much more important than this was the establishment of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. One of its activities is to formulate policies that will improve the status of women in the society. Also, the same department was established in each state and local government throughout the country for the same purpose. Other organizations introduced by the United Nations (U.N.) aiming at ending all forms of political discrimination against women include:

i) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
ii) The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and
iii) The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

1.3   Feminist Movements

Feminist movements were also carried out in order to fight patriarchy that subjugates women in Nigeria and Africa in general. African feminism seems to be difficult to define because of its ethnic and cultural diversity. But this problem does not deny the existence of African feminism. There are two important versions of feminism. First, it is a theoretical paradigm that strives to advocate and improve women's emancipation in a predominately patriarchal world. It is also a movement that prepares women's emancipation and equality with regards to gender (Korany et al. 3). Nnaemeka reiterates that Western feminism does not acknowledge the agency and potential of African women. She rhetorically asks in this regard if "a credible African feminism" would "portray African woman as powerless" (57). Okome ("Listening") emphasises that most of the feminist writings portray African women as "confused, powerless and unable to determine things for themselves" (7). Another problem is that Western feminists feel superior and want to help and enlighten African women. Western feminists have also dominated the discourse on feminism and the women's agenda at the expense of African women.

Nigerian feminist writers, on their part, have made their own contributions in the struggle to fight patriarchal appendages. Such feminist writers include Zaynab Alkali, Flora Nwapa, and Buchi Emecheta, to mention but few. They produced literary writings to portray how patriarchal societies subjugate women and also to enlighten women of the need to strive and develop both educationally and economically in order to avoid being subjugated by patriarchal society. Zaynab Alkali (born 1950) is one of the most prolific female Nigerian literary writers. She was the first female from northern Nigeria to write a work of fiction. Alkali has contributed immensely in enlightening women to know their rights and understand their society through her literary discourses. Alkali's literary works, which mostly focus on women's plight and their struggle to emancipate themselves from patriarchal shackles, have attracted the attention of some feminist critics who see her works from a feminist perspective and conclude that Alkali is a feminist writer who contributes in the struggle against all forms of discrimination against women in her literary discourses (Chioma; Ojinma and Egya; Seiyifa). Also, Gikandi, looking at her last two novels (*The Descendants* and *The Initiates*), describes her as a liberal feminist, but Azuike brands Alkali as a radical feminist. A brief story line of her novels can suffice here.

1.3.1   *The Stillborn* (1984): A Brief Story Line

The Stillborn is Zaynab Alkali's debut novel that won her the association of Nigerian authors' award in 1985. The novel discusses issues of women's oppression by patriarchal society and the attempts by the protagonists to extricate themselves from such shackles. The story begins with the introduction of one of the principal characters, Libira (known as Li), returning home with her mates after finishing girls' boarding primary school. Despite the excitement exhibited by other children who finished their primary education together with Li and who are eager to go home and meet their parents, brothers and sisters and loved ones, Li seems to be unhappy as she

thinks of her father's autocratic high-handedness in the disciplining of his household. Zaynab Alkali here shows how patriarchal structure in *The Stillborn* establishes two different codes: one for the male-child and another for the female-child. Baba's dilemma, when confronted with Sule's confession of breaking the fence affirms the patriarchal dichotomy. Baba puts it:

> What worried him now was, what was he to do with this man-child? He was a man now and it wasn't just his age, but what he stood for. He could beat Awa easily if she erred, no matter how old she was, but not Sule, his first born male-child. And to beat a man for going out to dance at night was outrageous. (Alkali, *The Stillborn,* 23)

It is this different treatment that establishes the patriarchal dichotomy and discrimination against the female child. Okereke posits that women need to extricate themselves from such patriarchal appendages (97). The society of Awa, Faku, and Li orientates them to see marriage as the ultimate achievement for a female child. So, the trio of girls dream of early marriage as the principal means for the self-attainment and fulfilment of the female child. The central theme of discussion of the trio of girls is always how to marry early and establish their own matrimonial homes, although for a variety of reasons.

Awa appears a conformist who wanted to remain in the village and have children like her parents and grandparents had done. When Faku asked Awa whether she would remain in the village, she replied that she would remain in the village, get married and have children like her parents and grandparents did. This means Awa intends to contribute generously to the population of the village by becoming a "baby factory" and conforming to both the cultural and societal expectations for a female child as represented in *The Stillborn*.

Faku dreams of marriage as a solution to her problems resulting from the lack of a father figure and the abject poverty that threatens their life:

> Faku also had a dream, a deep need for security. She had grown-up without a father she yearned for a man's presence in her home. Any man that would claim relation with her.....A man's muddy shoes outside my door! A man's commanding voice in the early hours of the day and the late hours of the night. Where indeed is the Lord of the house who brings in food for his obedient wife to cook? (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 56)

The culture orientates a female child to believe that once a girl marries, all her needs and up keeping would be the responsible of the husband, and this makes her have the idea of marrying for love. Faku, however, had different beliefs:

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What was this love the rest were cracking their heads about? When a man cared for his family, feed and clothed them properly, what was it if it wasn't love? She would like to be Garba's only wife. What women wouldn't? But if the man could afford to feed a dozen other wives, who was she to object? For her polygamy wasn't the point at all. The point was that once she married living alone with her mother was over. They would no longer have to work their fingers sore to feed themselves or mend the leaking roof, because someone else would be responsible (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 46).

Li, too, has her dream which she hopes to realize:

She was dreaming of paradise called 'city.' A place where she would have an easy life, free from slimy calabashes and evil-smelling goats…one of these days she would be a different woman, with painted nails and silky hair. She was going to be successful Grade 1 teacher and Habu a famous medical doctor, like the white men in the village mission hospital. (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 55)

Zaynab Alkali here portrays how women are subordinated and positioned as mere second-class citizens by patriarchal structures in northern Nigerian society in *The Stillborn*.

