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TOPIC OF RESEARCH: *Auza-i-Ijtemai-i-Afghanistan dar ruman-i-Dar Akram Usman: Dar ayineh-i-"Koocheh-i-ma"*

FINDINGS

This doctoral research, titled "*Auza-i-Ijtemai-i-Afghanistan dar ruman-i-Dar Akram Usman: Dar ayineh-i-"Koocheh-i-ma"*" presents a comprehensive socio-political and literary analysis of Afghanistan through the lens of the Persian-language novel *Koocheh-i Ma* by Dr. Akram Usman. The study explores the manner in which literature, particularly this novel, acts as a reflective mirror of the historical, political, cultural, and societal developments in Afghanistan spanning over seven crucial decades—from the 1930s to the early 2000s.

Afghanistan's modern history is marked by persistent political fluctuations, foreign interventions, and civil conflict, each of which has left a profound impact on its societal fabric. *Koocheh-i Ma*, while fictional, provides a vivid and realistic depiction of these changes as experienced by the Afghan people. By analyzing the narrative structure, character development, thematic concerns, and socio-political undercurrents of the novel, this research identifies the key historical moments and cultural transformations that define modern Afghan identity.

The novel begins its narrative in the 1930s—a time when Afghanistan, under King Nadir Shah and later King Zahir Shah, was experiencing relative political stability but remained a largely traditional and tribal society. The central focus of this period in the novel reflects a society deeply rooted in Islamic traditions, local customs, and patriarchal norms. Usman's portrayal of family structures, gender roles, social hierarchy, and rural-urban divisions serves as an authentic documentation of Afghan society in the early 20th century.

Moving into the 1950s and 60s, the novel captures the subtle yet growing influence of modernization and reform under Zahir Shah's constitutional monarchy. The increasing presence of foreign education, changes in lifestyle, and the emergence of political consciousness among youth are well-reflected in the

lives of Usman's characters. This period also marks the beginning of significant Indo-Afghan interactions. India's cultural influence, particularly through education and literature, as well as its political alignment during the Cold War, shaped Afghan intellectual circles. These themes are intricately woven into the narrative of *Koocheh-i Ma*, where the clash between tradition and modernity is an ever-present undercurrent.

The transition to the republican rule under President Daoud Khan in the 1970s introduces a period of political reform coupled with increasing authoritarianism. The novel captures the disillusionment among the intelligentsia and common people as expectations of democratic progress clash with the realities of political suppression and centralized control. Indo-Afghan relations during this time also shift, with India supporting Daoud's efforts at modernization while Afghanistan balanced its ties with both the Soviet Union and the West. These complex international relations are subtly alluded to in the novel through discussions among characters and the portrayal of public sentiment.

A significant portion of the novel and the thesis is devoted to the era of the Saur Revolution in 1978 and the subsequent Soviet invasion in 1979, which dramatically altered the political and social structure of the country. *Koocheh-i Ma* vividly captures the horrors of war, ideological divisions, the mass exodus of refugees, and the transformation of Afghan cities into battlegrounds. The characters become divided along ideological lines—some embracing Marxist ideologies, others aligning with traditionalist or Islamist factions—reflecting the real-life fragmentation of Afghan society during the communist regime and subsequent resistance movements.

The fall of the communist regime in the early 1990s, followed by the brutal civil war among Mujahideen factions, and finally the rise of the Taliban regime in 1996, are portrayed in *Koocheh-i Ma* with a tone of despair and loss. The novel documents the widespread destruction of Kabul, the silencing of intellectual voices, the suppression of women, and the enforcement of a rigid interpretation of Islam that uproots centuries-old Afghan cultural practices.

Through all these political shifts, *Koocheh-i Ma* remains grounded in its exploration of Afghan culture and traditions. The narrative richly describes Afghan festivals, family ceremonies, storytelling practices, poetry recitations, and Sufi traditions, thereby preserving cultural heritage that often gets overshadowed by political analysis. Usman's work serves not only as a literary masterpiece but also as an ethnographic record of Afghan life.

The thesis also includes an extensive biographical account of Dr. Akram Usman, situating him within the socio-political and literary context of Afghanistan. His education, literary career, and intellectual contributions are analyzed to better understand his motivations and the ideological currents that influenced his writing. Dr. Usman emerges not only as a novelist but also as a cultural historian and social critic whose work deserves recognition within the broader field of Persian and Afghan literature.

This study argues that *Koocheh-i Ma* is more than a novel—it is a socio-political document that chronicles the soul of a nation through one of its most turbulent periods. Literature, in this context, becomes a tool of resistance, remembrance, and reflection. The novel's deep engagement with themes such as displacement, identity, modernization, tradition, and resilience makes it an essential text for understanding Afghanistan beyond conventional political narratives.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to literary studies, Afghan historiography, and cultural anthropology by offering a nuanced reading of the novel *Koocheh-i Ma* and highlighting the role of fiction in capturing and interpreting the lived experiences of a nation in transition. It provides future scholars with a framework for studying socio-political realities through literature, and positions Dr. Akram Usman's work as a cornerstone in the literary portrayal of modern Afghanistan.