Awa's dream requires no real effort to realize it. All she wants is to remain in the village, get married and have children. She does not dream of going to the city and enjoying life there. So, she married Dan Fiama, a school head master (HM) and remained in the village. Awa's expectation again is that when she marries Dan Fiama (the HM), the city will come to the village; the government will take over the school; and a secondary school will be attached to the primary school. But Awa's dream of heading the adult education classes becomes mere wishful thinking. So, what she and Dan Fiama experience are retrogressions and disillusionment:

I think many things helped change my man. The village itself changed and he changed with it. The government took over the mission school just as we hope…But it wasn't my man they made head over the school. They said he wasn't educated enough to head such a big school…My man was pushed into junior classes to teach. Those of us that could barely read were asked to work anywhere in the school except the classrooms. (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 87)

Faku and her mother, who were conditioned with abject poverty coupled with the societal orientation for a female child to believe that marriage would be the end of all deprivations, could not understand Garba's view on women as purely objects for men's comfort and pleasure. The import of Garba's statements does not impact Faku: "she did not seem to have taken in Garba's gibe about women slaving for men" (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 46). Married as a second wife to a man who already had a wife of twenty years with nine children, Faku was to accept that the first wife "is the

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mother-of-the-house and the master of the house too" (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 79). It does not take Li long to understand that Faku is very lonely and unhappy and that marriage is the opposite of her dream.

Li, on her part, finds marriage and the city contrary to her expectations. Her abandonment in the village for four years by Habu, her husband, and the unsmiling welcome she received in the city when she was conveyed there to Habu made her acknowledged that "she had lost her man to the city." "This man wasn't the man she used to roll with on the sand in front of her father's compound. The man lying on the other side of the room was a well-dressed stranger who did not talk to a village woman" (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 70). Nostalgically, Li tells Hajiya how Habu treats her. "I try not to, but his attitude is more than I can bear…He does not want me here, I know. He treats me as he would to a dog with disgust" (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 71). While Li tries to escape her father's patriarchal restrictions, she also dreams of a marriage made on love. Unfortunately, things became turned the other way round. Li laments:

> Where is my man? ...That boyish man with incredible smile and a mischievieous twinkle in the eye? Where is that proud, self confident, half-naked lover that defied the laughter of the village and walked the length and breadth of the village, just to see me…? This man wasn't the man she used to roll with on the sand in front of her father's compound. (Alkali, *The Stillborn*, 70)

Li's unsmiling welcome from her husband, Habu, in the city, the humiliation from the marital ties and the mockery she suffered from some women in her village, consequently, has made her see her marriage as full of emptiness.

Zaynab Alkali here portrays how women are subordinated and positioned as mere second-class citizens by patriarchal structures in northern Nigerian society in *The Stillborn*.

1.3.2   *The Virtuous Woman* (1986): A Brief Storyline

The Virtuous Woman is Alkali's second novel, which appeared in 1986. In the novel, female characters are seen struggling with aspects of morality. However, Alkali discusses feminist issues by creating a Zuma society that supports girl's education. The story begins with a character by the name Nana Ai, who gained admission into a prestigious girls' secondary school (Her Majesty College), where the chief of Zuma village held a very big feast in her honour. Four years later, two more girls from the same primary school in the same village named Hajjo and Laila gained admission into the same school with Nana, and the village seemed to be in a festive mood. Two boys (Abubakar and Bello) were also mentioned as going to King's College, though whether they were attending as students who gained admission like the trio of girls or

anything else was not mentioned. However, it was assumed that they were also going as students and for their educational achievements, the village of Zuma did not give any comment, praise, or celebration as it had done for the girls going to Her Majesty College. Alkali here creates a society that tries to uplift the status of a female-child though educational empowerment, which nego-feminism theory and cultural theory aim to achieve between the sexes.

Dogo is a male character portrayed in *The Virtuous Woman* as an antifeminist. He is a wealthy and a successful farmer who has hundreds of cattle, and people used to refer to him "as rich as Dogo" (Alkali, *The Virtuous Woman*, 51). Dogo's misfortune is that his wife (known as 'the first wife') gave birth to only one male child and six daughters. He regrets having female daughters for they are only consumers, and letting others consume your wealth means your name dies out. He prefers to have male children so that his name would be extended from one generation to another. When he was advised to take some of his daughters to school, he refused and considered it a waste of resources. The girls should remain with their mother at home to help in domestic work, and when they are ready for marriage, they do so. Dogo was not contented with what he had and took a second wife hoping that she would give him more male children. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the second wife took seven good years before she delivered him male twins. Dogo, out of excitement, slaughtered a cow and had a big feast in the village. A few weeks after the festival, the twins died, and Dogo turned to drinking and gambling. To add to these tragedies, the second wife could no longer have children because of her sickly condition, and she finally left Dogo for good. The first wife, who was driven from the house by Dogo who suspected her of bewitching the second wife, prospers economically through her sheer hard work. Out of her economic capacity, she sent two of their grown-up daughters to school. Here too Alkali tries to uplift the position of the female characters through education and economic empowerment in *The Virtuous woman*.

1.3.3   *The Descendants* (2005): A Brief Story Line

The Descendants is Alkali's fourth novel. Her third book is a collection of short stories (*Cobwebs and Other Stories*), and my study is on her novels. Alkali portrays the characters Magira Milli, Seytu, Professor Aiman Zaki and Aji Ramta. Each of these characters and others not mentioned here has a role to play, but Alkali seems to focus more on Magira Milli and Seytu. Magira Milli is portrayed as an enlightened woman who always listens to the happenings in her society through her transistor radio. Despite the fact that neither Magira Milli nor her husband Lawani Duna acquire formal education nor educate their children, she vows that her grandchildren will acquire education to avoid repeating the same mistake. That is why we see her advising Seytu to go back to school after her operation. We also see her fighting her son Aji Ramta for being anti-feminist as he supports early marriage for a female child in place of education. Alkali assigns an important role to Magira Milli in which she is described as an advocate of education, especially for a female child. She is also described as a woman who dominates all. Dala, the wife of the late Abdullahi, reveals Magira Milli as a woman who controls everybody in the family. Abbas again describes Magira Milli as a woman who long controls and commands everybody in the house. She is also

described as "a field marshal" (Alkali, *The Descendants*, 152), "the indomitable Magira Milli" (160), and "the magnificent woman" (229). To add to this, Seytu tells us that Magira Milli is the initiator of the Ramta dynasty.

Seytu is one of the central female characters and marries Lawani Dam at the age of thirteen. Two years after that, she experienced health problems from tender vaginal wall damage while giving birth. Lawani Dam, her husband, was expected to take responsibility for her health, but unfortunately, he abandoned Seytu in this condition. After her successful operation, Aji Ramta suggests that Seytu, when fully recovered, should reconcile with her husband and go back to her matrimonial house. Hearing this from her son, Magira Milli instantly rejects the idea and reminds him that Lwani Dam abandoned Seytu in her illness. Magira Milli instead advises Seytu to go back to school, which she does so. Seytu successfully finishes her secondary school education with an excellent result that secures her admission to read medicine. After her programme, she becomes a medical doctor, a specialist in paediatrics, and finally attains the highest position as chief medical director in the hospital she where she works (Makulpo Hospital). Seytu's life has been improved through acquisition of Western education, which the nego-feminism and cultural theories aim to achieve.

Aji Ramta is one of the male characters and a surviving son of Magira Milli, who had little education in Borno. Here in Makulpo he gives lessons in learning to read and write to the children and adults who were interested in education but had no money to go to regular school. In return, his students work on his farm during the rainy season. At harvesting time, they work on his vegetable gardens. Aji Ramta is accused of being anti-feminist and supports early marriage of a girl in place of education. He and Dala, the wife of the late Abdullahi, removed Peni, a daughter to the late Abdullahi, from school and married her out to the butcher (Madu Chimba), who constantly beats her like an animal. Other characters worth mentioning include, Professor Aiman Zaki, the chief medical doctor (Seytu replaces him), who plays a significant role in the development of the Ramta dynasty. Abbas is another character whose role helps in the consolidation of the Ramta dynasty. Glo Madina, a close friend of Seytu, is also a medical doctor in the Ramta dynasty. Finally, Justice Hawwa, Minister of the State, is a daughter to Seytu. In summary, Alkali in *The Descendants* seems to show the importance of education for a female child, which also leads to economic independence.

1.3.4   *The Initiates* (2007): A Brief Story Line

The story begins with the introduction of Batanncha as the oldest and very reputable man in Debro village. Batanncha has two wives, Yamusa and Yelwa, with two sons and a daughter. Colonel Samba is a successful soldier and an eldest son of Batanncha from Yamusa and brother to a twin brother and a sister (Salvia and Avi Dayyan) from Yelwa. Batanncha is a man of patience and integrity. When his son (Colonel Samba) involved himself in an aborted coup, he calmed himself down and tried to address the issue in an amicable away. Batanncha's two friends, Bamusa and Batapchi, show their

true colours to him, although his wife, Yamusa, tries on several occasions to convince him that they are not true friends:

> Everybody knows except Batanncha that those two are his worst enemies. He must have a lot of tolerance and a clean heart, or perhaps the village is short of good men. (Alkali, *The Initiates*, 30)

Avi Dayyan, is a sister to Salvia and Yelwa, and their mother has a very reputable job. She is a very rare geologist who secured a lucrative job and holds a very important position in a big oil company. Being economically sound, she takes responsibility for the education of her brother's (Colonel Samba's) children during his absence. Alkali here portrays Avi Dayyan as both educationally and economically developed, which improves her life in the society in *The Initiates*. This is what the two theories (nego-feminism theory and cultural theory) advocate: improving the life of the female characters in the society as in *The Initiates*. Alkali also tries to depict the political miss- management by the politicians and the attempt by young soldiers to change the government, which proves abortive. Some soldiers who involved themselves in the abortive coup were punished, while others like Colonel Samba went into hiding. Later, the corrupt government was toppled, and those soldiers who went into hiding were pardoned.

Alkali, from a feminist perspective, succeeds in portraying Avi Dayyan as a female character who is highly educated and economically independent. She assists her brother's (Colonel Samba's) family when he disappears after the aborted coup. Others, like the Brigadier General and Hashim, also assist Colonel Samba's family and his parents. Batanncha admits this:

> Between Dayyan, who held an important position in one of the biggest oil companies, being a rare geologist, and the Brigadier, Samba's family had been well cared for. (Alkali, *The Initiates*, 151)

Alkali here emphasises the importance of women's education, which improves their position in a patriarchal society. Avi Dayyan is educationally empowered, which leads to her being economically independent, and she also becomes one of the important figures who assist Colonel Samba's family in terms of needs. Avi Dayyan's improved condition of life in the society in *The Initiates* is what nego-feminism theory and cultural theory advocate and seek to achieve between the sexes.

Alkali's books and other writings which examine the roles of females within patriarchal society have been translated into German French, Japanese, Arabic, and Spanish.

Since the appearance of Alkali's first novel (*The Stillborn*) in 1984, she has had opportunities to travel far and abroad. Alkali travelled to Switzerland, Holland, Australia, Canada, the U.S.A. and other places. Alkali was invited to Switzerland and Australia for a reading tour in 1989, and later in the same year, she was in Cambridge for the British Council sponsored International Writers Conference. Alkali was in the U.S. Information Service sponsored International Writers in Iowa, U.S.A. in August 1989. She attended the meeting of African authors programme "A Voyage Around" in October 1990 in Berlin, Germany. Alkali was invited to the 5th Feminist Book Fair in the Netherlands two years after Berlin. In June 1992, she was in Zurich, Switzerland on a reading tour. In 1994, Alkali was in attendance for a reading tour captioned "House of World Culture," again in Berlin, Germany. All these opportunities allowed Alkali to meet great writers and critics from all over the world. Alkali is a multiple award winner, author and women's advocate. She received The Nigerian Women Distinction Award on the occasion of Nigerian Golden Jubilee. In 2000, she was honoured with the title of icon of Hope along with other distinguished writers like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka by President Olusegun Obasanjo. In 2001, her community conferred on her the chieftaincy title of Magiran Garkida (Queen of Garkida). In 2003, Zaynab Alkali returned to her academic work. This experience gave her some opportunities to travel and know the places in Nigeria that she had not known before. Finally, in 2015 she was appointed a member of National Peace Committee for General Election. These great achievements of Zaynab Alkali, which were due to her intelligence and ability in literary works, have attracted the attention many critics and reviewers to study her works of fiction.

Buchi Emecheta and other female writers portray how female characters developed and asserted themselves despite patriarchal shackles. Their main thrust is to fight the oppressive nature of patriarchal society and assert their freedom. In *The Second Class Citizen* (1974), Ada fights against the pressures of poverty, patriarchy, marriage and social customs that beset her. She fights tirelessly to extricate herself from the shackles and manacles of discrimination that entrap the female child. When her husband (Francis) demands that she should not practice birth control, she defies that and gets a birth control device. When Francis attempts to frustrate her dream to become a writer by burning her book, "The Brain Child," Ada left him. Here the act of desertion portrays the African woman's struggle for emancipation.

Flora Nwapa was one of the foremost female writers who could be placed among the first generation writers like Amos Tutula, Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka. Nwapa, in *Efuru* (1966), portrays the heroine Efuru as a dignified and assertive woman in a continuous struggle to remedy her plight. Her decision to walk out of a marriage that had encumbered her with nothing short of misery against the rigid conventions of a traditional African society that considers divorce as a taboo is salutary. Efuru defies tradition by running away to get married without bride wealth. She rebels against the

societal framework and against staying indoors the customary three months after circumcision.

1.4   African Feminist Writers

One of the main concerns of African feminist writers is to fight against some African traditions that still oppress women. According to Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, one of the most relevant forms of oppression is the African tradition that most often empowers the man over the woman. Within traditions, marriage has been very oppressive for African women. First the woman loses status by being married because in the indigenous systems, which are still at the base of the society, the woman as daughter or sister has greater status and more rights within her birth lineages. Within marriage, she becomes a possession; she is voiceless and often has no right in her husband's family, except, as in some groups, through what accrues to her through children (Ogundipe-Leslie 75).

Another traditional aspect discussed by Ogundipe-Leslie is the bride price. According to African traditions, the African man who wants to marry a woman should give her family compensation: dowry or the bride wealth. This material compensation given to the family could be in gifts, like bulls, cows, and goats or in money. In Ogundipe-Leslie's opinion, "the bride price promotes the commoditization of women" (Ogundipe-Leslie 211).

Taking into consideration some situations in Africa such as oppressive indigenous traditions and the history of colonization, the politics of empowerment for the contemporary African woman proposed by Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Ama Ata Aidoo and other African feminists differ from the one proposed by the Western feminists. Though African women recognize the relevance of Western feminism in unveiling the disempowered situation of women under the patriarchal system and acknowledge the influence of the feminist movement, they also perceive its limitations in coping with the reality of African women. Nevertheless, they propose an alternative movement, which will take into consideration Africa's history of colonization and imperialism, African traditions and the necessity of not separating oneself from the African male in the reconstruction of Africa. So, African feminists recognize the necessity of constructing oppositional thought in order to empower oppressed men and women or the whole oppressed society. African female writers remark that African feminism is a movement that seeks the liberation of Africa from external powers. African feminism is an inclusive movement, which integrates all African people into the construction of the African continent. It takes into account needs and goals that arise from the particular realities of women's lives in African societies and the necessity of a reconstruction of Africa. Phanuel Egejuru and Ketu Katrak in their book *Womanbeing and African Literature* have the following to say: "Women's issues constitute important aspects of working towards a most just and humane future for African society" (9). Nevertheless, this is a discussion that goes beyond gender and proposes a deconstruction of Western ideology and a resistance to imperialism and/or neo-imperialism. The politics of empowerment for African women proposed by

African feminists is a movement which searches for the full participation of African women in African societies' issues because they believe that there will be no liberation for Africa without women's liberation. Nnaemeka opines that African feminism is necessary for empowerment of African women. There is the need for a feminism that is distinctly African and that caters to the needs and desires of African women (58).

1.4.1 African Feminist Writers' Response on Male African Writers

African feminists' writers, seeing how male African writers have deliberately failed to present a positive picture of women in their literary writings, delved into writings in order to re-present a true picture of womanhood. Male writers' discourse writes female characters as footnotes of male history. Agency is denied female characters in male discourse in which they are treated as appendages and chattel in the treasure troves of patriarchy. Such African male writers include Elechi Amadi in his novel (1966) entitled *The Concubine*, portrays the female character Ihuoma, whose beauty attracts almost all the males in her village but deprives her of the right to a social life by restricting her only to the sea king. Any attempt to thwart the assigned fate of Ihuoma to become the sea king's bride is drowned as in the following passage:

> The sea king is terribly jealous and tries to destroy any man. Ihuoma belongs to the sea when she was in the spirit world; she was a wife to the sea king, the ruling spirit of the sea. (Amadi, *The Concubine*, 195)

Wole Soyinka is accused by African feminists of portraying women in a degrading manner in his novel (1963) *The Lion and the Jewel*. Soyinka, through Lakunle, one of the principal male characters, says that women cannot act for themselves because they have less mental capability compared to men. So, it is the man that makes decisions in all matters affecting the family. Lakunle says, "Women have a smaller brain than men and that is why they are called the weaker sex" (Soyinka, *The Lion and the Jewel*, 4). In the same text, Soyinka reserves another very degrading and retrogressive role for women, which is a seductive role, where women's nakedness is used to show the progress of their society. Thus, he says, "We'll print newspapers every day with pictures of seductive girls. The world will judge our progress by the girls that win the beauty contest" (37).

Another writer from northern Nigeria, Aliyu Abdullahi Jibiya, is also one of the accused writers. His novel (1982) *The Hunt Begins* portrays a similar picture of women. The role of women is to satisfy the male sexual urge. Not only that, they are also considered as goods for sale to the rich people, top government officials and royal heads in the society. Zangi, one of the characters, is said to have married out his daughters only to "people of substance" (Jibiya, *The Hunt Begins*, 8). In addition to this, girls are married out young and against their wishes. If they complain, they are threatened to be cursed, and this leads some of them to become prostitutes like Laraba, "the twenty year old prostitute in Himma" (17).

In *People of the City* (1954), Cyprian Ekwensi, too, portrays a female character named Aina as a thief who stole a wearing-cloth belonging to Madam Rabiyatu Foleye of 19A Molomo Street. Aina was arrested and taken to court for prosecution. The magistrate testified from Aina as a guilty person as she proclaimed herself as having stolen the cloth, and the magistrate sentenced her to three months imprisonment (Ekwensi, *People of the City*, 14-15).

In *Things Fall a Part* (1958), Chinua Achebe is also labelled as a male chauvinist, who is considered less insensitive to African woman by some feminist critics (Chukwuma, *Feminism*; Ogundipe-Leslie). Also, Ama Ata Aidoo accuses Achebe of his blatant disregard of women's rights in his literary works, *Things Fall Apart* in particular. Aidoo castigates Achebe for letting Okonkwo, his protagonist in the text, batter his wife Ekwfe just for cutting banana leaves, while the rest of the wives could not do anything rather than hover around whimpering for Okonkwo to stop (40-41). Acholonu, in "Female Predicament," laments that Ekwensi's description of Jagua in *Jagua Nana* betrays "the final debasement of woman" (38).

Since male African writers have failed to give a fair picture of women in most of their literary works, female writers have delved into writings in order to produce literary works which challenge and re-present the true image of women. Such female writers who put pen to paper for this effect include Flora Nwapa, whose writing includes *Ipuru* (1966), *Idu* (1969), and *This is Lagos and Other Stories* (1971). In *Idu*, Nwapa portrays Idu, one of the female characters, as a good, kind and very helpful wife not only to her husband but also to everybody in her community. Thus:

> Idu is presented as a picture of perfect woman, an ideal wife, industrious, kind-hearted and loving. She is also friendly and hospitable woman who is loved and respected by everyone in her community. (150).

Another female writer, Buchi Emecheta, in her novel (1974) *Second Class Citizen*, depicts a very courageous, determined, humble and generous wife in her matrimonial house. She takes on the responsibilities of the house by feeding the family, sponsoring their children's education and that of her husband. She also gives presents to the parents of her husband and some of his relations. As such, she becomes the breadwinner of the house:

> [...] she was to stay in Nigeria, finance her husband, and give his parent expensive gifts occasionally, help in paying the school fees for some girls and look after her young children…" (Emecheta, *Second-Class Citizen*, 30)

As a loyal wife to her husband and his family, she succumbed to the decision taken by her father in-law, who, according to the tradition, believed a woman should not be allowed to go abroad for study. She was to stay in Nigeria and sponsor her husband to study abroad. Thus: "Father does not approve of women going to the United Kingdom

(UK) for study, but you see, you will pay for me, and look after yourself, and within three years, I'll be back." (30).

Zaynab Alkali is one of the major Nigerian female literary writers whose concern is the place of women in a patriarchal Nigerian society. What surprises most of her audiences is her boldness and courage with breakthrough literary works that discuss gender issues in a deeply patriarchal society (northern Nigeria), where women are considered as mere second class figures. Her literary fictions have attracted many reviewers and researchers to conclude that Alkali's main concern in most of her literary works is the plight of women and how men oppress women in a patriarchal African society and their struggle to break away from such oppression. Some critics gave critical comments on Zaynab Alkali's literary works, which have immensely contributed towards gender issues in northern Nigeria, the rest of Nigeria and Africa, in general. For instance, Ojinmah and Egya say that Alkali in *The Stillborn*, her debut novel, explains how society encourages the socialisation of the female child towards dependence on fathers or husbands for sustenance (2). Kassam says Alkali's preoccupation is with the "plight of young girls in a society where their only viable option for long-term emotional survival is to strive and achieve a meaningful education" (119). Ojinmah and Egya stress that "any self-fulfilment that Alkali's female protagonists in her fiction achieve are so done by dint of hard work, as each character has to surmount traditional and cultural inhibitions that attempt to relegate the female-child to the status of perpetual dependence" (1-3).

Also, Seiyifa Koraye says "*The Stillborn* is a novel that portrays the social predicament of women in the society and the struggle to break through." Koraye concludes, "Wiry and tough-minded, undefeated though brutalised, Li emerges as the model of the heroic and truly liberated women Alkali clearly sets out to celebrate" (65). Ojinma and Egya conclude that Alkali's message in all her creative works is "that the female-child should not be eternally dependent on marriage as an answer to all her needs" (1). They also contend that female characters in her works attain some goals only by dint of hard work and indeed, the rejection of established norms which have become common features in African literature. Aderemi Bamikunle and Halima Shehu find the title feminist as a befitting one for Zaynab Alkali. Bamikunle, for instance, suggests that because *The Stillborn* is a "text that presents a heroine who rejects the traditional role imposed by society on its women, it is a very good example on the question of women emancipation and feminism. Shehu, on her own part, sees Alkali as an ardent feminist writer because she demands that women be placed in their rightful place as important members of the human race.

To sum up, some African feminist writers have tried to present women in a better light in their literary works so as to oppose the distorted picture of women presented by some of the male African writers in their literary works. Also, apart from female African literary writings as a means of representing the true picture of womanhood, authors have also formulated some theories such as womanism, stiwanism and motherism, which they hope would assist in their struggle to fight patriarchy in their societies (African societies).

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This research seeks to examine the condition and treatment of women in a patriarchal society in the works of Zaynab Alkali (*The Stillborn*, *The Virtuous Woman*, *The Descendants*, and *The Initiates*). Most of the critics and the reviewers of Zaynab Alkali's literary works portray female characters being subordinated by male characters. But this research sees Zaynab Alkali portraying female characters with dominant roles in the novels. Zaynab Alkali sees her society deeply entrenched with patriarchal life; a society where gender roles are distinct and clear, which places women with a subordinate role to men (Aina; Okome; Akintan; Abara; Makama). Feminists refer to this as "a systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination" (Kamarae; Stacey; Aina). Alkali, in response, tries to uplift the female characters through education and economic empowerment in northern Nigerian society in her novels. In other words, Alkali challenges her patriarchal society through construction of a matriarchal society. Here it is pertinent to briefly explain the term matriarchy so as to facilitate our understanding of how Zaynab Alkali uses it (matriarchy) against patriarchy.

Matriarchy is usually defined as a political system in which women are the dominant political actors, as opposed to patriarchy in which men are the exclusive or primary heads of families, social groups, or political states. But matriarchy has always been a controversial term since whenever it is mentioned, there are debates about whether matriarchies are imagined utopias or real societies, whether they existed at some time in the distant past or could be re-created in a possible future.

J.J. Bachofen's *Mother Right* argued that matriarchy is a social formation of a family tracing descent through the mother and in which also "government of the state was entrusted to the women" (156). Bachofen developed a three-stage mode: The Hetaeric stage in which neither men nor women had control, and people engaged randomly in sexual activity, worshipping Aphrodite (goddess of love and beauty). Women having tired of this, stopped it and created a matriarchy in which Artemis and Athena appeared as main deities. Agriculture was developed during this period, and so were the stories of Amazons and Furies. Bachofen argued that "matriarchal people feel the unity of all life, the harmony of the universe" (79) and embrace a philosophy of "regulated naturalism" in which maternal love is the basis of all social ties.

Friedrich Engels developed matriarchy from materialism in his book *The Origin of Family. Private Property and the State* in which he argued that matriarchy could be developed from group marriage in which paternity is uncertain so only female blood lines could be traced reliably. Engels believed that early human societies were presumed to have been egalitarian. Edward B. Tylor grouped matrilineal descent with post-marital residence in the wife's household as evidence that "the wives are the masters" in the family (89) and described the Minangkabau of Indonesia as one possible matriarchy. Alkali strategically fights patriarchy through matriarchy by empowering the female characters with education and economic development, which uplifts them to the dominant role in the society in her novels. Alkali usually prepares her female characters to go through difficult paths in order to achieve their goals (from grass to grace). For instance, Li, a character in *The Stillborn*, passed through a difficult

path before attaining the high position of "the man of the house" in her father's compound" (85). Seytu is another female character who suffered at the hands of her husband before emerging as a successful medical doctor in *The Descendants*. Alkali questioned the social structure of her patriarchal society which orientates its females to see marriage as the ultimate achievement in life. Through education and economic empowerment of female characters, Alkali exposes the negative side of the marriage institution in her society through the trio of female characters (Li, Awa and Faku), whose dream of marriage turned out to be an illusion in *The Stillborn*.

Consequently, Alkali's uplifting the female characters in northern Nigerian society in the selected novels leads to the subordination of the male characters. So, Alkali appears confrontational by challenging the social structure of her society, and this encourages gender conflict to continue and remain an unresolved issue.

1.5   Problem Statement

Discrimination in all forms against women has been a long and nagging issue that disturbs feminists globally. Since Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucritia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, and Simone de Beauvoir to the current feminists, there have been many attempts through movements, writings, protests, conferences, and workshops aiming to achieve women's liberation and the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women. The same problem is found in African societies. Women in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) suffer human rights abuses. Despite Africa's cultural diversity, its female inhabitants suffer sexual discrimination and abuse, intimate violence, political marginalization, and economic deprivation. For instance, "A woman in South Africa has a greater chance of being raped than she does of learning how to read" (BBC). Seventy percent of women in Niger report being beaten or raped by their husband, father or brother (UNOFPA). Maternal mortality rates in SSA are highest in the world. SSA is home to 20 percent of the world's births but contributes 40 percent of the world's maternal deaths (UNFPA). In SSA, about half of the population lives below poverty line, and over 80 percent of the poor are women (UNFPA).

During Alkali's many decades of literary participation, her works have enjoyed the attention of critics and reviewers around the globe. Full textual studies have been conducted in areas that presuppose Alkali as a feminist writer who contributes to the development of women in northern Nigeria and Nigeria in general. Chioma Opara's article entitled "The Foot as a Metaphor in Female Dreams: An analysis of Zaynab Alkali's novels" examines the attempts by Alkali's female characters to extricate themselves from patriarchal domination through a metaphoric analysis of the foot as a means by which the female characters walk out of bondage imposed upon them by society (158-166). In most of Alkali's works, she portrays male characters as lame-gendered and therefore incapable of wielding homogeneity in family or community matters, while the female protagonists like Li, Magira Milli, and Seytu often come in like super woman characters and make amends for the overall good of family and

community (158-166). This research thus seeks to further examine the condition of women in patriarchal Nigerian society in the novels of Zaynab Alkali.

Most of the studies conducted on Alkali's literary works has focused on female's oppression/subjugation and their struggle to emancipate themselves from such oppression. For instance, Alkali's literary works have been compared with the works of other writers such as in a PhD dissertation by Shehu entitled "Women Novelists on Women in Islamic Societies in Africa: A Critical Study of Zaynab Alkali, Mariama Ba, and Nawal El-Sadawi." The researcher examines how African women are oppressed by patriarchal society. Apart from patriarchal oppression of women, religion, which is the at the heart of life for most human beings, is also used as another weapon in the oppression of women.

Mainasara's Master's thesis entitled "A Thematic and Stylistic Analysis of Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants*" examines the major concerns of some prominent female writers who pioneered feminist literature in Nigeria. Writers such as Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Zulu Safola, and Zaynab Alkali have extensively written on the institutionalized marginalization and oppression of women. Though the themes of these writers differ or vary due to the influence of religion or cultural background, they mainly centre on the plight of women in a male dominated society usually referred to as a man's world.

Also, a Master's thesis by Ekwunife entitled "An Analysis of the Relationship between Knowledge, Power and Gender in Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* and *The Descendants*" sees the silencing of African women as a component of their oppression in literature.

However, despite Alkali's prominence as one of the most prolific female authors in Nigeria whose literary works are mostly on female gender, there studies have not yet been conducted that examine the status and treatment of women in patriarchal Nigerian society in Zaynab Alkali's novels. This research seeks to do so from this perspective and fill this gap in the extant literature on the subject.

Mohammed Alkali, in his PhD Dissertation (2013) entitled *Interrogating Nego-feminism in Six Nigerian Novels*, used Nego-feminism theory. This study will also use the same theory (nego-feminism) but with cultural theory as a supporting theory, which is hoped to reinforce nego-feminism theory to attempt to bridge the gap between the sexes. Also, most of the previous studies on Alkali's literary works used different theories which are confrontational in approaches, while this study uses nego-feminism theory and cultural theory, which seem to be compatible and non-confrontational in approaches.

1.6   Research Objectives

The first objective of this study is to examine the status and treatment of women in the patriarchal society in the works of Zaynab Alkali. Thus, the examination focuses on how women are maltreated by subordinating them as second-class citizens, sex machines that can only contribute to the development of the society through production of children. The study further considers the plight of women who are deprived of opportunities to develop themselves both educationally and economically.

The second objective is to show how Zaynab Alkali reconstructed the role of women through negotiation in the novels. Alkali strategically empowers her female characters through education and economic development, which consequently uplifts them to the position of the head of the household.

The study further aims to show how nego-feminism can be used as a tool to bridge the gap that exists in the African society in Zaynab Alkali's novels. The theory in essence aims to bridge the gender gap through establishing cooperation between the sexes with the hope of reaching a negotiated reconciliation of their grievances.

1.7   Research Questions

i) How are women's statuses and treatment examined in the patriarchal society in the works of Zaynab Alkali?
ii) How does Zaynab Alkali reconstruct the role of women through negotiation in the novels?
iii) In what ways can nego-feminism be used as a tool to bridge the gender gap that exists in the African society in Zaynab Alkali's novels?

1.8   Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study comprises nego-feminism theory and cultural theory. Nego-feminism theory as formulated by Obioma Nnaemeka is used together with some concepts from cultural theory to examine and analyse the novels of Zaynab Alkali.

In Obioma Nnaemeka's article (1999) entitled "Nego-feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way," the theorist defines Nego-feminism as "the feminism of negotiation; 'no ego' feminism" (360). This theory aims at establishing the sense of a reconciliatory forum between the sexes and a hope of reaching agreement through discussion and compromise. The theory neither encourages egocentricism nor feelings of superiority of one over the other. The theory encourages cooperation and discourages confrontation. The theory hopes to establish peace and

cooperation between the sexes so that conflict would be reduced to a very minimal level.

Cultural theory (sometimes known as "the cultural theory of risk") was formulated by Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky. The theorists suggest that people tend to perceive danger and respond to risk in different ways, and that these different ways tend to encourage the development of different social structures. Douglas, in her book entitled *Purity and Danger*, elaborates that "no classification is exhaustive, and therefore in every culture there are anomalies (ie matter out of place) towards which most people feel disgust or fear." Douglas formulated a framework called "Grid Group Cultural Models" and classified the models according to four characteristics: fatalism, collectivism, individualism, and egalitarianism. The researcher intends to use nego-feminism theory and cultural theory because they seem to share some common characteristics which could serve as signifiers for bridging the gap created in the novels of Zaynab Alkali.

1.9   Methodology

This study employs textual analytic methodology for investigation of four (4) of Zaynab Alkali's novels: *The Stillborn*, *The Virtuous Woman*, *The Descendants* and *The Initiates*. Analysis of these novels relies on the use of nego-feminism theory and cultural theory as analytical tools to examine how Alkali portrays female characters. This research will also analyse the novels of Zaynab Alkali to explore the effect of female dominance in the society in the novels using nego-feminism theory. Finally, this study will use nego-feminism as a tool for bridging the gap between the sexes.

1.9.1   The Structure of the Thesis

This study has seven chapters including introduction as chapter one. Chapter 1 begins with a general overview of African and Nigerian cultures and how women are portrayed culturally. The significance and limitations of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, theoretical framework, methodology and justification of the texts selection are also discussed. Chapter 2 discusses the literature review, which consists of an introduction, discussion of Zaynab Alkali and feminism, research on Alkali's literary works and finally, the conclusion of the chapter. Chapter 3 discusses the study's theoretical framework and methodology. Analyses of the novels begins with Chapter 4 on objective one, which examines how Alkali portrays female characters in the novels using nego-feminism theory and cultural theory as analytical tools. Chapter 5 continues the analysis with objective two, which explores the effect of female dominance in the society in the novels. Chapter 6 starts with objective three, using nego-feminism theory and cultural theory as tools to bridge the gap between the sexes in Zaynab Alkali's novels. This chapter provides a discussion of women's position in Nigerian society, specifically northern Nigeria, their isolation in literary discourse and their attempts to argue/dispute these two aspects. The social status quo and the literary world are also discussed by way of introduction. The discussion continues on how both Western and African feminist theories are used by feminists in

their hope to curtail women's oppression/subjugation and relegation to mere feeble second-class figures. The results of these efforts are discussed in relation to their role in paving the way for the implementation of nego-feminism and cultural theories in attempting to achieve the desired goal of bridging the gap between the sexes.

Nego-feminism is a new theory theorized by Obioma Nnaemeka which advocates cooperation, negotiation, reconciliation, and establishment of peace between disagreeing parties (sexes), while cultural theory, in a general sense, postulates that there are biological differences between men and women and such important differences should be celebrated by women. The theory also advocates cooperation, interdependence, sharing, trust and peace. So, these two theories are hoped to be used in this research as the alternative solutions to the gender war. Finally, in Chapter 7, a summary, conclusion, findings, contributions and recommendations for further study are offered.

1.10   Justification of Texts Selection

Zaynab Alkali portrays dominant female characters in the society in the selected novels (*The Stillborn, The Virtuous Woman, The Descendants* and *The Initiates*), which this study aims to analyse. So, selection of the texts is appropriate and justified. An examination investigating the concept of matriarchy through nego-feminism focusing on the male characters dominated by the female characters in the selected novels is the information gap that this research seeks to fill.

Another reason for selecting of the texts is that there is lack of scholarship on interrogating the concept of matriarchy through nego-feminism theory in the selected novels. So, to add scholarship to Alkali's literary works, there is the need to study the selected novels.

Finally, the researcher was impressed by Alkali's courage and boldness to raise concerns about gender issues from a region that values patriarchal life and where Islam predominates. This prompted the researcher to enthusiastically seek to study Alkali's literary work to see how female characters are portrayed in the selected novels. But when reading her literary works critically, the researcher discovered that Alkali portrays dominant female characters in the society in the selected novels, which is contrary to most studies conducted on her literary works. So, the researcher prefers to study her works from a perspective that has been given less attention: female characters dominating male characters as Alkali portrays female characters with dominant roles. Therefore, based on this criterion, the selection of the novels is appropriate to the aim of this research. For instance, *The Stillborn* portrays Habu Adam as its protagonist. His domination by female characters as portrayed by the author in the novel is justified for he is regarded as a total failure at the end and his wife triumphed over him both educationally and economically.

The second novel chosen; *The Virtuous Woman*, with Dogo as its protagonist, depicts how female characters overshadow almost all male characters in the text. In this sense, it seems as if there are no culturally stereotypical male characters in the text. Dogo's episode justifies female dominance over male characters in the novel as his abandoned wife later becomes economically independent and better than him. Though the abandoned wife does not have an opportunity to acquire Western education, through sheer hard work she prospers economically and even sponsored two of their grown-up daughters for their education. Economics is thus one of the significant aspects that Alkali uses to construct a matriarchal society.

The third novel chosen *The Descendants*, portrays Aji Ramta as the protagonist, who is considered an advocate of tradition and the only male character that appears as one of the members of the Ramta society. It is in this novel that Alkali portrays a complete picture of matriarchal society. Aji is the only son of Migira Milli (the iron lady) as the head of the Ramta society. Aji helps in the running of the Ramta family, but with the author's artistic manipulation, he is eliminated, which results in establishing the Ramta family as a complete matriarchal society. Even the medical director, Professor Aiman Zaki in Makulpo hospital, had to be replaced by Seytu (a granddaughter of Magira Milli) on the basis of retirement, but in reality, it is done just to establish the desired matriarchal society by the author. Here Alkali endows power on Magira Milli to control all. Alkali creates a matriarchal society through empowering female characters with education and economic development as her weapon to fight patriarchy in the selected novels.

The fourth novel chosen is *The Initiates*, which portrays Batanncha as the oldest and a very reputable person with a well to do family in the village of Debro. The author portrays him as an incapable and unenlightened husband in knowing his true friends. Yamusa, his wife, tries to alert him of the two pretentious friends, Bamusa, and Batapchi, whom he believes are his true friends, but he fails to understand. Bamusa and Batapchi used to come to Batanncha's *zaure* (a sitting room in a modern building) to discuss issues, eat and drink to their satisfaction. It is when his son Colonel Samba involved himself in an aborted coup that Batanncha came to realise his wife's several attempts to caution him about his supposed close friends. When he asked them if they were aware of the condition of his son, Colonel Samba, they pretended not to know anything concerning his son. They even stopped coming to his *zaure*. Batanncha now admits that his wife, Yamusa, is more enlightened than him and that is why she always dominates him.

1.11   Significance of the Study

Most of the previous research conducted on Zaynab Alkali's literary works focused on female oppression/subjugation and their attempts to emancipate themselves. This research is original and its primary objective is to add to scholarship on the literary works of Zaynab Alkali because not much focused has been given to interrogating the concept of matriarchy through nego-feminism. The aim is to establish peaceful and

mutual co-existence between the sexes using the two theories (nego-feminism theory and cultural theory) and end the gender war or reduce it to a barest minimal level.

The study is also significant in the sense that it will examine how the author portrays female characters in the society in the selected novels. In other words, how Alkali tries to uplift female characters and why she does so in the selected novels.

1.12   Limitations of the Study

Most of the researches conducted on the literary works of Zaynab Alkali portray women's oppression/subjugation by patriarchal society and their struggle to break away from the oppressive nature of patriarchy.

This study restricts its analysis to Alkali's selected novels *The Stillborn* (1984), *The Virtuous Woman* (1986), *The Descendants* (2005) and *The Initiates* (2007). It also limits itself to examine how Alkali portrays female characters in the society in the selected novels. In other words, how and why Alkali portrays female characters with dominant roles in the selected novels. The framework is limited to interrogating the concept of matriarchy through nego-feminism theory and cultural theory as defined by Göttner-Abendroth, Nnaemeka, and Tylor. This research also limits itself to exploring the effect of female dominance in the society in the selected novels. This research is further limited to determining how the nego-feminism theory and the cultural theory, which seem to be compatible, could work towards bridging the gap between the sexes. In other words what roles could the two theories (nego-feminism theory and cultural theory) perform with regard to the conflict between the sexes, bearing in mind all the attempts made so far through other theories discussed which unfortunately appear unsuccessful.

1.13   Definition of Terms

It is imperative to delineate some key terms that will enhance our understanding of the work. The concepts are matriarchy, nego-feminism, and culture.

1.13.1   Matriarchy

A matriarchy is a society based on a union of extended clans formed according to the principle of matrilinearity. It is also a society whose political decision-making is organized according to a long line of matriarchal kinship, and in the clan-house women and men meet in a council to discuss domestic matters (Göttner-Abendroth 8).

1.13.2   Nego-Feminism

Nego-feminism is a new feminist theory defined as a feminism of negotiation, "'no ego' feminism." This theory advocates compromise, cooperation, and reconciliation instead of confrontation between the sexes. It is a theory that transcends beyond a winner and the defeated in a gender war. The ultimate goal is to resolve the grudges through negotiation and reconciliation between the sexes, not through war. The theory encourages desirable social change for peaceful co-existence in the society. Nego-feminism provides better relationships between the sexes so that peaceful co-existence is established. The new theory explains a new movement that can go beyond "victor" and "defeated" in a "gender war." It does not call for a winner and loser, but calls on the two disagreeing parties (male and female) to negotiate and reconcile the differences between them (Nnaemeka 377-378).

1.13.3   Culture

The term was defined by the pioneer English anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture* as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as a member of society" (2). Tylor goes on to add that this is not only limited to men, women too are inclusive. Tylor also says that "culture is a powerful human tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists in our minds" (2).

1.14   Conclusion

A brief discussion of African history and its culture relative to this study were discussed in the introduction of this chapter. Also, a detailed discussion of Nigerian society and its culture in relation to the position of women in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods was also offered. Also, patriarchy in Nigerian societies and its effects leading to the matriarchal movement were discussed in this chapter. Highlights of the novelist's career and the selected novels were discussed. Finally, the chapter covered the statement of problem, research objectives, research questions, research methodology, structure of the thesis; limitation of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, justification of the texts selection and definitions of the terms.

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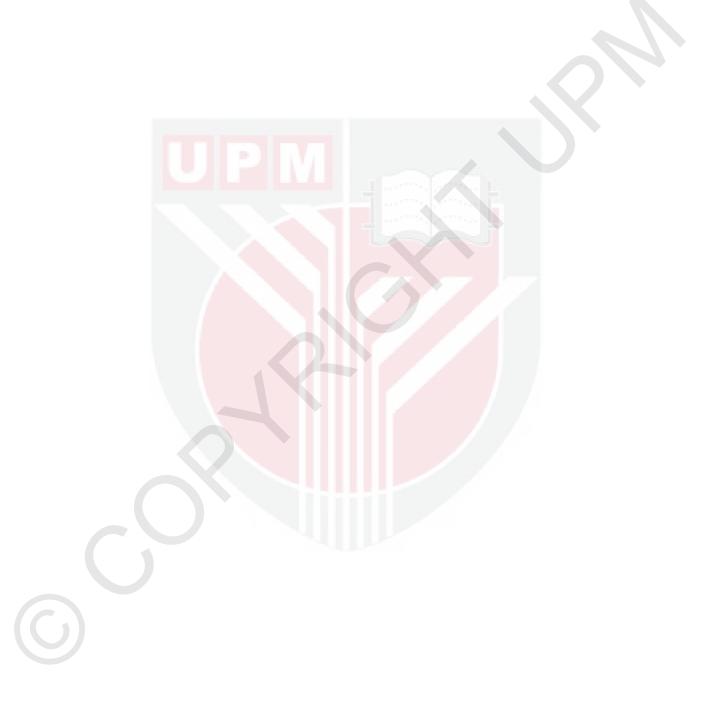
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Finally, I am happily married with children, residing in Kano State, Nigeria.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Muhammad A.U., Mani M., Talif R., Kaur Hardev (2017) ''Matriarchy through Cultural Change in Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* and *The Descendants*,'' published in BODHI International Journal of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

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Muhammad A. U., Mani M. (2017) ''Does the Concept of Matriarchy Exist? A Discussion of Zaynab Alkali's *The Virtuous Woman* and *The Descendants*,'' accepted by International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature (IJALEL) 18-07-01-40.

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